



Woodrow Wilson
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Asia Program

INDIA'S

Contemporary Security Challenges

Edited by
Michael Kugelman





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INDIA'S CONTEMPORARY SECURITY CHALLENGES

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GLOSSARY

AFRICOM	U.S. Africa Command
AOR	Area of responsibility
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
CENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
CISMOA	Communications and Information Security Memorandum of Agreement
CPI	Communist Party of India
CPI (ML)	Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)
CRPF	Central Reserve Police Force
DAE	Department of Atomic Energy
DPP	Defense Procurement Policy
FIR	First Information Report
FMCT	Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty
GDP	Gross domestic product
GW	Gigawatt
HADR	Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief
IAF	Indian Air Force
IONS	Indian Ocean Naval Symposium
IOR	Indian Ocean Region
Kg	Kilogram
LSA	Logistics Support Agreement
LWR	Light-water reactor
MCC	Maoist Communist Center
MCCI	Maoist Communist Center of India
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs
MHA	Ministry of Home Affairs

MMRCA	Indian Air Force medium multi-role combat aircraft
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MW	Megawatt
NPT	Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
PACOM	U.S. Pacific Command
PDFI	People's Democratic Front of India
PHWR	Pressured heavy-water reactor
PWG	People's War Group
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
RDF	Revolutionary Democratic Front
Rs.	Rupees
SATP	South Asia Terrorism Portal
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SPO	Special Police Officer
SRE	Security-related expenditure
TUF	Tactical United Front
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UP	Uttar Pradesh
UPA	United Progressive Alliance

LOOKING IN, LOOKING OUT: SURVEYING INDIA'S INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SECURITY CHALLENGES

MICHAEL KUGELMAN

India is the world's largest democracy, and one of its fastest-growing economies. The country is celebrated for its educated professional class, its urban-based prosperity, and its Bollywood-fueled cultural influence abroad. Commentators wax effusive about its extraordinary "growth story" and rising global clout. A 2010 joint study by the U.S. National Intelligence Council and the European Union declared it the world's third-most powerful nation.¹ India, to borrow a government slogan first coined in 2003, is indeed "shining."

This cheery narrative, however, masks a parallel reality about India. While parts of the country bask in the glow of new-found affluence, others continue to toil in the gloom of abject poverty. This other side of India is also riven by violence and unrest, which increasingly targets the government. Meanwhile, even as India takes on the trappings of a global power, it remains deeply concerned about security developments beyond its borders. Lurking beneath India's recent triumphs are internal and external security challenges that may well intensify in the years ahead.

CHALLENGES FROM WITHIN

India's billion-strong population is not only both prosperous and poor, but also marvelously diverse. It is comprised of a rich mosaic of ethnicities, cultures, and religions. Yet while these groups largely coexist peacefully, periods of violent activity often break out. As the *Economist* notes, "Outside the cosseted places where rich Indians and foreigners gather, Indians have long been used to conflict and terror."²

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Homegrown Violence

This violence features a dizzying array of perpetrators and victims. Low-caste *dalits*, despite reductions in caste prejudice, continue to be terrorized; the New Delhi-based Institute for Conflict Management registered 27,000 “caste-crimes” against *dalits* in 2007. Right-wing political parties such as the Shiv Sena (and its more violent offshoots) periodically sponsor attacks on migrant workers, and have driven terrified laborers from the western state of Maharashtra. Nearby, in the southwestern states of Kerala and Karnataka, and in the eastern state of Orissa, Hindu nationalists target Christian minorities. Meanwhile, in the northeast, more than 10,000 people have died from separatist violence over the last decade. Finally, Islamic extremists, led by an outfit called Indian Mujahideen, have unleashed attacks in Indian cities nationwide.

Over a period of several months in 2008, violence exploded. The Indian Mujahideen sparked a summer bombing frenzy, killing about 140 people across Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, and New Delhi. In September, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh admitted to major deficiencies in intelligence-gathering, and announced the hiring of additional policemen and the installation of more closed-circuit security cameras. Yet just a few weeks later, a series of bombs detonated in Assam state, a hotbed of separatist militancy, killing nearly 80 people. Meanwhile, a spasm of anti-Christian violence—triggered by the slaying of a charismatic Hindu preacher in late August—continued unabated. Orissa suffered the brunt of the attacks, with thousands of homes destroyed and hundreds of churches damaged. In one particularly egregious incident, as reported by the *New York Times*, a “Hindu mob” forced a Catholic priest and nun out of their home, stripped them, paraded them around the streets, and raped the nun.³ In another case notable for its brutality, “radical Hindus” entered a Pentecostal church in Mumbai, assaulted worshippers, and then stripped and beat the church preacher “senseless” before “leaving him unconscious in the street.”⁴

As this conflict raged across the nation, Indians reacted with alarm. Many faulted New Delhi for its uneven response, and accused the government of inaction in the face of anti-Christian aggression. Some feared a threat to India’s long traditions of pluralism and secularism, and others spoke of an increasingly radicalized society. One commentator warned

that “unless something is done to quell rising Hindu fundamentalism,” the Bajrang Dal—a virulently hard-line Hindu nationalist group—could become “India’s Taliban.”⁵

Indians also underscored a striking characteristic of the violence: its homegrown nature. With the exception of Assam’s separatist strife (which officials believed was orchestrated by Bangladesh-based militants), those responsible for organizing and carrying out the attacks were all Indians. Singh himself admitted in September 2008 that the involvement of locals added a “new dimension to the terrorist threat.”⁶ Such considerations would be put on hold two months later, when Pakistan-based militants launched deadly attacks on Mumbai. Yet in the few years that have followed, India’s violence has largely remained internally driven. During the summer of 2010, as a new anti-government uprising exploded in India-administered Jammu and Kashmir, Indian authorities acknowledged that Kashmiri youth and other local residents of the disputed region, and not Pakistani militants or other outsiders, were orchestrating the unrest.⁷

Levels of violence in India remained high in 2009 and 2010, though they have eased since the bloodshed of 2008. According to the U.S. Counterterrorism Center’s annual global terrorism reports, the number of terrorism fatalities in India decreased between 2007 and 2009. Additionally, while India had the fourth-highest number of terrorist deaths worldwide in 2007, it fell to sixth in 2009.⁸

One source of violence, however, shows few signs of abating: the Maoist insurgency.

The Maoist Insurgency: India’s Gravest Internal Security Threat

This rebellion, which explicitly calls for the state’s overthrow and directly targets its security forces, is repeatedly labeled by New Delhi as the country’s greatest internal security threat. It claimed hundreds of lives in 2009, many of them members of law enforcement. The following year saw multiple mass-casualty attacks, including ambushes on paramilitary forces and the sabotaging (and consequent derailments) of passenger trains. More than 200 security personnel died at the hands of the Maoists during just the first half of 2010.

Originally a modest pro-peasant movement, the insurgency has spread to more than two-thirds of India's states, and across more than a third of its 626 districts, most of them in the country's resource-rich central and eastern regions. The Maoists claim to fight on behalf of the destitute, landless communities endemic to these areas—many of them tribal groups long marginalized by New Delhi and rarely granted the rights guaranteed to them by India's constitution. In a nation where at least 250 million people subsist on less than a dollar a day, and where more people are poor in just eight states (many of them Maoist hotbeds) than in the 26 poorest countries of Africa,⁹ these communities exemplify India's grinding poverty. Increasingly, they fill the ranks of the insurgency as well.

The movement is sustained by robust funding activities. Extortion is a chief means of revenue-generation. The top police official in Chhattisgarh—arguably the state most affected by the insurgency—has estimated that the Maoists extort up to a whopping 20 billion rupees (more than \$445 million) across India every year, mostly from iron and coal-mining companies, infrastructure project contractors, and sellers of *tendu patta* leaves used in cigarettes.¹⁰ Others point to profits from illicit narcotics cultivation and even to contributions from Indian corporations and nongovernmental organizations.¹¹

This collection's first essay, written by **P.V. Ramana** of the Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses in New Delhi, traces the evolution of the insurgency. The movement originated in the late 1960s, when a branch of the Communist Party of India (CPI)-Marxist staged a peasant rebellion in the eastern village of Naxalbari (today, India's Maoists are often identified as Naxalites). Over the next few decades, he writes, the CPI-Marxist splintered into a variety of left-wing factions. In 1998, two of them joined forces to form the CPI-Marxist-Leninist-People's War (PW), "heralding the first major and significant merger among competing and rival Naxalite groups." Six years later, PW merged with another large faction, resulting in the CPI-Maoist party—"the largest and most lethal Naxalite outfit" in the country, and the entity that spearheads the current insurgency. Rebel leaders, he writes, appear to have realized that "strength lies in unity."

Ramana also highlights the "increasing militarization" and spread of the insurgency. Decades ago, Maoists wielded "spears, sickles, and farm-

ing implements.” Today, they have amassed an immense arsenal of sophisticated weaponry, including landmines, mortar, and rocket launchers. The rebellion has expanded its tactics, with more attacks on railways, buses, power lines, telephone towers, and other infrastructure. According to Ramana’s data, the number of infrastructural attacks launched over the first six and a half months of 2010 (171) greatly exceeds those staged over all of 2008 (109). Such tactics, he notes, have “caused enormous losses to the exchequer and hardships for the people.” Finally, debunking the myth that the insurgency is solely a rural one, he describes the Maoists’ infiltration of towns and cities. Arms-making facilities have been discovered in towns in Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, while “the presence and activities” of Maoists (including high-ranking ones) have been detected in Mumbai, New Delhi, Bangalore, and Chennai.

The Maoist insurgency, with its embrace of outdated ideologies and violent tactics, is often depicted as a puzzling anachronism in a rapidly modernizing democracy. What, then, enables it to strengthen and spread? For Delhi University’s **Nandini Sundar**, the answer is the government’s heavy-handed response to it. “Above all,” she writes in a companion piece to Ramana’s, “Maoists owe their growing support to the form and brutality of the government counterinsurgency campaign. This has effectively elevated a movement with local roots into one with a national presence.” What are the manifestations of this repression? One example is the Salwa Judum, a Chhattisgarh-based civilian militia that she argues is sponsored by New Delhi. After its formation in 2005, it torched villages; arrested, beat, and killed villagers; raped women; looted property; and destroyed grain supplies. Such scorched-earth policies won the Maoists many recruits, she writes, yet New Delhi, undeterred, responded in 2009 with Operation Green Hunt, a surge of new paramilitary troops and police into the country’s Maoist bastions. In Chhattisgarh, this offensive has featured arbitrary killings, house-burnings, and looting. “Dehumanization,” she declares, “has become the norm on both sides.” She describes the “now-famous image” of security forces “trussing up” female Maoist corpses to poles “like trophy animals.” Maoists, meanwhile, have beheaded a policeman in Jharkhand state. Sundar insists, however, that the recent spike in Maoist-orchestrated killings is “an expression of retaliation against” the Salwa Judum, and therefore “cannot be used as a causal justification for counterinsurgency.”

The government, writes Sundar, wants to “finish off” the Maoists—an objective she links to India’s strong desire for industrialization. Ever since the nation’s mining policies were liberalized in 2003, both New Delhi and state governments—along with powerful private corporations—have eagerly sought to exploit the bountiful mineral reserves found in Indian mining country. According to one estimate, mineral extraction revenues in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand alone exceeded \$20 billion in 2008—with \$1 trillion in proven reserves still available.¹² However, such mineral-rich areas lie right in the middle of the insurgency, with some parts controlled by the Maoists. Therefore, Sundar concludes, according to the government’s reasoning, the insurgents are an obstacle to “rapid industrialization” and must be “vacated.”

The insurgency and the government’s response have taken a terrible toll on those living in conflict areas. Poverty-stricken, victimized by mining-induced environmental blight, and traumatized by violence and unrest, these people also face a large-scale public health crisis. A 2008 report from *The Lancet* describes how malaria and malnutrition afflict scores of displaced villagers. A major cause of this suffering is the lack of available health care resources, ranging from clinics to medicine. However, according to the journal, Indian authorities—citing security concerns—deny health aid organizations access to those in need.¹³

The insurgency reverberates beyond the conflict zone as well. Economists and the media have warned of the risks to India’s investment climate, with talk of \$80 billion worth of steel production projects stalled by instability in mining areas.¹⁴ Others lament how the “increasing militarization” of both the rebellion and the response is “destroying” India’s Gandhian tradition of nonviolence.¹⁵

Both Ramana and Sundar lambast the government’s response, and particularly its excessively security-centric nature. Ramana faults Indian state governments for a “lagging and reactive” response, and laments the shoddy coordination between police and intelligence forces across different states. Sundar, meanwhile, regrets how numerous entities—from Parliament to the National Human Rights Commission—have failed to muster any credible effort to protect civilians. Such criticism feeds into a widespread belief in India that current policies are not working. This belief likely deepened following the release of a *Times of India* poll in September 2010, which surveyed “not-so-well-off” socioeconomic

groups in Andhra Pradesh. New Delhi's counterinsurgency strategies in this state—emphasizing the training of security forces and attention to economic development—are often cited as a success story, with Maoist violence having calmed down significantly since the 1990s. However, about two-thirds of respondents said not only that the government neglects them, but that Maoists “are right in choosing the methods they have to highlight” this neglect. Almost 60 percent said Maoists “were good for the area,” and two-thirds disagreed with characterizations of them as “extortionists and mafia.” The state “may have won the battle of the guns” in Andhra Pradesh, declared the *Times*, but the Maoists “are clearly ahead in the perception game.”¹⁶

What can be done? Ramana advocates for a more comprehensive response, characterized by a hybrid of security and development initiatives and more contributions from state governments. He also calls for the development of a national political consensus within and between states, and between states and New Delhi. Only with such a unified plan, he warns, can the country “squarely address” the problem. Sundar, meanwhile, counsels a justice-based approach that safeguards the interests and security of India's tribal communities.

These recommendations constitute just a few of the many proposed for combating the insurgency. Most revolve around the need for better governance and more development (particularly the provision of basic services, education, and jobs programs) and improved law enforcement capacities (especially better-trained police forces) in Maoist-affected areas. While many experts believe New Delhi's counterinsurgency campaign is too heavy-handed, others argue that it is insufficient. According to Ajay Sahni, a noted authority on the Maoists, India's Central Paramilitary Force contingent across the six worst-affected Maoist states—an expanse of more than a million square miles in area and comprising about 445 million people—constitutes a “bare” 23,200 personnel. Deploying such a modest security force, he contends, “is like trying to irrigate the desert with dewdrops.”¹⁷

Any new or expanded counterinsurgency initiative will require ample national expenditure. Yet even as matters stand now, the insurgency is causing the central government to run up a steep bill. The financial burdens of Operation Green Hunt, as with any major security operation, are considerable. Additionally, both Ramana and Sundar note that

New Delhi reimburses state governments for counter-Maoist expenses (Sundar alleges that some “cash-strapped” states take advantage of this arrangement by overexaggerating the Maoist threat).

However, even while New Delhi makes major investments in internal security, it is also allocating significant resources to tackle its external security challenges.

CHALLENGES FROM WITHOUT

As part of its quest to become a world power, India is engineering a major modernization of its armed forces. According to media reports, the nation intends to spend more than \$50 billion on military modernization between 2010 and 2015.¹⁸ This strategy is leading to upticks in defense spending. India’s overall defense budget for fiscal year 2010–11 was projected to be over \$30 billion, a 4 percent increase from the previous year.¹⁹ Indian security experts foresee a doubling of the defense budget, to \$60 billion annually, over the next decade.

To provide context for this increased spending, **Siddharth Srivastava**, a New Delhi-based independent journalist, surveys India’s strategic and political environment. Several factors, he argues, have generated “a greater sense of urgency.” One is India’s perennially troubled relations with Pakistan. He writes that the 1999 conflict in Kargil and the 2008 attacks on Mumbai intensified a long-existing arms race, and predicts that Indian arms purchases will surpass \$100 billion over the course of the 2010s. The Mumbai attacks also crystallized India’s military limitations. According to Srivastava, one of the chief reasons New Delhi chose not to retaliate was the belief of top Army brass that their arsenal was “inadequate and obsolete.” Another reason for the heightened concern about India’s strategic environment is the actions of China in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). China is developing ports and other infrastructure projects in Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Burma, and Bangladesh; building naval bases in Burma; and making “major investments” in East Africa. Energy-starved India also worries about China’s efforts to secure raw materials and other natural resources within the IOR. Srivastava says that Indians attribute such activities to Beijing’s desire to implant a “string of pearls” around India, which “can easily be tightened” if neces-

sary. In response, India has established intelligence-gathering “listening posts” in and near Madagascar.

Srivastava argues that the Congress Party's resounding triumph in the 2009 general elections will help facilitate India's military modernization. No longer does the government need to channel so many of its energies into managing a shaky ruling coalition. Additionally, the completion of the U.S.-India civil nuclear deal—which also took up much of the previous Indian government's time—should pave the way for security and defense to become “key focus areas” for the new governing coalition. Finally, the departure of “rabidly anti-American parties of the left” from the ruling government should spur Indian private-sector participation in indigenous defense production, and boost U.S. involvement in the defense trade with India. (In fact, just months after the elections, rumors abounded that New Delhi was contemplating whether to raise the cap on foreign direct investment in the defense industry from the current 26 percent; the government continued to explore this option in 2010.)

Many of the Indian concerns highlighted in Srivastava's essay directly relate to the maritime domain. These include China's sea-based hunt for energy resources and string of pearls strategy, the threat of Mumbai-style terrorism that uses India's coast as a launching ground, and piracy in the IOR. Unsurprisingly, the Indian Navy is a prime focus of the country's military modernization.

The Elephant at Sea: India's Maritime Modernization

Over the next decade, India plans to introduce 100 new warships to its naval forces.²⁰ Such efforts reflect a dramatic maritime transformation—one meant to improve India's power projection capabilities at sea and to produce a blue-water navy. New Delhi minces few words when stating the chief motivations for this policy. Speaking at a 2009 conference, a top Indian defense official noted that “China is developing its navy at a great rate. Its ambitions in the Indian Ocean are quite clear.” He identified responding to China's “aggressive modernization plans”—along with safeguarding energy security, protecting sea lanes, and tackling Islamic extremism—as India's maritime priorities.²¹

India's naval prowess may trail that of China, which boasts three times the number of combat vessels and five times the personnel. Yet the

Indian Navy is no lightweight; in terms of fleet size, it is the world's fifth-largest. Indeed, according to **Arun Prakash** of the National Maritime Foundation in New Delhi, the Navy enjoys a long legacy as a dynamic, global force. Prakash, a former Indian naval chief of staff, describes a "seafaring tradition" older than that of ancient Greece, and highlights trade relations with Persia, Mesopotamia, and Rome that extend back to 2000–3000 BCE. Still, he acknowledges, only over the last two decades has a consensus emerged about the need for a greater focus on maritime security. One of the drivers of this new consensus is globalization. Free trade is propelled by the sea, he writes, and sea-based commerce "in the face of multifarious threats" cries out for robust maritime defense. Another driver is the coastal security imperative. In the aftermath of the 2008 Mumbai attacks, India's public feels "a sense of intense vulnerability" about the nation's immense coastline. A third motivation is India's "adversarial relationship" with China. Because the position and strength of Chinese and Indian air bases and army formations are relatively evenly matched along the shared (and contested) Himalayan border, the IOR could become a highly strategic arena, with maritime forces expected to take on a "decisive role." Therefore, India must be "prepared at sea." Post-1990 economic growth has served as a catalyst for these three drivers, imbuing India with the financial capacity to pursue its expanded naval plans.

Prakash asserts that India's maritime growth can help strengthen its strategic position vis-à-vis Pakistan. This is because greater Indian sea-based power projection will compensate for what Prakash describes as India's "serious asymmetry." India has declared a no-first-use nuclear policy, he explains, while Pakistan has maintained a "deliberately ambiguous" threat of unilateral first-use that enables it to escalate small battles into nuclear conflict whenever it wishes. However, by staging robust maritime maneuver activities to support the Indian Army, India could deter Pakistani "adventurism" without approaching Pakistan's "unknown nuclear threshold."

The China Question...

Prakash also gives voice to India's wariness about China's naval plans. Beijing, he contends, is pursuing its naval expansion with "opacity"

and “steely resolve.” He acknowledges that India “must reconcile itself to not just seeing a nuclear-armed navy in surrounding waters, but also to the establishment of [Chinese] bases in the Indian Ocean.” More broadly, he writes of China’s economic and military rise, and the “increasingly arrogant attitude” that underpins it. Such sentiments capture the views of many within India’s security and strategic circles, who watch with trepidation as China expands its influence across Asia, and particularly across the IOR, which India has long considered its backyard.

Many observers describe Beijing’s activities in the waters and on the lands around India as a form of encirclement. The string of pearls strategy, according to this view, constitutes only part of the story. China makes periodic incursions into the northeast Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, which borders Tibet and is claimed by Beijing as its own. Additionally, China enjoys warm ties with Pakistan, a long-standing friendship that in 2010 resulted in a deal to sell Islamabad two new nuclear reactors. Furthermore, the People’s Liberation Army has a presence in the Pakistan-administered Kashmir areas of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. (Supporters of this narrative often understate the humanitarian nature of this presence.) With China already controlling one fifth of Jammu and Kashmir, the argument goes, Indians face the reality of a Chinese presence on both the eastern and western flanks of the volatile Kashmir region.

According to Prakash, Indian defense officials lament how perceptions of India as “diffident and irresolute” tempt “adversaries” to violate Indian national sovereignty. Developments in 2010 suggested that New Delhi may be trying to shed its reputation of softness. Indian media reports surfacing in July announced a new proposal to undertake “the largest-ever upgrade” of military capabilities along the Chinese border, including the formation of a brigade in the Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir, which abuts the China-administered Aksai Chin area of eastern Kashmir. Officials insisted the upgrade was simply for defensive purposes, and part of an Army “vision” to catch up to China’s capabilities.²² Then, several weeks later, India’s Air Force announced the deployment of a full squadron of aircraft to a base in Assam, which borders Arunachal Pradesh. An official noted that such planes, if outfitted with nuclear weapons, “could fly deep inside China with midair refueling.”²³

In light of such developments, it has become fashionable for experts to sound the alarm on China-India tensions. Predictions are increasingly being issued about the rising threat of war between the two Asian behemoths, particularly over border disputes and Tibetan Plateau water resources. There is even talk of a new nuclear arms race, with an op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal* warning that China and India “appear much closer to the brink of an all-out arms race than they do to any resolution of their differences.”²⁴

To be sure, however, such views on China-Indian relations represent only one side of the story. Many Indians—including the current prime minister—are firm proponents of rapprochement, and believe that New Delhi’s interests are much better served through a closer relationship with Beijing. This view argues that China’s activities in South Asia should be accepted as a reality, not a threat, and as reflections of China’s legitimate economic and energy interests, and not as indicative of imperial designs. Proponents of this narrative also argue that instead of obsessing about China’s actions, India should increase its own—particularly in Southeast Asia, where New Delhi’s image is largely a positive one. They assert that New Delhi can reduce its trust deficit with Beijing through increased border trade and more people-to-people exchanges.

...And the Pakistan Question

With so much attention focused on China, India’s troubled relationship with Pakistan is often overshadowed. Some experts—including in this volume—contend that China has now supplanted Pakistan as India’s biggest external security concern. Pakistan, the thinking goes, simply no longer poses a serious conventional threat. Indian military officials often give credence to such claims. Speaking at a combined commanders’ conference in September 2010, the three service chiefs concurred that China, not Pakistan, poses more of a “long-term threat” to India.²⁵

However, old suspicions and fears die hard. During the summer of 2010, the *Wall Street Journal* revealed that Pakistan’s principal spy agency, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), had concluded in an internal study that homegrown militancy, not the Indian Army, constituted the greatest threat to Pakistan’s national security—the first time since

independence that India had not been labeled the top threat.²⁶ Many in India, however, reacted with skepticism. The *Times of India* pointed out that just a few weeks earlier, Pakistan's army chief had insisted that India remained the biggest threat.²⁷ Some even alleged that the ISI report was a complete fabrication, concocted by Pakistan to help elicit more international relief aid for the catastrophic flooding then ravaging the country.

Such views reflect the mistrust that continues to bedevil India-Pakistan relations. Indeed, the Prakash and Srivastava essays in this volume underscore India's very real fears about Pakistan's nuclear weapons and extremist groups. In fact, New Delhi's concerns about another Mumbai-style terrorist attack, and its frustration with Islamabad's unwillingness or inability to dismantle Pakistan-based terror networks, have contributed to the impasse in bilateral peace talks. Furthermore, New Delhi worries incessantly that the flood of arms Islamabad receives from Washington—ostensibly to be used for counterterrorism purposes—will instead be diverted to activities that target India.

Washington's wish to deepen its relationship with Islamabad rankles many in New Delhi, as does the U.S. goal to foster more substantial ties with China—a bilateral relationship the American government has described as one of the world's most important. Yet despite—or perhaps because of—Washington's efforts to get closer to two of New Delhi's rivals, India has made the development of a strategic partnership with the United States one of its core foreign policy priorities. Washington, motivated by what many believe is a desire to position India as a counterweight to China, also places great importance on this burgeoning relationship.

THE EMERGING U.S.-INDIA STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP

India's independence hero and first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, did not envision his young nation pursuing alliances with other countries. It is Nehru who first coined the term “non-alignment,” and he was one of the founders of the movement of that name established during the early years of the Cold War. Yet in recent years, New Delhi's foreign relations have undergone considerable change—particularly in the context of its deepening relationship with the United States. This bilateral

relationship has evolved extensively since the Cold War, when relations were abysmal and dominated by ugly stereotypes about the “insolent Indian” and the “ugly American.” The situation began to change in the early 1990s, when India instituted economic reforms, marking a shift in its economic orientation and creating the basis for a new type of relationship with the United States. Additionally, the Indian-American community—which now numbers well over two million—has become a bridge linking the two countries.

One manifestation of deepening India-U.S. ties is an intensifying arms trade. American aerospace firms and other weapons-makers are competing to provide billions of dollars worth of arms to India. In September 2010, Indian media reported that the two countries were nearing agreement on their largest-ever defense deal, a \$5.8 billion package to supply India with Boeing-made transport aircraft. As of this writing, such a sale was expected to be announced formally during U.S. President Barack Obama’s visit to India in November 2010.

