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Indian Ocean: Zone of Peace or Conflict? The Impact of
India's Military Capability on Regional Stability.

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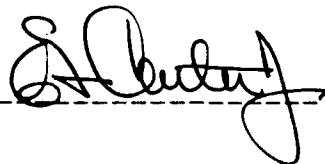
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CDR, USN

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
ABSTRACT	ii
I INTRODUCTION	1
II Indian Defense Doctrine	2
1947-1962	3
1948 Indo-Pakistani Conflict	
1961 Indo-Portugese Conflict	
1962 Indo-Chinese Conflict	
1962-1971	7
1965 Indo-Pakistani Conflict	
1971 Indo-Pakistani Conflict	
1971-1983	10
1986 Indo-South Yemen Evacuation Contingency	
1987 Indo-Sri Lankan Police Action	
1988 Indo-Maldivian Coup Action	
1983-Present	13
III Current Indian Military Capability	16
Army	
Air Force	
Navy	
IV Indian Ocean Regional Perspectives	19
Australia	
Indonesia	
Malaysia	
Pakistan	
V Global and Regional Security Implications and Analysis	23
VI Conclusion	26
NOTES	27
BIBLIOGRAPHY	30

Abstract of

Indian Ocean: Zone of Peace or Conflict? The Impact of
India's Military Capability on Regional Stability.

The impact of current Indian military capability on regional stability is analyzed by comparing India's defense doctrine with existing military capability and neighboring littoral state perceptions. A review of India's defense doctrine is conducted to illustrate the conflict that exists between stated Indian policies; such as territorial defense versus power projection, and actual applications of India's armed forces within the region. Although portrayed as a purely defensive force, it is shown that India's military has grown beyond realistic defense needs and has assumed a power projection capability, leading to an increasing escalation in arms procurement and instability within the region.

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"The soldiers will not then be hirelings, but they will form the national militia for defensive and protective purposes alone."...the soldiers of free India will "never be sent to cut down inoffensive Turks or Arabs in the West or equally inoffensive Chinese or Burmese in the East."

Ghandi, 1921

CHAPTER I

Introduction

As early as 1964, Sri Lanka (Ceylon), with the support of India and other members of the non-aligned states, put forth the proposal that the Indian Ocean be declared a Zone of Peace. 1 In the 1971 Session of the United Nations General Assembly, the General Assembly "... called upon all States to consider and respect the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace from which great Power rivalries and competition ... should be excluded, and declaring that the area should also be free of nuclear weapons." 2

Although conceptually agreed upon by many members of the international community, including the United States, the idea of an Indian Ocean Zone of Peace has faced many practical problems and progressively less support from the weaker members of the non-aligned movement. 3 Of particular concern has been the idea of a power vacuum if the superpowers departed the region. It is the fear that India is intent on filling that potential power vacuum that has led many Indian Ocean littoral states to view the escalation and application of India's military power with great suspicion. 4

it is the intent of this essay to demonstrate that, contrary to statements of the Indian government, India's rapid military expansion and regional application of military forces has led to escalating regional tensions and instability. 5 In support of the above argument, it will be shown that India's defense doctrine has evolved from one of territorial defense based upon a limited military capability, to one of external power projection based upon an increasingly sophisticated and expanding military. When India's military actions and capability are then viewed from the perspective of neighboring states, it becomes apparent that India has failed to support its proclaimed policy of an Indian Ocean Zone of Peace through peaceful co-existence; but rather, has sought to satisfy its policy objectives through military superiority and intimidation.

CHAPTER II

Indian Defense Doctrine

India's defense doctrine has evolved through a series of stages since the creation of an independent India in 1947. A product of British rule, the post World War II Indian military was dominated by the army and utilized primarily for internal civil policing action. With the division of India and creation of Pakistan in 1947, the British Indian Army was split into separate entities, two-thirds of the force remaining in India and one-third going to Pakistan. The post-colonial Indian military was thus modeled upon the British

system but initially lacked specific doctrinal focus. As will be demonstrated in the following, India's defense doctrine has been progressively shaped by successive Indian governments until it now exerts a dramatic influence over the entire South Asian region. 6

