



## India's fitful quest for seapower

Iskander Rehman

### ABSTRACT

Building on several years of research, and many interviews of Indian naval officers and government officials, both serving and retired, this article aims to provide a deeper understanding of the context and ramifications of India's naval rise. In particular, it seeks to explain a troubling paradox: the relative neglect of the navy vis-à-vis the other services, and the seeming misalignment of New Delhi's military strategy with its maritime geography. Indeed, the country's enviable position at the heart of the Indian Ocean, along with its peninsular formation, large exclusive economic zone, and extensive coastlines, would seem to suggest a natural predisposition towards the exercise of naval power. In reality, however, India's navy since independence has consistently been the most poorly funded of its military services, and has frequently struggled to make do with limited resources. The core question this article endeavors to address is whether this trend will persist, or whether various factors will combine in order to provoke a gradual rebalancing of the nation's military strategy and force structure.

### Introduction

The United States' rebalancing towards Asia has been accompanied by a renewed interest in maritime issues. In contrast to the main theaters of the Cold War, the region's strategic and economic geography is strongly defined by its narrow chokepoints, wide oceans, and increasingly contested waterways. As a result, the navies of the Asia-Pacific's two great rising powers, India and China, have attracted an unprecedented level of academic attention. However, while various studies have focused on the role of China's navy within its wider military strategy,<sup>1</sup> until recently most detailed explorations of India's growing naval power primarily focused on the Indian navy itself—rather than on how the quest for seapower fit into New Delhi's emerging grand strategy.<sup>2</sup>

Building on several years of research, field trips, and many interviews of Indian military officers and government officials, both serving and retired, this article aims to provide a deeper understanding of the role of the Indian Navy in

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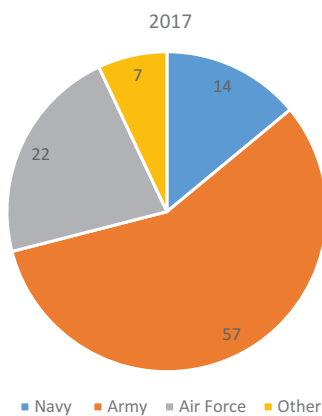
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India's grand strategy. In particular, it seeks to explain a troubling paradox: the relative neglect of the navy vis-à-vis the other services, and the seeming misalignment of New Delhi's military strategy with its maritime geography.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the country's enviable position at the heart of the Indian Ocean, along with its peninsular formation, large exclusive economic zone, and extensive coastlines, would seem to suggest a natural predisposition towards the exercise of naval power. In reality, however, India's navy since independence has consistently been the most poorly funded of its military services, and has frequently struggled to make do with limited resources. While the navy's fortunes have taken a positive turn over the past two decades, both in terms of funding and procurement, the so-called *Cinderella* service still only captures the smallest portion of the overall defense budget, which remains heavily skewed toward the nation's manpower-intensive Army. In 2017, for example, the Indian Navy only captured 14% of the defense budget, whereas the Army captured approximately 57%, and the Air Force 22% (see Figure 1).<sup>4</sup>

Over the past 5 years, Indian naval officers have repeatedly assured this author that the Navy's share would eventually rise to 25% of the overall defense budget, only to be sorely disappointed (see Figure 2).

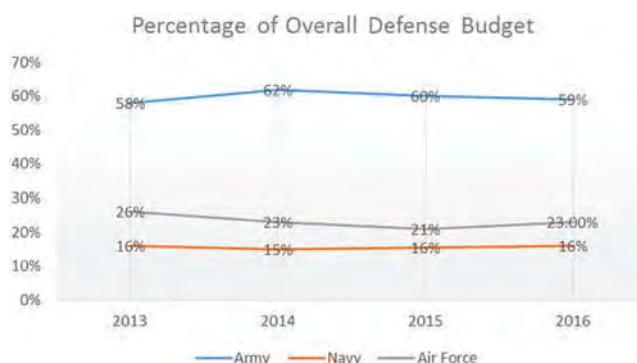
The core question this article endeavors to address is whether this trend will persist, or whether various factors will combine in order to provoke a gradual rebalancing of the nation's military strategy and force structure.

This article proceeds in three parts, and launches the discussion by offering a detailed preliminary analysis, both of India's historic maritime deficit, and of its gradual transition towards more ambitious explorations of seapower.<sup>5</sup> Three different—but not necessarily competing—explanations of India's tradition of naval neglect can be proffered:



**Figure 1.** India armed services allocations.

Percentages derived from Laxman K. Behera, *India's Defense Budget 2017-18: An Analysis* (New Delhi: Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, 2017), available at [http://www.idsa.in/issuebrief/india-defence-budget-2017-18.\\_lkbehera\\_030217](http://www.idsa.in/issuebrief/india-defence-budget-2017-18._lkbehera_030217)



**Figure 2.** Evolution of Indian armed services allocations 2013–16.

Figures and percentages derived from the data compiled in *IHS Jane's Defense Budgets: India Defense Budget* (Updated January 21, 2016).

- The first, more ideational in nature, makes the contentious claim that India is bereft of a strategic culture, let alone any form of grand strategy. This geostrategic incoherence has, supposedly, accentuated the nation's maritime shortcomings.
- The second explanation is more pragmatic and experiential. As India's primary strategic contingencies since independence have been predominantly land-based, it is argued, it is only natural that the country's strategic attention remains captive to continental considerations.
- The third explanation is organizational. In the absence of an effective system of higher defense management, India's defense planning lacks political direction and strategic coherence. As a result, resource adjudication in-between the three services tends to be status quoist.

The article examines these explanations turn by turn. First, I engage in a detailed analysis of the debates surrounding India's strategic culture. Foreign analyses of Indian strategic culture frequently conflate a perceived lack of strategic direction or purposiveness with a total absence of strategic culture. Those few observers who do concede to the existence of an Indian strategic culture and/or grand strategy habitually deem the latter to be too defensive in nature, or continentalist, to accommodate thalassocratic visions of the world. This article takes issue with these preconceived notions, and draws attention to the gradual crystallization of a rich maritime narrative and to the emergence of an increasingly hybrid strategic culture in India.

Rather than rooted in culture, could the obstacles to India's maritime transformation be of a simpler, more contextual, nature? The second section of this article engages in a historical study of the role the Indian Navy has played since Independence, and shows that the frequent recurrence of continental challenges prevented the young nation from fulfilling its more

ambitious naval force development plans. To this day, many believe that India's primary strategic contingencies are on land rather than at sea. There is a growing recognition, however, of the utility of a powerful navy, not only in its custodial role as a guarantor of the nation's growing seaborne equities; but also as a valuable diplomatic asset, and as a potential source of competitive advantage in a conflict with China or Pakistan. Finally, the navy will form the most survivable leg of the nation's prospective nuclear triad.

In a third and final section, I demonstrate that India's unfulfilled naval potential can best be explained by the absence of an effective system of higher defense management, which successfully adjudicates amongst the nation's continental and maritime challenges. The main obstacles to India's rise as a great naval power are not cultural, nor are they the result of a lack of consensus within India's strategic community on the purported virtues to be derived from seapower. They are organizational, and in the absence of comprehensive institutional reform, these obstacles will endure.

### **Explaining India's maritime deficit—a cross-examination of the ideational argument**

In 1992, George Tanham, a political scientist from RAND, published a monograph entitled "Indian Strategic Culture: An Interpretive Essay," in which he made the provocative argument that India had no tradition of strategic thinking.<sup>6</sup> He attributed this perceived lacuna to several historical and cultural elements. The sweeping, impressionistic nature of some of his conclusions sparked a vivid debate in India and prompted a series of animated rebuttals.<sup>7</sup> Ever since, the debate over whether India has a strategic culture, or a clearly discernible grand strategy, appears to have become a permanent feature of any discussion over the nature of India's military modernization.<sup>8</sup> While such commentary is often rich and intriguing, it is also invariably marked by the absence of clear conceptual definitions. "Grand Strategy" and "Strategic Culture" are frequently employed interchangeably, and, more often than not, are depicted as being either singularly absent, or depressingly deficient.<sup>9</sup> This section seeks to add greater clarity to the discussion over the ideational component of India's maritime rise by outlining the naval contours of India's grand strategy. It then proceeds to address the supposed absence or deficiencies of India's strategic culture with the aim of answering the following question—is India's current continental focus culturally predetermined?

### *India's grand strategy*

Grand strategy is a phrase that many understand as being intuitive. This has unfortunately resulted in something of a paradox—it is both frequently employed yet rarely defined.

One of the first, most classic, definitions remains that of Liddell Hart, who famously characterized “higher” or grand strategy as the ability to,

coordinate and direct all the resources of a nation, or band of nations, toward the attainment of the political object of the war.<sup>10</sup>

Since then, however, grand strategy as a concept has been substantively broadened, so as to encompass the strategic behavior of states in times of both war and peace.<sup>11</sup> In effect, grand strategy has become synonymous with effective long-term strategic planning.<sup>12</sup>

India is frequently accused, both at home and abroad, of being incapable—or unwilling—to undertake such an intellectual effort. In most cases, however, this criticism rests on the perceived lack of clarity of India's strategic planning rather than on its total absence. For instance, one Indian thinker rails against “the absence of an overarching template to guide different paths of the state and strategic bureaucracy, dispersed across the system”, which has, in his opinion, “created a palpable inertia and an intellectual vacuum.”<sup>13</sup> This inertia or lack of strategic focus is frequently attributed to the diffidence of India's politicians, who remain consumed by domestic matters and electoral concerns, or to the shortcomings of the country's severely understaffed bureaucratic elite.<sup>14</sup> Lack of absolute clarity, however, does not necessarily mean lack of purpose, nor should it automatically be equated with the absence of any form of long-term strategic thinking.<sup>15</sup>

