

India Doctrinal Orientation: Causing Instability in the Region

By Farzana Siddique

In the World of Today there are two big powers, Russia and America. In the world of tomorrow, there will be two more; India and China—there will be no fifth.”¹

Jawaharlal Nehru, August 1945

Introduction

Indian aspiration to become a great world power is as old as its independent existence. Even before India become independent, Jawaharlal Nehru, who became its first Prime Minister and remained in that position for seventeen years, had nurtured the notion of Great India. His vision of a greater India was instrumental in defining the aims and objectives of Indian foreign and security policies.² He had a strong conviction that India would recapture its lost glory and power through dedicated efforts in the fields of scientific, industrial and economic development, and military strength.

Indian efforts to gain great power status have continued, though in the intervening period when its economy was not performing well, the plans were put on back burner but never abandoned. To compensate for its weak military strength Indian policy makers relied heavily on ambitious diplomacy for strengthening its security in the initial years. It adopted a policy of non-alignment and claimed to pursue peaceful co-existence with all its neighbors which provided it the required space to work for materializing its great power status vision. This vision however, remained an illusion due to India's poorly developed technological infra-structure and economy.

¹ "Indian Expansionists and their Wild Aspirations," *People's March: Voice of the Indian Revolution*, Volume 6, Number 11, December 2005).

Available at: <http://www.bannedthought.net/India/PeoplesMarch/PM1999-2006/archives/2005/nov-dec2k5/expansionist.htm>

² Zafar Iqbal Cheema, *Indian Nuclear Deterrence: Its Evolution, Development and Implications for South Asian Security* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.39.

Its offensive objectives were visibly reflected during 1950's. India had also been secretly working on a nuclear weapons program since its independence. The objective of its nuclear program under the flag of peaceful use of nuclear energy was part of its strategic ambitions.

It was however, not possible for India to sustain its policy of nonalignment for long as it was not practical for it to perpetually stay aside from the Cold War competitors. In 1962 under its 'Forward Policy' India deployed its forces inside disputed territory with China in North East Frontier Agency Region (NEFA) and Ladakh resulting in war with China. The objective was to detach Tibet from China.

Its policy of nonalignment collapsed during and immediately after Sino-Indian conflict of 1962, as it decided to develop strong military relations with erstwhile Soviet Russia and also accepted help from the US and other western countries.

Another major event indicative of its offensive doctrinal orientation was the 1971 war with Pakistan. Indian forces marched from multiple directions into three strategically important areas of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) with armor and air support. It had also earlier trained and equipped thousands of Bengalis as Mukti Bahini (freedom fighters),³ who had launched insurgency against the Pakistani army and caused considerable attrition.

Orientation of Indian Force Posture 90's Onwards:

In the early nineties India had to face setback on two fronts. One was on defense policy front and other on economic level. Collapse of Soviet Union and crisis faced by its economy badly impacted Indian defense and economic policies. The balance of payment crises of 1990 and policy changes led to a decline in the GDP growth rate, which fell from 6.9 percent in FY 1989 to 4.9 percent in FY 1990 to 1.1 percent in FY 1991.⁴ In the wake of these two shocks India transformed its economic structure from a closed economy to a open market economic system, and also began exploring other avenues to fulfill its defense needs. India's decision to open up its economy began paying dividends and its GDP growth rate increased considerably. With increased GDP growth India was now in a position to further enhance its military power.

³ Zafar Iqbal Cheema, *Indian Nuclear Deterrence: Its Evolution, Development and Implications for South Asian Security* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.76

⁴ *An Economic History of India from 1947-2011*, February 20, 2012.
Available at: <http://eternian.wordpress.com/2010/02/20/indias-economy/>

There was a qualitative improvement in US-India relationship and India signed an agreement with US in 1991 to expand its military relations with the world's sole super power. In January 1992, the first Indo-US Army Executive Steering Committee was set up. Following formation of the joint committee two committees on naval and air forces were constituted. These measures were taken to a higher level of cooperation by signing of the Indo-US Military Cooperation Treaty during the visit of the US Defence Secretary, William Perry, in January 1995.⁵