1947-1962

As early as 1945 Jawaharlal Nehru had alluded to India's defense needs when he called for Asian unity and suggested the creation of an Asian Federation which would promote better defense through political stability and economic advancement. 7 "Nehru was convinced that India occupied a strategic position which could not be ignored ... and that India would dominate the Indian Ocean region both politically and economically." 8

Upon assuming the role of Vice-President of the Interim Indian Government in September 1946, Nehru outlined the defense challenges facing India. "Defence had to be related to the foreign policy of the country; the Army had to become fully "national" and it had to be brought "in accord with public sentiment;" ... Indian troops had to be pulled out of foreign countries like Indonesia and Iraq where they were being used for British imperial ends; Indian troops were not to be used for suppressing national movements in other countries; the Army had to be modernized and expenditure on defence had to be curtailed." 9

By 1947 Nehru was focused on India's internal economic

and political problems, advocating non-alignment and peaceful co-existence among the world of nation-states. 10 "Though defence was not to be ignored and the use of force and military power in the defence of the nation had been accepted, diplomacy and foreign policy were to manoeuvre a position where India would stay out of all power politics, military alliances, wars and conflicts." 11 Nehru believed that security problems could be solved diplomatically and that India, a land of peace, could live by peace because no one would be inclined to destroy that peace. 12 A viable Indian defense doctrine was thus of little concern to Nehru -- it was simply not necessary for India to become a military power.

With the creation of an independent Pakistan came India's first security concern. As described by India's first Defense Secretary, H. M. Patel, "if there is any war at all in which we are likely to be involved, it would be a war with Pakistan." 13 Patel further explained that "because of its policy of non-alignment, the Government, not unreasonably, took the view that the possibility of an attack from a first class military power was negligible, if not nil." 14

At the time, with the exception of Pakistan, Nehru could not imagine any possible threat from any other neighboring state. Ceylon was simply too small and weak to be of concern. Burma had historically been a friend to the northeast and China's control over Tibet to the north posed no threat simply because of geography. All other states to the north;

Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal, were much like Ceylon, small and comparatively defenseless. 15

On October 26, 1947, however, India became involved in its first conflict as a sovereign, independent nation. Although not aligned with the newly independent State of Kashmir, the Maharaja Hari Sing reportedly requested Indian military assistance when Pakistani forces overran his country. Defenseless, Kashmir had only two logical options: (1) accept Pakistani domination or, (2) accept an Indian offer of military support contingent upon the signing of an Instrument of Accession granting India sovereignty over Kashmir. Choosing to align with India, a significant portion of Kashmir was re-taken before a U.N. sponsored cease-fire took effect on January 1, 1949. 16

Restricting the military to the defense of the border with Pakistan, "Nehru repeatedly underscored India's policy of peace with no territorial ambitions or desire to provoke aggression." 17 Nehru considered Development Plans to be the Defense Plans of the country, thus continuing to suppress any initiative on the part of the government to create a viable defense doctrine. 18

By 1950 events external to India began to impact its defense and foreign policies. China's aggressive "liberation" of Tibet, incursion into Korea and suspected support for a revolt in Nepal, clearly signaled a change in how India was to view its northern border. "The Himalayas no longer offered "an impenetrable barrier" and China was no longer a weak

country." 19 Indian Defense Secretary Patel suggested that India's defense now required concentration on two fronts simultaneously viz., Pakistan and China. Despite Patel's counsel and numerous defense reports recommending reorganization and expansion of the Indian military, including one produced by the Chief of the Army Staff, General Cariappa; Nehru was not prepared to believe that China posed a threat to India. 20

Unwilling to define a specific defense policy which would integrate military development with economic programs, Nehru stressed that the weapons that India required were those "needed for nearby defence" and not for "a long range offensive war." 21 Krishna Menon, India's new Defence Minister, supported Nehru's vision in 1958 when he defined the role of the Indian armed forces as: (1) protection of the external frontiers; (2) aid to civil authorities as required; and (3) assistance to the international community (i.e., United Nations) for purposes of peace keeping. 22

In 1961, however, India's commitment to peaceful co-existence diverged from reality. Striking the Portuguese colony of Goa, Indian Army forces quickly resolved what had been in a process of negotiations for nearly 14 years. Although evidence exists that the "liberation" of Goa was politically motivated, General Elections were scheduled for March 1962, Nehru characterized the operation as completing the independence of India. 23