Indeed, a careful parsing of pronouncements by India's political and military leadership does reveal certain enduring themes and aspirations, as does the study of various government sources such as the annual reports emanating from India's ministries of external affairs and defense. These sources would suggest, notes Ashley Tellis, that there are three constants in India's grand strategy: the pursuit and preservation of economic growth, the consolidation of overall state capacity and of its democratic credentials, and the strengthening of overall national security.<sup>16</sup> The last component of India's grand strategy is perhaps the most complex. Indeed, for New Delhi, security has always been coterminous with a quest for greater strategic autonomy, and with a solid aversion for any form of partnership that could lead to either subservience or entanglement.<sup>17</sup> This autonomy is perceived as a key enabler—allowing India to practice a “multi-vectored” diplomacy which maximizes freedom of maneuver while minimizing the risks of friction which could flow from more solidified alignments.<sup>18</sup> During the Cold War,

India's quest for greater maneuverability was couched in the grammar of third-world solidarity and non-alignment. This stance had both normative and instrumental underpinnings. As scholars such as Sumit Ganguly have noted, at a systemic level, the "policy made sense, as it enabled a materially weak state to play a role that was considerably more significant than its capabilities would warrant."<sup>19</sup>

As a result, there is undoubtedly also an intentional aspect to the seemingly inchoate nature of India's grand strategy. In effect, its lack of codification and perceived illegibility paradoxically strengthens its capacity for adaptation.<sup>20</sup> Historical studies have pointed to the inherent plasticity of any successful pursuit of grand strategy.<sup>21</sup> This is something which India's foremost strategists have fully internalized, with a much-discussed 2012 study placing a strong emphasis on subtlety, and

a skillful management of complicated coalitions and opportunities—in environments that may be inherently unstable and volatile rather than structurally settled.<sup>22</sup>

With the end of the Cold War, however, the term non-alignment has largely fallen into desuetude, to be replaced in India's foreign policy lexicon by the less ideologically freighted term of "strategic autonomy", which some foreign observers have described as the natural, "realist mutation" of non-alignment.<sup>23</sup>

### ***The maritime logic behind India's grand strategy***

After having argued in favor of the existence of an Indian grand strategy, to what extent can it be described as maritime in nature? Reprising the previous taxonomy of core objectives—economic growth, democratic consolidation and enhanced security through flexibility—it can be argued that, in each case, the expansion of India's maritime power forms a fundamental prerequisite of its grand strategy.

### ***The economic logic***

Since the end of the cold war, the share of mercantile trade in India's gross domestic product (GDP) has grown exponentially. Indeed, as of 2015, it was estimated that external trade constituted close to 42% of India's overall GDP.<sup>24</sup> Nearly 90% of India's trade in volume, and over 77% of its trade in value, is maritime in nature.<sup>25</sup> The importance of container ship-driven growth stands in stark contrast to the pre-reform era, when overall international trade accounted for little more than 16% of the country's GDP.<sup>26</sup> Since the early 1990s, India's rapid industrialization and economic growth has been accompanied by steadily rising sea-borne imports. India now imports close to 73 percent of its oil, the bulk of which flows into India via the western Indian

Ocean, from the Middle East and Africa.<sup>27</sup> In addition to its deepening dependence on sea-borne trade and energy imports, India also possesses a large and growing expatriate population, particularly in the Gulf. These overseas workers channel billions of dollars back home every year, and their remittances play a major role in the prosperity of certain southern Indian states such as Kerala. Last but not least, the Modi government has been particularly eager to strengthen its cultural and economic ties with India's increasingly affluent diaspora, particularly on the North American continent, but also in places such as Australia and Southeast Asia.<sup>28</sup>

India's clear prioritization of economic growth and desire to maintain an open economic order should therefore logically correlate with a decisive rebalancing in favor of its navy, which appears best placed among the three services to protect the nation's growing seaborne equities.

### *The democratic logic*

In contrast to continental powers, states that orient their power seawards can more easily calibrate and shape perceptions, and therefore appear less threatening to their neighbors.<sup>29</sup> Traditional physiopolitical theory also holds that maritime polities are less hierarchical in nature, more commercially oriented, and more culturally cosmopolitan.<sup>30</sup> Since Aristotle, philosophers and political theorists have pointed to the democratic virtues of navies, which cannot readily be used as instruments of domestic oppression.<sup>31</sup> In contrast, large standing armies have traditionally been associated with authoritarianism, autarchic or feudal economic systems and cycles of internal repression.<sup>32</sup> While such traditional delineations may seem somewhat rigid or simplistic, they do maintain a certain relevance in the case of India, which is located in a region composed of a wide array of political regimes, many of which have been rendered brittle by decades of army-led coups, and are characterized by creeping authoritarianism or severe democratic dysfunction.

In contrast, the Indian Navy has gone so far as to suggest that Indian ships compose not only "small mobile pieces of national sovereignty", but also floating incarnations of the virtues of Indian democracy.<sup>33</sup> The Indian Navy's 2009 Maritime Doctrine thus posits,

the mere presence of an Indian warship, with its multi-ethnic and multi-religious crew in a foreign harbor, will contribute to India's image as a vibrant democracy abroad.<sup>34</sup>

This perception—of the navy constituting the most democratic, non-threatening and open-minded of India's three services—was frequently reiterated during the author's discussions with naval officers. Invariably, the interviewees portrayed themselves as less adversarial and more open to communication with their Pakistani and Chinese counterparts than their comrades in the Army or Air Force. In one particular case, this was attributed to the,



nature of the ocean as a medium. . . and as an international highway for trade and communication, far from the eyeball—to-eyeball tensions along the land borders.<sup>35</sup>

The Indian Navy also seeks to expand its custodial role in the Indian Ocean, engaging in anti-piracy patrols, escorting U.S. ships through the Malacca Strait after 9/11, and demonstrating its ability to emerge as a net security provider as well as a provider of public goods. Indian vessels have thus taken part in a wide range of humanitarian and disaster relief operations over the years, as well as in a series of non-combatant evacuation operations (NEOs).<sup>36</sup>

### *The security logic*

Finally, the pursuit of seapower also allows India to engage in internal balancing, by strengthening its overall military capacities, all while maintaining a certain degree of elasticity in the conduct of its multi-vectored military diplomacy.<sup>37</sup> During the first decade following the Cold War, the Indian Navy conducted close to fifty joint naval exercises with more than twenty countries. Since then, India's naval interactions have grown exponentially. Large-scale collective naval gatherings—such as the MILAN exercises (meaning confluence in Hindi), which include several navies from Southeast Asia and take place biennially off the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, or the IBSAMAR exercises, which involve the nations of the IBSA nations—India, Brazil, and South Africa—form the most visible, high-profile examples of India's embrace of multilateral maritime diplomacy. New Delhi also engages in an array of bilateral exercises, with countries as varied as Japan (JIMEX), Singapore (SIMBEX), France (VARUNA), and the United States (MALABAR).<sup>38</sup> Most recently and significantly, New Delhi has moved toward more permanently expanding the MALABAR exercises to include Japan (and maybe also Australia) after many years of vacillation for fear of antagonizing China.<sup>39</sup> Figures such as the former Chief of Naval Staff Nirmal Verma have openly acknowledged that through its “foreign cooperation initiatives,” the Indian Navy would gain vital “operational skills and doctrinal expertise.”<sup>40</sup> Indian officials have arguably also proved adept at leveraging the concept of strategic autonomy for internal balancing purposes. Indeed, few—if any—countries can currently claim to engage in high-end naval cooperation with as many different partners as India. For example, New Delhi has cooperated on nuclear submarine production with Moscow, ship-based missile defense with Jerusalem, and next-generation aircraft carrier design with Washington.

One clearly detects a compelling maritime logic to India's grand strategy. Why, then, is the nation's national security apparatus still so heavily oriented towards the army? Could it be due to the fact that, as some have claimed, India's strategic culture is irredeemably continentalist?



### ***Debating the weight of continentalism in Indian strategic thought***

The precise meaning of strategic culture is highly contested within the academic literature.<sup>41</sup> In order to keep the analysis manageable, this article chooses not to explore this debate in depth, eschews any essentialist reading of the concept, and opts to revert to the broader initial definition provided by Jack Snyder in his seminal work of the 1970s.<sup>42</sup> For the purposes of this discussion, strategic culture is therefore to be “*defined as the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behavior that members of a national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other with regard to (nuclear) strategy.*”<sup>43</sup> In effect, it is perhaps judicious to state from the outset that while culture may not have the power to mechanistically determine strategic behavior, it can, in certain cases, provide certain powerful preferences.<sup>44</sup> Keeping this in mind, to what extent can it be said that India does, indeed, have a strategic culture, i.e. certain culturally inspired strategic inclinations or predispositions? And if so, are these culturally constructed paradigms sympathetic, hostile or simply indifferent to ambitious expressions of maritime power?

The study of Indian strategic culture has been rendered particularly challenging by the lack of any form of intellectual convergence over several of its key determinants, ranging from the nation’s traditional geostrategic orientation to the relative salience of various epochs in its martial history.<sup>45</sup>

Whereas some thinkers such as Tanham attributed a perceived “absence of strategic thinking” or “passivity in military affairs” to the nation’s traditional fixation on the natural boundaries formed by the Himalayas; others, such as the famed Indian historian K.M. Pannikar, have emphasized in Mahanian terms the fact that the country’s peninsular formation has given the sea “a preponderant influence on its destiny”.<sup>46</sup>

Two authors of a study of Indian military modernization have attributed India’s perceived strategic lacunae to a “culture of restraint”<sup>47</sup>; while others have ascribed them to a military mindset which lacks creativity and continues to harbor an “attrition-oriented paradigm”.<sup>48</sup> There is a similar lack of consensus with regard to the country’s history.