Nuclear and Maritime Cooperation

One of the cornerstones of the U.S.-India strategic relationship is a civil nuclear accord that permits Washington to provide civilian nuclear energy and technology to India. In order to complete the deal, India, which has not acceded to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), had to obtain an exemption from a Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) rule stating that nuclear materials cannot be provided to non-NPT signatories. Prior to the agreement, writes **Dinshaw Mistry**, India’s refusal to become a party to the NPT was a point of contention between Washington and New Delhi. However, once the accord was ratified, its non-NPT status “was no longer an impediment” to U.S.-India relations.

Mistry, of the University of Cincinnati, discusses the deal’s implications. In terms of proliferation, he acknowledges that the accord could set a poor precedent by inspiring other non-NPT nations to seek exemptions to the NSG rule. Additionally, a new infusion of foreign-supplied uranium for India’s civilian reactors could free up existing uranium stockpiles for use in military reactors. Such concerns, he asserts, could be reduced if exemptions are given only to nations—

like India—that have already been subject to the NSG rule for several decades, and that have never exported “sensitive nuclear and missile technology” to other countries. Additionally, fears about expanded military use of uranium could be alleviated by establishing a global moratorium on fissile material production and negotiating a fissile material cutoff treaty.

The nuclear agreement, in Mistry's view, also holds positive energy and environmental implications. He calculates that by 2030, the nuclear energy it helps generate could potentially produce up to 15 percent of India's electricity (in 2007, this figure was about 3 percent). And while nuclear energy generally costs more than coal (India's most highly consumed energy resource), he argues that economies of scale and the government's willingness to foot many initial costs could strengthen its competitiveness. Furthermore, nuclear energy is green. He calculates that for every 20 gigawatts of new nuclear capacity, carbon dioxide emissions can be reduced by 150 million tons.

Stronger U.S.-India ties have also created ample opportunities for maritime security cooperation. In fact, according to **Andrew C. Winner**, this is “the most promising type” of future collaboration because it addresses such a range of security issues, from institution-building to stability. Winner, of the U.S. Naval War College, discusses both the operational and strategic elements of U.S.-India maritime cooperation. Already, the two countries perform joint naval exercises in the Indian Ocean. Also, U.S. cargo ships have been escorted through the volatile Strait of Malacca by Indian warships. He notes that both countries published maritime strategies in 2007 that contain “almost exactly parallel” lists of mission areas. The United States, slow to appreciate the strategic importance of the IOR, Winner asserts, is now zeroing in on it. The Obama administration's first Quadrennial Defense Review underscores America's interest in the region's stability, while the latest U.S. maritime strategy document lists the Indian Ocean—not the Atlantic—as the “second area of strategic focus” (the Pacific is the first) for the U.S. Navy.

Winner proposes areas with additional scope for maritime cooperation. These include humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, along with maritime capacity-building in the poorer states of the Indian Ocean littoral. (Currently, India and the United States undertake capac-

ity-building projects in parallel, with little information exchange.) At the same time, he identifies several barriers to cooperation. One of these is geopolitical—the potential for “hostile reactions” from China, Iran, and Pakistan, and disagreements between India and the United States as to how to respond. Another is bureaucratic. While India sees the Indian Ocean as a “strategic whole,” the U.S. security bureaucracy breaks it into four different regional commands, with a separate commander having responsibility for each. Such “invisible lines,” Winner writes, complicate policy coordination.

Constraints to Cooperation

These obstacles are not restricted to the maritime sphere. Winner writes of the “divergent perceptions” about the bilateral relationship as a whole. For Washington, the “most important sign” of partnership is combined military operations. Yet for New Delhi, it is military technology transfer. Such discordant India-U.S. perceptions—about both their strategic environment and each other—are the subject of this volume’s final chapter, by **Bethany Danyluk** of the consulting firm Booz Allen Hamilton. The two countries “generally have common strategic objectives,” she says, but “differ in their approaches to addressing them.” Each wants to fight terrorism, but Washington advocates a global, military approach, while New Delhi prefers a local, law enforcement-based approach. Both want a stable Pakistan, but Washington considers the country a critical ally in the war on terror, while New Delhi brands it as the prime source of global terror. And neither wants Iran to go nuclear, yet while Washington keeps military options on the table, New Delhi firmly holds to diplomatic ones.

Meanwhile, Indians perceive Americans as impatient and “too legalistic,” and believe they lack understanding about “cultural nuance.” Americans believe Indians are “highly sensitive” about the notion of sovereignty, lack reciprocity (“Americans sense that they consistently give more than they receive”), and “might be overestimating” their military capabilities (given the lack of resources and capacities to support India’s great-power aspirations). Such mutual attitudes cause a variety of problems, from frustrations over missed deadlines to impasses in negotiations over foundational agreements needed to move the relationship forward.

Each side also has certain core expectations, Danyluk writes. India wants to be treated as an equal, not junior, partner, and it expects the United States to help boost India's indigenous defense capacities through technology transfers and partnerships with Indian companies. The United States wants India to do more to promote South Asian regional stability and security, and to ensure that American companies win their share of lucrative defense deals.

Irritants to the bilateral relationship also extend to the realm of economics. In the summer of 2010, each government criticized the other about legislation thought to be damaging to economic interests. Washington lambasted New Delhi's new nuclear liability law, an outgrowth of the civilian nuclear accord. The U.S. business community had requested the measure, in order to ensure that American companies operating nuclear plants in India would have their liability limited in case of nuclear accidents. However, the U.S. government and private sector criticized the final bill for not going far enough to limit liability, and some feared it would discourage U.S. firms from doing business in India. Meanwhile, India excoriated a new American law that raises U.S. visa fees for foreign workers. While the legislation does not explicitly mention India, the country's external affairs minister has protested that it "would primarily impact companies of Indian origin and is seen as a discriminatory and protectionist measure."²⁸

Nonetheless, despite such obstacles, strategists—including those in these pages—generally believe that the bilateral relationship enjoys sufficient economic and cultural strength to weather any present or future challenges. As Winner writes, the trajectory of the relationship is "clear and positive," with many of the vital interests of each country "either identical or congruent."

STRUCTURAL OBSTACLES TO IMPROVING SECURITY

Improving coordination between intelligence and police; deepening the socioeconomic components and reducing the coercive elements of counterinsurgency; modernizing the armed forces; and working to reduce misunderstandings with key foreign allies: All of these policies figure in debates about how best to meet India's security challenges and threats, and all are articulated in this book. Yet several contributors

contend that unless India is willing to recognize and tackle the structural constraints to improving its security climate, these well-intentioned policies may well fall flat. One such constraint is the clout of the Indian mining lobby, and its frequent collusion with both the central and state governments. According to the *Asia Times*, all major political parties in the iron-ore-rich state of Karnataka have been funded by mining profits, and the BJP party has rewarded “mining barons” with ministerial positions.²⁹

Such collusion has implications for counterinsurgency efforts. In 2010, New Delhi proposed new legislation that would require mining companies to share 26 percent of their projects’ profits with local populations—a widely praised measure that many believe can deprive the Maoists of a major grievance. However, even as Parliament prepared to introduce the legislation, observers feared the opposition of mining interests would ultimately produce a watered-down version of the bill.³⁰ Sundar, writing in her essay about government funding for social infrastructure programs in Maoist areas, reaches a similar conclusion. “Without any effort to change the basic structure of exploitation—in which the local administration in collusion with industrialists, traders, and contractors make all decisions, without consulting villagers—it is unlikely that this money will yield much that is useful.”

Another structural constraint is the inefficiency of India’s defense procurement and modernization processes, particularly those pertaining to the Navy. Srivastava describes these as “slow, bureaucratic, and corrupt.” Winner laments the old age of the Indian fleet and references the inability of the country’s shipbuilding industry to deliver platforms in a timely matter. He also points out that the Navy has traditionally been the smallest and “least well-resourced” of the three military services. Such disparities, he argues, are rooted in a “land-centric” mentality among India’s political class—a “sea-blindness” that is in turn symptomatic of a lack of strategic thought. Several contributors, and particularly Prakash, decry the absence of long-term strategic planning among Indian statesmen and politicians. “Every military operation since independence,” he notes, “has been guided more by political rhetoric than strategic direction.” However, the Navy has sought to fill this vacuum by developing its own strategic

framework, and several essayists suggest that India's civilian leadership is now beginning to better understand the importance of strategic thought.

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

Another theme emerging from these pages is that of responsibility: An obligation incumbent on India to validate its status as one of the world's rising powers. In the external context, this involves building up its armed forces to keep pace with, and to protect its populace from, its formidable eastern neighbor. This also involves honoring its commitments to the global nonproliferation regime by refraining from testing any more nuclear weapons or violating guidelines on nuclear export controls—commitments, as Mistry points out, New Delhi pledged to uphold when concluding its nuclear accord with Washington.

In the internal context, this responsibility has more of an ethical and moral bent: India should treat its tribal populations with more dignity and respect. Sundar writes bitterly about the lack of appreciation for tribal lifestyles, and regrets how the government speaks of “political packages” for Kashmiris, yet insists on thinking of tribals as “pre-political” people who merely need food and jobs to be happy. She avers that the words penned by U.S. journalist I.F. Stone decades ago about American military views of Vietcong guerrillas—“What rarely comes through to them are the injured racial feelings, the misery, the rankling slights, the hatred, the devotion, the inspiration and the desperation”—perfectly describe how contemporary India's “blinker” political class regards the country's tribals. Many students of India ascribe such views to broader society, with tribal communities denigrated in popular culture and featured in jokes that depict them as hopeless bumpkins. Sundar, as do likeminded observers, calls for simple yet often elusive correctives: Apologize to tribal communities for how the country has treated them, and take a genuine interest in helping them provide for their basic needs. The implicit argument is that such gestures will generate goodwill, and reduce the appeal of the anti-government, anti-society message of the Maoists.

SECURING INDIA'S FUTURE: FROM NATIONAL TO HUMAN SECURITY

Even as India works assiduously to safeguard its national security in the coming years, it will increasingly need to take steps to strengthen human security as well. Hundreds of millions of Indians are malnourished, impoverished, illiterate, and ill. Such suffering is compounded by the country's rampant resource shortages (particularly those of water and energy).

Due to population growth and climate change, India's resource constraints are likely to deepen in the years ahead. Such shortages have major implications for both national and human security. The risk of tensions between Indian states over groundwater distribution, as well as of regional tensions with Pakistan over Indus Basin river water resources, could be significantly heightened. Additionally, with less water for irrigation, existing food insecurity could worsen.

In fact, even now, many of India's internal and external security concerns are intertwined with natural resource issues. The Maoist insurgency exploits resource misallocations suffered by tribal communities. Residents of electricity-deficient Jammu and Kashmir seethe at New Delhi's refusal to develop more power projects, and decry the paltry proportion of electricity they receive from the state-owned facilities that do exist there.³¹ The major land-based flashpoints for China-India tensions—particularly Arunachal Pradesh state—are water-rich, and situated on the Tibetan Plateau, site of the headwaters of many of the rivers that flow into India. Finally, naval modernization plans are driven in part by a desire to secure energy and mineral resources far beyond India's shores. Resource concerns, while not addressed explicitly, loom large within this book's discussions.

Given India's natural resource problems, the stakes of addressing the country's present security challenges will only intensify in the future. This suggests that better natural resource management will become as important a priority as tackling the Maoist threat and strengthening India's national defenses. Therefore, the watchwords of India's security future will likely be not just counterinsurgency, arms procurements, and naval modernization, but also resource equity and efficiency.

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INDIA'S MAOIST INSURGENCY: EVOLUTION, CURRENT TRENDS, AND RESPONSES

P.V. RAMANA

Since 1967, India has faced a revolution waged by extreme left-wing elements. On March 2, 1967, rebels belonging to a branch of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), and led by Charu Mazumdar, Kanu Sanyal,¹ and Jangal Santhal, staged a tribal peasant uprising in Naxalbari village, in the Siliguri subdivision² of what was then the Darjeeling district of the eastern Indian state of West Bengal. Since then, all those who have subscribed to the idea of an armed overthrow of the state have been generically referred to as Naxalites, the term having its origins in Naxalbari village.

In India, there are three streams of Naxalite groups: those that participate in parliamentary politics and have “postponed” their agenda of revolution;³ those that participate in parliamentary politics and also maintain armed, underground squads;⁴ and those that are avowedly committed to waging an armed revolution and consider parliamentary politics a sham. It is the last of these groups—and particularly the Communist Party of India (Maoist), or CPI (Maoist)—that constitutes this essay’s focus.

The CPI (Maoist) is the largest and most lethal of all Naxalite groups in operation in India. It is led by Muppala Lakshmana Rao, alias Ganapathy, a native of Bheerpur village in the Karimnagar district of Andhra Pradesh.

EVOLUTION

The Naxalite movement in India has a long, complex history and should be understood in two phases.

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Phase One: Splits Overshadow Mergers

This period was dominated by the fragmentation of Naxalite groups, though several mergers did occur as well. Some of the notable developments from the period include the following:

- In 1966, Kanhai Chaterjee (KC), a member of the CPI (Marxist) group, forms a group known as Dakshin Desh, also within the CPI (Marxist).
- In 1968-69, extreme left-wing elements within the CPI (Marxist) organize themselves under the banner of the All India Coordination Committee for Communist Revolutionaries (AICCCR).
- On April 22, 1969—International Lenin Day—the AICCCR group within the CPI (Marxist) splits. CPI (Marxist-Leninist, or ML) is formed under the leadership of Charu Mazumdar. Meanwhile, Tarimela Nagi Reddy splits from the AICCCR and forms the Committee of Revolutionary Communists. This eventually becomes a part of CPI (ML).
- On October 20, 1969, the Dakshin Desh group of KC splits from CPI (Marxist) because of disagreements over whether to embrace the ideology of Mao Zedong or Karl Marx, and re-names itself the Maoist Communist Center (MCC).
- In October 1971, Tarimela Nagi Reddy, Asit Sen, and Satyanarayan Singh part ways with CPI (ML) and Charu Mazumdar.
- On July 28, 1972, Charu Mazumdar passes away due to ill health while in prison. CPI (ML) splits into various factions led separately by Vinod Mishra, Mahadev Mukherjee, Santosh Rana, Chandra Pulla Reddy, Tarimel Nagi Reddy, Appalsuri, and others.
- In 1972, the Central Organizing Committee CPI (ML) [COC CPI (ML)] is formed as a breakaway faction of the CPI (ML). Various factions emerge within the COC CPI (ML).
- In 1974, Chandra Pulla Reddy's group merges with the groups of Tarimela Nagi Reddy and Satyanarayan Singh.

- In 1976, Central Organizing Committee (Party Unity), a splinter group of the CPI (ML), regrouped as CPI (ML) Party Unity, led by Dr. Viniyan and Jung Bahadur. In 1982, Appalsuri's COC CPI (ML) merges with Party Unity. Over time, Narayan Sanyal (alias Naveen Prasad, alias Niranjan Prasad) assumes mantle as general secretary of Party Unity.
- In January 1978, parting ways with the Chandra Pulla Reddy faction, another COC CPI (ML) faction is formed under the leadership of three people: Jagjit Singh Sohal (alias Sharma), Kondapalli Settharamaiah, and Suniti Ghosh.
- On International Lenin Day 1980, Kondapalli Seetharamaiah splits from the COC CPI (ML) and founds the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (People's War Group, PWG), in the Karimangar district of Andhra Pradesh.
- In 1992, Muppala Lakshmana Rao (alias Ganapathy) ousts Seetharamaiah and assumes the post of general secretary of the PWG.

As a former chief of India's internal intelligence agency has noted about this first phase:

Firstly, the leadership and the middle-level activists were all thoroughly ideologically motivated. Secondly, the movement drew into its vortex not only the political elements on the extreme fringe but also a large number of students. Indeed, several extremely brilliant students of Delhi University went all the way to the jungles of Bihar to hone their revolutionary skills! Thirdly, almost 200 revolutionary journals and publications of different shapes and sizes were brought out in English and vernacular languages. The level of ideological content and enthusiasm was, thus, high. At that point in time, the movement received the complete backing of China. The Communist Party of China extended guidance, financial support and training to the leadership. The *Peking Review* consistently devoted several column lengths to the movement, extolling it and the leadership provided by its founder, Charu Mazumdar.⁵

Phase Two: Mergers and Consolidations

The second phase of the movement—which continues to the present day—is dominated by mergers. There have been some splits, though they are largely insignificant and have had no impact on the lethal capabilities and influence of the chief rebel factions.

- In 1997, the Maoist Unity Center (MUC) is formed as an amalgam of Naxalites from the Kerala Communist Party and Maharashtra Communist Party.
- In 1998, after years of negotiations, Party Unity merges with PWG, and PWG is renamed the Communist Party of India-Marxist-Leninist (People's War, or PW), heralding the first major and significant merger among competing and rival Naxalite groups.
- In 1999, the Naxalbari branch of CPI-ML merges with MUC. Later, a faction of the CPI (ML) offshoot Red Flag merges with CPI-ML (Naxalbari).
- In January 2003, the Revolutionary Communist Center of India (Marxist-Leninist-Maoist) merges with MCC, and the resultant group is named the Maoist Communist Center of India (MCCI).
- In May 2003, CPI (ML) 2nd CC, another faction of CPI (ML), merges with MCCI.
- On September 21, 2004, PW and MCCI merge, resulting in the formation of the largest and most lethal Naxalite outfit in India — the CPI (Maoist)—with a then-estimated strength of 9,500 underground armed men and women.
- In 2008, CPI-ML (Naxalbari) and the Kerala unit of a group known as the CPI (ML) Janasakthi merge with CPI (Maoist).

In the months ahead, a strong possibility exists that other state units of the Janasakthi party will merge with CPI (Maoist).

With these mergers, there has been a consolidation of forces. The mergers should also be seen in the context of security operations against the rebels, turf wars leading to internecine clashes, and the proscription imposed on the rebels from time to time by the central government

and the affected states. In a manner of speaking, the rebels seem to have realized that strength lies in unity. The effect the merger would have was explained by Narayan Sanyal in a 1998 interview with the news website rediff.com, soon after his Party Unity merged with the PWG: “This is the most significant incident in the CPI-ML history after the martyrdom of Charu Mazumdar...It was the desire of the rank and file that there should be a unified leadership so that the revolution can be quickened.”⁶

On the other hand, CPI (Maoist) general secretary Muppala Lakshmana Rao, alias Ganapathy, had this to say about the significance of the merger: “In our agenda for a new democratic revolution, there are two aspects—the agrarian revolution and [the] fight for nationality. For the development of a new democratic revolution, the unification of the two is needed. Our merger is a cue for such unification.”⁷

CURRENT TRENDS

Increasing Militarization

The increasing militarization of the Maoists is evident both from the high number of fatalities in the violence perpetrated by them during the past few years and from the modern arms and equipment they are now wielding. When they launched their violent campaign in Naxalbari in 1967, the Maoists fought with ordinary weapons such as spears, sickles, and farm implements. Now they boast of varying types of rifles (including self-loading ones), light machine guns, and mortar—all of which are looted from Indian security forces. They also possess rockets, rocket launchers, anti-personnel pressure mines, and explosive devices, including landmines, claymore mines, and directional mines.

The rebels' rocket launcher program is particularly worthy of mention.⁸ In 2002, under the guidance of several Maoist officials, a technical team was formed to design rockets and rocket launchers. The project's leader, known by the alias Tech Madu, developed the initial version in Malkangiri Camp, Orissa, in 2003. That same year, he was sent to Chennai to obtain parts.

“Rocket Launcher-I” was a pilot project whereby 25 rockets with a launcher were developed at a cost of 950 rupees (Rs.) per rocket.

These were thereafter tested in the presence of several important Maoist leaders. “Rocket Launcher-II” was a project for developing shoulder-fired launchers and rockets. These were tested in 2004, and according to an internal CPI (Maoist) document seen by the author during a visit to Hyderabad in 2008, “even though they were not effective they had good nuisance value.” At this stage, Tech Madu was directed to return to Chennai to get 1,600 manufactured rockets and 40 launchers at a cost of approximately Rs. 35 lakh. He was able to obtain 1,550 rockets and 40 launchers, and they were dispatched to different parts of the country.

The police in Andhra Pradesh caught wind of these developments, and seized part of the consignment in Mahaboob Nagar and Prakasam districts on September 7 and 8, 2006, respectively. Subsequent raids on industrial units in Ambattur, an industrial suburb of Chennai, revealed an elaborate network that stretched across five states—Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Orissa.⁹

Urban Spread and the Tactical United Front (TUF)

Another important trend is the insurgency’s spread into urban areas. This expansion needs to be understood in tandem with the activities of TUFs. A TUF—a key criterion, according to communist ideology, for achieving the armed capture of state power—is a complex web of alliances with legal, over-ground organizations that need not necessarily subscribe to communist ideologies. The Maoists’ penetration into cities will give a fillip to their TUF operations.

The Maoists have long had a presence in towns and cities. Such environments cater to logistical needs and enable them to stay in safehouses during medical treatment or while in transit. Because of the anonymity they provide, it becomes easy for the Maoists to stay and operate in urban centers.

On January 10, 2007, police in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, unearthed a research-and-development-cum-arms-making unit of the Maoists. An interrogation of the arrested persons brought to light the fact that the rebels earlier ran similar units in other towns in Madhya Pradesh, such as Jabalpur and Indore. Just a few days later, police in Rourkela, Orissa, unearthed a similar unit.

On many occasions, important leaders on the Central Committee level have been arrested in town and cities. These include Malla Raji Reddy (alias Sattenna), who was arrested on December 17, 2007, in Angamaly town, Ernakulam district, Kerala. And on August 19 of that same year, Sridhar Krishan Srinivasan (alias Vishnu) was arrested in Mumbai. Vernin Gonsalves (alias Vikram), member of the Maharashtra State Committee, was arrested, separately, in Mumbai on the same day.

The detection of Maoist activities in towns such as Surat, in Gujarat, in 2006, clearly indicates that the Maoists are attempting to penetrate India's urban-based working class. In their earlier incarnation as the People's War Group, the Maoists gained solid experience penetrating and mobilizing the working class. The Singareni Karmika Samakhya (SIKASA), a Maoist front and trade union of miners in the Singareni Collieries in Andhra Pradesh, had near-total control over mine laborers and successfully fought for better miners' wages. At that time, its influence was such that all mining activity came to a grinding halt when SIKASA issued a strike call for better wages and implemented it for 58 days.

The Maoists' presence and activities have been detected in a number of towns and cities across the country, including in Delhi, the national capital.¹⁰ These towns and cities have also included Bhopal, Jabalpur, Indore, Rourkela, Bhubaneswar, Kolkata, Ranchi, Patna, Gorakhpur, Allahabad, Lucknow, Varanasi, Raipur, Bhilai, Nagpur, Shirdi, Bangalore, and Chennai, to name just a few.

Such efforts have been described as part of a grand strategy to mobilize discontented members of the population—and particularly industry workers.

Thus, the Maoists seem to be acting on a long-term plan. In their scheme of things, they hope to gain control over the working-class movement and use it appropriately at a later stage, when their so-called New Democratic Revolution has advanced. In the immediate to short term, the objective is to gain control over key (strategic) industries, with a view to inflicting “damage” on the state's capacity to fight the Maoists, either through organizing sabotage activities or bringing production to a halt. According to an internal document of the CPI (Maoist) viewed by the author, they envisage penetrating the working-class movement in industries such as communication, oil and natural gas, coal, transport, power, and defense production.

This brings the narrative back to the TUF. According to the Maoists, the Tactical United Front is one of the three magic weapons required to take the revolutionary agenda to its logical conclusion (the other two are a strong party and a strong army). Through forming coalitions with persons and groups that are opposed to the state and its policies, the Maoists seek to fight the state through “peaceful” means, as well as to broaden their support base.

The Maoists’ TUF is a secret committee. It functions directly under the Sub-Committee on Mass Organizations, which itself is a subset of the all-powerful Central Committee of the CPI (Maoist).

The objectives of the TUF include the following:

- To consolidate various “anti-imperialist” struggles and to bring them on to one platform on the basis of a common working understanding;
- To expand the reach of the Maoists across various sections of society by building contacts with them;
- To boost over-ground cadre strength, to thoroughly indoctrinate them, and then to incorporate them into organizational work, especially in urban areas;
- To poach partners for potential leaders and ideologues; and
- To enable its political activities to reinforce the Maoists’ military activities (such as armed struggle).

The Revolutionary Democratic Front (RDF), a front organization for the CPI (Maoist) proscribed by the Union (central) government under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, is a key component of the TUF. The organization issues calls and statements on various issues. On December 16, 2007, it called on the people to “Lend Support to the ongoing revolutionary movement in Dandakaranya, India.” In early June 2007, a RDF representative presented a paper entitled “Nandigram: The Road to Sovereignty of India,” at a Kolkata conference that railed against Special Economic Zones and other industrial projects that displace people. And in December 2007, RDF all-India leader GN Saibaba gave an interview to a Norwegian journalist, Mr. Lars Akerhaug. In 2007, the RDF launched its own blog, <http://rdfindia.blogspot.com>.

Moreover, the RDF is a key driver behind the formation of a broad front known as the People's Democratic Front of India (PDFI), founded in July 2006. Its members include Maoist ideologue P. Varavara Rao and RDF leader Darshan Pal. Some of its constituent organizations include Samyukta Sangram Committee (West Bengal), Indian Federation of Trade Unions, All India Federation of Trade Unions, Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha, Daman Virodhi Manch (Orissa), and Jharkhand Progressive Students Union (an affiliate of the All India Radical Students Federation). The PDFI hosted a meeting on May 12, 2007, in Delhi, to commemorate the 1857 First War of Independence, and a conference to debate "the need to initiate [a] third wave of independence struggle."