In 1992 India again moved to repair relations with China. India's "Look East" policy envisions achieving two objectives; one is to develop friendly relations with China, and the other, high-level engagement with "China-wary" nations (South Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, and Australia). It dovetails with the US policy of establishing closer ties with countries beyond Washington's traditional treaty partners to maintain US predominance.⁶ The 2010 US Quadrennial Defense Review talked of India's positive role as a "net security provider in the Indian Ocean and beyond."⁷

1998 Indian overt nuclear weapon test placed it in the list of nuclear weapon states and was seen as an emerging military power on the radar of world strategic community. Indian nuclear test was not a strategic surprise for its neighbors. It had in-fact been working on its nuclear weapon program since 1950's and also had prepared ground for 1998 overt nuclear test.⁸

India also developed an offensive limited conventional war strategy in 2004, as its existing strategy developed under Sundarji Doctrine had failed to achieve its political goals in the twin crises of 2001-2002. These crises erupted in the wake of Indian allegation that Pakistan was responsible for December 13, 2001 attack on Indian Parliament. Indian mobilized about 500, 000 troops along the International border with Pakistan, backed by naval forces for a blockade of Pakistani sea ports.⁹ These crises were also used as an opportunity by Indian military establishment to overtly come up

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Mohan Malik, "China and India Today: Diplomatic Jostle, Militaries Prepare," *World Affairs*, July/August 2012. Available at: <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/china-and-india-today-diplomats-jostle-militaries-prepare>

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Zafar Iqbal Cheema, *Indian Nuclear Deterrence: Its Evolution, Development and Implications for South Asian Security* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), p.76

⁹ George Perkovich, "The Non-Unitary Model and Deterrence Stability in South Asia," Stimson Center November 13, 2012. Available at: <http://www.stimson.org/summaries/perkovich-on-the-non-unitary-model-and-deterrence-stability-in-south-asia/>

with its age old desire of developing offensive strategic posture to counter perceived threats from Pakistan and China.

Indian military failure of Sundarji doctrine during operation Parakaram (2001-02) provided the required framework for new and offensive conventional war fighting strategy achieving quick mobilization capability to Indian military. The new strategy was named, “Cold Start.” Cold Start Doctrine also called as pro-active strategy aims at utilizing space for conventional warfare and keeping it under nuclear threshold. The Cold Start envisages reorganizing strike corps into at least eight smaller integrated battle groups (IBG’s) that combines mechanized infantry, artillery and armor operational maneuver groups.¹⁰ The doctrine is Pakistan specific and its thrust is offensive. However the doctrine is not yet fully operational due to constraints at operational, technical, political decision making level, and ineffective existing inter-services coordinating structure.

Indian military recently came up with another offensive military doctrine to counter threat on its eastern border with China. Indian army undertook massive reorganization of its military corps under its Long Term Integrated Perspective Plan 2012-2027 (LTIPP). A new “mountain strike corps” would allow India to move rapidly and counter possible Chinese incursions into disputed areas.¹¹

Development of this doctrine shows a significant reorientation of Indian military strategy from defense to limited offense. LTIPP would allow India to quickly transfer troops and equipment from one mountain war zone to another, making it possible for its military to fight both historical adversaries simultaneously. As a result, any increase in offensive capability along the Chinese border has implications for Indo-Pakistani stability.¹² In case of the army, its main areas of thrust in the coming years would continue to be enhancing combat ratio vis-à-vis China and upgrading of the combat edge against Pakistan. It would also look to build capability to meet collective threat in a two front conflict situation.¹³

¹⁰ Adil Sultan, “Pakistan’s Emerging Nuclear Posture: Impact of Drivers and Technology on Nuclear Doctrine,” Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), winter 2011- spring 2012 - Volume XXXI & XXXII, Issue Number 4 & 1.