India's defense doctrine, therefore, was poorly defined

in October 1962 when Chinese forces invaded the northeast frontier. Prior to this unexpected event the border with Pakistan was considered the only real focus of India's defense plans, given the Goa operation could be described as an "internal" action. Although a "Forward Policy" had been implemented in 1961, this equated to patrolling the forward areas of the northern border for infiltrators, not improving the country's ability to react to external threat. Catching the Indians by complete surprise, China's incursion into the northern highlands resulted in India declaring a state of emergency and Nehru appealing to the United States and Britain for military support. Before any multi-national action was taken, however, China declared a unilateral cease-fire and withdrew from the Indian territory. 24

India's defense doctrine for the period 1946-1962 could thus be summarized as limited in scope, direction and commitment. Although a modest military modernization program was underway, Nehru was not willing to define realistic long term politico-military objectives around which a sound defense doctrine could be developed. Diplomacy was Nehru's answer to external threats.

1962-1971

The Sino-Indian war of 1962 was clearly the watershed for the Indian military and the country's defense doctrine. 25 Most importantly China's actions and overwhelming success against the Indian Army had awakened Prime Minister Nehru to

the importance of a well thought defense strategy for a country of the size, resources and population of India. Nehru could no longer assume that India's non-aligned, peaceful co-existence stance would protect it from the realities of an increasingly polarized and hostile world. India's defense policy thus shifted from a reliance on diplomacy to one which recognized external military threats and the need to have a defense doctrine capable of addressing those threats. The entire structure of the military was re-evaluated and aggressive programs to improve the country's armed forces ensued. Beginning in 1964, five-year defense plans were implemented which focused on the requirement to simultaneously meet threats from both China and Pakistan. 26

With the death of Nehru on May 27, 1964, India's focus on defense concerns became even more acute. Although still committed to non-alignment and peaceful co-existence, the new Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, believed much more strongly in the need for a viable military. When China exploded its first atom bomb in October 1964, India's concerns for security acquired new dimensions, prompting India to acquire increasingly sophisticated weapons systems from the Soviets, Britain and the United States. 27

India's defense doctrine was thus evolving rapidly when, in April 1965, Pakistani forces started the second Kashmir War. Although initially caught off guard, the coordinated defense effort demonstrated by the Indian Army and Air Force was much improved over that exhibited just three years

earlier against the Chinese. 28 British and United Nations mediation efforts brought the conflict to a quick conclusion, however, before either side gained an overwhelming advantage.

By the late 1960's India's defense posture was thus becoming an ever increasing concern throughout the government. Many members of Parliament disputed the logic of non-alignment and the governments publicly avowed unwillingness to pursue atomic weapons development. The Defence Minister, Swaran Singh, described the state of affairs as an "armed peace." Increased military support for Pakistan from both China and the United States was seen as strong justification for an accelerated improvement of the armed forces. Forming for the first time in 1969 a Policy Committee to coordinate defense planning with international relations, the 1969-1974 "roll-on" Defense Plan was constructed with specific long term defense objectives. 29 With the British pulling out of the Suez in 1969, India appeared to be positioning itself to take advantage of any "power vacuum" that might occur in Southwest Asia.

With the arrival of the 1970's came increased tensions with regard to Pakistan and another benchmark in the evolution of an Indian defense doctrine. Since the creation of Pakistan, when it was formed out of two states separated by 1200 miles of Indian territory, many of those from East Pakistan had charged that they were being exploited by the national government located in the west. It was this festering internal Pakistani grievance which erupted into

widespread bloodshed and civil war in March 1971. Responding to a call for support from an emigre government of East Bengali leaders, India provided aid to an enormous amount of refugees streaming across the Indian border and called upon the international community to resolve the civil war. By December, however, Pakistani Army and Air Force incursions across India's borders had become flagrant, precipitating a devastating military response. Demonstrating a full range of its military capabilities, including for the first time its navy, India quickly won a resounding victory which resulted in the liberation of the new state of Bangladesh. 30