The Maoists have made attempts to form a TUF with Muslims. This effort has been active for several years. In the wake of the proscription imposed on the Students Islamic Movement of India, which has been involved in a series of bomb blasts in different cities and towns in India, Azad, spokesperson of the Central Committee of the CPI (Maoist), said (according to August 2008 media reports) that the ban was "a reiteration of the (government's) policy to continue its brutal war on Muslims." On a few other occasions, too, the Maoists have made attempts to find common cause with the Muslim community. For instance, they issued a press release in August 2008 that stated: "The [Central Committee], CPI (Maoist), hails the glorious role of the people of Kashmir in their just struggle for national self-determination. It calls upon the people of India to rise up in support of this just and democratic struggle of our brothers and sisters of Kashmir and to fight against the high-handedness and brutal suppression of their struggle by the expansionist Indian state."¹¹

Infrastructure Attacks

The Maoists are blasting railway tracks; setting railway wagons and stations and public transport buses on fire; and destroying the telecom towers of state-run and private telephone networks. The objectives of these attacks are to challenge the authority of the state, to dictate the terms of people's daily lives in Maoist strongholds, and to deny facilities and development to those living in the vicinity of the attacks. This has caused enormous losses to the exchequer and hardships for the people. The details of some of the more recent attacks are listed in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1: Infrastructure Attacks by Maoists, 2006-2009

Target	State	Details	January 1 to	January 1 to	January 1 to	January 1 to				
			December	December	December	December				
			31, 2006	31, 2007	31, 2008	to June 30,				
			Total	Total	Total	2009				
						Total				
Economic	Bihar	Uranium Mines	1	0	0	0				
		Essar Steel	1	1	1	0				
	Chhattisgarh	NMDC	11	4	0	1				
		Essar Pipelines	2	1	3	2				
		BRO	4	1	0	0				
		Gramin Sadak Nirman Yojana	0	0	1	1				
	Orissa	Essar Pipelines	1	0	0	4				
	Maharashtra	BRO	2	0	0	0				
	Jharkhand	Steel Plant	1	0	0	0				
	Bihar	Cement Plant	0	1	0	0				
Solar Plate		0	0	0	2					
Railways	Andhra Pradesh		1	1	2	0				
	Bihar		12	9	11	3				
	Chhattisgarh		5	18	6	3				
	Jharkhand		13	15	7	3				
	Maharashtra		1	0	0	0				
	Orissa		1	2	0	5				
	West Bengal		0	2	1	1				
Telephone exchange/towers	Andhra Pradesh		2	0	1	0				
	Bihar		0	0	14	12				
	Maharashtra		1	1	2	1				
	Chhattisgarh		1	3	15	5				
	Jharkhand		0	0	10	3				
	Orissa		1	2	4	5				
Power plants	Andhra Pradesh		2	3	0	0				
	Chhattisgarh		2	0	0	0				
	Maharashtra		0	0	1	2				
Mining	Orissa		1	0	0	0				
	Jharkhand		0	4	4	0				
	Chhattisgarh		0	1	2	0				
	Andhra Pradesh		0	1	0	0				
Poles/Transmission	Chhattisgarh		5	10	23	3				
	Orissa		0	0	1	0				
Total			71	71	80	80	109	109	56	56

Source: Lok Sabha (Indian Parliament), July 2009.

Table 2: Infrastructure Attacks by Maoists, 2010

Target	State	Details	2010 (Jan 1 to July 15)	
				Total
Economic	Andhra Pradesh	Uranium Mines	0	9
		Essar Steel	0	
	Chhattisgarh	NMDC	3	
		Essar Pipelines	0	
		BRO	0	
		Gramin Sadak Nirman Yojana	2	
	Orissa	Essar Pipelines	1	
		Gramin Sadak	2	
	Maharashtra	BRO	0	
	Madhya Pradesh	PM Sadak Yojna	1	
	Jharkhand	Steel Plant	0	
	Bihar	Cement Plant	0	
		Solar Plate	0	
		Gramin Sadak Nirmal Yojana	0	
Railways	Andhra Pradesh		0	35
	Bihar		11	
	Chhattisgarh		2	
	Jharkhand		12	
	Maharashtra		0	
	Orissa		6	
	West Bengal		4	
Telephone exchange/ towers	Andhra Pradesh		2	29
	Bihar		7	
	Maharashtra		0	
	Chhattisgarh		1	
	Jharkhand		6	
	Orissa		12	
	West Bengal		1	
Power plants	Andhra Pradesh		0	1
	Chhattisgarh		0	
	Maharashtra		1	
Mining	Orissa		0	1
	Jharkhand		0	
	Chhattisgarh		0	
	Andhra Pradesh		0	
	Maharashtra		1	
Poles/ Transmission	Chhattisgarh		0	0
	Orissa		0	
Panchayat Bhawan	Chhattisgarh		1	14
	Jharkhand		1	
	Andhra Pradesh		0	
	Maharashtra		1	
	Bihar		2	
	Orissa		6	
	West Bengal		3	
	Chhattisgarh		4	
School buildings	Andhra Pradesh		1	20
	Jharkhand		4	
	Bihar		8	
	Maharashtra		0	
	Orissa		3	
Forest roads, culverts etc.			62	62
	Total		171	171

Source: Lok Sabha, July 2010.

STATE RESPONSES

Central Government Response

Development Response: Past and Present Schemes

New Delhi has initiated a number of development programs and schemes, some of them especially targeting the Maoist-affected districts. Their objective is to bring in rapid socioeconomic development and to fill critical gaps in infrastructure. These various programs include Pradhana Mantri Grameen Sadak Yojana (PMGSY);¹² the National Rural Employment Guarantee Program (NREGP);¹³ the earlier Backward Districts Initiative (BDI),¹⁴ subsumed into the Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF);¹⁵ the National Rural Health Mission; and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS).

In 2008, the minister for home affairs noted that “[t]hese schemes are in addition to various income-generating, public-utility and social-security schemes of different Ministries like Rural Development, Agriculture, Health and Family Welfare, Youth Affairs and Sports, Panchayati Raj and Tribal Affairs.”¹⁶ The government has also approved a Planning Commission-initiated program known as the Integrated Action Plan, at a cost of Rs.13,742 crore, for rapid socioeconomic development and critical infrastructure-building in 60 districts across eight states.

Security Response

As has been noted by a number of analysts, the response of both New Delhi and the various affected states has been largely military-oriented, with an emphasis on crushing the Maoists militarily through security-force operations. In some states, in fact, both the security and the development responses are weak.

New Delhi has been assisting the states militarily in a number of ways. It has advised the states to strengthen the intelligence-gathering mechanism, to augment police forces, to fortify police stations, to provide incentives, and to impart specialized training in jungle warfare to the police. The central government has also been sending paramilitary forces to the states upon their request, extending financial assistance for police force modernization,

Table 3: SRE Reimbursement to Naxalite-affected States, 2006-2009 (crores of rupees)

State	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Andhra Pradesh	6.1	5.0	308.79
Bihar	0.04	2.30	305.18
Chhattisgarh	9.68	6.50	1540.69
Jharkhand	14.72	4.40	1876.25
Madhya Pradesh	2.51	1.70	381.36
Maharashtra	5.26	3.70	389.49
Orissa	7.16	6.73	969.91
Uttar Pradesh	--	0.80	111.46
West Bengal	1.50	2.80	100.19

Source: Lok Sabha (December 2009), Lok Sabha Secretariat, and Indian Ministry of Home Affairs (<http://mha.nic.in/pdfs/NM-Annex-IV.pdf>).

and providing financial assistance under the Security-Related Expenditure (SRE) scheme for various expenses incurred by affected states (see Table 3).

In 2005, the home ministry established a committee comprising directors general of some of the affected states, the director general of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), and top officials of the Intelligence Bureau. In its report, the Committee noted:

While the mechanism constituted for countering naxalism envisaged a multi-pronged approach, over the years the State response has tended to remain largely police centric, with the main effort being to counter the movement with superior force. The approach has often swung from one extreme—that of using overwhelming force—to the other, structured around “ceasefires” and “peace talks.” While it is recognized that the naxal problem goes well beyond mere law and order dimensions, the broader socio-economic issues have not attracted serious attention....¹⁷

Nevertheless, for the large part, there has been, in general, a security-centric response rather than one that places due emphasis on both security and development responses.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has decided to open 20 counterinsurgency and anti-terrorist (CIAT) schools, which will impart specialized training to state police undertaking counterinsurgency operations, jungle warfare, and counterterrorism in affected states such as Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, and Jharkhand. Of these, seven CIAT schools distributed across Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Orissa have been sanctioned, and an amount of Rs. 10.50 crore has already been released.

Furthermore, the MHA decided in 2008 to carve out 10 battalions from the CRPF in order to create a specialized force exclusively to fight the Maoists. These should realistically be completely operational by 2013 (the MHA has said they will be fully functional by 2011). These battalions would be established at a total cost of about Rs. 1400 crore (roughly Rs. 900 for infrastructure, and about Rs. 500 for training).

Rationale

While examining the central government's security-centric view of the Naxalite issue, one analyst wrote in 2007 that the "...'militaristic approach' adopted by the Center and state governments in assessing the field level situation, is perhaps extremely convenient to the ruling parties, since a military statistics-driven assessment would emphatically lead to planning on a military plane. The execution of development-oriented programs is naturally placed at a secondary level."¹⁸ Thus, the successes of the government are assessed on the basis of the number of rebels killed, arrested, or surrendered, or of the incidents of violence and exchange-of-fire, or of the number of weapons looted from security forces and then recovered from the guerrillas.

Response of Affected States

On the other hand, at best, the response of the various state governments, with the exception of Andhra Pradesh, has often if not always been found to be lagging and reactive.

Also, there is no unanimity in perceptions of the Naxalite issue among the various affected states. Thus, while states such as Chhattisgarh and Tamil Nadu have proscribed the CPI (Maoist), West Bengal has refused to do so. Orissa has lately proscribed the party, while Karnataka has issued contradictory statements and finally chosen not to ban it.

Meanwhile, Andhra Pradesh allowed the ban to lapse, initiated a peace process, and re-imposed proscription in August 2005, in the wake of the assassination of the serving Member of the Legislative Assembly on August 5. It is pertinent to point out that except for the CPI (Maoist), no Naxalite group in the country has been proscribed by any of the states or by the central government, even though some of them are committed to protracted armed struggle.

Further, coordination between the police and intelligence agencies of various affected states has been far from satisfactory. Only in recent years have initial indications of a change in this trend started to be witnessed, as evidenced by the seizure of 875 empty rocket shells in September 2006. Also, toward the end of August 2006, every single affected state had submitted a security and development plan for addressing the Naxalite issue. But otherwise, for many years, the response by the various states has either been one of inaction, or one focused in significant measure, if not excessively, on militarily fighting the Naxalites, rather than on addressing the issue on a socioeconomic plane.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The government's response to the insurgency must be a two-pronged approach of security and development, as India's prime minister has repeatedly stated. The security dimension should emphasize a calibrated use of legitimate force. Neither security nor development should be overemphasized at the cost of the other. In highly affected areas, there cannot be but a security-first approach. In marginally affected areas, development should take precedence over security.

Negotiations should not be undertaken at this stage. In the future, if they are held, it should be clearly borne in mind that the Maoists will not give up their weapons and join the national mainstream. The people of India should not be given any false hopes by the government, and this message should be clearly spelled out to them.

There has to be a broad national political consensus among all the political parties within the affected states, among all states, and between the states and the central government in New Delhi. Within this broad framework, individual states should devise local-level strategies. And in the field, area-

specific strategies and tactics need to be adopted. Only once this consensus has been achieved will it be possible to squarely address the problem.

Approximately 7 to 10 years will be needed for all this to take shape and to start delivering results; assertions by the MHA that the Maoist challenge can be defeated in three years are difficult to believe. Yet even in 10 years, expect some Maoists to remain and to continue to harbor the same ideology. And even after 10 years, the last Maoist will not have been killed or mainstreamed.

At any rate, it is reassuring to note that there are signs that the various state governments and the central government are evincing the political will to address the Maoist challenge headlong. Still, more time will be necessary. Furthermore, more years' time will be required to build the capabilities of the security forces in the affected states, and for development initiatives to have a perceptible impact.

NOTES

1 This legendary Naxalite leader committed suicide at the age of 81 on March 31, 2010. He disagreed with Charu Mazumdar's "class line" (annihilation of class enemies), and instead supported "mass line" (building a people's/mass movement). Owing to ideological differences, he eventually parted ways with Charu Mazumdar.

2 Siliguri is now a district in West Bengal.

3 These include the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation, whose foremost leader was Vinod Mishra. It is now led by Dipankar Bhattacharya.

4 These include the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Towards New Democracy; the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Resistance; and the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) People's Resistance.

5 KP Singh, "The Trajectory of the Movement," in P.V. Ramana, ed., *The Naxal Challenge: Causes, Linkages and Policy Options* (New Delhi: Pearson-Longman, 2007), 11-12.

6 See Chindu Sreedharan, "PWG Hopes Merger with Party Unity Will Boost Cadre Morale," *rediff.com*, October 5, 1998, <http://www.rediff.com/news/1998/oct/05nxl.htm>.

7 See "The Rediff Interview/Ganapathy: 'Unification is the Only Way to Advance the Cause of the Indian Revolution,'" *rediff.com*, October 7, 1998, <http://www.rediff.com/news/1998/oct/07gana.htm>.

8 This section is based on an extensive interview with a senior Indian Police Service officer from the intelligence branch of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, conducted in February and September 2007.

9 "Arms Haul Probe: Five States Join Hands," *The Hindu*, September 13, 2006, <http://www.hindu.com/2006/09/13/stories/2006091306110400.htm>.

10 See P.V. Ramana, "Maoists in Delhi: Is the Police Prepared?" IDSA web commentary, May 3, 2010, http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/MaoistsinDelhiIsthePolicePrepared_pvramana_030510.

11 See "Communist Party of India (Maoist) Central Committee, Press Release: August 27, 2008," posted on BannedThought.net, <http://www.bannedthought.net/India/CPI-Maoist-Docs/Statements/KashmirSelfDetermination-080827.pdf>.

12 This program, an initiative of the Ministry of Rural Development, is aimed at building rural roads to improve connectivity. "The State Governments have been requested to identify and prioritize unconnected habitations having population[s] of 500 and above in plain areas and 250 and above in tribal areas for preparing detailed project reports as per PMGSY program guidelines." See Ministry of Home Affairs, *Annual Report, 2007-2008* (New Delhi: Government of India, 2008), 22. See also <http://www.pmgysy.nic.in>, the official website of PMGSY.

13 This effort was originally initiated in 200 districts, and was extended to 330 districts in April 2007. Presently, it is being implemented in every district of the country.

14 The BDI was launched during fiscal year 2003-04, "with the main objective of putting in place programs and policies with the joint efforts of the Center and States which would remove barriers of growth, accelerate the development process and improve the quality of life of the people. The scheme aims at focused development of backward areas which would help reduce imbalances and speed up development." Also, the BDI was intended to "address the problems of low agricultural productivity, unemployment and to fill critical gaps in physical and social infrastructure." See Planning Commission, "Backward Districts Initiative-Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana-The Scheme and Guidelines for Preparation of District Plans," http://www.planningcommission.nic.in/plans/stateplan/guid_rsvy.pdf.

15 The BDI was implemented in 147 districts, whereas the BRGF is being implemented in 250 districts.

16 The home affairs minister provided this information to the Lok Sabha in reply to a Starred Question on April 22, 2008. See "Press Release: Development Initiatives in Naxal-Affected Districts," April 22, 2008, <http://pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=37724&kwd=>.

17 Cited from an internal report of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Copy available with the author.

18 K. Srinivas Reddy, "The Maoist Challenge," prepared for India 2006, a Symposium on the Year that Was, January 2007, http://www.india-seminar.com/2007/569/569_k_srinivas_reddy.htm.

AT WAR WITH ONESELF: CONSTRUCTING NAXALISM AS INDIA'S BIGGEST SECURITY THREAT

NANDINI SUNDAR

The Naxalite movement began in India in the late 1960s as a peasant struggle (in Naxalbari, West Bengal, hence the name Naxalite). It represented the revolutionary stream of Indian Marxism, with the aim of capturing control of the Indian state through armed struggle rather than parliamentary democracy. While the Indian state managed to crush the movement in the 1970s, causing an already ideologically fractured movement to splinter further (currently 34 parties by official estimates), in 2004 two of the major parties, the Communist Party of India (CPI) (Marxist-Leninist) People's War (formed out of the merger of the People's War Group, or PWG, with Party Unity) and the Maoist Communist Center (MCC) of India, united to form the Communist Party of India (Maoist). The CPI (Maoist) is currently a significant political force across several states, especially in rural areas where state services have been inadequate or absent. Their cadre comes from sections of India's poorest population, especially among *dalits* or "scheduled castes" and *adivasis* or "scheduled tribes," government designations that entitle these groups to affirmative action measures.

Since about 2005-06, the Maoists have become the main target of the Indian state, with thousands of paramilitary forces being poured into the areas where they are strong. As a consequence, armed conflict is occurring across large parts of central India and is taking several hundred lives on an annual basis. In the state of Chhattisgarh, which is the epicenter of the war, sovereignty is contested over large parts of terrain. Such condi-

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tions amount to those of civil war, which has been defined as “armed combat taking place within the boundaries of a recognized sovereign entity between parties subject to a common authority at the outset of the hostilities.”¹

COMPETING PERSPECTIVES ON THE MAOIST ISSUE

There are three main perspectives on the Maoist issue. The first, which is the security perspective, equates the Maoists with terrorists. India's Home Ministry has put out a half- page advertisement in all the national newspapers, proclaiming alongside photos of corpses that “Naxals are nothing but cold blooded murderers.” This perspective, which is held by the police-dominated Home Ministry as well as by many “security experts,” argues that the Maoists no longer have a revolutionary ideology and are a self-seeking group of extortionists out to destabilize the country and impede “development,” which is understood to mean industrialization. This perspective is blind to the history, ideology, and actual practices of the Maoists.

The second, which is the dominant liberal perspective, epitomized by an expert group constituted by the Indian government's Planning Commission, might be labeled the “root causes” perspective.² According to this view, poverty and lack of “development” (here meaning employment), and the want of primary services like education, are to blame for pushing people to support the Maoists. This view ignores the absence of a Maoist movement in other poor areas, as well as questions of Maoist theory, organizational presence, and local agency.

The third, which is the revolutionary perspective held by the Maoists themselves and their sympathizers, portrays the movement as a product of structural violence. While they describe people as forced into resistance and armed struggle, there is equally an emphasis on active agency and sacrifice, contrary to the root causes perspective that sees people as mainly passive victims. Article 4 of the CPI (Maoist) Constitution describes the party's goals in terms of long-term state capture: “The immediate aim of the party is to accomplish the New Democratic Revolution in India by overthrowing imperialism, feudalism and comprador bureaucratic capitalism only through the Protracted People's War and es-

tablishing the people's democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the proletariat.”

However, most Maoist public pronouncements have sought to emphasize more concrete economic and social objectives like land distribution, drought relief, farmers' debt, and caste atrocities. Such goals, more so than plans to overthrow the state, are the ones that resonate with the Maoists' supporters the most. In particular, since 2003-04, they have posited themselves as the only bulwark against mining and land acquisition.

This revolutionary perspective blurs over the history of nonviolent but militant struggles elsewhere in India, including against mining, as well as over the contradictions between the long-term demands of a guerrilla struggle aimed at state capture and immediate economic benefits for the people in whose name this struggle is being waged.

A nuanced analysis that seeks to explain the strength of the Naxalite movement in any particular area needs to take into account several factors. These include the specific socioeconomic context, the nature of stratification, the specific political history of the area (both in terms of parliamentary parties and social movements), the issues of agency that explain why certain individuals join the Naxalites, Maoist and state ideology, as well as the logic of Maoist militarization and state responses. Geographical factors—such as the suitability of territory for guerrilla struggle—also matter. In the following sections, this essay takes on some of the common discourses around Maoism, while developing its own argument that far greater attention must be paid to questions of injustice and impunity in explaining the overall trajectory of the Maoist movement in India.

OVERALL CONTEXT FOR THE CURRENT CIVIL WAR

Since India started liberalizing in the early 1990s, inequality has grown. Depending on the formula, anywhere between 28-80 percent of Indians were below the “poverty line” in 2010,³ and the latest UNDP figures reveal acute poverty in eight states, all of which (except for Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh) have a strong Naxalite presence.⁴ While the size of the Indian middle class is debated, it is commonly estimated to account for merely some 300 million people. Meanwhile, national newspapers

report on the globally acquisitive abilities of Indian companies,⁵ and the fact that India has the highest number of billionaires in Asia.⁶

Poverty

However, it is fallacious to argue that it is inequality, poverty, or lack of development per se that leads to people joining the ranks of the Naxalites (the root causes argument), or conversely, that it is Naxalites who are impeding development (the security perspective). While there is no doubt a strong correlation between areas of high poverty and Naxalism, a causal link or direction has not been established. For instance, Jhabua, in western Madhya Pradesh state, has roughly similar socioeconomic and demographic indicators as Dantewada in Chhattisgarh. According to the 2001 census, the population in Jhabua is 85 percent tribal, with 47 percent of the population living below the poverty line and only 36.87 percent literate. But unlike Dantewada, which is the heartland of the Maoist movement, Jhabua has been the site of a remarkable nonviolent movement for many decades now (the Narmada Bachao Andolan), apart from other local struggles over land and forests. Similarly, the region of Bundelkhand in central India is one of the poorest areas of the country, and while there is a high degree of stratification, there are no Naxalites. Furthermore, in order for people to support the Naxalites (or any other social formation), they have to be present, and historically, the Naxalites have not made much headway in western India, despite the presence of a sizeable *adivasi* or scheduled tribe population in Gujarat, Rajasthan, and western Madhya Pradesh.⁷

It is also important to remember that in each of the states where the Naxalites are present, the local configuration of power as well as Naxalite demands vary. In states like Andhra Pradesh or Bihar, a feudal set-up and sharp social stratification (in terms of both caste and class) have meant that the Naxalites have been pitted against local landlords in their defense of the poor. Meanwhile, in the *adivasi*-dominated tracts of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Orissa, the main concerns of the people have been exploitation by the government's police and forest departments, pitting the Maoists directly against the state.

Security experts claim that "development" is possible only once an area is within government control, and hence "area domination" through

military measures is necessary before people's rights can be recognized. However, high-poverty areas like Jhabua and Bundelkhand have always been within government control, and nobody has prevented the government from implanting whatever welfare schemes it wishes. On the contrary, one often sees more welfare services being implemented in areas under Maoist influence, if only because of their purported usefulness in low-intensity counterinsurgency. The large financial packages sanctioned to insurgency-affected areas by the Planning Commission (which allocates funds between government departments and states) may as well be seen as the success rather than the failure of a model of armed struggle in terms of getting benefits for people. The passage and implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act of 2006, which aims to provide secure land tenure to *adivasis*, is officially conceded as arising out of the need to undercut the core constituency of the Maoists.

Industrialization

If poverty is the context rather than the direct cause for the growing strength of the Naxalite movement, then the same must be said about India's industrialization regime, which is threatening to displace large numbers of people without providing commensurate employment. Industrialization provides the background not so much for understanding why the Naxalites are active—after all, the major struggles against land acquisition are led by non-Maoist local campaigns, and the Maoist's own roots lie in land reform—but instead as a reason for why the government is interested in finishing off the Naxalites.

The formation of the CPI (Maoist) in 2004 roughly coincided with the liberalization of India's mining policy in 2003, and with the SEZ Act in 2005, which set up Special Economic Zones. In 2001, the formation of the states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Uttarakhand also provided an incentive for the ruling parties in these states to intervene more actively in areas which had hitherto been relatively neglected in the larger parent states of Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. Both Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, states with large mineral and forest areas predominantly inhabited by scheduled tribes, explicitly set out to promote industrialization, signing a number of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with industrial

houses. Several of these MOUs are suspect, with local politicians and industrialists colluding to make quick money.⁸ Occasionally, the loot becomes so glaring that face-saving legal action is required for state legitimacy—leading, for example, to a former chief minister of Jharkhand, Madhu Koda, being charged by the Central Bureau of Investigation for corruption. The emphasis on mining has made it important to vacate the areas of Maoists, whose de facto control over the region constitutes an obstacle to rapid industrialization and land acquisition.⁹ Industry associations have explicitly supported the government's offensive against the Naxalites, and have called for the involvement of the private sector in this effort.¹⁰ Predictably, these associations have also opposed a government proposal to give tribals a 26 percent share in mining profits, on the grounds that a lower profit margin would adversely affect investment.¹¹ Ironically, however, while industry is opposed to any government regulation, it is happy to have the government acquire land on its behalf.

Government Repression

Forcible land acquisition has been an ongoing irritant in the Indian government's relations with village communities, leading to often-violent clashes in which villagers are killed by the police, who act almost as private agents for companies.¹² While these struggles are not led by the Maoists, and are usually local campaigns with activists taking care to keep their distance from any armed action, the repression against the Maoists provides an occasion to arrest and harass the activists in all these campaigns. The charge of being a Maoist sympathizer is easily levelled, and once arrested, even without the application of extraordinary law, legal redress takes time, effort, and money. The protests against land acquisition have also encouraged the Maoists to believe the situation is sufficiently ripe for them to expand, and to exploit in order to gain support. This belief is only strengthened when the government uses force against peaceful protestors—even at a time when it is exhorting the Maoists to come to dialogue.¹³

Above all, Maoists owe their growing support to the form and brutality of the government counterinsurgency campaign. This has effectively elevated a movement with local roots into one with a national presence. In West Bengal, the People's Committee against Police Atrocity, which is widely seen as close to the Maoists, originated as a reaction to police

repression after a Maoist attempt in November 2008 on the life of the state's chief minister. In Chhattisgarh, government responses have taken the form of state-sponsored vigilantism and, since 2005, methods of strategic hamletting known as Salwa Judum. When this boomeranged by increasing civilian support for the Maoists, New Delhi started Operation Green Hunt, in 2009. The controversial nature of this operation—a very visible one, spread across several states—has turned some sections of Indian civil society against the government.

Security experts often concede that state response is a critical factor in explaining Maoist activity; indeed they place all their faith in a military response wiping out the Maoists. But their narrative usually centers around the so-called success story of Andhra Pradesh, which has used a mixture of local development and a no-holds-barred police response in which several Maoists have been killed in extrajudicial “encounters” by a specially trained force called the Greyhounds. In Bihar, on the other hand, before the crisis of September 2010 (when the Maoists held four policemen hostage in exchange for eight of their comrades), the trajectory has been quite different. Bihar used to have a high incidence of Maoist-state-vigilante conflict, but relative quiet was bought through a tacit understanding between the Maoists and the political party Rashtriya Janata Dal.¹⁴ In both states, however, agrarian crises continue to be a problem. This shows, once again, both that “objective conditions” do not necessarily find expression in Maoist politics, and conversely, that it is not the Maoist presence which is impeding welfare, but the state's own indifference.

It is also important to note that the Maoists are not internally homogenous. Differences between the MCC and the former PWG persist even though they have merged and cadre members are transferred between states. For example, the MCC is widely considered more militarist and doctrinaire than the PWG. In Jharkhand, police have been successful in encouraging breakaway Maoist groups like the Jharkhand Liberation Tigers, as compared to Chhattisgarh, where not only is there a larger and more homogenous tribal base in the party, but the party has established much stronger roots through its mass struggles for land and remunerative prices for forest produce. The balance between militarization and mass politics has a variety of spin-off effects in terms of which demands get taken up and how.