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Adelia Saunders, “A Twist on India’s Cold Start?” *Institute for National Strategic Studies, INSS, National Defense University*, April 15, 2011. Available at: <http://inssblog.wordpress.com/2011/04/15/a-new-twist-on-indias-cold-start/>

¹³ Gautam Datt, “Defence Minister Pushes for Faster Arms Deals to be Made,” April 2, 2012. Available at: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/indiahome/indianews/article-2124174/Defence-minister-A-K-Antony-pushes-faster-arms-deals-made.html>

On strategic level India has adopted a policy of credible minimum deterrence based on existential deterrence. It has also declared No First Use policy on doctrinal level. The conventional doctrine and the nuclear doctrine combined go beyond deterrence, to potentially enable coercion through offensive deterrence.¹⁴ To implement or operationalize its offensive strategic and conventional force posture India has a huge military procurement plan.

Indian Defense Buildup:

Indian army is one of the largest armies of the world and the largest importer of weapons in the last decade. It has personnel strength of 1.1 million with 6 regional commands, a training command, 13 corps, and 38 divisions.¹⁵ The Indian army is improving at a rapid pace in areas of mechanized infantry, missiles and strategic corps organization. Indian Air Force has more than 665 combat aircraft in its inventory. It has signed a number of contracts with several countries to purchase of additional aircrafts. India is also allocating additional funds for expansion of its navy. It has 40 ships and submarines on order, including aircraft carriers, assault vessels, and trying to build nuclear submarines.

To accomplish its goal India is spending 2.5 to 3.0 percent of its GDP on defense. Consequently, India's defense budget has grown by some 64% (in real terms) since 2001—reaching \$37.4 billion for the financial year 2012-2013 and increased by 5 percent¹⁶ for fiscal year 2013-2014 which enabled Indian military the implementation of long-term acquisition plans. According to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), India is now the largest weapons importer in the world.¹⁷ Studies also indicate that India may spend up to \$80 billion on military modernization by 2015.

¹⁴ Adil Sultan, "Pakistan's Emerging Nuclear Posture: Impact of Drivers and Technology on Nuclear Doctrine," Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), winter 2011- spring 2012 - Volume XXXI & XXXII, Issue Number 4 & 1.

¹⁵ Gurmeet Kanwal, "India's Military Modernization Plans and Underpinnings," *The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR)*, September 24, 2012. Available at: <http://www.nbr.org/research/activity.aspx?id=275>

¹⁶ Aurangzeb, "India Defense Budget Cuts; A good Sign of Progress for Region," March 3, 2013. Available at: http://www.pakistankakhudahafiz.com/2013/03/03/op-ed-india-defense-budget-cuts-a-good-sign-for-progress-of-region/#.UUF_Wh04sng

¹⁷ Iskander Rehman, "The Military Dimensions of India's Rise." Available at: <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/pdf/SR010/rehman.pdf>

In 2002 India published the first iteration of its Defense Procurement Plan. The plan envisages arms procurements, construction and maintenance of installations, additional infrastructure, and other military equipment modernizations. Indian advance procurement plan includes new aircraft carriers, submarines, guided weapons, and artillery and space assets will also be a key in building India's broader military capabilities.

The major acquisitions of the Air Force over the next decade will be; 180 Sukhoi Su-30MKI aircrafts, MMRCA, Additional Advanced and Intermediate Jet Trainer aircrafts, the Fifth Generation Fighter, upgradation of more than 60 MiG 29 fighters, Jaguars, Mirage aircrafts, Airborne Early Warning Aircraft, Additional Aerostats.

Besides importing weapons and other equipments, India is pursuing a massive indigenous military equipment production plan. Currently Indian defense industry is meeting only 30 percent of its defense requirements and relying 70 percent on imports. Its Defense Production Policy 2011 has reiterated the strategic and economic importance of self-reliance in the area of defense.¹⁸ In an effort to develop indigenous plan for production of conventional and nuclear weapons required technical advancement, infrastructure and policies to improve indigenous defense industry for future acquisition of weapons. Indian defense industry is currently working on developing and production of aircrafts, helicopters, submarines, cruise missiles, ballistic missiles and other electronic equipments.