For example, the effects of British rule on India’s strategic thinking have led to strongly divergent interpretations. Some analysts, for instance, have viewed New Delhi’s seemingly excessive fixation on its continental borders as a complex form of strategic path dependency. One such thinker has argued that India’s continentalist orientation should be interpreted as a legacy of the policies of the Raj, whose administrators had historically privileged the Indian Army over the Indian Air Force, whose role was largely confined to air policing, and the Indian Navy, which was almost systematically neglected.<sup>49</sup> Others, however, have taken an opposite view, pointing to Imperial India’s history of expeditionary warfare, as a means of exhorting

India to become a more assertive maritime power and extend its influence over the entire Indian Ocean Region.<sup>50</sup> A similar divergence of opinion is apparent in-between the writings of an Indian academic such as Waheguru Pal Sidhu, who argues that in India the formation of Indian strategic culture was in fact interrupted by British rule, and Tanham, who famously asserted that “*the experience of the British Raj provided India with a geopolitical frame of reference that continues to influence present-day strategy.*”<sup>51</sup> Equally, some Indian authors have referred to ancient texts such as *The Arthashastra* and the *Mahabharata* as providing the foundations for Indian strategic culture,<sup>52</sup> while others have dismissed the relevance of such manuscripts to contemporary Indian thought.<sup>53</sup>

All this would appear to demonstrate that, rather than an absence of strategic culture, India may, somewhat paradoxically, suffer from a surplus of potential strategic reference points.

Indeed, a close study of Indian military history reveals the existence a remarkably diverse set of strategic sub-cultures throughout the history of subcontinent, ranging from the more nautically minded Cholas or Marathas, to the land-based armies of the Mughals and Rajputs.<sup>54</sup> This has led some eminent military historians to conclude that such a variety of approaches to statecraft and military power throughout history precludes the notion of an overarching, quintessentially Indian, strategic culture.<sup>55</sup> Departing from the same observation, one could arrive at a very different conclusion. The hybrid, variegated, quality of India’s strategic culture is its defining characteristic, and a fitting reflection of the diversity inherent to the subcontinent’s strategic past, as well as of the wealth of its deeply syncretic intellectual tradition.<sup>56</sup>

Historiographers have aptly noted the extent to which history, like cartography, can be viewed as a mere representation of reality.<sup>57</sup> A society’s understanding of its own history is to a large extent embedded within narratives, complex mediums through which nations engage not only their citizens and bureaucratic constituencies, but also the wider world.<sup>58</sup> Depending on the strength of their persuasive power, narratives can structure the perception of geopolitical realities and act as effective catalysts for strategic adjustment.<sup>59</sup> New Delhi’s geostrategic orientation seawards will thus hinge in large part on the strength of the consensus within India’s strategic community on the need and requisite urgency of such a shift.

### ***The crystallization of India’s maritime narrative***

While India’s strategic community remains conflicted over the legacy of British or Mughal era strategic thinking, there has been a concerted effort—particularly amongst advocates of Indian naval expansion—to promote certain defining moments in India’s maritime past.<sup>60</sup> This has resulted in

the emergence of a maritime soft power narrative that centers largely on a major historiographical theme: Ashokan Pacifism and the Buddhist Legacy.

The Emperor Ashoka, of the Mauryan Dynasty, is widely acknowledged in India as one of the most enlightened rulers the subcontinent has ever known, along with the Mughal-era Akbar the Great. Ashoka's rule also represents one of the few moments in India's long history when almost the entirety of the subcontinent was unified as a common strategic entity. Having inherited vast tracts of land, Ashoka foreswore violent conquest after the bloody battle of Kalinga, which resulted in tens of thousands of enemy casualties. From then on, he chose to extend Mauryan rule through the Buddhist concept of "dharma" or exemplary conduct.<sup>61</sup> This was accomplished in large part through the dispatch of high-profile Buddhist missionaries—such as his daughter Sangamitra—to Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. Members of India's strategic community have advanced the Ashokan notion of dharma as a form of pre-modern Indian soft power, and point to India's long-standing history as a birthplace of ideas and of peaceful cultural diffusion.<sup>62</sup> Whereas China invaded and occupied Vietnam for over a thousand years, India spread Buddhism and the Hindu concept of sacred kingship to Southeast Asia not by sword and flame, but via trade and itinerant missionaries.<sup>63</sup> The fact that ancient India did not engage in long-term occupation or widespread forcible conversion in Southeast Asia is viewed as particularly significant.<sup>64</sup>

The latest version of the Indian Navy's Maritime Doctrine opens with a short historical preview which describes how traders, and Buddhist and Hindu philosophers traveled to Southeast Asia, imparting the region with a distinctly Indian flavor, while an Indian diplomatic official in Beijing depicted the peaceful propagation of Buddhism as a "*multi-millennia old bond that India shares with the rest of the Asian continent, and which acts as a testament to the power of its civilizational pull.*"<sup>65</sup> In another sign of the renewed emphasis on India's maritime past east of the Malacca Straits, the Indian Ministry of Defense and External Affairs joined hands in 2012 to dispatch a sail training ship, the *INS Sudarshini*, on a 6 month voyage throughout Southeast Asia. In the course of the departure ceremony, a Ministry of External Affairs official described the initiative as an attempt to "*retrace the civilizational and historical links between India and South East Asia.*"<sup>66</sup> Increasingly, therefore, there appears to be a meeting of minds in-between Indian navalists and Indian officials, with a gradual merging of narratives. The former Indian national security advisor Shivshankar Menon has thus attributed India's alleged continental mindset to "*centuries of colonial rule*", while underscoring that much of ancient Indian prosperity and security was predicated on a "*maritime strategy that included Southeast Asia.*"<sup>67</sup>

More recently, India's Ministry of Culture launched *Project Mausam*, an initiative which, according to the official press release,

at the macro level aims to reconnect and reestablish communications between countries of the Indian Ocean world, which would lead to an enhanced understanding of cultural values and concerns; while at the micro level, the focus is on understanding national cultures in their regional milieu.<sup>68</sup>

Some recent efforts by retired Indian naval officers and historians, however, may come to jar with this appealing soft power narrative.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, contemporary scholarship has begun to place an increasing emphasis on the nautical endeavors of the Chola Dynasty, which held sway over much of Southern India and Sri Lanka from the ninth to the thirteenth century.

Studies have focused, in particular, on the eleventh century maritime trade wars that opposed the Chola empire to the Sri Vijaya kingdom, which lay nestled on the Malacca Strait. The conflict appears to have been motivated, primarily, by the desire of the Chola ruler's desire to break the Sri Vijaya's monopoly over Southeast Asian SLOCs. The Cholas proceeded to cobble together a small armada, composed of a hodgepodge of merchant vessels, catamarans, and dhows, traversing the Bay of Bengal, and disgorging thousands of Indian soldiers on Southeast Asian shores. This previously little known episode of South Asian history, which resulted in a resounding Chola victory, would seem to indicate that Indian maritime power could also be exerted in a more predatory manner.<sup>70</sup>

By and large, however, the focus has been on the early, more peaceful, days of India's seafaring past. This suggests a strong desire to forge a cultural narrative that is both supportive of New Delhi's maritime reorientation and reassuring to the rising power's smaller Asian neighbors.

There would therefore seem to not be any deep-rooted cultural barriers to a greater rebalancing towards naval assets. Could the overbearing weight of India's land-based forces simply be the result of the nation's recent history and of a resultant prioritization of continental security?

### **The tyranny of contingency: Land-based circumstances and continental priorities**

In order to answer this question, this article's second section examines the role the Indian Navy has played in India's military operations since independence.

#### ***A blue water blueprint***

Contrary to many commonly shared assumptions, India has long harbored blue water ambitions. In fact, even during the short twilight period of colonial rule—following the conclusion of World War II and before the advent of Indian independence—British military planners had already begun to lay the foundations for a much expanded Indian fleet. In 1944, a report

had been commissioned by the British Chiefs of Staff Committee on the size and composition of post war forces in India.<sup>71</sup> While many in London had already begun to reconcile themselves to the reality of an independent India,<sup>72</sup> the report still envisaged India's navy as a *dominion* navy, supplementing and complementing Royal Navy actions, rather than taking on a wholly separate strategic role.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, the report had laid out a much more ambitious role for the Indian Navy, which it envisioned taking on greater responsibility within its own maritime backyard. Part of this can, no doubt, be attributed to the growing recognition in Whitehall that, following 6 years of intense conflict, London could no longer afford to extend the same level of security guarantees as in the past.<sup>74</sup> According to British naval planners, an expanded Indian Navy was thus expected to ensure the security of the subcontinent's maritime trade, while repelling, if necessary, any attempts at (Russian) amphibious landings. A series of planning documents counseled the training of specialized amphibious formations within the Indian Army, and the creation of a small, *rapid reaction*, expeditionary force to respond to low-level instability throughout the Commonwealth. The proposed fleet architecture was much more ambitious than anything that had preceded it. Indeed, post-war development plans recommended a "balanced" naval force, of three cruisers, eight destroyers, eight frigates, and a large number of minesweepers and torpedo boats. Follow-on reports projected a dominion naval force that incorporated even more high-end naval assets, such as light aircraft carriers, and submarines.<sup>75</sup> As Rear Admiral Satyindra Singh, one of the Indian Navy's official historians, has pointed out, British influence over the Indian Navy would be preserved, albeit in an indirect fashion, through London's monopoly over supplies and spare parts.<sup>76</sup>

With the advent of Indian independence and partition, however, the subcontinent's naval future took a different turn. The formerly undivided Royal Indian Navy (RIN) was split between India and Pakistan, with newly independent India inheriting about two thirds of the fleet. As many of the sailors and technical ratings of the RIN had been recruited amongst Punjabi Muslims, India witnessed an exodus of over 47% of its sailors to Pakistan.<sup>77</sup> When it came to the officer corps, Pakistan suffered from more acute penuries than India, although both nations' higher command structures were cruelly short staffed in the early years following independence. As a result, both the Indian and Pakistani navies maintained a small corps of "loaned" British officers for the next decade or so.<sup>78</sup>

Only a week after independence, India's Naval Headquarters issued an *Outline Plan for the Reorganization and Development of the Royal Indian Navy*. The introduction to the plan appears, interestingly, to foreshadow some of the Indian Navy's looming bureaucratic challenges, while laying out a surprisingly ambitious maritime vision,

The Navy and Army of India as united forces have existed for over three hundred years. The Army at the date of partition numbered some 480,000 men and was fully equipped as a modern fighting machine. The RIAF (Royal Indian Air Force) has existed for ten years and at the date of partition possessed some eleven squadrons. The Navy, by contrast, possessed but a handful of small ships. (...) India, till recently, has been little interested in her overseas trade, nor has she appreciated her position in world strategy as the focal country of the Indian Ocean area.