India's willingness to commit its armed forces beyond its borders in 1971 capped a decade of accelerating growth and modernization for the military. India's military was becoming a policy tool of the government which could be utilized with growing confidence. The period 1962-1971 was thus one of transition in which India's leaders recognized the seriousness of establishing a defense doctrine (and supporting military force) which supported, and was supported by, clearly defined national objectives. India had clearly established itself as the predominant force in the region. 31

1971-1983

Although the Indian government continued to state that it stood "firmly by its policies of non-alignment and peaceful cooperation" after the 1971 war, the Defense Ministry quickly set about re-orienting its 1974-1979 Defense

plan. 32 A need was seen to accommodate the changed concepts of warfare, taking into consideration: external threat; self-reliance in defence production; and modern weapon technology. 33 Voicing further security concerns in 1974 "that acquisition of arms by some neighboring countries and the activities of some powers in the Indian Ocean posed a danger to ... India," and that such states as Sikkim and Bhutan were "of vital strategic interest to India," Prime Minister Indira Gandhi increasingly looked beyond the borders of India when defining national interests. 34 Incorporating Sikkim into the Indian Union in 1975, India demonstrated its increasing willingness to act on its security concerns despite the diplomatic threats of China and other regional powers.

Although the seventies were virtually a continuum of minor border clashes between Pakistan, China and India; international interest was focused on a single event which occurred in 1974. 35 With the explosion of its first nuclear device, India became the sixth nation to become a nuclear power. Many viewed the event as a direct contradiction to India's previous support of a "nuclear free Indian Ocean Zone of Peace." India viewed its atomic research as peaceful, although the implication that a military capability was clearly within easy reach did not escape anyone. 36 Placing significant emphasis on "attaining self reliance for defence ...," Indira Gandhi saw an ever increasing need for a strong military supported by an indigenous arms capability. 37

Identifying Pakistan, Bangladesh and China as its primary security concerns in 1977, the new Janata government led by Prime Minister Desai, acknowledged that "any trouble in the Indian Ocean might endanger India's growing maritime trade ..." and was therefore, of concern. 38 India's interest in the region was expanding coincident with the growth of many regional navies and the increasing presence of American and Soviet naval forces. But India had embarked on its own aggressive naval modernization program several years earlier and by 1977 was capable of reaching and influencing any of the major choke points of the region. Former proponents of the "Zone of Peace" concept, such as Pakistan and Sri Lanka, were now expressing second thoughts about any departure of the superpowers from the region; they were suspicious of India's ever increasing military capability. 39

When Tamil ethnic violence broke out in Sri Lanka in 1983, specific warnings were made by China against outside interference from others in the region and that "the big should not bully the small" -- a specific reference to India. 40 Reportedly seeking military assistance from the United States, Britain, China and Pakistan, the Sri Lankan governments drift toward alignment with so many outside foreign powers was clearly uncomfortable for India. 41

A major shift in India's defense policy and doctrine had thus occurred after the Bangladesh War and throughout the remainder of the decade. India now firmly saw itself as the rightful leader in the region and dedicated itself to

removing unwanted influences in the region. Particularly sensitive to any foreign infringement in its neighboring states (e.g., Sri Lanka, Sikkim and Bhutan), India took aggressive steps to create a cordon sanitaire between it and any potential adversary. Not content to allow the superpowers ad hoc influence in the region, India embarked on the development of a world class military (including a 'blue-water' navy) which would overshadow any within the region.

1983-Present

Upon the death of Indira Gandhi in 1984, India's new Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, again expressed India's grave concern over ethnic violence in Sri Lanka. The ethnic violence had now led to terrorism throughout the country and a subsequent crackdown by government forces. As a result of the indiscriminate nature of the bloodshed many Tamils were fleeing to Southern India, an area largely populated by Tamils. India was thus again caught in the middle of an ethnic crisis which was funnelling thousands of refugees to its borders. 42

Charging the Indian government with aiding the Tamil militants, the Sri Lankan government sought foreign assistance (i.e., money, arms, training, etc.) in coming to grips with its increasingly volatile situation. Although repeatedly calling for a just settlement for the Tamils, it was Sri Lanka's linkage with Pakistan and several other foreign governments (including the U.S.) which continued to

most concern India. 43

In 1986, however, the governments attention briefly shifted to the Arabian Sea. Deploying the INS Godavari to the coast of South Yemen, India was prepared to evacuate nearly 5000 Indian nationals in the event they were threatened by civil war. The first peacetime active deployment of an Indian naval vessel outside home waters, it was a precursor to events which would occur in the following two years. 44