Indian Strategic Deals: Indo-US Strategic Partnership

US National Security Strategy, 2002 noted that "U.S. interests require a strong relationship with India."¹⁹ A joint statement issued by Prime Minister Vajpayee and President Bush in January 2004 declared that India-United States "strategic partnership" includes expanding cooperation in the areas of easing restrictions on dual use technology export to India, increase in civil nuclear and civil space cooperation, as well as expanding dialogue on missile defense.²⁰

¹⁸ Prospects for Global Defense Export Industry in Indian Defense Market, *Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)*, Report 2010.

Available at: <http://www.defense-aerospace.com/dae/articles/communiques/DeloitteIndianDefence.pdf>

¹⁹ Sanjeev Kumar Shrivastav, "Contours of the India-United States Strategic Partnership," *Institute of Defense Studies and Analysis, IDS*, September 29, 2009. Available at:

http://www.idsa.in/idsastrategiccomments/ContoursoftheIndiaUnitedStatesStrategicPartnership_skshrivastav_29090.

²⁰ Ibid.

Bush and Vajpayee joint statement laid the basis for the NSG waiver to India in 2008 which ended India's nuclear apartheid. NSG waiver has also cleared the way for India and other international strategic players to cooperate in nuclear and defense fields. India is also struggling for NSG membership. If India becomes a NSG member, it would be the only member that is non-signatory to NPT. Indian membership for NSG is also backed by Britain, France and Russia.

Indo-Russia Bilateral Military Relations

Historically Russia has been the largest supplier of military equipment to India. Resurgence of India-Russia partnership under the declaration on Strategic Partnership of 2000 between India and Russia was reflected in Russian President's statement on December 23, 2012 that, the developments of the First decade of the 21st century confirmed that it was a particularly significant and timely step."²¹

India and Russia are engaged in several deals including fourth-fifth generation fighter aircraft. India's major purchases from Russia over the last 18 years have been varied and extensive, including aircraft (MIG 29, MIG 29 SMT, SU 30K, SU MK1), helicopters (Mi-17, Mi-18, etc.) and air-defense systems (AK 630 30mm, etc.), artillery and armored vehicles (256M Tunguska), frigates (Talwar stealth class), submarines (Kilo/Sindhughosh), nuclear submarines (Akula-2 lease) and an aircraft carrier (the delayed Gorshkov purchase originally due for handover in 2008-09, now scheduled for handover at the end of 2012).

Indo-France New Decade of Military Relationship:

Indo-French ties in the last two decades have flourished remarkably in the field of defence and civil nuclear cooperation. In 2011-12 trade between India and France was valued at USD 9 billion, and French companies have invested about USD 3.5 billion in Indian market. In this regard Indian government had finalized an agreement in 2012 of French Dassault Aviation's Rafale fighter jets which would be world's biggest purchase of warplanes in 15 years.²²

²¹ "India and Russia: New Prospects for Strategic Partnership in the 21 century," *President of Russia*, December 23, 2012. Available at: <http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/4789>.

²² "India Rises Quietly and Steadily," *The Nation Thailand*, February 22, 2013. Available at: <http://www.ciidefence.com/pdf/Creating%20a%20Vibrant%20Domestic%20Defence%20Manufacturing%20Sector%20V5.pdf>

Conclusion:

Reorientation of Indian military doctrine from defensive to offensive to materialize its vision for attaining great power status; backed by exponential increase in defense budget and procurement plan, both from indigenous and foreign sources, has worried its smaller neighbors. In the wake of destabilization caused by Indian doctrinal orientation these countries are forced to take certain steps in order to enhance their security. Sheikh Hasina Wajid, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, on her recent visit to Russia on 14 January 2013, signed an agreement for purchase of military equipment worth \$2 billion. Russia will allocate a \$500 million loan to Bangladesh to build the country's first nuclear power plant (NPP).²³ Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have worked to improve relations with China. Development of sea ports in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Gawader in Pakistan has been viewed disapprovingly by India. Besides, Pakistan had to adjust its own strategy to offset imbalance caused by Indian massive military buildup plan.