Today, all is changed. (...) A Navy commanding the respect of the world is not a luxury for her but a vital necessity.<sup>79</sup>

For newly independent India's strategic community, such a fleet was to be structured around two, if not more, light aircraft carrier task forces, complete with auxiliary vessels such as tankers and repair and depot ships for extended blue water operations.

### ***The marginalization of naval strategy***

Rapidly, however, the Indian Navy's more grandiose naval ambitions ran into a series of treacherous shoals. As Cold war divisions gradually rigidified, the Indian Navy's strategic aims appeared less and less compatible with those of its British patron.<sup>80</sup> While the Indian Navy had begun to articulate an increasingly ambitious vision for its future role in the Indian Ocean, decision-makers in London preferred to see the Indian Navy focused on more narrow, localized missions, such as anti-submarine warfare (ASW), and coastal defense. In November 1950, in a missive to the First Lord of the Admiralty, Patrick Walker, the British Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, clearly articulated London's unease:

The fact is, as I think we all realize, that there is a fundamental divergence of view between the Indians and ourselves on what the function of the Indian Navy should be. We naturally wish to see them build up a navy, which while providing adequately for their own home defense needs, would also in the future be able to make a significant contribution to Commonwealth naval strategy, on the assumption that India would be willing to cooperate. Hence the importance which we have all attached to the provision in the Indian Navy of adequate antisubmarine and minesweeping forces. The Indians, on the other hand, have been pressing for United Kingdom help in building up what they describe as a fully balanced force, including a substantial naval aviation element.<sup>81</sup>

As Nehruvian India strengthened its policy of non-alignment and progressively distanced itself from the West, the United Kingdom grew increasingly reluctant to transfer high-end naval equipment to India. This became particularly apparent after Pakistan's entry into U.S. sponsored alliance systems such as the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), in the mid-1950s. For example, although London did agree, in 1957, to sell New Delhi a Majestic-class aircraft carrier in 1957 (commissioned into Indian service as the INS Vikrant in 1961), it repeatedly rebuffed India's requests for

Oberon class submarines at reasonable prices, which led the Indian Navy to turn—albeit reluctantly—toward the Soviet Union as an alternative source for naval hardware.<sup>82</sup>

The Indian Navy's difficulties were greatly compounded by Prime Minister Nehru's reluctance to disburse large amounts of funds on military modernization. Navies are by nature highly capital-intensive services,<sup>83</sup> and in India's case, the need to invest in additional shore-based infrastructure only added to the Navy's budgetary birth pains. Although Nehru had at times expressed enthusiasm for the Navy's lofty maritime vision, the first Indo-Pakistani war had immediately resulted in a prioritization of the Army, and, to a lesser extent, of the Air Force.

Throughout the 1950s, therefore—and despite the political leadership's approbation of the Navy's pan-regional ambitions—the Cinderella Service's share of the overall defense budget never once surpassed 12 percent. This was undoubtedly due to the fact that, for India's security managers, in the years following independence, India's prime strategic contingencies were on land, rather than at sea.

The Navy did play a role in India's early campaigns of internal consolidation, whether during the forcible integration of the princely state of Junagadh, now in Gujarat, in 1947, or during Operation Vijay, in 1961, which resulted in the eviction of the Portuguese from Goa. In both cases, however, the Navy's function was supportive and enabling, rather than decisive. During the 1962 Sino-Indian war, hostilities were confined to the continental theater, mainly out of concerns over the risks of horizontal escalation. Following the disaster of India's defeat, the Indian Navy was relegated even further to the backseat, and its share of the defense budget plummeted to 4% in 1964–65.<sup>84</sup> Meanwhile, the Indian Army nearly doubled in size in the decade following its defeat, going from 458,000 to 825,000 troops.<sup>85</sup>

Putting aside the perennially vexatious issue of its insufficient resourcing, perhaps the greatest frustration for the Indian Navy was its complete marginalization from higher defense management, and the conduct of military operations. This became painfully apparent during the 1965 Indo-Pakistani conflict, which was subsequently described by Indian naval officers as an intensely humiliating experience. General J.N. Chaudhuri, the Indian Army chief, and head of the Chief of Staffs Committee (COSC), was an authoritarian figure who micromanaged the planning of operations, and deliberately excluded the Navy chief, Admiral D.S. Soman, from meetings.<sup>86</sup>

The prime responsibility for the Indian Navy's inaction, however, lay with the civilian government, which had issued strict directives that the Navy not proceed more than 200 miles beyond Bombay, or north of the parallel of Porbandar.<sup>87</sup> These instructions were primarily motivated by two factors. First, India's political leadership placed a clear priority on the defense of the



Andaman and Nicobar islands, which Indonesian President Soekarno had threatened to seize while Indian forces were otherwise preoccupied on the western maritime front.<sup>88</sup> Second, the Indian Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, had expressed concerns over opening another front off Karachi, fearing that it would indefinitely protract the conflict, thus impeding war termination.<sup>89</sup> While this decision may or may not have been valid, Indian naval officers were intensely frustrated by these government-imposed strictures.<sup>90</sup>

With the Pakistani Navy's shelling of the coastal town of Dwarka, in Gujarat, the Indian Navy's sense of grievance was further exacerbated. Although the attack caused only negligible damage (one unfortunate cow formed the sole casualty), the Indian Navy felt intensely humiliated by its inability to respond to the blatant provocation.<sup>91</sup>

Adding insult to injury, the Lok Sabha and general public seemed unaware of the draconian nature of the Indian Navy's rules of engagement (ROE). Members of parliament ridiculed the Indian Navy's perceived timorousness, and the Indian press was virulent in its criticism.<sup>92</sup>

In 1971, when Islamabad's brutal campaign of repression in East Pakistan led to steadily escalating tensions in-between India and Pakistan,<sup>93</sup> India's naval leadership was determined to salvage its bruised reputation and demonstrate its relevance. In the words of Admiral S.M. Nanda, then Chief of Naval Staff, the Indian Navy felt intense pressure to prove that it was not simply an "ornamental service", for fear that otherwise it would simply be "written off."<sup>94</sup> Admiral Nanda outlined a much more offensive role for the Indian Navy and found a receptive audience in Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Unlike during the 1965 war, the Indian Navy had ample time to prepare its fleet for combat readiness. In November 1971, as war loomed increasingly large on the horizon, Admiral Nanda openly declared at a press conference that the Indian Navy would target Karachi.<sup>95</sup>

A month later, only a few days after war had been officially declared, Admiral Nanda made good on his promise by launching a daring series of missile attacks against Karachi. The Indian Navy displayed a rare degree of ingenuity, towing Osa-class missile boats—designed primarily for "green water" or coastal defense operations—across the Arabian Sea and towards Karachi. The use of sea-based missiles against docked vessels and land-based installations had never been attempted in South Asia, and had a devastating effect on Pakistan's surface fleet, destroying or crippling two destroyers, as well as several auxiliary vessels.<sup>96</sup> Steel fuel tanks along the coastline were hit, and the entire portuary complex of Karachi was set ablaze for several days.<sup>97</sup> To this day, this operation continues to be viewed as the Indian Navy's finest hour, and is commemorated every year on the 4th of December, through the celebration of the Indian *Navy Day*. Throughout the rest of the conflict, and despite the tragic loss of a frigate, the INS Khukri, to a torpedo attack, the Indian Navy

played an active role, pursuing maritime reconnaissance and strike operations in the Bay of Bengal. Toward the end of the conflict, the U.S. engaged in an exercise of naval suasion by surging a naval task force, led by a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, the USS *Enterprise*, into the Indian Ocean.<sup>98</sup> From Washington's perspective, this deployment was construed first and foremost as a means of dissuading India from launching further offensives into Western Pakistani territory.<sup>99</sup> For India, however, such an action was perceived as little more than a blunt exercise in intimidation.<sup>100</sup> Indeed, there is no evidence of any planned Indian offensive deeper into West Pakistan. The USS *Enterprise* "incident," as it is often referred to in Delhi, was to have a lasting impact on the Indian strategic psyche.

All in all, however, the 1971 war was perceived by many in the Indian Navy as a stirring success, not only for the nation, but also for a formerly beleaguered service that had struggled to prove its utility in past conflicts.

Following the USS *Enterprise* incident, naval chiefs argued that a more powerful Indian Navy was necessary, not so much to compete with the superpowers, but rather to "raise the costs of their intervention in the region of the Indian peninsula."<sup>101</sup> Indeed, recent archival studies would appear to suggest that India's first forays into nuclear submarine reactor design were heavily motivated by the sense of vulnerability triggered by the USS *Enterprise* deployment.<sup>102</sup> A few years prior, in the late 1960s, a study group of high ranking naval officers had already issued a report that envisioned a much larger fleet taking over the functions of the Royal Navy as it withdrew its forces East of Suez. After the Indian Navy's good showing in 1971, hope was rekindled that India's security higher defense apparatus would prove more sympathetic to such aims.

Unfortunately, the 1971 naval operations against Pakistan may have proven successful, but they also removed the only visible naval threat to India. Perhaps, partly as a result, there was no significant change in defense allocation patterns throughout the 1970s.<sup>103</sup>

The Indian Navy also had to contend with the unpleasantness of inter-service turf wars, only managing to wrest responsibility for maritime reconnaissance from a recalcitrant Air Force in 1976, after over a decade of bitter struggle.<sup>104</sup> Army generals lambasted what they portrayed as the, chimeric, "neo-colonialist" views of the naval study group, and asserted that Indian naval strategy should content itself with sea denial and coastal defense.<sup>105</sup>

In a society marked by relatively harmonious civil-military relations, one could argue that intra-service competition might lead to positive outcomes. Individual services, through their active lobbying of the civilian leadership, infuse the debate with high-level military expertise, and generate vital information. The civilian leadership finds itself both empowered as a neutral arbiter, and better informed in its own decision-making.<sup>106</sup> This is predicated, however, on the notion that the military leadership has unfettered

access to the highest policymaking circles, and that the civilian leadership has the requisite knowledge and expertise in order to arbitrate effectively and clearly define the nation's key defense needs. Unfortunately, in India, as we shall see in a later section, both of these preconditions are conspicuous by their absence.