By mid 1987, Prime Minister Gandhi was again focused on events in Sri Lanka when President Jayewardene agreed to the establishment of an Indian peace-keeping force (PKF) for the implementation of a peace accord with the Tamil militants. Ultimately committing over two army divisions plus naval units for insurgent interdiction, India's support did not come cheaply. Gandhi utilized Sri Lanka's increasingly desperate situation to India's advantage by incorporating the following security safeguards into the PKF agreement: "forces prejudicial to India's security were not to be allowed to stay in Sri Lanka; Trincomale was not to be permitted to be used by foreign powers for military purposes; the Sri Lankan soil was not to be used for military propaganda against India." 45

India's defense and foreign policies were now coming into sync and were allowing Gandhi to progressively expand the reach and influence of India. On November 3, 1988, India again responded to a call for military assistance when a coup attempt was staged in the Maldives by a group of Tamil

mercenaries from Colombo. Demonstrating its newly developed rapid reaction, long-range air insertion capability, India was able to land paratroopers and restore the government of President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom within 24 hours. During the following 48 hours Indian naval and air units successfully intercepted and boarded a cargo ship the rebels had hijacked in an effort to escape back to Sri Lanka. 46

Having justified the expense of the 1985-1990 Defense Plan through the application military force several times by the late 1980's, Ghandi's plans for long term modernization continued unabated into the 1990's. India's defense doctrine was now markedly different than that envisioned by Nehru nearly 45 years before. India had regained its regional pre-eminence not as a result of diplomatic acumen but because of an alignment of foreign policy and defense goals, backed up by one of the worlds fastest growing military's. Regional concerns were aptly reflected following the Maldives operation when Sri Lanka's Island newspaper argued:

"This incident once again provided India with an opportunity to demonstrate pre-eminence in the region, a long cherished dream of Indian politico-military strategists ... It would be ostrich-like to ignore the fear of smaller nations of South Asia about current developments providing opportunities for what has been described as the spread of Indian hegemonism." 47

CHAPTER III

Current Indian Military Capability

Army

The Indian Army is the third largest in the world, trailing only the major powers, China and the Soviet Union. With over one million active duty and over 300,000 reserve and territorial army (volunteers) personnel, India's Army includes 18 infantry and 11 mountain divisions plus two armored and one mechanized division. Primarily deployed to meet what is considered its most immediate threat, an invasion from either Pakistan or China, the army is structured to conduct a simultaneous two-front war in the northern regions of India. In addition to countering these two historic adversaries, Indian troops have also been called upon to support threatened allies (e.g., Maldives) as well as support both international and regional peace-keeping missions (e.g., Sri Lanka). Internally, troops have also been utilized to support local state security/police forces in what has become an increasing battle against counter-insurgency and ethnic terrorist activity and unrest (e.g., Punjabi Sikh movement).

Typical of the other two services, the Indian Army is composed of a wide diversity of equipment bought on the international market as well as produced indigenously. Although the Soviet Union has been the most significant supplier, arms have also come from the United States,

Britain, France, and Czechoslovakia. 48

Air Force

An increasingly sophisticated (and costly) portion of the Indian military, the Air Force is composed of over 100,000 personnel and nearly 1600 aircraft formed into 13 fighter/interceptor and fighter/ground attack squadrons, 19 air-defense squadrons, three reconnaissance squadrons, and numerous transport, helicopter and training squadrons. Of significance, India has the third heaviest airlift capability in the world with its 13 transport squadrons (including 12 Soviet Il-76's). Positioned primarily in support of Army units facing Pakistan and China, the Air Force has a mixed success record against Pakistani forces, but recently demonstrated its increasing importance and flexibility when it utilized its rapid reaction, long-range air insertion capability in support of the Maldivian Coup Action. 49

Similar to the Army, the Air Force has acquired much of its armament from foreign sources but at the expense of commonality. Although dominated by Soviet aircraft (e.g., MIG-25/27/29/31), a significant number of Mirage 2000's and Jaguar's have also been purchased as well as a variety of helo and support aircraft. Adhering to India's long standing commitment to creating an indigenous weapons production capability, the MIG-27 is under license and the MIG-29 is under consideration. 50