Public Opinion

For both the government and the Maoists, proving local support is critical. For the government, this is because its claim to being a democracy rests on a version of social contract theory, which in turn presumes legitimacy among the public at large. For the Maoists, local support is necessary for a movement that claims to be fighting for the people. But it is precisely in such situations of civil war and conflict that support can never be gauged accurately.

An August 2010 survey by an academic agency and two media houses (*The Week*-CNN-IBN-CSDS) across the “red belt” claimed that 49 percent support the government, and 60 percent have faith in the democratic process, although 76 percent want the political system to be reformed.¹⁵ But remarkably, in the printed *Week* version of the survey, responding to questions about who the Naxalites are and what they stand for, on average 50 percent of people had “no opinion.”¹⁶ Indeed, apart from the perils of voicing an opinion in times of conflict and the safety-driven impulse to underreport support for the Maoists, people themselves often do not know what they want, because the present is so bad, and the alternative so dim. But even taken at face value, what emerges from the survey is a strong preference for developmental solutions over military ones, for unconditional dialogue, and for reform of the existing political process.

Securitizing the Problem and Creating “Moral Panic”

Until recently, official pronouncements on the Naxalites located the movement largely in a “socioeconomic” context, as not “merely” a law-and-order problem, but one borne out of a development deficit.¹⁷ In the last three or four years, however, the Indian government has converted the Naxalite “problem” almost exclusively into a security issue, with an “effective police response” overriding all other solutions.¹⁸ Even normal development and administrative processes are “securitized”—as seen in the use of the Border Roads Organization traditionally deployed in frontier areas to build roads in the heart of India, and in the proliferation of smaller administrative and police units.¹⁹

Much of the discourse around Naxalism in India today is akin to what Stuart Hall has identified as the creation of a “moral panic” around mugging in 1970s Britain:

When the official reaction to a person, group of persons or series of events is out of all proportion to the actual threat offered, when “experts” in the form of police chiefs, the judiciary, politicians and editors perceive the threat in all but identical terms, and appear to talk “with one voice” of rates, diagnoses, prognoses and solutions, when the media representations universally stress “sudden and dramatic” increases (in numbers involved or events) and “novelty” above and beyond that which a realistic approach would sustain, then we believe it is appropriate to speak of the beginnings of a *moral panic*.²⁰

This moral panic, created by the government’s response and its amplification by the media, is primarily responsible for giving the Maoists a visibility they did not possess earlier.

What is then at stake is the government’s image of being firm and taking action; action which may have no direct relevance or efficiency in tackling the problem at hand. The “Naxalite problem” is not so much about violence in absolute terms, as it is a reflection of the threat posed by Naxalites to the status quo. It is also a function of the security establishment’s need to project a “threat” that justifies more—often unaccountable—funding and forces. In fact, states are compensated by the federal government for any anti-Naxalite expenses, including those expended on “local resistance groups.” This gives many cash-strapped states an incentive to project a greater threat from Naxalites than the latter actually pose.²¹

This is not to say, however, that the Maoists do not see armed challenge as the only serious alternative to the state.²² The Maoist fetishization of militarism is connected to the goal of capturing state power through armed struggle, and establishing, in a slogan commonly attributed to them, “*Lal Qila par Lal Jhanda*” (Red flag on the Red Fort).²³ The combination of Maoist self-projection as a significant military force and government projections of them as a military threat makes it difficult for independent observers to insist that both sides go beyond the logic of

war. While the government brands any critic of its counterinsurgency policies as pro-Maoist, the Maoists have declared that those who criticize their acts of violence are ultimately “apologists for the oppressors, in spite of their good intentions and sincere attitude.”²⁴

MAOIST ORGANIZATION, MILITARIZATION, AND FINANCING

The Communist Party of India (Maoist) is organized like every other communist party, with a politburo and central committee, which oversees various state committees or special zonal committees. These state/zonal committees straddle existing state boundaries. For instance, the Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee has seven divisions under it, which include Bastar in Chhattisgarh and Gadchiroli in Maharashtra. Below this are regional, divisional, or district committees, area committees, and so on down to local cells in villages or factories.

There are also various mass organizations that have units in villages. In the Dandakaranya region, these are known as *sanghams* or collectives—like the women’s organization, the seed-sowing cooperatives, and the village defense committee. These collectives are supervised by a visiting squad or *dalam* comprising some 10 to 15 people, which carries arms but is not primarily involved in military action. There is a separate military wing, the People’s Liberation Guerrilla Army, which is assisted by people’s militias (made up of village defense committees) for specific actions.

The Maoists are estimated to have 7,300 weapons for 10,500 armed cadres nationwide, a 25,000-strong people’s militia, and 50,000 members in village-level units.²⁵ According to police sources, they also have “AK-series assault rifles, carbines, 7.62 [millimeter] self-loading rifles, grenade launchers, mines, improvised explosive devices and mortars,” and are manufacturing their own weapons.²⁶ Despite occasional police claims that Maoists get their weapons from China or Sri Lanka, in its saner moments the security establishment recognizes that most of this weaponry is looted from the police themselves or from raids on government armories. The Maoists have engaged in some major military actions—breaking open jails, as in Dantewada and Jehanabad; looting ammunition depots and explosives from the National Mineral Development Corporation warehouses in Dantewada; blasting trans-

formers; and attempting assassinations of prominent politicians. In 2008, they ambushed and killed 38 members of the elite Greyhound forces on the Balimela reservoir in Orissa, while in April 2010 they killed 74 personnel of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in the Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh. These deaths were memorialized by the state in ways similar to those who died in the Kargil war between India and Pakistan, with at least one television commentator calling for a war between “India” and the Maoists.

The actual violence by the Naxalites belies the threat they supposedly pose in military terms. Even in Chhattisgarh, the state affected the most by government-Naxalite conflict, figures prior to the current counterinsurgency offensive suggest no need for the 16 companies of special armed police that were sent there in 1998, or for the 10 battalions of paramilitary forces that are currently posted there. While Naxalite killings have certainly gone up since 2005, and especially in Chhattisgarh, this spike is seen by both sides as an expression of retaliation against the Salwa Judum militia, and hence cannot be used as a causal justification for counterinsurgency. According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, there were 908 Naxalite-related deaths in the country as a whole in 2009.²⁷ However, much of this data, as well as data published by the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), which are drawn from open-access sources like news reports and are widely cited, are inaccurate and misleading. For instance, the SATP lists 518 civilians, 608 security forces, and 491 “terrorists” killed in Chhattisgarh between 2005 and 2010, coming to a total of 1,617.²⁸ However, during the initial two years of Salwa Judum, there were also a number of people killed by security forces and vigilantes whose deaths were simply not recorded, or they were recorded as killed by Naxalites since state compensation is available only to those killed by Naxalites.²⁹ In later years, due to public pressure, these extrajudicial killings have been recorded as “encounters.”

The overwhelming establishment focus on Naxalite violence also casts into stark relief the double standards espoused by India’s ruling parties. Congress and the BJP have each been responsible for the deaths of thousands of citizens.³⁰ The BJP, especially, but not uniquely, has several fronts which are openly engaged in vigilante violence against the vulnerable, including artists, filmmakers, and authors whose views are deemed unpalatable, as well as Christians, Muslims, and others.³¹ The

BJP's mother organization, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, openly disavows India's secular constitution. Violence or killings alone, therefore, cannot account for the government's anxiety about Naxalism. What frightens New Delhi is the fact that the violence is primarily directed against security forces, and those in power, rather than against the poor, who are already daily objects of violence in India.

The Maoists finance their operations through what they call levies on industries and forest contractors, enabling the rise of dynamics of corruption, patronage, and protection. Indeed, industrialists often work out private bargains with the Maoists. For instance, this author was told by a surrendered Maoist from Orissa that a senior official of the Essar Group appealed to him to allow a pipeline to pass through his territory. This pipeline is meant to pump iron ore from mines at Bailadilla in Chhattisgarh to Visakapatnam port. The Essar official said: "Since you are the local government here we will pay you the same rate of royalty we pay the government." Given that this rate is abysmally low (considerably less than U.S. \$1, or 27 rupees [Rs.] per ton), and given that the market rate for iron ore is U.S. \$120 (about Rs. 5600) per ton,³² this did not constitute much hardship for the Essar Group. The Maoists decided to divide the 2.8 crore they got annually between party funds and local development, but in the first year they spent it all on roofing tiles for 60 villages. The following year, however, the Chhattisgarh state unit of the Maoists objected to the mining by Essar on the grounds that it devastated the local environment and provided no benefit to the people of Chhattisgarh. Consequently, the Maoist Central Committee called off the deal with Essar, and ordered the Orissa committee to break the pipeline. The Maoists repeatedly claim that their deals with companies and contractors do not come at the expense of their own constituency, e.g. even when they have a deal with a contractor, they insist on minimum wages. However, this scarcely enables transparent alternatives to the system of industrial capitalism.

Maoist levies (the government calls these "extortion" schemes) must, however, be placed alongside other parallel systems of informal taxation that routinely operate without government censure. Regular levies extracted by forest and police staff to facilitate illegal tree-felling or tin mining are routine in mineral-rich and forested states like Chhattisgarh. State facilitation of private accumulation is extensive, ranging from the

Supreme Court, where a chief justice has been accused by senior advocates of helping mall developers (at the expense of thousands of small shopkeepers, factory owners, and ordinary citizens), to “sweetheart deals” between politicians and corporates over disinvested public sector enterprises, and to government doctors and teachers who, because of their failure to work, push people toward private health care or tuition.

CASE STUDY: THE MAOISTS AND SALWA JUDUM IN BASTAR

This section focuses on what used to be the undivided district of Bastar in Madhya Pradesh state, but which has now been carved into five smaller districts, and is part of the state of Chhattisgarh. Dantewada district or south Bastar has seen the maximum action in the conflict. In part, the intensity of state warfare against the Naxalites in Bastar is explained by the area’s status as a potentially “liberated zone” for the Maoists: A stronghold established over a period of 30 years with the rudiments of a “people’s government” (*janatana sarkar*). Gaining access for the police in previously no-go areas has become a quintessential assertion of state sovereignty, overriding any other manifestation of stateness such as schools, hospitals, or employment programs.

The first Maoist squad of five people came to Bastar in 1982 from Andhra Pradesh, as part of a conscious decision to set up a guerrilla base in the forests of Bastar, which could provide a safe area in the future. Initially, the Maoists took up cases of exploitation, such as the nonpayment of minimum wages, teacher absenteeism, and demands for bribes by policemen and foresters. Later, once villagers no longer had to deal with the forest department and police on an everyday basis, the Maoists mobilized on the issue of remunerative prices for minor forest produce with local contractors. They focused especially on *tendu* leaves, which are used for making cheap cigarettes, and which constitute the major source of cash income in the area.

From 1983–87, the party started discussing the local agrarian structure and the applicability of a model of the “New Democratic Revolution” to it. The question was whether the major contradiction was simply between villagers and the state, or whether there was also a class conflict within tribal society, and how classes were to be defined. According to

one former leader, the real growth in support for the party came when the Maoists began to redistribute the land of the village headmen and others, some of whom had owned as much as 200 acres (though in general, society is not very sharply stratified). Coupled with this was party support for the cultivation of forestland in South Bastar. At this stage, the party also began to address people's personal problems in their meetings with the villagers: forced marriages, village disputes, and so on. It was this opportunity to escape patriarchy at home—rather than an ideological commitment to establish a proletariat government—that began to draw women to the party.³³

The dispossession of village headmen and landlords led to a reaction in the form of an anti-Naxalite movement known as the Jan Jagran Abhyan of 1990, which began in West Bastar, and spread further south. This movement, led by an influential *adivasi* leader, Mahendra Karma, was the prototype for its much more famous successor, the Salwa Judum, and involved burning villages and other scorched-earth tactics. The Maoists beat it back by 1991, and re-established their village level organizations.

Between 1992 and 2005, the party expanded fairly steadily, and was able to distribute land, create grain banks, build ponds, and also undertake some basic medical work in villages, though how much of an alternative government this represents has been debated, especially when it came at the expense of accessing government funds. The party also had its own printing presses, and published different kinds of journals, such as *Viyuka (Morning Star)*, a theoretical journal for party members; *Prabhat (Sun)*; and *Sangharshrath Mahila (Revolutionary Woman)*, for local consumption.³⁴ Performances of its cultural troupe, Chetna Natya Manch, appear to have been hugely popular.³⁵

This Maoist narrative is broadly supported by the author's interviews with villagers. The level of contact with the Maoists varies from area to area, and even between villages in the same area. What sort of political understanding this contact translates into is difficult to say.³⁶ In general though, in the core Maoist areas, almost every village had *sanghams*—people were involved in either the women's wing, agricultural cooperatives in which farmers shared seeds and plough cattle, or the children's groups (*bal sanghams*). In some places, the *sangham* leaders overthrew the traditional leadership like the village headman and priest, whereas elsewhere, the traditional leaders continued to decide on rituals, festivals,

etc., while *sangham* members concentrated on calling meetings on economic or political issues. *Sangham* meetings would be held two to three times a month, and much less frequently the villagers would be called to the forests to meet a visiting armed squad.³⁷ Land distribution was indeed widespread, and in some cases, the Maoists even distributed their own land deeds.

During this entire period (1992–2005), the state responded intermittently. Villagers were often arrested for harboring Naxalites. However, despite this, and despite significant rewards for individual Naxalite leaders, a police document on Bastar notes that informers were hard to come by.³⁸ Perhaps some of this was due to a fear of Maoist vengeance, but an equally large part is undoubtedly due to the support they had among villagers. Additional police stations were built during this period, and existing ones were fortified with barbed wire. However, in general there was a stalemate.

In 2005, Mahendra Karma, by now the Congress leader of the opposition in an assembly dominated by the ruling BJP, and facing various criminal charges for his involvement in a timber scam, found common cause with the security establishment, which had decided on a policy of promoting “local resistance groups,” and with the local units of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the parent organization of the BJP. Together they started the Jan Jagran Abhiyan of 2005, which was soon renamed Salwa Judum. Villagers were coerced into attending rallies, on pain of beating or fines, and then forcibly taken to camps. Several hundred villages refusing to join were burned, and their residents, especially those known to be active in the *sanghams*, were killed, beaten, or arrested. Women were raped. Property, especially livestock, was looted, and grain was burned. The single clearest sign that Salwa Judum was state-sponsored comes from the fact that it began during the monsoons—a time when every self-respecting peasant is busy tilling the land. Traditionally, all political activity takes place after the harvest in November–December.

To the extent that Salwa Judum has any local roots, these lie in the resentments and backlash created by the Maoist emphasis on land distribution, and by Maoist opposition to electoral politics on the grounds that elections serve more as a source of personal enrichment than democratic expression. Those who did stand for local elections have been forced to

resign (though it is important to note as well that the government has resorted to forced polling and rigged elections). Additionally, some *sangham* members may have exceeded their authority and become coercive.

The Salwa Judum campaign peaked from 2005 to 2007. Strong retaliation by the Maoists, mass action by the parliamentary Communist Party of India (which was the only party to take a principled stand on the issue), as well as a writ petition in the Supreme Court against vigilantism and the violation of human rights in the course of this state-sponsored movement, reduced the momentum somewhat between 2007 and 2009, though sporadic attacks on villages continued. Thanks to the excesses of the Salwa Judum, Maoist recruitment increased exponentially. In the summer of 2009, however, the state government of Chhattisgarh and the central government launched Operation Green Hunt across Maoist-affected districts in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, and West Bengal.

While elsewhere the main focus is on combing operations, in Chhattisgarh the prime strategy involves a combination of Special Police Officers, or SPOs (who include former *sangham* members) and government security forces engaging in combing operations in villages, arresting people, killing others randomly, burning houses, and looting. Several thousand more security forces have been poured into the district. The main difference between this and the first phase of Salwa Judum is that mass forced evacuations of villagers to camps are not happening, though many people are fleeing to Andhra Pradesh. The SPOs now have guns and uniforms, and refer to themselves as “Koya commandos.” The villagers, however, continue to call them Judum.

Dehumanization has become the norm on both sides of this internal conflict across the country. Maoists treat informers in increasingly brutal ways, including the beheading of a policeman in Jharkhand. Meanwhile, a now-famous image from West Bengal showed security forces trussing up the corpses of slain women Maoists to poles, like trophy animals.

DEMOCRACY AT WAR: INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO THE MAOIST CHALLENGE

Almost as remarkable as the coming to center stage of the Maoists between 2005 and 2010 has been the timidity of India's democratic institutions when faced with what is termed a “national security” issue. This

is of course hardly unique to India, as demonstrated by the failure of statutory checks on excesses committed during the U.S.-led “war on terror” worldwide. While the main ruling parties, the Congress and the BJP, colluded in sponsoring the Salwa Judum, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), which rules in West Bengal, has prosecuted its war there through its own armed gangs, locally called the Harnad Vahini. Parliament has thus offered little protection for the people. While *adivasi* legislators have been generally opposed to a militaristic solution, they are dependent on their parties for tickets and funding and have been unable to provide an alternative voice.

Independent statutory commissions have also failed the victims of vigilante and state violence. The National Human Rights Commission did not respond to repeated pleas from victims in Chhattisgarh, and when directed by the Supreme Court in 2008 to undertake an inquiry, sent a team of 16 police personnel who went to villages in armored tanks, accompanied by some of the very SPOs who had been responsible for the violence. The National Commission for Women has not taken up the cases of rape victims, while the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes has been silent. The only commission which has displayed any enthusiasm or integrity is the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights, but it is relatively new and powerless.

Within the government, the Home Ministry calls the shots on this issue, with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs completely irrelevant. The Home Ministry Naxal Management Cell is dominated by policemen or “security experts,” and the home minister himself, P. Chidambaram, has made the war against the Maoists his own. While elements in the Congress Party have been uncomfortable with this approach, with party colleagues calling the home minister “intellectually arrogant” and his ministry “paranoid,” the Congress Party leader, Sonia Gandhi, has acquiesced in the war on *adivasis*.

The Supreme Court has been the only institution to uphold its mandate of protecting the rule of law, but court processes are tortuous and the writ petitions against vigilante violence and abuses of human rights have already lasted three years. In any case, repeated judicial directions to the state of Chhattisgarh to carry out elementary tasks, like registering First Information Reports (FIRs) or rehabilitating those whose houses were burned, have been met with outright refusals to act.

In the initial years of Salwa Judum (2005–2008), the media were largely quiet, especially in Chhattisgarh. This was enabled through a combination of government censorship and threats against the media; the enactment of the Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act 2005, which penalized anything that could be construed as support for the Maoists; and a language and reality disconnect between journalists and *adivasis*. The strategy of arresting the secretary of the People's Union for Civil Liberties, Dr. Binayak Sen, had a mixed effect. On the one hand, his release became a cause célèbre, bringing some media attention to the issue. On the other hand, it focused all civil society attention on his person, at the expense of the wider issues involved. In West Bengal, a much stronger democratic tradition; an active opposition party, the Trinamool Congress, intent on winning elections; and the national media's virulent anti-communism ensured that the ruling CPI (Marxist)'s handling of the Maoist issue got sufficient coverage. Since Operation Green Hunt started, Maoist attacks escalated, and celebrities like Arundhati Roy have adopted the Maoist cause, the issue has finally become front-page news.

Despite repeated exhortations to the Maoists to agree to peace talks, the central and state governments are clearly unwilling to engage with them in practice, on the grounds that Naxalites' willingness to talk is merely a ploy to buy time. The nadir was the police arrest and killing of the Maoist leader Cherukuri Rajkumar, aka Azad, in June 2010, precisely at a time when he was about to confirm dates for peace talks to begin.

The latest in the saga is the proposal to flood Maoist areas with funds, largely for the building of roads, but also for "basic social infrastructure." The government's Planning Commission has allotted Rs. 13,472 crores for 60 "Naxal-affected and backward districts"³⁹ as part of a strategy to win hearts and minds. But without any effort to change the basic structure of exploitation—in which the local administration in collusion with industrialists, traders, and contractors make all decisions, without consulting the villagers—it is unlikely that this money will yield much that is useful. Above all, there is no appreciation for *adivasi* lifestyles or any attempt to build upon existing strengths, and tired versions of modernization theory continue to be espoused by India's ruling politicians. Such stale rhetoric is clearly apparent in this reportage from *The Hindu*, citing comments made by the home minister, P. Chidambaram: "The Minister indicated that while implementation of laws such as PESA and

FRA might give rights to forest dwellers, the long term solution lay in the basic development which would bring them out of the forests.”⁴⁰

While the Indian government is willing to talk of a “political package” for Kashmiris, when it comes to the country’s *adivasis*, they are seen as “pre-political,” content if they are fed or given laboring jobs. What I.F. Stone wrote decades ago about Vietnam rings as true today of India’s blinkered political classes:

In reading the military literature on guerilla warfare now so fashionable at the Pentagon, one feels that these writers are like men watching a dance from outside through heavy plate-glass windows. They see the motions but they can’t hear the music. They put the mechanical gestures down on paper with pedantic fidelity. But what rarely comes through to them are the injured racial feelings, the misery, the rankling slights, the hatred, the devotion, the inspiration and the desperation. So they do not really understand what leads men to abandon wife, children, home, career, friends; to take to the bush and live gun in hand like a hunted animal; to challenge overwhelming military odds rather than acquiesce any longer in humiliation, injustice or poverty.⁴¹

Justice. Political overtures instead of mere economic packages. Development to benefit citizens, not corporates. Apologies for the past rather than homilies for the future. These would all go a long way toward negotiating peace.

NOTES

1 Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 17.

2 See “Development Challenges in Extremist Affected Areas,” Report of an Expert Group to the Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi, April 2008, http://www.otherindia.org/dev/images/stories/exp_gp_sj.pdf.

3 The economist Jean Dreze writes: “At least four alternative figures are available: 28 percent from the Planning Commission, 50 percent from the N.C. Saxena Committee report, 42 percent from the Tendulkar Committee report, and 80 percent or so from the National Commission for Enterprises

in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS).” Jean Dreze, “Poverty Estimates vs. Food Entitlements,” *The Hindu*, February 24, 2010, <http://www.hindu.com/2010/02/24/stories/2010022456271200.htm>.

4 “There are more MPI (Multidimensional Poverty Index) poor people in eight Indian states alone (421 million in Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal) than in the 26 poorest African countries combined (410 million).” “Oxford and UNDP launch a better way to measure poverty,” Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and United Nations Development Program, July 14, 2010, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/mediacentre/announcements/title,20523,en.html>.

5 In 2007, Tata Steel of the Tata Group bought British steelmaker Corus for \$12 billion, Hindalco of the Aditya Birla group bought U.S. aluminum sheet-maker Novelis for \$6 billion, and Jindal Steel acquired the development rights for the El Mutun mine in Bolivia for \$2.3 billion. “The value of takeovers by Indian firms has risen sharply, from less than \$1 billion in 2000 to an estimated \$8 billion in 2006. Acquisitions in the first six weeks of 2007 added up to more than \$18 billion.” See “Indian Companies Become Major Players in Overseas Acquisitions,” HULIQ, February 19, 2010, <http://www.huliq.com/11617/indian-companies-become-major-players-in-overseas-acquisitions>.

6 Narayanan Madhavan, “India’s Band of Billionaires Biggest in Asia,” *Hindustan Times*, March 10, 2007, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-s-band-of-billionaires-is-the-biggest-in-Asia/Article1-209306.aspx>.

7 There are several reasons for this. They include the origins of the Maoist movement in Andhra Pradesh and Bengal, from where they spread to neighboring states, as well as the dominance of Hindu reform movements in *adivasi* areas in Western India. In Gujarat, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh has recently appropriated these populations for a Hindu chauvinist agenda, although *adivasi* movements fighting for land and forest resources continue to be active.

8 Supriya Sharma, “Iron Ore Mines Going for Rs 1 Lakh in Chhattisgarh?” TNN, Aug 2, 2010, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Iron-ore-mines-going-for-Rs-1-lakh-in-Chhattisgarh/articleshow/6245781.cms>.

9 However, contrary to much activist hype, there is no direct co-relation between two proposed steel plants for mining in Dantewada and the forcible evacuation of villages under the state-sponsored vigilante movement called Salwa Judum. Salwa Judum has specifically targeted Maoist strongholds, not villages, which are situated in mining areas. This is clear if one maps the progress of Salwa Judum.

10 “The growing Maoist insurgency over large swathes of the mineral-rich countryside could soon hurt some industrial investment plans. Just when India needs to ramp up its industrial machine to lock in growth and when foreign companies are joining the party—Naxalites are clashing with mining and steel companies essential to India’s long-term success.” FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry), *Task Force Report on National Security and Terrorism* (New Delhi: FICCI, 2009), <http://www.ficci.com/SPdocument/20032/>

terrorism-report.pdf. This report also calls for private security agencies to be given arms licenses, which is dangerous given that hired goons are already being used against villagers.

11 “FICCI Opposes Mining bill, Debunks Tribal Compensation Scheme,” *Economic Times*, July 25, 2010, <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/FICCI-opposes-mining-bill-debunks-tribal-compensation-scheme/articleshow/6214184.cms>.

12 See for instance, police firings at Maikanch village in Rayagada district, Orissa, where three people were killed while protesting against land acquisitions for bauxite mining (2001); at Tapkara in Ranchi district, Jharkhand, where nine were killed while protesting against the Koel Karo dam (2001); at the Khuga dam site in Churachandpur district, Manipur, where three were killed (2005); at Kalinganagar in Orissa, where 12 were killed while protesting against a Tata Steel Plant (2006); and at Nandigram in West Bengal in 2007, where 15 were killed while protesting against land acquisitions for a special economic zone. This is by no means an exhaustive list of recent police firings related to land acquisitions. The police usually claim that they were attacked first and forced to maintain law and order; this is contested by the human rights groups that have conducted independent investigations into the incidents.

13 On May 15, 2010, the police fired upon and injured protestors peacefully demonstrating against a proposed POSCO steel plant in Orissa. On May 12, 2010, they killed one protestor at the Kalinganagar industrial complex.

14 Arindam Sen, “Anarchism or Revolutionary Marxism,” prepared for Resurgence, a symposium on the Naxal/Marxist challenge to the state, March 2010, http://www.india-seminar.com/2010/607/607_arindam_sen.htm.

15 Rupashree Nanda, “State of the Nation: Government Preferred Over Naxals,” IBN Live, August 9, 2010, <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/people-in-naxal-hit-areas-prefer-govt-poll/128447-37-64.html?from=tn>.