Under the tenure of Rajiv Gandhi, and in the late 1980s in particular, the Indian Navy experienced something of a renewed emphasis. Although there were no sizable changes in the Navy's share of the overall defense budget, a number of high-profile acquisitions, such as a nuclear-powered attack submarine (SSN), the *INS Chakra*, on lease from Russia, and the *INS Viraat*, a Centaur-class aircraft carrier acquired from the United Kingdom, attracted the world's attention. A plethora of hyperbolic, and sometimes somewhat alarmist, articles spoke of India's potential emergence as a maritime superpower in the Indian Ocean. *Time Magazine* famously released a cover story in April 1989, whose headline read, "Superpower Rising: Propelled by an Arms Buildup, India Asserts on the World Stage."<sup>107</sup> During the 1980s, the Indian Navy also participated in a number of high-profile custodial duties, ferrying troops to thwart an attempted coup in the Maldives in 1988, and providing active support in the ill-fated IPKF (Indian Peace Keeping Force) operations in Sri Lanka from 1987 to 1990.<sup>108</sup>

This period, however, was to prove short-lived. With the end of the Cold War, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Indian Navy found itself on its own once more struggling to find suitable avenues for procurement, and grappling with increasingly finite resources. The difficulties the Indian Navy faced during this period were such that several Indian naval officers described the 1990s to this author as a "lost decade."<sup>109</sup> With the overt nuclearization of the subcontinent in 1998, the Navy showcased its ability to play a potentially useful role in terms of intra-war signaling under a nuclear threshold, engaging in coercive maneuvering outside the Pakistani portuary city of Karachi, both during the Kargil war, in 1999, and during the months-long standoff in-between India and Pakistan in 2001–02.

Despite the steady growth of a maritime consciousness amongst India's political elites, and the slow crystallization of a more coherent strategic narrative, the nation's military funding priorities have remained resolutely continental. Is this state of affairs fated to endure almost indefinitely, or is India's military machinery on the cusp of a major strategic readjustment?

### **Toward a maritime readjustment?**

In this third and final section, it is argued that India's unfulfilled naval potential and disconnect in-between strategy and resourcing can be

attributed to two main factors. First, a number of longstanding bureaucratic and infrastructural failings continue to retard India's ambitious naval modernization efforts. Second, the self-sustaining nature of continental rivalry in the subcontinent has led to competing military priorities, and—in the absence of effective higher defense management—to a certain amount of strategic confusion. The default response of India's security managers to this newly protean security environment has been to preserve the traditional status quo in terms of resource adjudication. The article concludes by stating that absent a major effort on the part of India's political leadership to reform the nation's security structures, India's naval modernization efforts will remain uneven.

### ***Bureaucratic and infrastructural impediments to India's naval rise***

The Indian Navy is currently the sixth largest maritime force in the world, and as of 2016, possesses one aircraft carrier, one nuclear-powered attack submarine (SSN), thirteen conventional, diesel-electric submarines (SSKs), eight destroyers, and fourteen frigates.<sup>110</sup> Over the past decade, the Indian Navy has also added a variety of other high-end assets to its inventory, ranging from sophisticated long-range maritime patrol aircraft, to fourth generation fighter jets, and ships with stealth-class superstructures. Within the next 10 years, the Indian Navy hopes to boost its fleet to 200 warships, and 300 aircraft structured around three carriers (two of which will be domestically produced).<sup>111</sup> In accordance with the vision laid out in the Maritime Capacity Perspective Plan 2012–27, the Indian Navy aims to evolve as a network-centric, three-dimensional force, capable of operating effectively in the air, surface and subsurface domains.<sup>112</sup> Most recently, the Modi government cleared plans for the future indigenous construction of another six SSNs.<sup>113</sup> New Delhi also plans to expand its fledgling sea-based deterrent and construct three to five more SSBNs.<sup>114</sup>

However, although there is no doubt that the Indian Navy is modernizing, this process is a lot more uneven, and occurring a lot slower, than what cursory analyses of military capabilities might suggest.<sup>115</sup> Indeed, despite the impressive nature of some of India's most recent acquisitions, there are lingering doubts as to whether the Indian Navy will be able to reach its projected force levels any time soon. India's Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), in a series of damning reports, has pointed to a series of debilitating time and cost overruns that consistently hobble India's more grandiose naval ambitions. Due to an unsavory mixture of political diffidence, bureaucratic inertia, and severe infrastructural deficits, the expansion of India's naval fleet has fallen victim to a series of "cascading delays." In February 2014, a CAG report to parliament revealed that between 2005 and 2010, 74 percent of the Indian Navy's refits had been completed after an

accumulated delay of 8,629 days, or 23.6 years.<sup>116</sup> The delays were attributed to the rapid ageing of many of the IN's ships, infrastructure constraints at Indian dockyards, and to the lack of timely availability of critical spare parts. Indeed, it is estimated that close to 60 percent of India's ships are approaching obsolescence.<sup>117</sup> Most indigenous shipbuilding programs have also experienced severe delays, and older vessels are often being decommissioned faster than they can be replaced.<sup>118</sup>

While India's first indigenously built aircraft carrier, the *INS Vikrant* was launched in August 2013, the ceremony was more than 4 years behind schedule, and it is now not expected to join the fleet until late 2018.<sup>119</sup> Meanwhile, due to a series of delays in construction and procurement, as well as the loss of a Kilo class submarine in an accident, the state of India's subsurface fleet is cause for growing concern.<sup>120</sup> With only 13 operational submarines remaining, India's submarine fleet remains far short of the force levels envisioned by India's Cabinet Committee on Security in 1999, when it approved a 30 year plan for the construction of 24 conventional submarines.<sup>121</sup> It is important to note that while additional resourcing is essential to the Navy's long-term plans, many of the service's more immediate travails stem from cumbersome procurement and acquisition practices. Clearance for decision-sensitive paperwork can prove inordinately slow. In the course of private conversations, military officers spread across all three services repeatedly complained about the morale-sapping effect of these chronic delays, and pointed to the persistence of archaic filing methods which only exacerbate the issue.<sup>122</sup> Paradoxically, these bureaucratic failings have occasionally obliged the Navy to return unspent funds at the end of the fiscal year to the treasury, even though the service remains in dire need of additional platforms and spare parts.<sup>123</sup>

Finally, the Indian Navy suffers from the same malady as its sister services—the increased difficulty to attract the best and brightest into its ranks. The Indian MOD has highlighted the challenges of addressing manpower shortages in an economic environment marked by “lucrative alternative career venues,” and the Indian Armed Forces have repeatedly requested for additional funds to pay for increased staff levels, and for a progressive revamping of pay and conditions of service.<sup>124</sup> Unfortunately, India's traditionally status quoist civilian bureaucracy has thus far displayed a high degree of reticence to effectively address these demands. As a result, the Indian Navy continues to suffer from an acute shortage of officers and sailors.<sup>125</sup> This state of affairs is, some have argued, partially responsible for the Indian Navy's recent spate of accidents, as officers with limited technical expertise and operational experience have been entrusted with highly sophisticated vessels.<sup>126</sup> If the Indian Navy's manpower deficiencies are not promptly addressed, such tragedies may indeed become tragically routine.

### ***The self-sustaining nature of continental competition and the challenge of competing priorities***

The Indian Navy has, over the past decade or so, been pursuing an ambition plan for expansion—albeit with mixed results. The rapid growth of India's economy has liberated a steady flow of funds, even as the Navy's share of the defense budget has remained at relatively low levels, and the overall defense budget has continued to flicker in-between 1.7 and 3 percent of India's gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>127</sup> It would appear, however, that the past decade has not witnessed a reprioritization in the favor of the Navy. Indeed, New Delhi may now have access to more resources, but it has yet to develop the institutional and political capacity to mobilize those same resources effectively, and to modernize strategically in response to a broad spectrum of challenges. Each service receives more funds in nominal terms, but the overall strategic outlook and order of priorities remain pretty much the same.<sup>128</sup>

Recent developments along both the Indo-Pakistani and Sino-Indian borders might in fact ossify—rather than erode—the hold of continentalism on India's national security policy. Over recent years, India has been engaged in a substantive revamping of its basing and transport infrastructure along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), and has implemented a number of measures designed to arrest what is increasingly perceived in New Delhi as a rapidly deteriorating military balance.<sup>129</sup> Chief amongst these measures is a massive augmentation in ground forces deployed along the border. In 2011–12, the Indian Army raised two infantry mountain divisions of around 40,000 men, and began recruitment for a more irregular force of tribal scouts in frontline Himalayan states such as Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.<sup>130</sup> In May 2013, following a tense three-week standoff with a PLA platoon in the Depsang valley, approval was given to raise a new mountain strike corps to deploy in the eastern portion of the LAC.<sup>131</sup> India's efforts to improve its infrastructure and add thousands more boots on the ground will inevitably prove onerous. Indeed, India's expansion of its ground forces has been accompanied by a rise in personnel costs, a trend which may well increase the Army's share of overall defense expenditure even further, even as personnel spending continues to eat it into its capital outlay.<sup>132</sup> As some commentators have observed, this manpower-centered approach to conventional deterrence may not prove to be the most effective or economically viable.<sup>133</sup>

As both Delhi and Beijing continue to strengthen their forces along the border, and Chinese actions grow increasingly assertive, the attention of India's strategic decision-makers may find itself increasingly captured by transhimalayan, rather than by transoceanic, security dynamics. Meanwhile, tensions have also grown along the line of control (LOC) with Pakistan, with both nations periodically trading heavy artillery fire and engaging in cross-



border raids.<sup>134</sup> Caught within such a tense and geopolitically dynamic neighborhood, it has often proven difficult for India's naval constituency to make a compelling case for increased funding, or for a maritime readjustment.<sup>135</sup>