Navy

Historically the weakest component of the Indian armed forces, the Navy has been on a rapid ascent since the early 1970's when its value was demonstrated in the Indo-Pakistani 'Bangladesh' war and when the U.S. demonstrated its seapower might by positioning the Enterprise Battle Group in the Bay of Bengal. Now ranking among the six largest navies in the world, the Indian Navy's importance has grown with the countries ever broadening defense doctrine. Composed of over 47,000 personnel, 100 ships and 150 aircraft, the fleet is projected to reach between 200-300 ships by 2025. 51

Given an increased desire and willingness to project power throughout the region, the Indian government has developed an impressive ship building capability (including submarines) while expanding the Navy's base facilities beyond the Indian subcontinent to the Andaman/Nicobar Islands. Sighting its immense coastline and expanding maritime trade as rationale for a large naval force, India has either built or acquired: two aircraft carriers (ex British), one cruiser, 21 destroyer-frigate class ships, nine corvettes, 25 patrol boats (14 missile capable), 20 diesel submarines (note: leased Soviet Charlie SSN Chakra recently returned), and numerous amphibious, mine warfare and auxiliary class ships. Long range plans call for the construction of three new aircraft carriers (French design) and associated escorts, several submarines (including possible nuclear construction), and a new class LPD with a full division assault-eschelon

amphibious capability. Additionally, Naval Aviation has paralleled ship development, acquiring IL-38 and long range Tu-142 F anti-submarine warfare (ASW) aircraft which are capable of conducting surveillance or ASW throughout the Indian Ocean. 52 Of note, India established an independent Coast Guard in 1978 which has steadily assumed coastal patrol duties, thus allowing navy units to assume an increasingly "blue water" naval role. 53

CHAPTER IV

Indian Ocean Regional Perspectives

The list of nations expressing increased interest or outright concern over India's growing military capability is steadily growing. Although size and geographic location are a factor in the degree of "interest," most nations have responded either politically or militarily to what is perceived to be a fundamental shift in the regions balance of power and in India's defense doctrine. Of the many nations influenced, the following four have been singled out as representative of the broad spectrum of diplomatic relationships which India has within the region.

Australia

The Australian government has consistently denied responding to any particular threat in the Indian Ocean but, as was recently affirmed by Defence Minister Senator Robert Ray, is obligated by ASEAN and the Five Power Defence

Agreement (FPDA) to pay close attention to those events that impact the northeastern region. ⁵⁴ Geographically an interface between two significant regions of the world, South and Southeast Asia; Australia has historically focused most of its attention on its eastern coast and its ANZUS/ASEAN defense relationships. Since the 1970's, however, Australia has been progressively motivated to rethink its Indian Ocean defense posture because of: the increased strategic importance and instability of the region; the growing economic importance of Western Australia and associated trade routes; and, its long standing defense responsibilities for the Cocos (Keeling) and Christmas Island territories as well as its ASEAN/FPDA neighbors who also border the region. ⁵⁵

Although a member of the United Nations Ad Hoc committee on the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace resolution, Australia has seen regional initiatives to exclude the superpower nations as neither practical or realistic. International (superpower) dependence on the Indian Ocean/Persian Gulf SLOC's is simply too significant. ⁵⁶ While no single Indian Ocean nation has yet acquired the military power to totally dominate if the superpowers did depart the region, India and Australia are clearly the two most capable of assuming that role. Given Australia's modest commitment to an increased military presence and capability, India clearly overshadows the entire region in its long term military modernization and growth programs. ⁵⁷ By the turn of the century India will unquestionably possess an overwhelming regional strategic

military advantage. 58 It is such a military advantage that has generated concern among the many smaller, often strategically (geographically) positioned states located throughout the Indian Ocean. 59

Indonesia and Malaysia

Recognizing their strategic positions along the Straits of Malacca, both Indonesia and Malaysia have viewed India's newly developed power projection capability as particularly disturbing. 60 Although operations such as the Sri Lankan peace-keeping mission and Maldives coup suppression were considered proper (i.e., by invitation) and regionally stabilizing, they were nevertheless also seen as an indication of India's willingness to export its power. 61