16 Suhas Palshikar and Yogendra Yadav, “The Week-CNN-IBN-CSDS Poll Inside India’s War Zone,” *The Week*, August 20, 2010, 20-43.

17 “Naxalites operate in a vacuum created by inadequacy of administrative and political institutions, espouse local demands and take advantage of the prevalent disaffection and injustice among the exploited segments of the population and seek to offer an alternative system of governance which promises emancipation of these segments,” Ministry of Home Affairs, Internal Security Division, “Status Paper on the Naxal Problem,” May 18, 2006, 1.

18 For the police, “effectiveness” means huge expenditures, for instance, on mine-protected vehicles, helicopters, the fortification of police stations etc., rather than simply greater professionalism and courteous treatment of the public. This, despite the fact that police behavior and contempt for villagers is a major cause of support for Naxalism.

19 On July 13, 2010, the government of India proposed a Unified Command to carry out anti-Naxal operations. “The Centre also offered more helicopters,

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logistical support and intelligence sharing to the States to fight the Maoist menace. It sanctioned about 16,000 additional Special Police Officers, taking the total number of such posts to about 30,000. It also decided to fund the establishment or strengthening of 400 police stations in the affected districts at the rate of Rs. 2 crore a police station on 80:20 basis over two years. The States were asked to set up an empowered group, chaired by Member-Secretary, Planning Commission, to modify the norms and guidelines to implement development schemes having regard to the local needs and conditions in the affected districts. It was decided to improve road connectivity in 34 worst affected districts. A number of roads and bridges are proposed to be included at a cost of Rs. 950 crore by the Road Transport and Highways Ministry. The Chief Ministers were told that the Planning Commission was considering a Special Development Plan for the affected districts with focus on primary education, healthcare, drinking water and road connectivity." Vinay Kumar, "Centre Proposes Unified Command to Fight Naxals," *The Hindu*, July 15, 2010, <http://www.hindu.com/2010/07/15/stories/2010071557350100.htm>.

20 Stuart Hall et al., *Policing the Crises: Mugging, the State and Law and Order* (New York: HM Publishers, 1978), 16.

21 Author's interview with Shivraj Patil, India's home minister, February 2007.

22 In a reply to an open letter written by the Independent Citizens Initiative (a six-member group that visited Dantewada to carry out an investigation into the Salwa Judum, and of which this author was a member), Ganapathy, the Maoist General Secretary, asks: "Can you show us one instance from the pages of Indian history where the rights of *adivasis* were ensured through non-violent and open means? And not just in India, but anywhere else in the world for that matter?" Ganapathy, "Open Reply to Independent Citizen's Initiative on Dantewada," *Economic and Political Weekly*, January 6, 2007.

23 The Red Fort in Delhi has been the symbolic seat of India's power from Mughal times onward.

24 Ganapathy, "Open Reply."

25 Gautam Navlakha, "Maoists in India," *Economic and Political Weekly*, June 3, 2006, 2187.

26 Rahul Bedi, "Maoist Insurgency Spreads in India," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, July 1, 2006, 21-25.

27 Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, *Annual Report 2009-10*, <http://www.mha.nic.in/pdfs/AR%28E%290910.pdf>.

28 "South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) Fatalities in Left wing Extremist Violence, Chhattisgarh 2005-2010," http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/maoist/data_sheets/annualcasualtieschhatisgarh.asp.

29 Nandini Sundar, "Pleading for Justice," prepared for Resurgence, a symposium on the Naxal/Marxist challenge to the state, March 2010, http://www.india-seminar.com/2010/607/607_nandini_sundar.htm.

30 Two thousand seven hundred thirty-three people officially died in Delhi in the anti-Sikh pogroms of 1984 (see www.carnage84.com/official/ahooja/ahooja.htm), and 1,254 in the anti-Muslim pogroms of Gujarat in 2002 (Answer in Parliament, provided by Minister of State for Home Affairs, August 2005).

31 Nandini Sundar, "Vigilantism, Culpability, and Moral Dilemmas," *Critique of Anthropology* 30 (March 2010): 1-9.

32 "Should India Ban Iron Ore Export?" Zeebiz.com, July 30, 2010, <http://biz.zeenews.com/interviews/story.aspx?newsid=109>.

33 Credit for this narrative is owed to an interview with Lanka Papi Reddy, former Central Committee member, who has now surrendered, March 2010.

34 See Gautam Navlakha, "Days and Nights in the Maoist Heartland," *Economic and Political Weekly*, April 17 2010, 38-47. For a critique of this position, see Nirmalangshu Mukherjee, "Arms Over the People: What Have the Maoists Achieved in Dandakaranya," *Economic and Political Weekly*, June 19, 2010, 16-20.

35 This is evident from a variety of sources, including *People's March* (a magazine that carries Maoist views) and footage from the television channels Sahara Samay and CNN-IBN.

36 Based on author interviews between 2005 and 2010, the one message that seems to get across even in non-core villages is that people should keep the police at bay, and live a life independent of government.

37 At least two accounts of such meetings emphasize the importance of reading among the Maoists, suggesting that this was an alternative route to education, which the state was failing to provide. This author was told: "Whoever joins them learns to read."

38 AN Singh, *Naxalpanthi Gatividhiyon Sambandhi Teep*, c. 1990 (cyclostyled document prepared by the Bhilai Zone Police Chief).

39 "Rs. 50 Crore a Year to Develop Naxal-hit and Backward Areas," *The Hindu*, August 8, 2010, <http://www.hindu.com/2010/08/08/stories/2010080863581300.htm>.

40 Ibid.

41 I.F. Stone, *In a Time of Torment, 1961-1967* (New York: Little Brown & Co, 1967), 173.

INDIA'S STRATEGIC AND POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

SIDDHARTH SRIVASTAVA

In order to understand India's external security climate, it is important to form a view of the overall contemporary strategic and political environment in the country. This paper looks at these two elements.¹

CHANGING REALITIES: A NEW SENSE OF URGENCY

Over the last few years, a greater sense of urgency has prevailed in India's strategic environment. Several factors account for this new urgency.

India At Odds With Pakistan, and the China Factor

For a number of years, conflict between India and Pakistan has caused a South Asian arms race of great proportions.

However, more recent events, such as the 1999 Kargil conflict and the November 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, have heightened India's quest to stockpile arms.

In the decade that has followed Kargil, the value of India's arms purchase deals has crossed U.S. \$50 billion, with every sign indicating that this figure will surpass U.S. \$100 billion over the coming decade. India's arms acquisitions have more than doubled between 1999 and 2004 (U.S. \$15.5 billion) and 2004 and 2009 (U.S. \$35 billion). In fact, the defense ministry has inked over 450 arms contracts worth over U.S. \$30 billion in just the last three years.

Pakistan and China, the two countries that concern India the most, have large military agendas in place. Pakistan, a former Cold War ally of

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America's and now a partner in the U.S. war against terror, has continued to receive large amounts of military aid, including state-of-the-art F-16 fighters. Pakistan is assisted by China, whose military prowess is far ahead of India's. China's officially declared defense budget is nearly two and a half times India's.

The India-China Indian Ocean Region Tussle

For quite some time, and particularly as their economies have grown, India and China have been eyeing each other's influence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Such influence has significant strategic, military, transport, energy, and commercial implications for both countries.

India has long been wary of the bases being set up by China in India's neighborhood—a policy that has been described as a “string of pearls” around India's neck, which can easily be tightened should the need arise.

How is this string of pearls strategy being implemented? First, in Gwadar, Pakistan, China is developing a deep-water harbor that could be used by an expanding fleet of Chinese nuclear submarines. Second, China is developing ports and other infrastructure projects in Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. Third, China is helping build a deep-water port in Hambantota on Sri Lanka's southern coast. Fourth, China is building two naval bases in Myanmar. And fifth, major Chinese investments are being made in East Africa, and particularly in Kenya and Tanzania.

Over the long term, Chinese naval officers speak of developing three ocean-going fleets to patrol Japan and Korea, the western Pacific, the Strait of Malacca, and the Indian Ocean.

Not to be left wanting, India has established a new listening post that has begun operations in northern Madagascar, a large island off Africa's eastern coast. The monitoring station will gather intelligence on foreign navies operating in the region by linking up with similar facilities in Mumbai and Kochi, cities located on India's west coast and the headquarters of the Navy's Western and Southern commands, respectively.

The station is India's first in the southern Indian Ocean, and is significant due to the increasing traffic of oil supplies across the Cape of Good Hope and the Mozambique Channel (the latter being located between Madagascar and southeastern Africa).

India has also set up another monitoring facility on an island it has leased from Mauritius, and situated to the east of Madagascar. Its latest defense agreements with Maldives only strengthen such moves. Maldives comprises over 1,000 tiny islands, and is about 400 nautical miles from the Indian coast.

Terror and Arms

A reluctance for battle by an ill-prepared army may have resulted in India not launching an attack on Pakistan in the aftermath of the Mumbai terrorist attacks.²

In fact, it has become increasingly apparent from top officials in the know that closed-door meetings of top military commanders and political leaders discussed the poor state of the armory (both ammunition and artillery), and that this tilted the balance in favor of not striking at Pakistan. Army commanders impressed on the political leadership in New Delhi that an inadequate and obsolete arsenal at their disposal militated against an all-out war. It is notable, however, that the Navy and Air Force, based on what each deemed its proper preparedness, gave the government the go-ahead to carry out an attack and to repulse any retaliation from Pakistan.

In response to perceived threats following the Mumbai attacks, India's 2009-2010 defense budget was raised by 34 percent to U.S. \$30 billion. Officials say that defense modernization expenditures should easily surpass U.S. \$100 billion between the years 2000-2020. In fact, U.S. \$10 billion was set aside by the government for net capital expenditure for fiscal year 2009-2010—perhaps an indication of the impact of the Mumbai attacks.

In a grim reminder about the danger that India faces from sea-based terrorism, the Indian Navy warned in early 2010 that due to inadequate security measures, terrorists could smuggle “dirty” nuclear bombs into the country via ports.

Energy Politics and Sea-Based Platforms

New Delhi recently lost out to China on a contract to secure energy resources in Myanmar. India is now wary that Chinese energy firms

are going to make a dash for Sri Lanka's oil and gas sources in the Mannar Basin.

Additionally, competition for hydrocarbon sources between India and China has moved to Africa, which will heighten efforts to power the seas. In early 2010, India's federal petroleum minister, Murli Deora, said: "India is making a renewed push to open doors for state-run firms in the African oil industry by offering to invest in building new refineries in return for gas and equity in oil fields."³

Given the huge volume of oil movement between the Persian Gulf and Malacca Strait toward northern Asia, the Indian Navy is looking to develop a long-range nuclear platform on the eastern and western seaboard, with adequate strike capability. In this context, India unveiled its first indigenous nuclear-powered submarine, the *INS Arihant*, in July 2009. The vessel is expected to be commissioned in 2012. Once the submarine is operational, India will be the sixth country (after the United States, Russia, China, France, and Britain) to possess a nuclear-powered submarine.

Some observers believe nuclear submarines represent a critical addition to India's weapons capability. Such a vessel provides a difficult-to-detect-and-target undersea platform for quick retaliatory nuclear strikes. Nuclear submarines have greater speed and power than, and can cover greater distances and stay underwater longer than, conventional diesel-electric submarines—hence allowing for sudden strikes while maintaining stealth and higher protection.

Sea Piracy

India is taking a serious view about the rising incidence of ship hijackings by pirates, especially in the IOR. Indian defense minister A.K. Antony has said, "Piracy in the high seas is becoming a serious problem and all nations, mainly those in the IOR are concerned about it." Antony notes that the Indian Navy "is in touch with other navies on this, since piracy occurs in the IOR, especially in Somalian waters and other areas. We are in the process of discussing the charter proposals." However, according to Antony, the government has ruled out the option of "hot pursuit" (a doctrine of international law, based on the ability of a country's navy to pursue a foreign ship in territorial waters, even if the foreign ship escapes to the high seas).⁴

Indian shipping industries feel that the government should send naval war ships to protect the lives of Indian crew members. New Delhi, however, has not been keen to do so. Indian ship owners have also been demanding protection for Indian seamen working onboard Indian and foreign ships, who account for 6 percent of the global seafaring population. Several Indian seafarers have refused to sail, even after being offered more money, resulting in losses to shipping companies.

SPEEDING UP PROCUREMENT AND ACQUISITIONS

The Kargil conflict and the Mumbai terror attacks have crystallized for India its need for more import-driven defense acquisitions. A new Defense Procurement Policy (DPP) came into effect in November 2009. The policy aims to bring transparency and probity to arms purchases, which have historically become mired in red tape and corruption allegations that delay acquisitions. Defense Minister Antony has said that the policy aims at “promoting and facilitating” the broad involvement of India’s defense industry, while also sparking “transparency and integrity” in defense acquisitions.⁵

This new DPP represents an important step, given how notorious India’s defense procurement and modernization processes are for being not just slow, bureaucratic, and corrupt, but also for lacking any long-term strategic planning. India has struggled mightily both to procure aircraft carriers internationally and to build them indigenously. Its sole aircraft carrier, the five-decade-old *INS Viraat*, has been refitted to operate for another five years, despite earlier plans that had called for it to be junked. With its air fleet depleted due to repeated accidents and half of its imported British Sea Harriers (a naval jet fighter, reconnaissance, and attack aircraft) lost to crashes, the *INS Viraat* is often deemed a “toothless tiger.” For years, Indian Navy commanders have sought to impress upon the political leadership India’s need for at least three aircraft carriers.

The ground is now being prepared for large acquisitions. Over the last couple of years, purchases have been made of jet fighters, warships, submarines, radars, tanks, missiles, weapon systems, and platforms, mostly from France, Russia, Israel, and America. These acquisitions include the 2007 purchase of the 36-year-old warship *USS Trenton* (rechristened the *INS Jalashwa*) from the United States. This is India’s second-largest war-

ship, after the *INS Viraat*. As of this writing, several other large-scale purchases were pending. One is a U.S. \$12 billion deal to buy 126 multi-role combat aircrafts. Six global aerospace companies are bidding for this jackpot deal: Lockheed Martin and Boeing (in the United States), Dassault's Rafale (in France), Gripen (in Sweden), MiG (in Russia), and Eurofighter Typhoon (a consortium of British, German, Italian, and Spanish companies).

DOMESTIC POLITICS AND DEFENSE: THE EXIT OF LEFT PARTIES

The unexpected landslide victory of India's Congress Party in the 2009 general elections has unshackled the new government from the tricky task of managing the earlier governing coalition for survival, especially the rabidly anti-American parties of the left.

Additionally, while much of the Congress-led government's energies last term were utilized in tying up the India-U.S. civilian nuclear deal and in dealing with recalcitrant communist allies that had problems with such growing strategic ties, broader issues of security and defense are key focus areas this time round.

Furthermore, with the exit of the left from the governing coalition, the role of Indian private firms in defense production should get a filip (though the political marginalization of the anti-American left will also pave the way for more American involvement in the defense trade with India).

THE FUTURE

In the years ahead, India figures to experience some considerable changes in its broader strategic environment, particularly in terms of its defense relationships and its domestic defense capacities.

Strategic Shifts

India is increasingly turning to countries such as Israel and America to procure arms (Israel, in fact, has overtaken Russia as India's largest defense supplier), while also remaining close to long-time partners France

and the United Kingdom. Ties between India and America have undertaken a strategic shift over the last couple of years, resulting in the signing of the landmark civilian nuclear deal between the two countries. Additionally, America has been promoting India as a counterweight to China in the region, while also tapping into new business opportunities in India—such as those in nuclear energy generation.

Domestic Defense Industry

The Indian private sector has often failed to meet expectations on indigenous arms production, and is a great cause for worry. This failure is in many ways rooted in a long-standing dependence on foreign capital. As far back as 2001, more than 25 percent of the Indian defense sector was allowed to be funded by foreign direct investment. In fact, soon after the 2009 general elections, discussion began within the government about the possibility of raising this figure even higher.

However, there is some reason to be hopeful about a more robust Indian defense industry. The government has now ruled out allowing multinational armament companies to go in for indirect offsets (in this context, investments in non-defense sectors) in defense deals worth over 3 billion rupees. Some of India's major firms are now waiting in the wings; L&T, Mahindra & Mahindra, and Tata Group are some of the key domestic players looking at big defense contracts.

CONCLUSION

India's defense modernization has gathered steam as a response to China, Pakistan, and terrorism. A political consensus exists around the imperative of such modernization. What remains to be seen, however, is whether this process is achieved by an increase in foreign procurements and imports, or by a deepening of indigenous efforts. Still, there is little doubt that India will be stockpiling arms with great determination over the next decade.

NOTES

1 Unless otherwise stated, material from this essay has been gathered from conversations the author has held with various sources within India's government in 2009 and 2010.

2 See Siddharth Srivastava, "Indian Army 'Backed' Out of Pakistan Attack," *Asia Times*, January 21, 2009, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/KA21Df02.html.

3 Priyanka Bhardwaj and Michael J. Economides, "India and China Face Off in Africa," *Energy Tribune*, January 4, 2010, <http://www.energytribune.com/articles.cfm/2793/India-and-China-Face-Off-in-Africa>. For more information about India's energy policies overseas, see Michael Kugelman, ed., "Foreign Addiction: Assessing India's Energy Security Strategy," Asia Program Special Report No. 142, October 2008, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, DC, http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/FINALASIA_SpecialReport_142_rpt.pdf.

4 "Government Finalizing Strategy Against Sea Pirates," *Indian Express*, October 1, 2008, <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/govtfinalisingstrategyagainstseapirates/368243/0>.

5 "New DPP from November 1: Defense Minister Antony," *Thaindian News*, October 27, 2009, http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/india-news/new-dpp-from-november-1-defence-minister-antony_100266363.html.

THE RATIONALE AND IMPLICATIONS OF INDIA'S GROWING MARITIME POWER

ARUN PRAKASH

It was not too long ago when Indians felt exasperated that scholarly opinion in the United States tended to either ignore or understate India's regional significance. It was also galling for some that American scholars and analysts were either dismissive of, or paid little attention to, India's evolving sea power and the motivation prompting this renewed maritime focus.

But things are obviously changing, because a steady stream of study teams and delegations have, of late, been visiting New Delhi to investigate India's allegedly "dramatic" naval growth, and many investigative pieces of writing have appeared in print and on the Internet.

Those in India who are intrigued by this eruption of curiosity need to remind themselves that when a third-world country is seen launching a nuclear submarine or negotiating the price of a second-hand aircraft carrier, ears do prick up and often hackles rise. Indians may have the reputation of being a talkative race, but they are not very good at communication. This paper attempts to redress this lacuna by discussing the rationale behind India's growing maritime power as well as its implications.

THE GROWTH STORY

First of all, the Indian Navy is not an entity that grew overnight. At independence in 1947, the departing British saw India as a potential base and bastion against a possible Soviet advance toward the warm waters of the Indian Ocean. In this Commonwealth matrix, the Indian Navy was envisioned as an anti-submarine task force, and was to receive three

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surplus light-fleet carriers from the Royal Navy, along with a large naval aviation component and necessary escort forces.¹

However, due to subsequent developments—including India’s assumption of a “non-aligned” stance, its financial difficulties, and the outbreak of the Korean War—just a single British aircraft carrier, two old cruisers, and eight new frigates were transferred to India by 1961.² Yet for a newly independent nation, this was not an insignificant force. Visionary naval leaders in India ensured that underway replenishment ships, diesel submarines, and a maritime reconnaissance element were progressively added, and an indigenous warship-building capability created, in the following decade, to lay the foundation for a balanced blue-water navy.

Strong India-USSR ties were established in the 1960s and yielded a windfall of hardware for the Indian Navy. Between 1980 and 1991, the Navy’s major acquisitions included, among other items, an aircraft carrier, 27 shipborne vertical and short take-off and landing (VSTOL) fighters, five guided-missile destroyers, 12 diesel submarines, nine missile corvettes, five maritime reconnaissance aircraft, and a nuclear attack submarine on lease.

This steady accretion of maritime capability, spread over a decade, was regrettably unaccompanied by any attempt on India’s part to convey a rationale or reassurance to neighbors. Concurrently, India’s young prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi, decided to adopt a proactive regional approach, resulting in military interventions (by invitation) in Sri Lanka and Maldives. All this led to a degree of unease about India’s long-term intentions in its neighborhood, especially in Australia, which used the convenient Indian “bogey” to initiate its own military build-up.

The reason cash-strapped India could afford all this military hardware was because it came from the USSR—either through a barter system or at throwaway prices, and payable in Indian rupees. Through this display of fraternal altruism, Soviet admirals were not just acquiring influence and leverage for Moscow, but also binding India to the USSR for the lifetime of every weapons system sold. The chaos that followed the demise of the Soviet Union led to a collapse of the arms supply chain, and left the Indian armed forces struggling to keep their weapons systems alive.

India’s arms acquisition system, which had been based on buying on credit or on rupee payment, now had to face the realities of the cash-and-carry international arms bazaar. However, since the opening up of

India's economy in the early 1990s, the country's rapidly growing gross domestic product (GDP) has generated adequate resources for defense purchases, thereby enabling India's armed forces to embark on ambitious re-equipment plans.

India's unexpected nuclear tests in 1998 may have invoked Western disapproval, but certainly upgraded its strategic status, and led to a re-computation of the regional balance of power. Other factors that counted significantly in the evolving matrix were the progressive decline of U.S. economic and military influence, the rise of China and India in close proximity, and the emerging salience of the Indian Ocean in the overall geostrategic context.

DRIVERS FOR GROWTH

Why does India, a developing nation with enormous socioeconomic problems, have such maritime ambitions?

In fact, while the Navy had, no doubt, always nurtured a lofty vision of itself as a blue-water force at some future point in time, this vision was initially shared by neither the politicians nor the bureaucracy. It is only during the last two decades that certain key factors have coalesced to drive a consensus across the board that India does indeed need to focus on maritime security.

- The first of these is the powerful phenomenon of globalization, which has done for India what naval historian and strategist Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan achieved for the United States with his persuasive writings in the last decades of the 19th century. International trade, the *sine qua non* of globalization, is carried overwhelmingly by sea, as is energy, the lifeblood of industry. Ensuring stability at sea, as well as the safety of shipping lanes in the face of multifarious threats, has assumed prime importance, and brought maritime forces into sharp focus.
- In 1993, explosives from a neighboring country arrived on India's west coast via boat, and were used to trigger serial blasts that created mayhem in Mumbai. Fifteen years later, in November 2008, terrorists landed by fishing trawler in Mumbai to play havoc with the city once more. This has created a sense of in-

tense vulnerability among the public about India's 7,000-kilometer coastline and 600 odd islands.

- Next is the adversarial relationship with China. There is recognition within Indian security circles that China's economic and military rise, which underpins an increasingly arrogant attitude, could eventually lead to a confrontation. Given the relative geographical location of air bases and army formations, when the gloves are off the Sino-Indian military equation along the Himalayan borders is going to be evenly matched. The Indian Ocean may, therefore, become an arena where maritime forces play a decisive role. In this context, India needs to be prepared at sea and to leverage her geographical advantage.
- The fourth factor, more catalyst than driver, is availability of funding. Four decades of post-independence fiscal stringency that kept the Indian Navy's plans in deep-freeze ended when the economy was opened in 1990. Steady GDP growth is now generating sufficient resources for implementation of many long-delayed plans. The Navy only needs to ensure correct prioritization of its requirements.

The effectiveness of these drivers can be gauged from the financial commitments made by the government of India to the Navy's acquisition programs. India has now launched its first nuclear-powered ballistic-missile-carrying submarine (SSBN) as the lead boat in a building program reported to cost about U.S. \$6 billion. At least two more SSBNs will follow, with longer range missiles. Additionally, a Russian nuclear-powered attack submarine is due to be delivered, shortly, on a 10-year lease. Furthermore, India will be spending approximately U.S. \$2.5 billion on acquiring a refurbished Russian aircraft carrier, while a second such ship, being indigenously built in the city of Cochin, will possibly cost another billion dollars. If similar amounts are taken as the cost of seven stealth frigates, six diesel subs, and 30 other warships on order, according to media conjecture, it signifies a committed expenditure in the region of U.S. \$15-20 billion, in the next decade, on naval hardware of strategic significance.

SOME FLAWED ASSUMPTIONS

Many India-watchers have noted and commented on these developments, and a few of them have also ventured to undertake an in-depth analysis. In a well-researched and insightful document published in 2009,³ Prof. James Holmes and two of his U.S. Naval War College colleagues have offered a set of postulates about the foundations of India's naval strategy. Just as this study attempts to gain an understanding of the Indian mind, it also provides an insight into the logic followed by the authors.

In general, the most striking feature about American research *vis-à-vis* India is the intense desire to place Indian thought processes and actions into a known and familiar paradigm. There is understandable trepidation that straying off the beaten track and exploring unorthodoxy might lead researchers into uncharted and therefore hazardous waters. Unfortunately, Indian mores and culture do not lend themselves easily to conventional constructs and interpretations that are familiar to the Western intellect.

This tendency can be illustrated by flagging just two assumptions⁴ in the aforementioned document:

- Firstly, that a grand historical narrative is required to bolster support for a maritime build-up and strategy, and that if India does not have a “usable past,” it should perhaps create one.
- Secondly, that the shape and size of the Indian Navy represents the physical manifestation of society's political and strategic culture, and that India's national leadership is motivated by history and philosophical traditions, in its employment of military power.

These two assumptions are singled out because they are not entirely valid, in the Indian context, and once accepted, such assumptions could lead to erroneous conclusions or deductions.

Historical Backdrop

The number of historical accounts that authoritatively establish India's ancient maritime past is not large. But this is more an indication of in-

tellectual lethargy and reluctance on the part of India's historians to investigate an esoteric field, rather than of the absence of such a past. Nor was India lucky enough to obtain the services of someone as creative as Commander Gavin Menzies, who has single-handedly managed to reinvent Chinese Admiral Cheng Ho and to embellish his exploits.⁵

One need only spend a few days in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, or Cambodia to be struck by the depth and breadth of permeation of these countries by Indian culture, languages, architecture, and even dietary habits. This could have taken place only over centuries of intense maritime interaction. In addition, three great religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam—reached Southeast Asia via India.