Some navalists have argued that, by virtue of its peninsular geography and privileged position athwart Beijing's main sea-lines of communication, India possesses something of a game-changing maritime edge over its Chinese neighbor. This body of thinkers argues that India should reallocate funds away from ground forces, and toward the navy. This reallocation would serve to resource a more cost-effective strategy, which focuses on imposing heavy costs on China at sea, rather than on land, primarily through the disruption or interdiction of its flow of maritime trade through the Indian Ocean.<sup>136</sup> While such arguments have become increasingly widespread, they are also often unaccompanied—at least in the open domain—by serious operational research (OR), and neglect to take into account the manifold difficulties associated with the establishment of a blockade.<sup>137</sup> As historical studies have shown, blockades against large land powers can prove to be prohibitively costly, both in terms of time and resources, and have often foundered when not carefully integrated into a wider, cross-theater, military strategy.<sup>138</sup> The arguments of the navalists have thus run into fierce opposition from other Indian strategists, who have questioned the effectiveness of peripheral actions on continental great powers such as China, particularly within the context of a brief, localized war along the border.<sup>139</sup> In many ways, this discussion mirrors some of the most archetypal debates held amongst military theorists over the advantages and/or disadvantages to be derived from pursuing a strategy of horizontal naval escalation against a formidable continental adversary.<sup>140</sup>

Another argument has been to suggest that by threatening to engage in horizontal escalation, the Indian Navy could either deter Pakistani subconventional provocation, or, in the event of conflict, provoke war termination on favorable terms.<sup>141</sup> While this argument may have held merit fifteen years ago, certain developments in Pakistan's own naval and shore-based anti-access capabilities would now render it much more difficult for the Indian Navy to rapidly and decisively exert sea control along Pakistan's littoral.<sup>142</sup> Last, but not least, the projected nuclearization of Pakistan's fleet threatens to provide Islamabad with the possibility for escalation dominance at sea.<sup>143</sup>

This does not mean, however, that the Indian Navy has no useful role to play in times of war. Regardless of the possible effectiveness or operational feasibility of a distant blockade, a putative Indian threat to Chinese shipping could have its own deterrent effect, and cause decision-makers in Beijing to think twice before initiating hostilities in the Himalayas.<sup>144</sup> If the PLAN does begin to deploy more vessels in the Indian Ocean, or seek to establish permanent bases in the region, these might provide the Indian Navy and



Air Force with a an easier set of targets in the event of a Sino-Indian war.<sup>145</sup> While it is unlikely that tactical gains in the Indian Ocean theater would, in and of themselves, lead to a wider strategic victory, successfully exercising the *naval option* could have powerful symbolic ramifications, reinforcing military morale and India's "will to war."<sup>146</sup>

Meanwhile, acts of naval suasion along the Makran coast might still serve a useful signaling function—or as a *threat-in-being*—in the event of renewed tensions with Pakistan,<sup>147</sup> and potentially service a cost-imposing strategy, by forcing Islamabad to divert a portion of its aerial defenses away from its terrestrial borders, or to maintain its submarine fleet along its coastline in order to better shield its maritime approaches.<sup>148</sup> As New Delhi's indigenously designed cruise missiles grow in range and sophistication, India's ships could also begin to play more of a central role in wartime contingencies, serving as mobile firebases and conducting tailored, standoff strikes against targets deep within an enemy's interior.<sup>149</sup> Finally, the Navy will eventually host India's most secure second-strike systems—in the form of its flotilla of indigenously designed ballistic missile submarines (SSBNS).

### ***The absence of adjudicating structures***

Studies of the nature of military effectiveness have indicated that diverse threat environments, where the challenges to national interests are numerous and not immediately perceptible, can complicate strategic assessments and result in uncoordinated policies. It has also been shown that the quality of threat (i.e. its clarity) has more meaningful consequences for military effectiveness than the quantity or level of threat.<sup>150</sup> For many decades, New Delhi's maritime concerns were numerous, but diffuse, and none of them seemed as urgent to address as the challenges posed along the nation's borders. As India's overseas presence and interests continue to grow, and as it begins to transition, in the words of its Foreign Secretary, from being a balancing to a leading power,<sup>151</sup> this rigid dichotomization of security concerns has begun to appear increasingly artificial. The future envisioned by Indian security managers is not so much of India as a *continental* or a *maritime* power, but as a *full-spectrum* great power—in the vein of the United States—with the capacity to address both its immediate continental challenges, which are not likely to dissipate any time soon, and its more long-term maritime objectives.

In sum, what appears to be required is less a *strategic transformation* than a *strategic recalibration*. Ideally, this could be accomplished via resource redistribution rather than through additional expenditure, and through the crafting of a coherent, balanced, national security strategy.<sup>152</sup> Indeed, analysts have long pointed to the importance of political coherence in the formulation of defense planning, particularly when a security bureaucracy seeks to adopt

a “portfolio” approach in response to multiple, and occasionally competing, military challenges.<sup>153</sup>

This article has demonstrated that there is now a broad consensus over the need for India to strengthen its naval capacities, and that there are no deep-rooted, ideational, or cultural barriers to a more vigorous pursuit of sea-power. Yet if one were to consider that grand strategy remains, at its heart, an “investment problem,” it becomes rapidly evident that even as New Delhi has begun to more cogently define its maritime interests, it has continued to *overinvest* in landpower, and *underinvest* in seapower.<sup>154</sup> The absence of any elite consensus on how and when to reallocate resources in-between the services, however, suggests that until now the potential domestic political costs to military recalibration have been perceived by India’s leadership as being too high and the process too arduous.

Indeed, the explanation behind this continued strategic disconnect is not cultural, but organizational. There is a vast body of literature on the various domestic barriers to self-strengthening reforms, and on the effects of organizational dysfunction on a state’s ability to adroitly extract and convert its resources. Klaus Knorr and Paul Kennedy have both observed that there are wide variations in how states respond to systemic pressures, and that these differences can often to be attributed to the states’ respective levels of societal or institutional cohesiveness.<sup>155</sup> In his detailed study of instances of “underbalancing” behavior, Randall Schweller notes that states with high levels of integration are the most likely to balance effectively when confronted with external threats, while those suffering from lesser degrees of elite cohesion will underreact, balance inefficiently or incoherently, and adopt “policies defined by the lowest common denominator.”<sup>156</sup>

Over the past few years, numerous observers have drawn attention to the various pathologies that continue to affect Indian civil-military relations almost seven decades after independence.<sup>157</sup> Perhaps one of the most serious symptoms of India’s civil-military malaise has been the continued absence of a higher defense structure that can effectively adjudicate in-between the nation’s increasingly numerous security requirements, set priorities, streamline acquisition and procurement procedures, and upset profoundly entrenched resource allocation patterns.<sup>158</sup>

The prolonged absence of a Chief of Defense Staff (CDS), despite a widespread recognition of its urgent necessity, means that the prime forum for inter-service discussion continues to be the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC), and the Integrated Defense Staff (IDS), two bodies with no real decision-making power. It is important to note, however, that while creating such an institution is an essential first step, its existence may not suffice, in and of itself, to alter current force structure imbalances. Indeed, the difficulty will be to succeed in creating a CDS with genuine authority over three service

chiefs that have long been accustomed to a high degree of operational autonomy. Another challenge will be to get a freshly minted CDS to behave as a joint leader rather than as a more powerful patron of his own service.<sup>159</sup>

It is perhaps the political class's apathy—more than any persistent proclivity for overassertive control—that has had the most deleterious consequences, as it has led to the almost absolute empowerment of an intermediary class of often ineffectual bureaucrats in the Indian Ministry of Defense (MOD), and to a natural tendency toward inertia.<sup>160</sup> Close observers of the nation's civil-military dynamic have aptly described it as “an absent dialogue”, with excessively compartmentalized levels of national security decision-making.<sup>161</sup> Whereas some theorists have distinguished in-between unified and divided models of democratic civil-military arrangements, India's particular system can perhaps best be described as rigidly siloed, with each actor operating within the narrow confines of its own bureaucratic fiefdom.<sup>162</sup>

Each branch of India's military continues to promulgate its own service-specific doctrine, and as of now there exists no tri-service equivalent of a National Defense White Paper. This presents a stark contrast with Asia's other great rising power, China, which has explicitly laid out the rationale for its naval reorientation in its recent Defense White Papers.<sup>163</sup>

## Conclusion

This analysis presented here has demonstrated that the obstacles to the emergence of India as a major naval power are primarily of an organizational nature. Absent a meaningful, structural, reform of New Delhi's national security apparatus, the Indian Navy will continue to suffer from a critical strategy-resource mismatch, running the risk of dashing expectations not only in New Delhi, but also in Washington, whose strategic community has long viewed the Indian Navy as a critical partner in the policing and protection of the Asian commons.

There are some indications that the Modi government is according more attention to maritime security issues, most notably by laying the groundwork for a more robust cooperative security architecture in the Indian Ocean.<sup>164</sup> Concerns have also become more widespread over China's increasingly routine submarine deployments in India's maritime backyard,<sup>165</sup> its growing assertiveness in the South China Sea, and over the potential strategic ramifications of the much-touted Maritime Silk Road.<sup>166</sup> As these maritime threat perceptions become increasingly systemic within India's security community, there is a possibility they will act as catalysts for greater naval expenditure.

Meanwhile, in the course of private conversations with this author, Western defense officials have expressed cautious optimism with regard to the potential for future reforms, pointing, for example, to the fact that their

Indian counterparts have sought to draw inspiration from the United States' own reorganization efforts, and most notably from the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act.<sup>167</sup> The most recent version of India's Maritime Strategy was reportedly extensively "peer-reviewed" by the Navy's sister services prior to its release, as part of an invigorated effort towards intellectual harmonization amongst the three services.<sup>168</sup> Indian defense officials have also indicated that the nation's first tri-service White Paper was in the offing, with the promise that the nation's hierarchy of priorities—and attendant force structure plans—would finally come together within a coherent strategic framework. As always, and especially when it comes to guarantees of major reform, only time will tell. Until then, India will remain a maritime great power in the making.