When India's power projection capability is coupled with recent military expansion in the Andaman Islands and at Port Blair, it becomes apparent why many ASEAN (specifically Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand) states are concerned. The ability to mass naval, ground and air units in the Eastern Indian Ocean poses a very realistic sea control threat to the Malacca Straits, a critical SLOC enroute the Persian Gulf. A threat scenario eluded to by Ashely Tellis in her discussion of Indian naval employment strategies; former Indian Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral R.H. Tahlilani, confirmed in 1990 India's intentions to "control the critical choke points at Malacca" and to closely monitor "the western approaches to the Arabian Sea." 62

As a result of the above security uncertainties and concerns, Indonesia and Malaysia have both embarked on costly defense programs designed to counter a potential regional threat. Although neither country currently views India as a hostile threat, both (as well as many others) are watching intently for signs that India may harbor aspirations for greater strategic influence in the region. 63

Pakistan

India's neighbor to the northwest, Pakistan remains India's most likely adversary in any regional conflict. Although since signing the Simla Agreement in 1972, both parties are on record as seeking a durable peace through bilateralism, neither appears particularly flexible with regard to historic territorial claims. Primarily focused on the Kashmir sovereignty issue which began shortly after independence, Pakistan views India's steady military growth as a direct and very real threat. Conversely, India sees the Kashmir dispute as just one of many in which Pakistan is attempting to create instability within the region. 64

Pakistan's rivalry with India thus precedes India's military buildup and shift in defense doctrine. Nevertheless, the consequence of India's military expansion and resulting victories over Pakistan in 1965 and 1971 has been to force Pakistan to seek protective military ties from outside the region. In a spiraling manner Pakistan's alliance with the United States and China has then led to further confrontation

with India. India, preferring to resolve regional disputes internally and bi-laterally, has sought to exclude extra-regional powers from discussions, thereby enhancing India's prestige and status as a major Asian power. 65

Pakistan thus sees India's sustained military expansion as well beyond that required for national defense. When evaluated in the context of recent actions in Sri Lanka and the Maldives, India's power projection capability becomes evident and so does the strategic imbalance that it portends. 66

CHAPTER V

Global and Regional Security Implications and Analysis

In the March 31, 1991 issue of India Today, the following were listed as the four historic pillars of Indian foreign policy:

- 1) Protecting India's interests through the Cold War by not being drawn into superpower created regional conflicts;
- 2) Meeting the threats of a Sino-Pak combine;
- 3) Identifying the role of Third World and non-aligned movements in the political and economic sphere within a bi-polar world order;
- 4) Furthering India's own ambition of being a dominant power in the subcontinent.

It has been India's efforts to accomplish its fourth goal that has created the most controversy surrounding its

impressive military expansion program.

Global Implications

For the global community, India's ability and willingness to respond to regional crises (as discussed earlier) has been generally seen as a positive development which minimizes the strain on already over-taxed international resources. India's unwillingness to support the international community on other occasions (most recently the Gulf War), however, has frustrated many global powers and led to a continued suspicion of motives. 67 Determined to be non-aligned, it would appear that India has often sacrificed international good will for uncertain objectives.

Periodic border disputes with Pakistan and China have also continued to plague India and worry global powers. Because of current superpower alliances it is feared that a border clash could easily escalate to the international level. Of particular concern is the rapid escalation in weapons technology in the Indian military, including the possibility of nuclear weapons. Although India has expressed its aversion to the use of nuclear weapons, it is unlikely it would restrain itself if it appeared Pakistan posed an immediate threat of nuclear attack.

Lastly, frequent references to Indian control of critical Indian Ocean SLOC's is of concern to all nations dependent on Middle Eastern oil supplies. When India's naval expansion is contrasted with inherent defense needs a great

disparity is evident from even the most liberal perspective. Clearly any attempt by India to control the movement of shipping in the region would solicit an immediate diplomatic and military response from the global community.

Regional Implications

As reflected by the discussion in Chapter IV, India's military growth and increasing external application of military power is considered by many nations as a sure indication of India's desire to dominate the region -- if not militarily, certainly politically. Determined to maintain their autonomy, many of the smaller littoral states are turning to high technology in an effort to counter India's overwhelming military superiority, while simultaneously buffering themselves through defense alliances with either Australia or one of the superpowers.