These examples present empirical proof of the intense seafaring activity and great maritime tradition nurtured by a succession of royal dynasties that flourished on India's eastern seaboard up to the 13th century. Similarly, from the west coast, intrepid Indian mariners were trading with Persia, Mesopotamia, and Rome as far back as 2000-3000 BCE—a seafaring tradition older than that of Greece, Sparta, or Carthage. While Western accounts studiously ignore these achievements, KM Panikkar has, so far, been the sole Indian historian possessing the diligence and scholarship to investigate India's maritime past.⁶

Another historical fact now embedded in India's racial memory is that invaders who came across the Himalayan passes stayed on to be assimilated into our culture and society. However, those who arrived on our shores by sea came to conquer, plunder, and exploit.

So a grand maritime narrative already exists and does not need to be invented. However, it certainly requires dedicated research, collation, authentication, and wide dissemination. This is not for the purpose of explaining India's maritime aspirations to the people or government, or even for shaping diplomacy, because the imperatives of the 21st century have achieved that. Rather, it is for re-awakening maritime consciousness among India's youth and perhaps also for convincing skeptical foreigners.

Strategic Culture

In the early 1990s, the American analyst George Tanham, in a monograph on the subject of India's strategic culture, drew pointed attention to the historic lack of a strategic thought process in Indian society.⁷

Tanham's investigation did not go down well with the intellectual elite, but with India's accretion of hard power, his diagnosis of strategic myopia has tended to regain prominence.

The most obvious illustration is provided by Indian statesmen. Given their deep-rooted urge to emphasize the principle of civil control over the armed forces, one would expect the Indian politician to eagerly grasp Carl von Clausewitz's dictum that for any military undertaking to be meaningful, it has to have a political underpinning.⁸ And yet surprisingly the Indian politician has flinched not just from outlining national aims and objectives, but also from providing guidance regarding strategic aims and end-states to the country's armed forces leadership. Every military operation since independence, from the 1947 India-Pakistan war to the 2002 general mobilization, has been guided more by political rhetoric than strategic direction.⁹

The sheer intensity of political activity in India makes great demands on a politician's time. The sophisticated Indian statesman creates political space by detaching himself from the corporeal and mundane, and operating on the metaphysical plane. In this context, a former Indian prime minister is reported to have loftily expressed his opinion that "not taking a decision is also a decision."

The more earthy politician, on the other hand, views matters pertaining to national security or to strategic affairs as arcane, tedious, and time-consuming, and best left to the bureaucracy to handle. This allows him to devote his time and attention to complex activities relating to constituency, party, Parliament and, of course, political survival. This is why difficult decisions relating to issues like integrating the armed forces or creating the position of chief of defense staff have remained in limbo for decades.

It is against this background of a hiatus in strategic culture and the complete detachment of the political establishment that the senior leadership of the Indian Navy has, for decades, pursued a vision of maritime India. With patience and perseverance, and mostly without the benefit of higher political direction, the Navy has assiduously acquired hardware and capability from wherever it was available.

During the past decade it has also undertaken the creation of a doctrinal and strategic framework for employment of maritime forces in peace and in war, which has preceded the issuance of a national security guid-

ance or strategy. While the political establishment may not be actively participative in defense policymaking, it is to this establishment's credit that it has not seriously interfered with or impeded these endeavors. That function has been adequately performed by the bureaucracy.

The military leadership expects that as the Indian state attains political maturity, the politician will find the capacity to address security issues with the seriousness they deserve. The groundwork should already be in place by then.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD

India has earlier experienced the adverse reaction that can result in its neighborhood from the *ad hoc* upgradation of military capabilities. While the armed forces try to redress this situation, the political establishment has never considered issuing a white paper or undertaking a defense review that would articulate India's national viewpoint, guide the armed forces, and reassure neighbors. In this context, it is worthwhile to examine India's maritime growth *vis-à-vis* two close neighbors, Pakistan and China.

Pakistan

Pakistan is in the happy position of receiving generous arms aid from China as well as the United States. There is also a regular transfer of technology and material for nuclear weapon and missile programs from China to Pakistan. Over and above this, Pakistan neither needs, nor can afford, an arms race with India.

Very soon after going nuclear in 1998, India formally declared a policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons. Pakistan, on the other hand, has based its strategy on a deliberately ambiguous threat of unilateral nuclear first-use. The country has unofficially declared some conventional "red lines," the crossing of which will supposedly trigger a nuclear response. Thus Pakistan has arrogated to itself the right to escalate a skirmish or encounter into a nuclear conflict when things are not going well. Pakistan has thus actually leveraged its nuclear capability to provide a cover for the two-decade-long war it has been waging against India through terrorist proxies.

It is in this situation of serious asymmetry that India has been exploring means of deterring Pakistani adventurism while keeping well below an unknown nuclear threshold. One of the devices is the “cold start” mobilization envisaged by the Indian Army. The other concept is to apply pressure in support of the Indian Army, from Pakistan’s seaward flank, through maritime maneuver from the sea. This would encompass the full spectrum of maritime warfare, from commodity denial and anti-submarine warfare to power projection across the littoral.

China

As far as China is concerned, in its quest for securing strategic resources it has cast its net worldwide, from Australia to the Russian far east and from west Africa to the heart of South America. China is building a navy that will safeguard its far-flung economic interests and its extended sea lines of communication. Shrouded in opacity, the Chinese Navy’s expansion plans are being pursued, with steely resolve, in all three dimensions. Many new classes of surface combatants and a fleet of 60-70 submarines are in the offing. An aircraft carrier might appear one of these days.

As China pursues its vision of great-power status, India must reconcile itself to not just seeing a nuclear-armed navy in surrounding waters, but also to the establishment of bases in the Indian Ocean. Chinese scholars are already preparing the ground by hypothesizing that these measures are necessary not just to protect China’s own sea lanes, but also to safeguard regional and global stability.¹⁰

In a naval arms race that is already in progress all around us, India is actually losing ground, because of its tardy decision-making and procurement processes. Many in the senior defense hierarchy consider that the diffident and irresolute posture that has come to define India as a “soft state” acts as a provocation, since it has tempted adversaries to repeatedly take liberties and violate India’s sovereignty.

THE MARITIME STRATEGY IN A LARGER PERSPECTIVE

For all its strategic myopia, India’s political establishment clearly comprehends the electoral setbacks and trauma that can result from economic stagnation and delays in already-lagging developmental programs. In this

context, the Indian politician also grasps the primacy of seaborne trade and energy lifelines as far as the country's economic progress is concerned.

He also realizes the hugely deleterious adverse public opinion that results from national security lapses that take place on his watch. The vulnerability of India's long coastline, clearly demonstrated in the November 2008 Mumbai terrorist strike, has convinced him of the imperatives of maritime security.

As mentioned earlier, the dynamics of an economy growing at 7, 8, or 9 percent are adequate to generate the kind of funding that India's immediate security needs demand, with minimal impact on developmental programs. The delays imposed by India's cumbersome acquisition process have ensured that there is always more money than the three branches of the armed forces can spend. After hitting a low of 1.85 percent of GDP in 2008, the defense budget has been hovering around the 2 percent mark, and the allocation for 2009 amounted to U.S. \$30 billion. The next year's budget, announced in March 2010, crept up marginally to 2.12 percent of GDP. Even if this percentage remains static, with GDP growing at 7 to 8 percent, the defense budget could double to U.S. \$60 billion in the next decade.

How do the other armed forces view the Navy's plans? The Indian Army has been driven into an intellectual and doctrinal cul-de-sac by 20 years of insurgency, which demands an ever-increasing number of boots on the ground. Moreover, the "dead hand" of the bureaucracy has effectively stalled its long-overdue modernization plans. As it seeks a way out of this dead end, the Navy offers it an option by promising to apply intense seaward pressure on the adversary. The Navy's strategy, force-planning, and funding have, therefore, received consistent support from the Army's leadership.

The Indian Air Force (IAF), like counterparts the world over, has frequently succumbed to the temptation of sniping at naval plans, and especially during times of fiscal stringency. Naval aviation has usually been the root of its insecurity, especially since the IAF now owns long-range fighter bombers and mid-air refuellers. The Navy, on the other hand, has invariably endeavored to anchor its force-planning strategy to a geostrategic logic that transcends bipartisan issues. Currently, since the budgetary cake is big enough to go around, a truce prevails between the Navy and Air Force.

CONCLUSIONS

Those seeking sinister motives or a Machiavellian orientation may be disappointed by the prosaic logic underpinning India's maritime growth. It cannot be otherwise: A nation and polity struggling to pull half a billion people above the poverty line have many demands on their resources, and hegemony is the last thing on their minds. A few final remarks are offered here:

- India's maritime history, both ancient and recent, provides adequate underpinning and justification for building a robust, modern, naval force.
- The growth trajectory of this force will be guided by the vision of India's naval leadership, with its gaze firmly focused on national maritime interests and regional stability. This paradigm will prevail until, in the fullness of time, the political milieu stabilizes and enables the politician to devote more time and energy to national security issues.
- Asia is on the verge of becoming an arena for balance-of-power politics, in which an unstated naval arms race is already in progress. India has lagged behind in this race and needs to catch up.

Lastly, as a measure of reassurance, India is a status quo power whose national interests will be best served by peace, tranquility, and stability in the region, so that vital goals of development and poverty eradication can be met at the earliest. The Indian Navy will therefore threaten no one.

NOTES

1 Vice Admiral GM Hiranandani, *Transition to Triumph, History of the Indian Navy, 1965-1975* (New Delhi: Lancer Publishers, 1999), 3-11.

2 Ibid., 7-8.

3 James R. Holmes, Andrew C. Winner, and Toshi Yoshihara, *Indian Naval Strategy in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Routledge Taylor & French Group, 2009).

4 Ibid., 8-34.

5 Gavin Menzies, *1421: The Year China Discovered the World* (London: Bantam, 2003).

6 KM Panikkar, *India and the Indian Ocean* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1945).

7 George K. Tanham, *Indian Strategic Thought: An Interpretive Essay* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 1992).

8 Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 87.

9 In the winter of 1947, as the Indian Army was on the verge of expelling a Pakistani invasion of Kashmir, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru took the case to the United Nations, leading to a cease-fire and a dangerous stalemate that persists to date. Similarly, the 1962 Sino-Indian and 1965 India-Pakistan conflicts were marked by poor military planning because they lacked a political underpinning. After a significant military victory in 1971, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi agreed to the return of captured territory as well as 93,000 Pakistani POWs without extracting any *quid pro quo*, political or military, from Pakistan. In 2002, after a Pakistan-inspired attack on the Indian Parliament, the Cabinet decided to order an unprecedented mobilization involving over a million men under arms, for which armed forces chiefs were given no political or military aims. The costly but point-less mobilization was terminated a year later, with no change in the status quo.

10 According to President Hu Jintao, “certain major powers have attempted to dominate the Malacca Strait, which could constitute a major crisis for China.” Statements such as this one help in constructing a hypothetical scenario in which the United States and/or India could cripple China by blocking its Indian Ocean energy supply sea routes. Such a scenario could then be used by China to generate a two-pronged maritime strategy, which would include the development of a powerful blue-water navy to “break out” of coastal waters, and the securing of footholds in the Indian Ocean region to sustain long-range naval deployments. The construction of ports like Gwadar in Pakistan and Hambantota in southeastern Sri Lanka mark the early signs of this strategy.

THE U.S.-INDIA CIVIL NUCLEAR AGREEMENT AND ITS PROLIFERATION, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

DINSHAW MISTRY

In July 2005, in a joint statement with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, U.S. President George Bush announced plans for civilian nuclear energy cooperation with India. Three years later, the U.S. Congress enacted legislation permitting civilian nuclear trade with India, and the international Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) also lifted its ban on nuclear commerce with India. Thereafter, India could acquire nuclear reactors, as well as uranium fuel for its reactors, from foreign suppliers. In return, New Delhi agreed to separate its civilian and military nuclear facilities, and place the civilian component under international safeguards. It would place 14 of its 22 power reactors under permanent safeguards.¹ It would keep its breeder reactor outside safeguards. And it would shut down one of its two military-related reactors. Further, New Delhi affirmed its existing positions regarding a moratorium on nuclear testing, supporting talks on the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT), and adhering to international guidelines on nuclear and missile export controls.

The civilian nuclear agreement was intended to boost Washington's strategic partnership with India, a partnership that policymakers noted "should be one of the United States' highest priorities for the future."² Prior to the agreement, Washington and New Delhi had significant differences over India's remaining outside the nonproliferation regime (given that India has not signed the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, or NPT), and this set back political relations between the two states. After the agreement, the issue of India's remaining outside the NPT was no longer an impediment to U.S.-India relations and to nuclear discussions

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with New Delhi. Washington and the international community could now undertake civilian nuclear trade with India, and could more substantially discuss other nuclear security issues with India, irrespective of its NPT status.

Beyond its political significance, America's civilian nuclear agreement with India has major proliferation and energy implications. The agreement could have both negative and positive implications for the nonproliferation regime. It could also be beneficial by providing India's economy with a clean source of energy. Still, the magnitude of these benefits is uncertain and will depend upon prevailing political and economic factors. This paper assesses the proliferation and energy implications of the civilian nuclear cooperation agreement, the most significant U.S. strategic initiative with India since the end of the Cold War.

IMPACT ON THE NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION REGIME

The civilian nuclear agreement gave India an exemption from a critical NSG rule, which forbids the transfer of civilian nuclear technology to any state that has not acceded to the NPT and accepted full-scope safeguards. A serious concern with this exemption, as the *New York Times* noted on April 7, 2006, is that “in trying to give India a special exemption, Mr. Bush is threatening a carrot-and-stick approach that has been effective for more than 35 years.”³ Under this approach, countries could receive civilian nuclear technology (the carrot) if they joined the NPT and renounced nuclear weapons. However, they were denied this technology (the stick) if they were not in the treaty.

Looking ahead, if two other countries that have not joined the NPT—Pakistan and Israel—also seek and are given an exemption from the NSG's full-scope safeguards rule, then this rule will have been relaxed not just for one country (India), but for three (Israel, Pakistan, and India). It would then be harder to reject exemptions for additional countries in Asia, Europe, or the Middle East should they decide to leave the NPT.⁴

The logic behind this is as follows: If a country relies significantly on nuclear energy and on foreign imports of reactors and fuel, then it is less likely to break out of the NPT if doing so would disrupt its ability to secure energy supplies—which would happen under the current rules of

the NSG. Yet if leaving the NPT does not affect a state's nuclear energy imports (because it is receiving an exemption from NSG rules), then the state would be more inclined to leave the NPT. Thus, the exemption for New Delhi can influence decisions about leaving the NPT in other countries, and this could seriously undermine the NPT.

The consequences of the exemption for India may well depend on how it is framed. If countries may be exempted from the full-scope safeguards rule only after being subjected to this rule for some 20 to 30 years, and only if nations adhere to major nonproliferation norms, then the damage to the nonproliferation regime may be lessened. Along these lines, the carrot-and-stick NPT approach would still be affirmed, because India incurred important costs of being denied civilian nuclear imports for three decades before receiving an exemption. Further, it only received an exemption because of its relatively clean export control record (it had not exported sensitive nuclear and missile technology to other countries), and it will presumably only receive this exemption as long as it complies with nonproliferation norms such as those against nuclear testing.

Proliferation Concerns about Fissile Material Production

One proliferation concern raised by the civilian nuclear agreement is that India could expand its nuclear arsenal, leading Pakistan, and possibly China, to also expand their arsenals. While such a nuclear expansion is theoretically possible, it may also not materialize, for a number of reasons discussed below.

In general, India's military-related Dhruva reactor produces plutonium sufficient for about five nuclear weapons annually. This is not a large amount of plutonium, so the concern about India's fissile material expansion would not arise if India henceforth were to rely only on the Dhruva reactor for weapons-grade plutonium.

India could further expand its nuclear weapons stockpile in two ways. First, because its breeder reactor would not be under international safeguards (it would also not be under safeguards in the absence of a civilian nuclear agreement), India could use weapons-grade plutonium from this reactor to expand its nuclear arsenal. A few years after it is operational—say around 2014—the breeder could annually supply at least 90 kilo-

grams (kg) of weapons-grade plutonium, which is sufficient for perhaps 15 nuclear weapons.⁵ However, this concern may not arise if India requires the breeder-derived plutonium to fuel future breeder reactors, and therefore does not use this plutonium for nuclear weapons.⁶

Second, foreign-supplied uranium fuel for India's civilian nuclear reactors could free up India's domestic uranium supplies for military nuclear reactors. However, again, this concern may not materialize, because India's heavy-water reactors produce reactor-grade rather than weapons-grade plutonium when operated in a normal mode. To be sure, if operated in a low burn-up mode, these reactors would produce weapons-grade plutonium. Under such a scenario, India's nuclear establishment could operate one 220-megawatt (MW) heavy-water reactor in a low burn-up mode, whereby it would consume a considerable 190 tons of uranium annually, and could produce at least 100 to 150 kg of weapons-grade plutonium, sufficient for perhaps 15 to 20 nuclear weapons. Still, given that India's uranium milling capacity is limited,⁷ it may not divert the considerable one-third of its domestically milled uranium required to operate a power reactor in a low burn-up mode, especially because India would also incur international reputational costs for doing so.

The above concerns can be further addressed in two ways. First, they could be addressed by the FMCT or by a global moratorium on fissile material production. Once such a moratorium or treaty is in place and India becomes a party to it, then India would not be able to use plutonium from any of its reactors for nuclear weapons. Second, India may soon have enough nuclear material for a minimum deterrent, and may therefore not need more plutonium for military purposes. In theory, some 100 to 150 deliverable nuclear weapons would provide India with a minimum deterrent against China and Pakistan. India's existing military reactors have already produced, or could soon produce, weapons-grade plutonium sufficient for 100 to 150 nuclear weapons, plus reactor-grade plutonium sufficient for many additional nuclear weapons.

The FMCT is the best way to cap fissile material production by India and its nuclear neighbors, Pakistan and China, over the middle term. These three countries all have a strategic interest in such a treaty because it caps fissile material production by their neighboring rivals. Still, until such a treaty is actually completed, India and Pakistan may continue

producing weapons-grade fissile material to expand their nuclear weapons arsenals.

Restraining Nuclear Testing in Asia

The U.S.-India civilian nuclear agreement has a potentially positive implication. With its commitment to halting nuclear tests, the accord can restrain India's governments—and, consequently, governments in Pakistan and China—from testing new generations of nuclear weapons, including thermonuclear weapons.

It is true that within some elements of India's government, the interest in future testing remains. Most of India's nuclear weapons are believed to be first-generation fission weapons, and India's 1998 test of a thermonuclear device had mixed results.⁸ Accordingly, some of India's senior nuclear scientists, military officials, and defense experts have called for a commission to assess the thermonuclear test,⁹ while others argue that India could maintain a deterrent based on its proven fission devices plus a single test of a thermonuclear device.¹⁰ Still, while some sections of India's nuclear and defense establishment may seek additional thermonuclear tests, India's government has committed to a moratorium on nuclear testing under the civilian nuclear agreement. If New Delhi breaks this moratorium, it would jeopardize India's ability to import nuclear reactors and uranium fuel to meet India's energy requirements. And so long as India maintains its test moratorium, Pakistan, and presumably China, will have one less reason to test additional nuclear weapons.

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

India's economy has grown at a rate of 6 to 8 percent annually in the past decade. If this growth rate is maintained, then India's demand for electricity is expected to increase considerably. The civilian nuclear agreement could provide an important, and environmentally friendly, energy source for a growing Indian economy. It could also offer export opportunities for international nuclear suppliers.

In 2010, India's existing nuclear power reactors generated about 4,400 megawatts (MW) of electricity (but because of domestic uranium fuel constraints, these reactors may not operate at full capacity).¹¹ In addition,

two Russian-built 1,000-MW light-water reactors and an Indian-built 500-MW breeder reactor are to be completed by 2012. By that year, nuclear energy is expected to provide an estimated 3.7 to 4 percent of India's electricity, as shown in Table 1.

By 2020, India's Department of Atomic Energy expects to build eight 700-MW reactors (generating 5,600 MW of electricity), and India's nuclear power capacity would then be 14 gigawatts (GW). Further, if India imports light-water reactors generating about 10,000 MW of electricity, its nuclear power capacity would be 24 GW, and nuclear power could contribute 7 to 10 percent of India's electricity.

By 2030, India could develop four nuclear parks, each generating up to 10,000 MW of electricity, based on imported U.S., French, and Russian light-water reactors.¹² It could also build up to 20 700-MW reactors. Its nuclear power capacity could then increase to about 60 GW, and nuclear power could generate an estimated 8 to 15 percent of India's electricity.

The above projections depend upon how effectively Indian and international suppliers overcome logistical, technological, and financial chal-

Table 1: India's Projected Nuclear Power Expansion and Implications for Energy

	PHWRs (MW)	LWR (MW)	Breeder Reactor (MW)	Total Nuclear Capacity (GW)	Nuclear Share of Electrical Capacity
2007	3,800	320		4	3.2%
2012	4,460	2,320	500	7	3.7-4 %
c. 2020	10,000	2,320	1000-2000	14	4 -6 %
c.2020 plus imports	10,000	12,320	1000-2000	24	7-10%
c. 2030	14,000	40,000	?	~60	8-15%

Source: Author's projections, based on compound annual growth rates varying from 4.3 to 8 percent for India's total installed electrical generating capacity.

PHWR: Pressured Heavy-Water Reactor.

LWR: Light-Water Reactor (includes two U.S.-supplied plants at Tarapur that generate 320 megawatts).

lenges to building nuclear plants on a large scale. Here, it should be clarified that the cost of nuclear energy is generally greater than that from coal-fired plants. However, economies of scale (whereby many nuclear plants are built at a single location), public-private partnerships (whereby the government bears most of the initial costs of acquiring land and providing security and regulation), and environmental savings may make nuclear energy more competitive compared to other forms of energy.

India's increasing reliance on nuclear energy could have positive environmental implications, but the magnitude of these environmental gains would be modest. In general (as noted by David Victor in his testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources in July 2006), every 10 GW of new nuclear energy capacity translates into a carbon-dioxide reduction of 75 million tons.¹⁵ Thus, if India increases its nuclear capacity by 20 GW (which it plans to do by 2020), then these new nuclear plants, if they were to substitute for coal-fired plants, would lessen India's annual carbon-dioxide emissions by about 150 million tons. If India increases its nuclear capacity by 40 GW, then the carbon-dioxide savings would be 300 million tons. These reductions are small compared to India's total annual carbon-dioxide emissions—which are expected to be about 1800 million tons (1.8 billion tons) by 2020, as shown in Table 2. However, they compare favorably to reductions planned by other states (emissions cuts planned by the European Union under the Kyoto Protocol are some 200 million tons per year).

Table 2: Carbon Dioxide Emissions and Projections (Billion Metric Tons)

	2003	2010	2015	2020	2025
China	3.5	5.9	7.0	8.2	9.3
United States	5.8	6.4	6.7	7.1	7.6
India	1.0	1.4	1.6	1.8	2.0
OECD Europe	4.3	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.9
Total World	25	30	34	37	40

Source: Energy Information Agency, Annual Energy Outlook 2006 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Energy, June 2006), Report #: DOE/EIA-0484.

CONCLUSIONS

The civilian nuclear agreement with India was intended to boost U.S.-India relations. It also sought to bring India into the nonproliferation regime, and to enhance India's nuclear energy sector. By 2010, it was already beginning to have an impact on some of these proliferation and energy issues. India had begun placing some reactors under safeguards; two of these reactors, the Rajasthan-5 and -6, were being fuelled with imported uranium. Additionally, India also planned to import a large number of reactors to meet its future energy needs.

Looking ahead, the civilian nuclear agreement could have net positive consequences for India, the United States, and other countries if the following take place over the next 5 to 10 years: India maintains its moratorium on nuclear testing and joins the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (which would be more likely only after some major states outside the treaty decide to ratify it); ends its production of weapons-grade fissile material and joins a future FMCT (at the time of writing, this treaty had yet to be negotiated); strengthens its strategic partnership with Washington; and imports a significant number of nuclear reactors that would provide a modest amount of energy for its economy, benefit the global environment, and offer export opportunities for the United States and other nuclear supplier countries.

In summary, India's decisions on not significantly expanding its nuclear weapons programs (which depend, in part, on decisions in neighboring states and on progress on treaties concerning nuclear testing and fissile material production), on aligning more closely with Washington, and on importing significant quantities of nuclear energy, will determine whether the civilian nuclear agreement has positive or negative consequences over the long term. By working closely with India in the coming years, Washington could positively influence New Delhi's decisions on these key proliferation and energy issues.

NOTES

1 These include 16 heavy-water reactors, two boiling-water reactors at Tarapur (supplied by the United States in the 1960s), and two Russian-built light-water reactors that would begin operating around 2010–2011.

2 R. Nicholas Burns, “America’s Strategic Opportunity With India,” *Foreign Affairs* 86, no. 6 (November/December 2007): 131–146, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/63016/r-nicholas-burns/americas-strategic-opportunity-with-india>.

3 Editorial, “The Indian Nuclear Deal,” *New York Times*, April 7, 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/07/opinion/07fri3.html>.

4 For a related argument, see George Perkovich, “Global Implications of the U.S.-India Deal,” *Daedalus* 139, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 20–31, <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/global.pdf>. North Korea is also seeking such an exemption. See Victor Cha, “What Do They Really Want? Obama’s North Korea Conundrum,” *The Washington Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (October 2009): 119–138, http://www.twq.com/09october/docs/09oct_Cha.pdf.

5 For varying estimates between 90 kg and 140 kg, see R. Rajaraman, “Estimates of India’s Fissile Material Stocks,” *Science and Global Security* 16, no. 3 (2008): 74–86, <http://www.princeton.edu/sgs/publications/sgs/archive/Rajaraman-Vol-16-No-3.pdf>.

6 By 2010, India’s heavy-water reactors had produced an estimated 10 to 12 tons of reactor-grade plutonium. Assuming that the initial loading of each breeder requires about four tons of plutonium, India may only have plutonium sufficient for the initial loading of three to four breeder reactors, and would require plutonium from its first breeder reactor for the initial loading of its fourth and fifth breeder reactors. Others note, however, that India’s heavy-water reactors would have produced enough reactor-grade plutonium to load four to five breeder reactors by 2020. See M. V. Ramanna, Zia Mian, A.H. Nayyar, and R. Rajaraman, “Fissile Materials in South Asia and the Implications of the U.S.-India Nuclear Deal,” *Science and Global Security* 14, nos. 2–3 (2006): 117–145, http://www.fissilematerials.org/ipfm/site_down/rr01.pdf.