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## Notes

1. See, for example, Robert S. Ross, "China's Naval Nationalism: Sources, Prospects, and the US Response," *International Security* 34, no. 2 (2009): 46–81; Nan Li, "The Evolution of China's Naval Strategy and Capabilities: From 'Near Coast' and 'Near Seas' to 'Far Seas,'" *Asian Security* 5, no. 2 (2009): 144–69; Toshi Yoshihara and James R. Holmes, *Red Star over the Pacific: China's Rise and the Challenge to U.S. Maritime Strategy*, 1st ed. (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2010); Bernard D. Cole, *The Great Wall at Sea: China's Navy in the Twenty-First Century* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2010); Michael A. Glosny, Phillip C. Saunders, and Robert S. Ross, "Debating China's Naval Nationalism," *International Security* 35, no. 2 (2010): 161–75; Andrew S. Erickson, "China's Modernization of Its Naval and Air Power Capabilities," in *Strategic Asia 2012–13: China's Military Challenge*, edited by Ashley J. Tellis and Travis Tanner (Seattle, WA: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2012), 61–127.
2. For some exceptions to this tendency, see Walter Ladwig III, "Delhi's Pacific Ambition: Naval Power, Look East, and India's Emerging Influence in the Asia-Pacific," *Asian Security* 5, no. 2 (2009): 87–113; James R. Holmes, Andrew C. Winner, and Toshi Yoshihara, *Indian Naval Strategy in the Twenty-first Century* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009); David Brewster, *India's Ocean: The Story of India's Bid for Regional Leadership* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014); David Scott, "India's Aspirations and Strategy for the Indian Ocean—Securing the Waves?" *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 36, no. 4 (2013): 484–511.
3. Jakub Grygiel has argued that, "at the level of foreign policy, geography is a geopolitical reality to which states respond by formulating and pursuing a

- geostrategy.” See Jakub J. Grygiel, *Great Powers and Geopolitical Change* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 1.
4. Ritika Behal, “India’s Defense Budget 2015–2016: An Analysis,” *Defense Production and Acquisition Business News*, <http://www.defproac.com/?p=2079> (accessed February, 2016); India’s total defense budget in FY 2017 was evaluated by IHS Janes at 52.44 billion constant U.S. dollars. Their defense analysts, employing slightly different methodologies, arrive at an even lower estimate of the navy’s share of the overall defense budget, pegging it at approximately 12% in 2017. See Craig Caffrey et al. “India—Defense Budget,” in *Jane’s Defense Budgets* (last updated March 15, 2017). Accessed at <https://janes.ihs.com> March 18, 2017.
  5. This article draws on the classical definition of seapower, as it pertains to a nation’s ability to both “use and control” the sea through the employment of naval forces. For “use and control,” see George Modelski and William R. Thompson, *Seapower in Global Politics, 1494–1993* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1988), 4. For another, broader, definition of the constituents of seapower in the modern era, see Sam J. Tangredi, “Globalization and Seapower: Overview and Context,” in *Globalization and Maritime Power*, edited by Sam J. Tangredi (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2002), 1–25.
  6. George K. Tanham, *Indian Strategic Thought: An Interpretive Essay* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1992). <http://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R4207.html>.
  7. George K. Tanham and Amitabh Mattoo, eds., *Securing India: Strategic Thought and Practice* (New Delhi, India: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 1996).
  8. See, for example, “Can India Become a Great Power?” *The Economist*, <http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21574511-indias-lack-strategic-culture-hobbles-its-ambition-be-force-world-can-india> (accessed June 05, 2013).
  9. “Why India Does Not Have a Vibrant Strategic Culture,” *The Economic Times*, [http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-10-21/news/34607671\\_1\\_indian-interests-strategic-culture-manmohan-singh](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-10-21/news/34607671_1_indian-interests-strategic-culture-manmohan-singh) (accessed October 21, 2012); Harsh V. Pant, “India’s Search for a Foreign Policy,” *Yale Global*, <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/india-s-search-foreign-policy> (accessed June 26, 2008); Manjari Chatterjee Miller, “India’s Feeble Foreign Policy: A Would-Be Great Power Resists its Own Rise,” *Foreign Affairs*, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/india/2013-04-03/indias-feeble-foreign-policy> (accessed May/June, 2013).
  10. B. H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy: Second Revised Edition* (Toronto, Canada: Meridian, 1991), 321–22.
  11. Paul Kennedy, for example, has defined grand strategy as, “the capacity of the nation’s leaders to bring together all the elements, both military and non-military, for the preservation of the nation’s long-term interests.” Paul Kennedy, “Introduction” in *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, edited by Paul Kennedy (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 5.
  12. Barry Posen and Andrew Ross have provided perhaps one of the most workable, and succinct, definitions of grand strategy, which they describe as providing “a set of action-oriented principles that prioritizes among and connects threats to an overarching vision of the state’s role in the world.” See Barry R. Posen and Andrew L. Ross, “Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy,” *International Security*, 21, no. 3 (Winter 1996/1997), 3.
  13. Zorawar Daulet Singh, “Thinking About an Indian Grand Strategy,” *Strategic Analysis* 35, no. 1 (2010), 52–70.
  14. See, for example, Daniel Markey, “Developing India’s Foreign Policy Software,” *Asia Policy* 8, 2009.

15. See Hal Brands, *What Good is Grand Strategy? Power and Purpose in American Statecraft from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 15.
16. Ashley Tellis, "Between the Times: India's Predicaments and its Grand Strategy," *India in Transition*, University of Pennsylvania, <http://casi.sas.upenn.edu/iit/tellis> (accessed March 12, 2013).
17. Vipin Narang and Paul Staniland have argued that while there has been "a strategic core has nevertheless emerged and endured that broadly shapes India's approach to world affairs. This strategic worldview emphasized autonomy, flexibility, and a desire to avoid dependence on stronger powers." See Vipin Narang and Paul Staniland, "Institutions and Worldviews In Indian Foreign Security Policy," *India Review*, 11, no. 2 (2012), 76–94.
18. Most recently, India's Foreign Secretary provided one of the clearest articulations of this mindset by stating that, "In India's current position it is possible to make a case that a simultaneous pursuit of multiple relationships ceates a virtuous cycle where each can drive the other higher," See, "Remarks by Foreign Secretary at the Release of Dr. C. Raja Mohan's book launch: Modi's World-Expanding India's Sphere of Influence. (July 17, 2015)," Indian Ministry of External Affairs, [http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/25491/Remarks\\_by\\_Foreign\\_Secretary\\_at\\_the\\_release\\_of\\_Dr\\_C\\_Raja\\_Mohans\\_book\\_Modis\\_WorldExpanding\\_Indias\\_Sphere\\_of\\_InfluencequotJuly\\_17\\_2015](http://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/25491/Remarks_by_Foreign_Secretary_at_the_release_of_Dr_C_Raja_Mohans_book_Modis_WorldExpanding_Indias_Sphere_of_InfluencequotJuly_17_2015) (accessed July 18, 2015).
19. Sumit Ganguly, "Introduction," in *India's Foreign Policy: Retrospect and Prospect*, edited by Sumit Ganguly (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1. The evolving nature of Cold War alignments in the third world meant that India's own geopolitical orientation shifted over the decades, particularly once the Nixon Administration initiated a rapprochement with China. New Delhi then found itself drawing much closer to Moscow, both countries signing The Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in 1971. While the relationship could not be defined as an alliance by any means, it did lead to close security cooperation and diplomatic coordination. For a good overview of Indo-Soviet relations during the Cold War, see, Vojtech Masny, "The Soviet Union's Partnership with India," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 12, no. 3 (2010), 50–90.
20. For example, former Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran has suggested that when dealing with China, "being non-aligned but threatening to become aligned," might constitute the best posture. See, Shyam Saran, "The Beijing Paradox," *The Business Standard*, [http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/shyam-saran-the-beijing-paradox-115070701418\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/shyam-saran-the-beijing-paradox-115070701418_1.html) (accessed July 7, 2015).
21. Williamson Murray, Richard Hart Sinnreich, and James Lacey edited by, *The Shaping of Grand Strategy: Policy, Diplomacy, and War*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
22. *Non-Alignment 2.0: A Foreign and Strategic Policy for India in the Twenty First Century*, (New Delhi, India: Center for Policy Research, 2012), <http://www.cprindia.org/workingpapers/3844-nonalignment-20-foreign-and-strategic-policy-india-twenty-first-century>.
23. For "realist mutation," see Guillem Monsonis, "India's Strategic Autonomy and Rapprochement with the U.S," *Strategic Analysis*, 34, no. 4 (July 2010), 611–24.
24. See *Sagarmala Concept and Implementation Toward Blue Revolution* (New Delhi, India: Government of India Press Information Bureau, March 25, 2015), <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=117691>, and Speech by Indian Foreign Secretary Nirupamo Rao on "The Maritime Dimensions of India's Foreign Policy,"



organized by the National Maritime Foundation at the India Habitat Center, New Delhi, <http://meaindia.nic.in/myprint.php?id=190017885&d=29&sz=c&m=&y=&pg=&flg=&searchdata1=> (accessed July 28, 2011)