Development and Deployment:

Note: Following information has been collected from open internet sources.

Indian Conventional Delivery System (with optional nuclear role):

Name	Range	Origin	Status
MiG-27 (Bahadur) MiG-29 (Baaz)	800km/ Short Range	Russia Russia	Deployed from 640km from Lahore, Pakistan at Hindu air base
Jaguar IS/IB (Shamsher)	1,600/ Short Range	France/UK	Gwalior air base in the Punjab region, overlooking Pakistan and Kashmir.
Mirage 2000H (Vijra)	1,850km /Short Range	France/UK	Deployed at Ambala air base 525 km from Islamabad, Pakistan
Su-30		Russia	Negotiation phase with Russia
Tu-142MR (Bear)	3,650/ Long Range	Russia	Intercontinental bomber aircraft, deployed in different Indian naval bases
Tu-22M-TUPOLEV (Backfire)		Russia	

²³ "Russia, Bangladesh Ink Arms, Energy Deals.", January 14, 2013
Available at: <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20130115/178795124.html>

Indian Missiles:

Name	Type	Range	Properties	Status
Prithvi-I	Ballistic	150KM/1,000 kg	Liquid	Operational
Prithvi-II	Ballistic	250km/800-1,000 kg	Liquid	Operational
Prithvi III/Dhanush	Ballistic	350km/500-1,000 kg	Solid	In development phase/ tested
Agni-I	Ballistic	700-850km/800-1,000 kg	Solid	Development/Tested
Agni-II	Ballistic	2,000-3,300 km/800-1,000 kg	Solid	Serial Production
Agni-III	Ballistic	3,000-5,500km/600-1,800 kg	Solid	Development/ Tested
Agni-IV/Surya	Ballistic	5,000-6,000 km/600-1,800 kg	Solid	Under Development
Brahmus	Cruise	300 km/250 kg	Solid	Tested
Sagarika	SLCM	350/km/500 kg	Liquid	Underdevelopment
Prahaar/Sanskrit	Ballistic	150 km/1280 kg	Solid	Tested
Nirbahay	SB Cruise	1000 km		Plan stage, will supplement Brahmos

Indian Defense Buildup

- Ultra light howitzers
- Towed and wheeled 155mm guns
- Self-propelled tracked and wheeled guns 155 mm artillery guns
- Mounted gun systems and Air defense guns
- III Gen anti-tank guided missiles
- Surface to air missiles with different ranges
- Futuristic infantry combat vehicle
- Smart ammunition
- Artillery rockets
- Assault rifles and close quarter battle carbine
- Battle field surveillance and weapon locating radars
- Night vision equipments

The critical technologies to be acquired by India are:

- Battlefield transparency or intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance technologies
- Command, control, communication and computer technologies (C4I technologies)
- Precision strike technologies for destruction of targets beyond visual range
- Robotic military vehicles / tactical unmanned vehicles
- Futuristic main battle tank FMBT

- 5th generation fighter jet program
- Sukhoi Su-30MKI program (230+ to be built by Hindustan Aeronautics)
- Ilyushin/HAL Tactical Transport Aircraft
- T-90S Bhishma with over 1000 to be built in India
- Akula-II nuclear submarine (2 to be leased with an option to buy when the lease expires)
- INS Vikramaditya aircraft carrier program. New name for former Soviet aircraft Gorshkov
- Tu-22M3 bombers (4 ordered)
- Mil Mi-17 (80 ordered)
- Ilyushin Il-76 Candid (6 ordered to fit Israeli Phalcon radar)
- Sukhoi/HAL fifth generation fighter aircraft
- INS Arihant (destroyer of enemies) Nuclear Submarine
- IAC-1 Aircraft carrier
- Dassault Rafale is a French twin-engined delta-wing agile multi-role 4.5th-generation jet fighter aircraft designed and built by Dassault Aviation.
- Short and medium range mobile air defense
- Arjun MK II missile-firing capability against long-range targets, panoramic sight with night vision

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