7 India currently operates one mill supplying an estimated 220–300 tons of uranium annually. Another mill with a similar capacity commenced operations in the late 2000s, and is in the process of being expanded. These two mills would be just enough to supply the 600 tons of uranium needed for India’s existing heavy-water reactors (which generate 4,400 MW of electricity), but would be insufficient for India’s future heavy-water reactors.

8 K. Santhanam and Ashok Parthasarathi, “Pokhran-II Thermonuclear Test, a Failure,” *The Hindu*, September 17, 2009, <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/article21311.ece>., and P. K. Iyengar, “Non-Fissile Doubts,” *Outlook*, October 26, 2009, <http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?262331>.

9 For a statement by 13 former nuclear scientists, military officers, and defense experts, issued on December 20, 2009, see “N-Deterrence: Top Scientists Urge Govt to Set Up Probe Panel,” *The Tribune* (India), December 21, 2009, <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2009/20091221/nation.htm#4>.

10 K. Subrahmanyam and V. S. Arunachalam, “Deterrence and Explosive Yield,” *The Hindu*, September 20, 2009, <http://beta.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/article22870.ece>. In general, India’s nuclear deterrence against its primary security threats of terrorism and territorial incursion would not be enhanced by testing weapons of a larger yield, because increasing yields would not deter additional terrorist attacks, and nor would they deter more expansive territorial incursions and Kargil-type military operations against India. By this reasoning, India would have no significant military necessity for additional thermonuclear tests.

11 As a result of fuel constraints, India’s power reactors operated at just 50 to 60 percent of their capacity in the mid-2000s. To overcome these constraints, in 2009-2010, after the civilian nuclear agreement was finalized, two of India’s newly constructed 220-MW reactors (Rajasthan-5 and -6) were placed under safeguards and fueled with imported uranium.

12 According to press reports, the new energy parks would be at Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu, with six Russian reactors generating 6,800 MW; at Jaitapur in Maharashtra, with six French Areva reactors generating 9,600 MW; at Mithi Virdi in Gujarat, with Westinghouse AP1000 reactors; at Kovvada in Andhra Pradesh, with General Electric-Hitachi reactors; and at Haripur in West Bengal, with four Russian reactors generating 4,800 MW.

13 This testimony can be seen at http://www.cfr.org/publication/11123/india_nuclear_deal.html.

THE UNITED STATES, INDIA, THE INDIAN OCEAN, AND MARITIME ELEMENTS OF SECURITY COOPERATION

ANDREW C. WINNER

Any current or future maritime cooperation between the United States and India, whether in the Indian Ocean or elsewhere, must be viewed against the larger backdrop of the radical change in U.S.-Indian security relations that has occurred since the early 1990s. During the Cold War, Washington and New Delhi viewed each other with mutual suspicion. Washington believed that New Delhi's arms supply relationship with the Soviet Union, established through a treaty of cooperation and friendship in 1971, put India firmly in the Eastern camp. New Delhi, for its part, mistrusted Washington for a variety of reasons. These include the Indian perception of the United States as a successor to colonial ruler Britain, U.S. rejection of the possibility of a true non-aligned position during the Cold War, and U.S. support for Pakistan. During the 1980s, when the United States and the Soviet Union sought to significantly expand their naval presence into the Indian Ocean, New Delhi fought back diplomatically, proposing that the ocean be declared a zone of peace free from the navies of outside powers.

The U.S.-Indian relationship changed fundamentally with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Coupled with substantial Indian economic liberalization in the 1990s, the U.S.-Indian economic and diplomatic relationship expanded rapidly. U.S. President Bill Clinton made it a high priority to improve relations with India, both because his administration understood the economic benefits to each country but also because it was in keeping with each administration's national security goals, which included expanding and strengthen-

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ing democracies and market economies worldwide. While India's nuclear weapons tests in May 1998 temporarily slowed the improvement in security relations, the warming trend continued with President Clinton's week-long historic visit to India in March 2000—the first visit by a U.S. president in 22 years. The inclination to improve relations was reciprocated by Indian governments headed by both major political parties—Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The administration of George W. Bush entered office focusing on improving relations with great powers, including India.¹ It also saw India as a potential balancer against the rise of China in Asia. Even before the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, there were reports that the Bush administration was seeking to lift a range of economic and political sanctions that had been put into place after India's 1998 nuclear tests. (Similar U.S. sanctions were levied on Pakistan when it conducted nuclear tests in response to India's.) After the September 11 attacks, the improvement in U.S. and Indian relations accelerated in large part due to a stronger perception of mutual threat from jihadi groups that operated out of Afghanistan and Pakistan. President Bush made it a priority of his administration to conclude an agreement on civilian nuclear cooperation with India. This agreement, the framework for which was set in 2005 and which was finally ratified and implemented in 2008–09, swept aside years of Cold War policies and laws that kept the United States and India from cooperating in the civilian nuclear sphere. It was also a *de facto* recognition by Washington of India's nuclear weapons status outside of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. The agreement was as important for its symbolism as its content, because it significantly reduced an irritant in relations that had begun with India's 1974 “peaceful nuclear explosion” and continued with Washington's spearheading of the growth of the global nuclear nonproliferation regime. It was also viewed in India as vindication for the decision to test nuclear weapons in 1998, a move that was seen as elevating India to great-power status and that had to be dealt with as such by Washington and other great powers.

The Obama administration came into office focused on ending the war in Iraq, winning the war in Afghanistan, and coping with a global recession. The combination of a new administration headed by a different political party, and a shift from the high visibility of negotiating a

nuclear agreement to the less glamorous job of implementing it, led some observers to question the Obama administration's commitment to continuing to improve relations with India.² To a large degree, these early critiques of the Obama administration are just so much hand-wringing and do not hold up to any degree of scrutiny. The new U.S. administration's focus on two ongoing wars and severe domestic and global economic crises was completely understandable. Moreover, New Delhi was in the middle of an election in May 2009, and the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance coalition held the new American administration at bay for several months until it was successfully past these elections and knew that it no longer needed support from left-wing parties.

Since that election has passed, there is ample evidence for a continuing steadiness and indeed improvement in relations between the United States and India under the new U.S. administration and the Indian government with its renewed electoral mandate. The first official state visit to Washington under the Obama administration was of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. As of this writing, President Obama was to conduct a reciprocal visit in November 2010. Strategic dialogue discussions have taken place between the U.S. secretaries of state and defense and their Indian counterparts. In remarks during one of these meetings, President Obama declared that “[the] relationship between India and the U.S. would be a defining partnership of the 21st century.”³ Clearly the political impetus exists for increased and improved U.S. and Indian security cooperation, particularly in the maritime domain, and especially in the Indian Ocean.

In 2007, the Indian Navy published a maritime strategy—officially the Indian Maritime Military Strategy.⁴ This document and related documentation by the Indian government is a good place to start in examining how India sees the Indian Ocean, its place in it, and the place of the security of the Indian Ocean in India's overall national security policy. Indeed, the contrast between the centrality of the Indian Ocean in Indian naval documents, and this ocean's relative absence in other official Indian pronouncements on foreign policy and national security policy, offers a useful window into India's land-centric view of the world versus an emerging maritime consciousness that is being advocated by some in the Indian maritime services. Official government documentation, however, is insufficient and needs to be placed in a larger context to be analyzed with any degree of sophistication.

After an examination of India's goals and strategies as they relate to the Indian Ocean, this paper will look into India's current and future capabilities and capacity to achieve those goals and fulfill the strategies. All states have limitations and generally reach farther than they can grasp, and India is no exception. Potential stumbling blocks to India achieving its objectives in the Indian Ocean include budgetary shortfalls, military limitations (both capability and capacity), policy and bureaucratic friction, and the potential actions of other actors in the Indian Ocean region, particularly but not exclusively the United States.

INDIA'S MARITIME MILITARY STRATEGY AND DOCTRINE

In 2004, the Indian Navy published the Indian Maritime Doctrine, whose purpose was to "provide every officer, irrespective of his rank, branch, or specialization, a common vocabulary and a uniform understanding of maritime concepts."⁵ This document was updated and published again in August 2009.⁶ Because it is primarily an educational document for Indian naval officers, it provides a very useful starting point for examining what the Navy thinks about the Indian Ocean.

What is the Indian Navy telling its officers in its most basic of documents? In both the 2004 and 2009 versions of the doctrine, the Indian Ocean is detailed as the primary maritime environment in which India has to operate. The 2009 version of the document breaks up India's maritime areas of interest into two parts—primary and secondary. The primary area encompasses the entirety of the Indian Ocean, including all of "the choke points leading to, from and across the Indian Ocean"—except the southern portion (reaching to Antarctica) and, interestingly, the Red Sea and its littoral states.⁷

The Indian Navy's second major publication, its October 2007 maritime strategy, provides a bit more information and insight into how it views the Indian Ocean.⁸ The strategy document devotes an entire chapter to the Indian Ocean region and its geopolitics. While largely descriptive, the chapter does enumerate various facts and trends in the Indian Ocean that could affect India's security, including state failure, territorial and maritime disputes, population trends, and terrorism. In its "assessment" section, the document discusses problematic trends along with various efforts by regional navies to increase capabilities and capaci-

ties. The strategy document notes that the Indian Navy has been supportive of these efforts as they are aimed at improving good order at sea. The overall tenor of this section of the strategy is that India is involved in cooperative initiatives in the region and that these will increase in the future to the benefit of overall security in the Indian Ocean region.

A section on the Indian Ocean in the strategy document discusses the increased presence of extra-regional navies. In contrast to the views of Indian national security policymakers in the 1970s and 1980s, these fleets are characterized generally as benign, with the document going so far as to say that the “...strategic objectives of a majority of extra-regional navies are broadly coincident with India’s own strategic interests, there is no clash of overarching interests in the IOR.”⁹ This discussion of extra-regional navies is written in a way that makes it clear that the maritime forces being described are those from the West—the United States, Europe, Japan, and Australia. A separate, but neutrally worded, paragraph in the same section notes that the Chinese Navy is on the path to developing a blue-water force and that its various building programs exist “along with...attempts to gain [a] strategic toe-hold in the IOR.” That intriguing but unfortunately curt statement ends the discussion of the Indian Ocean region and its geopolitics.

To obtain a more detailed understanding of how the Indian Navy and the rest of the Indian military view China and China’s role in the Indian Ocean, one must read the articles and speeches of retired flag and general officers. This is true for much public discourse over national security issues (although this is changing; see section below on India’s evolving national security institutions). It is generally only after military officers retire that they enter the public discussion of national security interests and strategies and are allowed to publish and speak publicly. A speech in August 2009 by the then-outgoing Indian Navy Chief of Staff, Admiral Sureesh Mehta, is a good example. While not quite retired at the time, Admiral Mehta candidly discussed India-China competition in ways unlikely to be seen in any official Indian Navy document.¹⁰ His speech is noteworthy because Admiral Mehta, in that window right before his retirement, had both an insider’s detailed understanding of the United Progressive Alliance government’s view of China and a solid sense of the government resources that India had, and was likely to have, on hand to engage in that competition with China.

Admiral Mehta's speech was an overview of India's national security challenges, but it received significant play in the Indian media because he addressed, in four paragraphs, how India should "cope" with China in the years ahead. He noted China's advantages over India in "GDP, defense spending or any other economic, social, or development parameter," and indicated that those gaps were growing and, for India, too wide to bridge. However, he also noted the existence of a "trust gap" between India and China, largely because of land boundary disputes and because of China's predilection for "intervention in space" and "cyber warfare." Despite his prescription for cooperation, Mehta asserted that there are areas where tension could arise between these two rising Asian powers. Specifically, he said that "competition for strategic space in the Indian Ocean" needs to be watched diplomatically. In terms of military prescriptions, the outgoing service chief argued that India must reduce the military gap (despite his belief that on most measures of comparison, China was ahead and pulling away) and "counter...the growing Chinese footprint in the Indian Ocean Region."¹¹

INDIA'S EVOLVING NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY DOCTRINE: FROM "SEA BLINDNESS" TO THE CENTRALITY OF THE SEA?

The views of military service chiefs, as noted in several newspapers immediately following Admiral Mehta's speech, are rarely articulated in public.¹² This is due to strong civilian control of the military and the accompanying fact that Indian military tradition defers public articulation of policy and strategy to the realm of the civilian politician or career civil servant. This delineation of public roles mirrors the very strong control over budgets and national security strategy maintained by the Indian civilian national security elite. This means that simply examining the writings and speeches of Navy officers, or officers of any service, may be misleading. Indeed, one only has to look at the Ministry of Defense's annual reports to see that the official views of the higher echelon are decidedly land-centric. These documents represent the closest that India comes, as of 2009, to a publicly articulated defense strategy or indeed national security strategy. Over the past five years, the Indian Ocean is hardly ever mentioned in the lead chapter of this document, which is

entitled “The Security Environment.”¹³ In the 2008 version of the annual report, the Indian Ocean is only mentioned twice. It is dubbed a “strategic region” once in a discussion of growing defense ties between India and the Maldives. The other mention is in the context of coastal security, which is embedded in a section discussing the aftermath of the November 26, 2008 terrorist attacks on Mumbai, when terrorists infiltrated the financial and entertainment capital of India from the sea.¹⁴

A continental mindset, or “sea blindness” as it is sometimes referred to, may be slowly changing in India, perhaps due to efforts by the Navy and others who think more naturally about the maritime realm. In September 2009, the Indian Navy’s think tank, the National Maritime Foundation, invited the retired foreign secretary Shivshankar Menon to give a speech focused not broadly on India’s foreign policy challenges, but specifically on “the maritime imperatives of Indian foreign policy.”¹⁵ While the invitation and requested subject matter forced the issue of addressing the maritime realm, the content of the speech is revealing in terms of how thinking has evolved in India’s foreign policy and in the national security establishment even in just several years’ time. Indeed, Menon began this speech by echoing what has become a regular talking point among India’s Navy and maritime thinkers: that India has long had a continental mindset. Menon attributes this, plus an accompanying resource constraint in the maritime realm, to India’s colonial legacy—because European powers exclusively dominated the seas around India. In the speech, the former foreign secretary outlined three areas where the maritime realm, and particularly the Indian Ocean, is central to India’s foreign policy concerns. The first is trade, and he listed the standard statistics on the volume and value of seaborne trade that passes by India heading both east and west. On energy, he mentioned that both India and China face a “Hormuz dilemma,” an interesting recognition that India has proximate security issues as opposed to the more common discussion of China’s “Malacca dilemma.” Finally, he mentioned classic security issues such as intrastate conflict, but skipped by these potential problems to focus the majority of his speech on a range of transnational security concerns including terrorism, smuggling, and piracy.

In response to these three maritime issues, Shivshankar Menon noted that India has been increasing its cooperation with friendly foreign governments in the Asia-Pacific to enhance India’s naval cooperation, but

he explained that these cooperative efforts are still mostly in the declaratory stage, with substantive progress far behind those in places like the Atlantic or Mediterranean.¹⁶ Such a statement acknowledges that India is relatively new to such cooperative ventures and seems to imply support by the official foreign policy apparatus for continuing and expanding such maritime cooperative efforts. However, his very next sentence points to caution, and illustrates why maritime cooperative efforts with India are likely to be slow in developing. Menon noted that because the cooperative endeavors “occur in a regional and global context that is changing so rapidly, and when the relative balance of power in the area is shifting and evolving, we need to be careful of the effect of these formal and informal demonstrations of intent on others.” Menon could be expressing the Ministry of External Affairs’ concern that too rapid a move toward cooperative endeavors by India, particularly those that involve the United States, could unnecessarily antagonize China and/or Pakistan.

The Indian Navy has also made an attempt to engage in “maritime diplomacy,” a policy outlined in the naval strategy document by which naval assets are used to support foreign policy by nonviolent methods. In the case of the Indian Navy, the naval assets were naval officers. In February 2008, the then-Chief of the Indian Navy, Admiral Mehta, convened an Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), inviting his counterparts from Indian Ocean littoral states to discuss maritime security, stability, safety, and consequent collective prosperity. The concept was to begin a sustainable dialogue among regional navies on topics of mutual interest with the goal of deciding upon courses of action on transnational issues that require bilateral or multilateral efforts. Despite requests, officials from outside powers who have interests in the Indian Ocean (including the United States, China, and the United Kingdom) were not invited. The United Arab Emirates hosted the second IONS in May 2010.

CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY

The Navy, naturally, focuses more heavily on the Indian Ocean than do other sections of India’s national security establishment. The Navy, however, has its limitations. The continental mindset predominates not only in the civilian hierarchy but in the other military services as well.

Historically, the Navy has been the smallest, and least well-resourced, of the three services; the one-million-person-plus Indian Army dwarfs the 55,000-person Indian Navy. Historically, the Navy has received the lowest budget allocation of the three Indian military services. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Navy averaged 12 percent of the overall military budget, despite the capital-intensive nature of the service.¹⁷ This share has increased significantly since 2000, with the maritime service's percentage increasing to 15 percent in 2008-09, slightly over 15 percent in 2009-10, and estimated to shrink slightly in 2010-11 to approximately 14.6 percent.¹⁸ Meanwhile, government expenditures for 2008-09 represented an increase of 19 percent in the overall defense budget, and the figures for 2009-2010 and proposals for 2010-2011 increase spending by 19 percent and 8 percent, respectively.¹⁹ These figures are nominal and do not take into account Indian inflation figures, which have been in the high single digits over the past several years. Percentage growth in either a single service or overall defense budget, however, only tells part of the story.

Both the absolute budget figures for India's military, and the percentage of the national budget that the military receives, provide another sense of how many resources the Indian government is able and willing to commit to security issues—and particularly to security issues in the maritime realm. Indian expenditures on the military ranked 10th in the world in 2008, and that relative ranking is unlikely to change in the next two decades.²⁰ As a percentage of gross domestic product, India's military expenditure has only rarely breached the 3 percent mark—most notably for several years after 1962, when New Delhi hiked its spending significantly after losing a border war to China.

Even if India's defense budget were to increase, and even if the Indian Navy were to receive a greater percent of the budget, there would remain significant constraints on what type of capability would result, at least over the next decade. One such constraint is the current high average age of the Indian fleet, particularly major surface vessels. While on the one hand India's naval chief has outlined plans for major purchases to make the fleet both larger and more modern, on the other, this same chief has lamented the inability of India's shipbuilding sector to deliver platforms in a timely manner.²¹ In an ironic twist, higher operational tempos brought on by greater naval involvement in activities such as

counterpiracy operations in the Gulf of Aden may actually accelerate a decline in the fleet's capabilities in the short-to-medium term. Finally, overall defense policy preferences (and, indeed, requirements) for the indigenous production of defense goods will only exacerbate this issue unless there are significant changes in the efficiency of Indian naval yards.

Despite policy pronouncements that emphasize the indigenization of the production of defense goods and services, India's defense establishment understands that a significantly higher degree of domestic defense production is a long-term goal at best. In the meanwhile, India must rely on a mix of indigenous design and production, licensed production, and direct purchases from foreign suppliers. The latter route, however, is not without its significant problems, as highlighted by the drawn-out procurement drama involving a Russian aircraft carrier, the *Admiral Gorshkov*. Moscow and New Delhi's original deal, signed in 2004, was for delivery of the refitted and modernized Kiev-class aircraft carrier to India in 2008, at a cost of \$1.5 billion dollars. Wrangling over cost and delivery dates began almost immediately, with a February 2008 Indian offer to add \$600 million more to the price. Moscow countered with a request for another \$1.2 billion, and in late 2009 the two sides had apparently reached an agreement on price and delivery, the latter being set for 2012.²² Also, delays due to disagreements on price as well as accidents during refit have slowed the delivery of a leased Russian Akula submarine to India.²³

India's problems with unreliable foreign defense suppliers have changed, but they have not disappeared. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Soviet Union was a reliable military supplier for India. This changed with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. India was left with a large stock of Soviet equipment, but with a fragmented supply chain for spare parts. New Delhi worked hard in the 1990s to rebuild this supply chain for its now-former Soviet equipment, as well as to begin establishing better contacts with Western manufacturers. India became both more capable and more willing to purchase defense goods from the West and, over time, even from the United States. In the wake of the U.S.-Indian civilian nuclear accord in 2006, restrictions, and India's perception of them, began to decline. However, even with an increased willingness in both New Delhi and the West to engage in serious defense cooperation

and sales, India's limited defense budget will continue to constrain the country's options.

The issue for India is not only that it may not be able to afford some Western goods, but also that the Indian defense procurement system is slow and has restrictions on how money is spent, which makes large purchases difficult. Often, foreign purchase possibilities are slowed by advocates within India for indigenous development. Indigenous Indian weapons development programs are notoriously slow, often resulting in defense products that are not directly related to military requirements. Moreover, Indian procurement rules require any unspent funds to be returned to the treasury if they are not obligated by the end of each fiscal year—making large purchases, whether foreign or domestic, difficult. Such requirements also lead to some reports overstating the actual procurement purchasing power of the Indian armed services in recent years.

Despite the fiscal constraints on India's purchases of maritime capabilities, and even in light of obstacles in its procurement system, over the next 10 to 20 years the age and composition of the Indian Navy will gradually shift to one of a younger average fleet with significantly greater capabilities. Projecting the exact capabilities of that fleet, and what India will choose to use it for, is difficult. However, what can be analyzed with more certainty is what the Navy has done over the past several years in the Indian Ocean. This provides at least some sense of how the Navy is thinking about how its capabilities can support broader Indian national security and foreign policy goals.

The Navy was fairly active in the Indian Ocean during the first decade of the 21st century across a range of missions. In the 2001-02 crisis with Pakistan following terrorist attacks on the Indian parliament, the Indian Navy deployed elements of both its eastern and western fleets to guard Indian maritime assets and also to deter Pakistan from horizontal escalation (that is, deterring Pakistan from broadening the geographic scope of the crisis, in this case to the maritime domain) if the crisis had escalated to actual conflict. After the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, Indian naval vessels escorted U.S. resupply ships and warships through the Strait of Malacca. In addition to these traditional naval roles, the Indian Navy has more recently conducted a wider range of missions, reflecting the breadth of maritime mission areas outlined in its 2007 maritime military strategy. The Navy has participated in

tsunami relief operations in 2004–05 that ranged from affected Indian states to Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Indonesia. In 2006, it undertook a noncombatant evacuation operation, helping over 2,000 Indian, Nepali, and Sri Lankan citizens from Lebanon during the Israeli conflict with Hezbollah. Finally, after what appeared to be some internal debates between the Navy and civilian policy circles, the Navy joined the efforts of numerous other navies in counterpiracy operations off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden.²⁴

This range of operations, both in type and geographic reach, shows that the Indian Navy currently has the capability to influence many areas of the Indian Ocean in a variety of ways in support of Indian foreign policy. The question is whether the Indian Navy's capabilities are well integrated into that broader foreign and security policy or whether they are, to some degree, serendipitous. India's foreign and security policy processes for generating ideas, integrating efforts, and undertaking implementation lag behind India's ambitions. The Indian government and broader analytic community recognize this, but it is taking time to make changes and to develop a more modern set of processes, procedures, and institutions that reflect India's history, culture, and geopolitical position in the world. Three events since 1998 have pushed the Indian state to modernize how it thinks about, formulates, and implements foreign and national security policy, whether it is in regards to the Indian Ocean region or to other geographic and functional issues. The first was India's testing of nuclear weapons in May 1998 and its declaration that it was a nuclear weapons state. The second was the Kargil war with Pakistan in 1999. The third was the terrorist attack on Mumbai in November 2008.

New institutions and working relationships are a necessary step, but often real integration among military services takes decades to achieve, as the United States acknowledged decades after passage of its seminal mid-1980s legislation to create a truly joint military. Laws and governmental institutions are not the only necessary steps in establishing a robust foreign policy and national security community capable of generating ideas, evolving policies, and carrying out implementation. A broader set of policy institutions that need reform and growth, dubbed "foreign policy software" by Daniel Markey, include Indian think tanks, the Indian Foreign Service, Indian public universities, and India's media and private businesses.²⁵ Markey argues that these institutions need investment, reform, and expansion to allow

India to achieve great-power status. While developing and implementing a coherent and capable security strategy toward the Indian Ocean region is something short of great-power status, it requires the same type of depth of analysis, creativity, and cohesiveness of implementation that Markey argues is required for even broader Indian foreign policy aspirations.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED STATES

Regardless of whether India has a fully articulated and fully resourced maritime, joint, and interagency policy on the Indian Ocean, what it says and does will have an impact on other states on the Indian Ocean littoral or on those with maritime interests there, such as the United States. This will in turn lead to reactions, some of them suspicious or hostile, and others that regard India's greater role in the Indian Ocean as a chance for improved cooperation. The result of these interactions could determine whether the Indian Ocean becomes a "zone of peace" or, alternatively, something more akin to Robert Kaplan's view that it will become the site of commercial and military rivalries.²⁶

Perhaps sparked by the writing of Kaplan and others, the U.S. Department of Defense has expressed an increased interest in the Indian Ocean. In the first Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) conducted by the Obama administration, the Defense Department states:

The United States has a substantial interest in the stability of the Indian Ocean region as a whole, which will play an ever more important role in the global economy. The Indian Ocean provides vital sea lines of communication that are essential to global commerce, international energy security, and regional stability. Ensuring open access to the Indian Ocean will require a more integrated approach to the region across military and civilian organizations. An assessment that includes U.S. national interests, objectives, and posture implications would provide a useful guide for future defense planning.²⁷

This bodes well for strategic thinking on the part of the United States in terms of how to engage in the maritime realm with India. At the very least, it could represent an effort by the U.S. national security establish-

ment to move beyond thinking about the Indian Ocean only as an interstate highway for maritime forces on the way to the Persian Gulf.

Maritime security interaction between India and the United States in the Indian Ocean region is the most promising type of future cooperation, because it addresses myriad security issues in the region—including institution-building and stability in many states on the Indian Ocean littoral. As noted above, the security relationship between India and the United States has changed fundamentally over the course of the past two decades.

Even prior to the landmark nuclear agreement, Indian and American cooperation in the military sphere was on the increase, particularly when compared to the Cold War era. This enhanced military interaction was led by the U.S. and Indian navies, and was centered largely on the Indian Ocean. In the 1990s, the United States and India began a series of annual, increasingly complex naval exercises in the Indian Ocean. The Malabar exercises, named for the Indian coast near where they have often been held, were interrupted in the wake of the 1998 Indian nuclear tests, but resumed after the September 11 attacks. In 2007, the exercise series expanded to include ships from Australia, Japan, and Singapore. In 2008, the exercises reverted to a bilateral endeavor, but the 2009 exercise included ships from the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, and took place in international waters off Japan. In 2006, President Bush and Prime Minister Singh signed an Indo-U.S. Framework for Maritime Security Cooperation, which committed the two sides to cooperate “in ensuring a secure maritime domain.”²⁸ This short document set out the bureaucratic structures within which India and the United States would engage one another on maritime security issues, and it put forward the general view of senior political leadership that maritime security cooperation was an area ripe with promise. With the lifting of restrictions in the wake of September 11, the Indians began more seriously considering purchases of U.S. military equipment, and the first major procurement was for the Indian Navy in the form of advanced maritime patrol aircraft—U.S.-manufactured P-8s.