Also of additional concern to many of India's neighbors are the large ethnic Hindu populations residing within their borders. Although there is no evidence of India exporting ethnic subversion or insurgency; as witnessed in Sri Lanka, India is not adverse to taking action if it feels it has an interest in the situation.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

In conclusion, although India's military growth has been a factor in "stabilizing" some situations in the region, the outcome has frequently been a partial loss of autonomy for the affected country. When viewed from the perspective of a neighboring state, India's dramatic military buildup appears threatening and without logical (i.e., peaceful) purpose. From the global perspective, India's military growth and continuing efforts to eliminate superpower influence in the region are not consistent with its stated objective of making the Indian Ocean a Zone of Peace.

The questions remain, for what purpose is India's military buildup and how has it affected the Indian Ocean region? Although publically denied, it would appear India is determined to dominate the South Asian region militarily, thereby assuring itself the pre-eminent position in the region. Regretfully, with India's rise to power is likely to come an increase in arms proliferation and instability within South Asia.

NOTES

1. 2:p. 135.
2. 2:p. 135; 7:p.36; 41:pp. 178-179.
3. 24:p. 266.
4. 2:p. 137.
5. 11:pp. 24-26.
6. 20:p. 63; 41:p. 72.
7. 24:p. 41; 41:p. 47.
8. 24:p. 41.
9. 24:p. 23.
10. 20:p. 63.
11. 24:p. 25.
12. 24:p. vii.
13. 24:p. 32.
14. 24:p. 32.
15. 24:p. 32.
16. 24:pp. 33-34; 37:pp. 38-39; 41:pp. 66-67.
17. 24:p. 39.
18. 24:p. 39.
19. 24:p. 47.
20. 24:pp. 47-48.
21. 24:p. 59.
22. 24:p. 68.
23. 24:p. 102.
24. 20:p. 64; 24:p. 100.
25. 45:p. 723.
26. 20:p. 65; 24:p. 139.

27. 24:pp. 147-149.
28. 24:p. 154.
29. 24:pp. 162-186.
30. 24:pp. 194-213; 37:pp. 111-153, 206-220; 41:p. 70.
31. 22: p. 94.
32. 24:p. 233.
33. 24:p. 233.
34. 24:p. 244.
35. 41:pp. 74-77; 45:p. 723.
36. 24:pp. 244-245, 314.
37. 24:p. 284.
38. 24:p. 275.
39. 24:p. 275.
40. 24:p. 298.
41. 24:p. 299; 41:pp. 117-118.
42. 24:pp. 301-302.
43. 17:pp. 405-406; 24:p. 317.
44. 40:p. 4.
45. 17:p. 408.
46. 8:pp. 30-33; 10:pp. 43-44; 18:p. 49; 40:p. 4.
47. 8:p. 33.
48. 3:pp. 214-216; 32:p. 41; 45:p. 275.
49. 31:p. 12; 40:pp. 4-5.
50. 3:pp. 214-216; 31:p. 12; 45:pp. 725-726.
51. 15:p. 23; 38:pp. 78-88; 45:p. 726.
52. 24:pp. 31-44; 30:pp. 2-11; 35:pp. 214-216; 38:p. 86; 43:pp. 124-125; 45:pp. 726-727.
53. 45:p. 727.

- 54. 42:p. 69.
- 55. 2:p. 191; 11:p. 8; 13:pp. 370-376; 32:pp. 39-40; 33:pp. 203-204.
- 56. 2:pp. 135-137.
- 57. 14:p. 23.
- 58. 23:p. 62; 32:p. 44; 33:p. 204.
- 59. 32:p. 44; 33:p. 205.
- 60. 11:p. 26; 12: p. 9; 25:p. 68; 33:p. 205; 42:pp. 73-80.
- 61. 12:p. 9; 31:p. 39; 44:p. 12.
- 62. 12:pp. 9-10; 16:p. 10; 23:p. 65; 25:pp. 65-71; 39:p. 45; 44:p. 13.
- 63. 12:p. 9; 33:p. 205.
- 64. 19:pp. 30-31.
- 65. 19:p. 31.
- 66. 23:pp. 62, 66.
- 67. 1:pp. 34-35.

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