Annual exercises and the purchase of defense articles and goods are tangible demonstrations of improved cooperation in the maritime realm, but the maritime strategies of both the United States and India create the foundation for significantly greater cooperative activities and approaches to security in the Indian Ocean. The new U.S. maritime strategy, is-

sued by the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard in October 2007, was, at the time, a forward-looking document. Its very title, “A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower,” represented a departure from the emphasis on unilateral security efforts emphasized in earlier national security documents and statements by the administration of President George W. Bush.²⁹ It appeared to anticipate the more cooperative, multilateral approach espoused by the administration of President Obama. One startling change in U.S. maritime focus in the document was its statement that “[c]redible combat power will be continuously postured in the Western Pacific and the Arabian Gulf/Indian Ocean to protect our vital interests, assure our friends and allies of our continuing commitment to regional security, and deter and dissuade potential adversaries and peer competitors.” Since World War II, the U.S. Navy has been a two-ocean navy—the Atlantic and the Pacific. This new strategy heralds a change in that focus. The Navy is still a two-ocean navy, but the oceans have changed. The Atlantic Ocean has been supplanted by the Indian Ocean as the second area of strategic focus for the U.S. Navy. The document was codifying what had been the reality of U.S. naval deployments since August 1990, when Saddam Hussein’s Iraq had invaded Kuwait. Since that time, the United States had kept, almost continuously, at least one carrier battle group and often an expeditionary strike group deployed in the Northern Arabian Sea and/or Persian Gulf.

In addition to this focus on the Indian Ocean, the new U.S. maritime strategy contains lists of mission areas for the U.S. maritime services that almost exactly parallel those mentioned in India’s maritime strategy document. Each document emphasizes the desirability of cooperative approaches to these maritime missions, and the U.S. and Indian navies have already begun cooperative activities in some of the areas. In the area of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, the U.S. and Indian navies were both first responders after the 2004 tsunami in the eastern Indian Ocean. The two navies deconflicted their activities, but clearly there is still more significant scope for cooperative endeavors in this mission area, ranging from joint exercises and training to cross-decking and sharing lessons learned, to joint contingency-planning and operations.

In the mission areas of maritime security and protection of maritime commerce, the United States and India have been cooperating since November 2008 as part of the broader international effort to combat

piracy off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. The cooperation has been on a low level, with both attending United Nations-hosted contact group meetings and U.S. Navy-hosted operational-level information-sharing meetings at the U.S. Navy facility in Bahrain. However, as of mid-2010, India had not yet joined the U.S.-led Coalition Maritime Force with its combined task force (CTF-151), which the United States set up as a central multilateral contribution to the counterpiracy effort.³⁰

Both the United States and India have undertaken other multilateral efforts at maritime security in the Indian Ocean region—the former as part of CTF-150, which patrols the North Arabian Sea on a broad maritime security mission that includes counternarcotics and counterterrorism, and the latter in joint counterpiracy patrols with countries bordering the Strait of Malacca. In several instances after September 11, Indian warships accompanied U.S. high-value cargo ships through the Strait of Malacca to protect them against possible attack by terrorist groups or pirates.³¹ There is clearly scope for greater cooperation in these areas, and it will likely come about over time.

India, in order to increase its access and influence within its neighborhood, is helping to build the maritime capacity of regional states. It is also helping these neighboring states increase their capacities for monitoring and patrolling their areas of the Indian Ocean commons. The United States has engaged in such capacity-building programs in the Indian Ocean region for decades, first as part of its Cold War containment policy and later as part of counterterrorism efforts. Both Washington and New Delhi will continue to contribute to the increased capabilities and capacities of smaller and relatively poorer states on the Indian Ocean rim. The question is whether and how the two states can increase their cooperation on capacity-building to increase overall efficiency and effectiveness. Current practice is for New Delhi and Washington to go about their capacity-building programs in parallel, with little to no information exchange or coordination. One possibility would be to exchange information on future capacity-building plans during one of the many bilateral defense meetings that now take place on a regular basis between India and the United States. An even more ambitious step would be to coordinate these programs, exchanging information in advance, building on one another's projects, and—when needed—dividing up labor among various Indian Ocean countries so that all important areas are

addressed on a fairly regular basis. This would of course require some meetings of the minds between Washington and New Delhi on the goals and priorities for this capacity-building. As noted above, the similarities of the maritime strategies of the two nations, along with increasingly close relations, provide some hope that this alignment of interests in the Indian Ocean may not be that difficult to achieve.

There are, however, potential barriers and challenges to India-U.S. cooperation in the maritime realm in the Indian Ocean and beyond. None of these are insurmountable, but they may slow or stymie cooperative efforts between the two maritime powers. One challenge is the potential reaction of other powers to increased U.S.-Indian security cooperation. This includes potentially hostile reactions from a range of countries important to Indian Ocean security—China, Iran, and Pakistan. The United States and India could see these reactions differently and differ about the way in which they would want to handle them diplomatically and potentially militarily. A second challenge is simply overcoming the long history of misunderstanding and real antagonism between India and the United States. While senior political leaders in both countries have made a commitment to improve relations and have taken many steps along these lines, progress may at times be hindered by long-held perceptions and misperceptions.³² Building trust will take time, even between democracies that appear, on the surface, to share many common objectives.

Another challenge is institutional culture and structures. As noted above, India is working hard to establish joint and interagency institutions. It is, however, still quite limited in terms of capacity, particularly in terms of empowered decision-makers in the government. The United States often overwhelms partners and allies with its sheer size and its long-established mechanisms and procedures—often ones created for entirely different purposes and contexts such as the Cold War. The United States has to examine its approach to improving cooperation with India with an eye toward seeing if its institutions, procedures, and policies make sense for a relationship with a regional power (aspiring to global or great-power status) that is neither a potential adversary nor a treaty ally.

In terms of the Indian Ocean, the United States also has a significant bureaucratic challenge. Washington does not make military strategies for

oceans. In fact, it divides the world in continental terms, and in the U.S. military's unified command plan, responsibility for the Indian Ocean rests with four different regional commanders with dividing lines cutting across strategically critical locations. It is as though lines of invisible buoys in the waters of the Indian Ocean divide military responsibility among different U.S. military commands. At times, these invisible lines make policy coordination difficult, as is the case when the dividing line puts India in one command's area of responsibility and Pakistan in another's. Washington has to figure out how to overcome or otherwise blur these bureaucratic seams if it is going to effectively work with India on the range of questions involving maritime security in the Indian Ocean. This may be one of the challenges to be addressed in the study suggested by the QDR. New Delhi sees the Indian Ocean as a strategic whole. If Washington seeks to better coordinate its policies toward this maritime region with New Delhi, it has to be able, bureaucratically, to craft and implement a more seamless strategy.

Finally, there will be the more mundane technical issues of resources, capacity, and military interoperability. Again, here the issue is in part one of money and technology and in part one of diverging perceptions about what is most important in moving a relationship forward. For Washington, the most important sign that another nation is a security partner is the nation's willingness and ability to conduct combined military operations. Conducting combined operations takes some technological commonality, but it largely takes political will and a familiarity with one another's tactics, techniques, and procedures. For New Delhi, the signal that another state is a true partner is its willingness to transfer military technology to it, even if that technology is not necessarily going to be used in combined operations. These different views have to be understood by both sides, and concrete policies and procedures to accommodate them have to be developed in New Delhi and Washington.

These challenges are not insignificant. They may slow or constrain the relationship in certain areas. However, the trajectory of the U.S.-India relationship is clear and positive. Both nations have vital interests in the Indian Ocean region, and are going to develop and implement strategies designed to secure these interests. Many of these vital interests are either identical or congruent. It only makes sense that India and the United States will figure out ways to support one another in this pursuit.

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PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS OF THE INDIA-U.S. DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP

BETHANY DANYLUK

Ten years ago, defense relations between the United States and India were virtually nonexistent. Consumed by Cold War alliances and attitudes, the two countries often pursued conflicting interests while courting each others' enemies. In the post-Cold War era, lingering suspicions overshadowed bilateral relations, and the U.S. imposition of sanctions following India's 1998 nuclear tests essentially closed the door on any chance of rapprochement.

The September 11, 2001, attacks fundamentally altered the trajectory of the relationship. India and the United States found a common interest in fighting terrorism and began to recognize each other's importance toward achieving broader security goals. Following U.S. President George W. Bush's subsequent removal of sanctions, the two countries embarked on an era of renewed relations. The past decade has seen considerable growth in the breadth and depth of the defense relationship, but obstacles remain that constrain the extent to which relations can evolve. Moreover, the perceptions and expectations each country has of working with the other in the context of defense relations must be understood and managed for the relationship to progress to the next level.¹

PROGRESS IN DEFENSE RELATIONS

Since 9/11, the evolution in defense relations has been driven by several factors. First, the performance of the Indian military during bilateral exercises and regional operations has proven to the United States and

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other countries that the Indian military is a capable force and potential partner for regional stability. In short, the United States has begun to take the Indian military seriously. Second, leaders at the highest levels in both countries have concluded symbolic agreements with an eye toward a more strategic, institutional relationship. Third, bilateral defense trade has accelerated with a few key deals, which have helped build goodwill between the nations, highlighting the growing influence of the commercial sector as a driving force, and strengthening interoperability. Fourth, burgeoning people-to-people contacts fostered during exercises, exchanges, and visits have contributed to a growing sense of trust and mutual respect between the militaries. Finally, a high-level commitment to the defense relationship in both countries has provided strategic direction and momentum necessary to keep the relationship moving forward.

Performance of the Indian Military

In 2004, the U.S. and Indian Air Forces met in Gwalior, India for the annual round of their bilateral exercise, known as Cope India. Much to the Americans' surprise, the Indian Air Force (IAF), with its Russian MiGs, outperformed the U.S. Air Force and its F-15s during combat maneuvers. This had an enduring effect on the rudely awakened, but greatly impressed, U.S. Air Force. Later that year, the Indian response to the Asian tsunami underscored the growing prestige of its military, as the Indian Navy proved the country was a capable partner that could successfully undertake complex humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations in the region. In 2006, India evacuated more than 2,000 Indian, Sri Lankan, and Nepalese nationals from Lebanon during the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, again demonstrating its ability to respond quickly and effectively. Then, in 2007, the annual Malabar naval exercise, which had previously been a bilateral exercise between the United States and India, took on a multilateral character after India requested the participation of Singapore, Japan, and Australia. The success of Malabar in 2007 (much to China's dismay) demonstrated India's ability to take a leading role, showcased the interoperability of the five navies, and highlighted the increasing complexity of U.S.-India military cooperation.

Bilateral Agreements

In 2005, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Minister of Defense Pranab Mukherjee signed the New Framework for the U.S.-India Defense Relationship, the first agreement of its kind between the United States and India, which outlined a broad strategy to guide defense cooperation over the next decade. The signing of the U.S.-India nuclear deal in 2008 affirmed that the countries were moving toward a truly strategic partnership.

The Defense Trade

In 2002, India acquired firefinder radars from the United States—the first tangible benefit for the defense trade after the removal of sanctions. But the bilateral defense trade really accelerated over the next few years with a few “big-ticket” Indian purchases, including the Landing Platform Dock *USS Trenton*, subsequently renamed the *INS Jalashwa*; the C-130J Aircraft; and the P-8I Long-Range Maritime Reconnaissance Aircraft. The United States is also a key contender in the ongoing Indian medium-range multi-role combat aircraft procurement; the request for proposal asks that bids incorporate the life cycle cost, a provision that increases U.S. competitiveness significantly. Even more recently, India sent a letter of request to the United States about the potential purchase of 10 C-17s which, if concluded, would represent India’s second-largest defense acquisition (after the P-8I, the long-range maritime reconnaissance and anti-submarine warfare aircraft used by the navy) from the United States.

People-to-People Contacts

People-to-people contacts have also been a crucial driver of growing defense ties; relationships formed between officers during exercises, visits, and exchanges are a key factor in building mutual trust and respect that will shape future generations of Indian and American officers at the highest levels.

Commitment at the Highest Levels

Much of the progress in strengthening bilateral defense relations has been possible because of the high-level attention the relationship has received in both countries. Indians and Americans credit the George W. Bush administration for taking relations to the next level, and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for risking his political career to push through the nuclear deal. President Barack Obama has indicated that his administration intends to build on the successes of the Bush administration, and has followed through with symbolic gestures such as high-level visits to India (as of this writing, Obama was expected to travel to India in November 2010) and the hosting of Prime Minister Singh as his first state visitor. Additionally, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton declared in a 2009 speech at the U.S.-India Business Council that the two countries had entered a third phase, or “3.0” era, in relations. (To be sure, however, there has been some growing Indian wariness toward the current U.S. administration. This is rooted in the perception that Washington has been prioritizing Beijing over New Delhi, and also in India’s anxiety about the delays in implementing the nuclear deal—which India attributes to the influence of the nonproliferation community, a group generally associated with the U.S. Democratic Party.)

LINGERING OBSTACLES

These developments, among others, have created an upward trend in the relationship, and there is genuine optimism in both countries about the future direction of the relationship. In fact, many Americans and Indians have stated that defense has become the key component—the foundation, even—of the broader relationship. Despite this progress, however, a number of issues remain that need to be resolved or at least understood to facilitate continued growth in defense relations.

Different Organizational Structure

India and the United States have dissimilar structures that guide foreign defense cooperation. In the United States, decision-making authority lies with the Department of Defense in the Office of the Undersecretary

of Defense for Policy. In India, however, it is the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)—the equivalent of the U.S. State Department—that makes these decisions. India’s Ministry of Defense (MOD) must obtain MEA approval to engage in cooperative activities with the United States (and other countries) at all levels—from negotiating high-level defense agreements to procuring U.S. defense equipment and participating in military-to-military exercises. Reconciling the goals and operational objectives of MEA and MOD can be challenging given the fundamental differences in the nature of the organizations; moreover, the added layer of bureaucracy requires more time to reach decisions in India. These factors often result in delays or cancellations of meetings, working groups, and exercises. When these events do occur, it can be difficult to determine the appropriate mix of participants (and their foreign counterparts) needed to accomplish the agenda.

Bureaucracy

The bureaucracies in both countries are a constant obstacle. In the United States, the bureaucracy is difficult to navigate because of its multiple layers of complexity, meticulous legal requirements, and the plethora of restrictions that regulate cooperation to protect U.S. interests. On the Indian side, the bureaucracy suffers from inefficiency and a lack of capacity that constrains the level of attention to the relationship. While Americans and Indians are each frustrated by the other’s bureaucratic obstacles, they also recognize the shortcomings in their own countries.

Political Dynamics

Political dynamics in both countries create uncertainties that can hinder progress in the bilateral relationship. Indians are concerned that U.S. policies guiding the relationship are subject to the whims of Congress, with its frequently changing leadership and shifting agenda. For example, memories of the U.S. sanctions imposed after India’s 1998 nuclear tests, which cut off access to supplies of U.S. spare parts for India’s British-made Sea King helicopters, still pervade the Indian psyche. More recently, given the strong influence of nonproliferation advocates within

the U.S. Democratic Party, Indians worry about delays in full implementation of the civilian nuclear agreement, which was concluded during a Republican administration. In India, the parliamentary debate surrounding the nuclear deal in 2008 is indicative of how coalition politics can undermine cooperation. Throughout this process, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), a minority party in Prime Minister Singh's United Progressive Alliance (UPA) coalition, voiced its opposition to the nuclear deal, ultimately withdrawing its support for the UPA. Singh managed to push the deal through by drawing other minority parties into the UPA and winning a subsequent vote of confidence, but this case underscored how fragile political coalitions are in India and how minority parties can wield disproportionate influence.

The Seam Issue

The Pentagon's organization of U.S. combatant commands is a constant annoyance for Indians, because the divide between U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) and U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) constrains cooperation. The Department of Defense has structured the combatant commands in a way that imposes an artificial line through the Indian Ocean, placing India in the PACOM area of responsibility (AOR). Indians maintain that this demarcation, or "seam," fails to account for the fact that India has interests in both AORs. While appreciation of Indian interests and concerns on this issue has increased within the U.S. defense community, Americans counter that PACOM is India's advocate and point of engagement for pursuit of its interests—even the ones that lie in other AORs. U.S. decision-makers have taken steps to involve India more with CENTCOM, but the issue remains a point of contention. The recent addition of U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) has generated further concern for the Indians as their defined area of interest continues to expand.

Foundational Agreements

Several key agreements that the United States requires of its foreign defense partners remain unsigned. The United States considers agreements such as the Logistics Support Agreement (LSA) and the Communications

and Information Security Memorandum of Agreement (or CISMOA) to be “foundational” for defense cooperation, including the transfer of military equipment and the sharing of information. As such, not having these agreements constrains the extent to which the relationship can progress.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

Indian and American perceptions of the strategic environment have become more similar over the past decade. Filled with new confidence as a result of economic growth and military modernization, India has moved beyond its traditional preoccupation with Pakistan, which is mired in economic and political turmoil, to focus on broader regional interests, including regional stability, maritime security, and managing China’s expanding presence and military modernization. India (and the United States as well) clearly remains concerned about threats posed by terrorism and nuclear weapons from Pakistan, but recognizes that Pakistan is in no position to pose a serious conventional threat. Simply, India’s view is no longer “Pakistan-centric.”

The United States used to view the Indian Ocean not as a discrete area of interest, but rather as a “crossroads” where other important regions coincide. Today, U.S. leaders view the Indian Ocean as a strategic region in its own right—one in which the United States has fundamental interests such as securing energy resources, protecting sea lanes, and countering terrorism. Leaders at PACOM have now produced a specific Indian Ocean strategy; building a strong defense relationship with India has become a key component of this strategy.

Within this environment, Indians and Americans generally have common strategic objectives, but they differ in their approaches to addressing them. For example, both countries want to fight terrorism, but the United States wants to do it around the globe and within a military framework, while India is focusing on threats on its borders using police and paramilitary forces. Both countries want stability in Pakistan, particularly to ensure security of its nuclear weapons. For the United States, however, Pakistan is an ally in the war on terror; for Indians, it is “the source of all global terrorism.” Similarly, neither India nor the United States wants a nuclear Iran, but the United States

has not ruled out a military option, while India advocates only diplomatic solutions.

PERCEPTIONS OF EACH OTHER

One result of the growing defense relationship is that military officers and defense officials in the United States and India have been interacting more frequently and more closely on many levels. While these Indians and Americans generally express respect for each other's countries, people, and militaries, they also have developed critical perceptions of each other that must be understood and considered if relations are to progress further. That individuals in both countries feel comfortable conveying such candid perspectives is an important indicator of how far the relationship has come.

Indian Perceptions of Americans

There are three overarching perceptions Indians commonly express about Americans in the context of the U.S.-India defense relationship. The first is that the United States is too legalistic in its approach to its relations with India. For Indians, the U.S. focus on signing agreements and putting everything in writing demonstrates that Americans are “wedded to the written word.” Senior MOD officials, for example, are confounded about why they “have to sign an agreement just to talk to the United States about signing an agreement.” For Indians, the American approach is anathema to their cultural norms. Indians prefer to discuss general themes and reach agreement on overarching principles before working out more specific details. Interactions with Americans, they claim, center on “checking the boxes, signing the agreements, and going home.” Indians have criticized this “checklist diplomacy” for its inflexibility, and also for its failure to measure success accurately or to appreciate smaller steps and intangible progress, such as stronger rapport and trust.

A related perception is that Americans are too impatient and strive to achieve end results too quickly. Indians surmise that this disconnect likely arises because the two countries have different perceptions of timeframes. From the Indian perspective, several months does not seem

like a long time for a civilization that has existed for thousands of years. The United States, however, is a young state—moreover, one in which instant gratification is pervasive—so Americans are more sensitive about timeframes and deadlines. These differing perceptions often lead to frustration about missed deadlines for signing agreements, or plans that fall through for meetings or exercises.

Indians also sense that Americans lack understanding about cultural nuance and sensitivity to how Americans are perceived by the international community. This deficit manifests on both large and small scales. The former is exemplified by U.S. failure to consider adequately the religious, tribal, or other cultural implications of the Iraq war; the latter by a dearth of cognizance about seemingly minute issues such as word choice or the symbolism of its actions. As a result, U.S. military actions can appear arrogant, offensive, or even threatening. Consequently, India and its military become wary of being perceived as too closely associated with the United States, or even of drawing the same criticism that American military actions do as New Delhi's defense ties with Washington intensify.

American Perceptions of Indians

Americans in the defense and policy-making communities also frequently describe three general perceptions about the Indian military and defense establishment. First, Indians are highly sensitive about their sovereignty. India's spirit of "fierce independence" is understandable given its history and experience as an occupied or colonized country, but from the U.S. perspective it also manifests in ways that inhibit cooperation. For example, Indian concerns about sovereignty have been a sticking point in negotiations surrounding some of the foundational agreements necessary to move the relationship forward, such as the LSA and End Use Monitoring (the latter accord allows the United States to monitor the use of defense equipment and technology sold to other countries).

Additionally, Americans perceive a lack of reciprocity from the Indian side. Americans sense that they consistently give more than they receive—whether in terms of taking the lead in organizing exercises or working groups, or in efforts to enact major milestones such as the

nuclear deal. However, they also recognize that this incongruity exists in many, if not most, of their relationships with other defense partners, simply because of the nature of the U.S. superpower status. This unequal give-and-take in the relationship, according to Americans, could likely exist because “India does not have as much to give,” rather than because of self-seeking Indian behavior.

Finally, Americans sense that the Indian military might be overestimating its capabilities. According to this view, India’s capabilities do not necessarily match up with its stated requirements as an emerging great power. India is modernizing its military at a rapid pace, but it still faces capacity constraints in terms of equipment and personnel, and political constraints in terms of its bureaucracy and political will. On the positive side, India’s own perceptions of its role reflect aspirations toward becoming more proactive in promoting regional stability and security, in cooperation with the United States and other partners, in order to achieve mutual objectives. However, in American eyes, although India wants to be seen as a great power, it is not necessarily prepared at this point to assume that role and the attendant responsibilities.

EXPECTATIONS FOR THE RELATIONSHIP

Looking toward the future, Indians and Americans have clear ideas about what they expect from their defense relations. For Indians, the relationship must move forward as an equal partnership. They do not want India to be seen as a “junior partner” of the United States, which is how they perceive other U.S. partners, even longstanding allies such as the United Kingdom and Japan. Instead, Indians want the United States to place India in a different category. Strategically, this means that India does not want a formal alliance with the United States; alignment with any one power constrains India’s ability to maximize its strategic options and autonomy. Operationally, it means that India is willing to engage in joint operations with the United States, but only alongside the U.S. military—not “under” the U.S. flag.

Indians also expect the future defense trade with the United States to support the development of India’s domestic defense capabilities. India wants to move beyond a strictly “buyer-to-seller” relationship to a more collaborative one in which the United States transfers technology,

complies with offset requirements, and works with Indian companies through joint ventures or other arrangements to strengthen India's own industrial base.

From the U.S. perspective, India is the key strategic actor in the Indian Ocean region, with similar interests and shared objectives. Americans are looking to India to assume more responsibility for stability and security in the region, in order to alleviate some of the burden currently shouldered by the United States. Opportunities for greater Indian responsibility are particularly promising in Maritime Domain Awareness (a global maritime security effort that involves monitoring the maritime environment and sharing information about potential threats); HADR; peacekeeping operations; counterterrorism; anti-piracy; prevention of illegal arms smuggling; sea lane security; border control enforcement; and information-sharing.

Americans also expect that the defense trade will expand and that U.S. companies will win some of the lucrative deals that are pending, such as the Indian Air Force Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) deal (a package that would supply the IAF with 126 multi-role combat aircraft). A critical underlying assumption is that increased U.S. competitiveness requires a "level playing field" that is free from corruption. Americans want India to view defense sales not only as transactional, but also as a way to build interoperability between the two militaries and to ensure long-term cooperation over the entire life cycle.

THE WAY FORWARD

Managing perceptions and expectations will require a common strategic vision for the relationship that guides subsequent interactions and cooperation toward shared goals. Policymakers and military officers in the United States and India have articulated the following recommendations for maintaining the momentum and positive trajectory of the relationship:

- Both countries should focus on concluding outstanding foundational agreements that will enable closer cooperation and increased access to information and technology.

- The United States should encourage India to take a leading role in bilateral and multilateral exercises to achieve the dual objectives of increasing India's profile and helping alleviate Indian concerns about inequality in the relationship.
- The U.S. strategy for engaging India in joint operations should accommodate Indian sensitivities about sovereignty. Specifically, the command and control structure could be organized in a way that ensures India would retain control over its own forces. A gradual progression, beginning with benign activities such as joint disaster-response before moving toward "heavier" operations such as counterterrorism or anti-trafficking, would help mitigate some political obstacles to closer cooperation.
- The United States should continue to find ways to bridge the PACOM/CENTCOM divide, such as by increasing Indian involvement in CENTCOM dialogues and facilitating interactions between CENTCOM and PACOM on India-related issues, to demonstrate to India that the United States understands New Delhi's concerns and wants to accommodate Indian interests.
- India and the United States should increase people-to-people contacts to develop rapport and to strengthen trust and cultural understanding. In particular, the United States could increase openings at war colleges and send more U.S. officers to India.
- India should undertake a public relations campaign to help shape domestic perceptions in a positive way. For example, India should highlight examples of past U.S. support to India, such as its assistance during the 1962 war with China, and draw attention to tangible returns from the relationship, such as the successful delivery of U.S. defense equipment.

Action on the above steps, combined with ongoing efforts to understand perceptions and expectations, is crucial to strengthening the bilateral defense relationship and to facilitating greater U.S.-India cooperation in order to bring stability and security to the Asian and global security environments.

NOTES

1 Insights and quotations in this paper come from Bethany Danyluk and Juli MacDonald, *The U.S.-India Defense Relationship: Reassessing Perceptions and Expectations* (McLean, VA: Booz Allen Hamilton, November 2008).

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