25. Rao, "The Maritime Dimensions of India's Foreign Policy."
26. See *India Trade Profile*, (Washington, DC: World Trade Organization), <http://stat.wto.org/CountryProfile/WSDBCountryPFView.aspx?Language=E&Country=IN>.
27. See Ernst and Young Pvt. Ltd, "India's Energy Security: Key Issues Impacting the Oil and Gas Sector 3," Report prepared for the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, 2011, <http://www.ey.com/IN/en/Industries/Oil—Gas/Indias-energy-security> According to International Energy Estimates, this percentage is expected to increase to a staggering 90 percent by 2030. Overall energy dependency (i.e., including coal and natural gas) is expected to reach 80 percent. See Michael Kugelman, "Integrating Energy Concerns into India's National Security Strateg," *The IAGS Journal of Energy Security* (December 2011), <http://www.ensec.org/index.php>.
28. Rama Lakshmi, "Modi Wants to Turn 25 Million in the Diaspora into Global Ambassadors," *The Washington Post*, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia\\_pacific/india-wants-to-turn-25-million-in-the-diaspora-into-global-ambassadors/2015/02/17/908ee6ff-a650-42bc-ac58-0a2c91530a26\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/india-wants-to-turn-25-million-in-the-diaspora-into-global-ambassadors/2015/02/17/908ee6ff-a650-42bc-ac58-0a2c91530a26_story.html) (accessed February 18, 2015).
29. See Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson, "Balancing on Land and Sea: Do States Ally Against the Leading Global Power?" *International Security*, 35, no. 1 (Summer 2010), 7–43.
30. For an excellent discussion of the importance attached to geography in classical political thought, see Daniel H. Deudney, *Bounding Power: Republican Security Theory from the Polis to the Global Village* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 114–36.
31. Eric Heginbotham has argued that "navies will generally support liberal national domestic positions, whereas armies will frequently support integral nationalist ones." See Eric Heginbotham, "The Fall and Rise of Navies in East Asia: Military Organizations, Domestic Politics, and Grand Strategy," *International Security*, 27, no. 2 (Fall 2002), 86–125.
32. Peter Padfield, *Tides of Empire: Decisive Naval Campaigns in the Rise of the West*, vol.2, 1664–1753 (London, UK: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), 2–3. John Stuart Mill remains perhaps one the most famous earlier proponents of what Daniel Deudney has termed "maritime whiggery" (the tendency by many XIXth century thinkers to closely associate maritime powers with free trade and democratic systems of government) See John Stuart Mill, *England's Danger Through the Suppression of Her Maritime Power: Speech Delivered in the House of Commons, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 1867*. Consulted by the author in the U.S. Library of Congress, Washington D.C., on June 30, 2015. For "maritime whiggery," see Daniel H. Deudney, *Bounding Power*, 114. See also Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860–1900* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 31–46
33. For "small mobile pieces of national sovereignty," see L. W. Martin, *The Sea in Modern Strategy* (London, UK: Chattoo & Windus, 1967), 138.
34. Indian Navy, *Indian Maritime Doctrine* (New Delhi, India: Indian Navy, Integrated Headquarters, 2009), 65–6.
35. Author's interview of former Indian Navy Chief Admiral Sushil Kumar, Noida, December 2012. Strategic commentators have long drawn attention to the differences in service cultures and perspectives, which can appear particularly prevalent in-between naval and ground forces personnel. See J. C. Wylie, *Military Strategy: A General Theory of Power Control* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1989; first pub. 1967), 42.



36. For an overview of the Indian Navy's emergence as a custodial actor, see Nitin Pai, "Non-State Threats to India's Maritime Security: Sailing Deeper Into an Era of Violent Peace," in *The Rise of the Indian Navy: Internal Vulnerabilities, External Challenges*, edited by Harsh V. Pant (London, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 170–3.
37. For a seminal discussion of what constitutes internal balancing, see Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York, NY: Random House, 1979), 117–18.
38. For more on the role naval exercises play in the development of India's naval proficiency, see Iskander Rehman, "From an Ocean of Peace to a Sea of Friends: India's Evolving Attitude Toward Maritime Multilateralism," in Waheguru Pal Sidhu, Pratap Bhanu Mehta, and Bruce Jones, *Shaping the Emerging World: India and the Multilateral Order* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2013), 131–57. For a broader discussion of how nation-states arbitrate in-between internal and external balancing, see James D. Morrow, "Arms Versus Allies: Trade-Offs in the Search of Security," *International Organization*, 47, no. 2 (Spring 1993), 207–33.
39. Sanjeev Miglani, "India, Japan, US. Plan Naval Exercises in Tightening of Ties in Indian Ocean," *Reuters*, <http://in.reuters.com/article/2015/07/22/india-military-exercises-idINKCN0PW1E120150722> (accessed July 22, 2015).
40. See, "Farewell Press Conference by Outgoing CNS," Indian Navy, <http://indiannavy.nic.in/cns-speeches/farewell-press-conference-outgoing-cns> (accessed August 7, 2012); For a description of how the Indian Navy has "showcased" its ability to be "interoperable" with the most advanced navies in the world, see Vijay Sakhuja, *Asian Maritime Power in the 21st Century* (Singapore: Institute for Southeast Asian Studies, 2011), 200.
41. For an overview of the academic discussion surrounding the concept of strategic culture, see Lawrence Sondhaus, *Strategic Culture and Ways of War* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006), 1–14.
42. Jack L. Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations*, (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1977), <http://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R2154.html>.
43. Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture*.
44. See Jeffrey Legro, *Rethinking the World: Great Power Strategies and the International Order* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 6.
45. The most thoughtful recent study is that conducted by an Australian academic in Ian Hall, "The Persistence of Nehruvianism in India's Strategic Culture," in *Strategic Asia: Understanding Strategic Cultures in the Asia-Pacific*, ed. Ashley J. Tellis et al. (Seattle, WA: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2016), 141–169.
46. K. M. Pannikar, *The Future of Southeast Asia: An Indian View* (New York, New York: Macmillan, 1943), 100–1. K. B. Vaidya was another early, and widely read, Indian navalist who argued in favor of a stronger navy. See K. B. Vaidya, *The Naval Defense of India* (Bombay, India: Thacker & Co., 1949).
47. Stephen P. Cohen and Sunil Dasgupta view "reticence in the use of force as an instrument of state policy" as forming the "dominant political condition for Indian thinking on the military." See Stephen P. Cohen and Sunil Dasgupta, *Arming Without Aiming: India's Military Modernization* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2010), 1.
48. G. D. Bakshi, *The Indian Art of War: The Mahabharata Paradigm* (New Delhi, India: Sharada Publishing, 2002).
49. Raju G. C. Thomas, "The Armed Services and the Indian Defense Budget," *Asian Survey* 20, no. 3 (1980), 280–97.
50. C. Raja Mohan, The Return of the Raj, *The American Interest*, <http://www.the-american-interest.com/articles/2010/05/01/the-return-of-the-raj/> (accessed May 1, 2010).

51. See W. P. S. Sidhu, "Of Oral Traditions and Ethnocentric Judgements," in *Securing India: Strategic Thought and Practice*, edited by George K. Tanham and Amitabh Mattoo (New Delhi, India: Manohar, 1996), and George K. Tanham "Indian Strategic Thought."
52. Drawing on an extensive analysis of the treatment of strategy in seminal Hindu texts, Indian historian Kaushik Roy has argued that there is a dualistic tradition in Hinduism with regard to statecraft: *dharmayuddha*, which is more moderate and defensive in orientation, and *katayuddha*, which is closer to realpolitik and more offensively-minded. See Kaushik Roy, *Hinduism and the Ethics of Warfare in South Asia: From Antiquity to the Present* (New Delhi, India: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
53. Lawrence Sondhaus, for instance, notes that the Arthashastra was unknown in recent times until rediscovered by an Indian scholar in 1904, casting doubt over claims that it has had any consistent influence on strategic thinking throughout Indian history. See Sondhaus, *Strategic Culture*, 93.
54. For an excellent study of the Marathas Confederacy, see Randolph Cooper, *The Anglo-Maratha Campaigns and the Conquest for India: The Struggle for Control of the South Asian Military Economy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
55. Jeremy Black has thus posited that for most of its history, "India was a geographical rather than a cultural abstraction," with no "overarching military values." See Jeremy Black, *Rethinking Military History* (London, UK: Routledge, 2004), 1127. Timothy Hoyt also emphasizes the difficulty in truly defining an Indian martial tradition. Timothy D. Hoyt, "The Indian Way of War," in Thomas G. Mahnken and Dan Blumenthal, *Strategy in Asia: The Past, Present and Future of Regional Security* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014), 147–62.
56. India's uniquely syncretic tradition, due to its unique combination of "internal pluralism and external receptivity," has been discussed at length by the famed economist and philosopher Amartya Sen. See Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity* (New York, NY: Picador Books, 2005), 348.
57. John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History: How Historians Map the Past*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004).
58. See Henry Steele Commager, *The Search for a Usable Past and Other Essays in Historiography* (New York, NY: Knopf Books, 1967).
59. See Edward Rhodes, "Constructing Power: Cultural Transformation and Strategic Adjustment in the 1890s," in *The Politics of Strategic Adjustment: Ideas, Institutions, and Interests*, edited by Peter Trubowitz, Emily O. Goldman, and Edward Rhodes (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1999), 29–79. Harvard professor Alastair Iain Johnston has also demonstrated that traditions are frequently redefined and reinterpreted by elites "with a political interest in highlighting or downplaying certain traditions." See Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 10.
60. For more on the role political discourse and rhetoric can play in shaping grand strategy, see Bryan Garsten, *Saving Persuasion: A Defense of Rhetoric and Judgment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), and Jennifer Mitzen, "Illusion or Intention? Talking Grand Strategy into Existence," *Security Studies*, 24, no. 1 (2015), 61–94.
61. Romila Thapar, *Ashoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*, Revised ed. (Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 1998). See also Rupert Gethin, "Buddhist Monks, Buddhist Kings, Buddhist Violence: On the Early Buddhist Attitudes to Violence," in *Religion and Violence in South Asia: Theory and Practice* edited by John R. Hinnells and Richard King (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 62–82.

62. Dayan Kishan Thussu, *Communicating India's Soft Power: Buddha to Bollywood* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 53–8, and Abati Battacharya, *India's Growing Soft Power in Southeast Asia: Will it Clash with China?* (New Delhi, India: IPCS Special Commentary, August 2013), <http://www.ipcs.org/article/peace-and-conflict-database/indias-growing-soft-power-in-southeast-asia-will-it-clash-4070.html>
63. Kenneth R. Hall, *A History of Early Southeast Asia: Maritime Trade and Societal Development, 100–1500* (Plymouth, UK: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers, 2011), 36–67.
64. See, for example, Admiral Arun Prakash (Retd.), “The Rationale and Implications of India's Growing Maritime Power,” in *India's Contemporary Security Challenges* edited by Michael Kugelman (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2011).
65. Author's interview of Indian diplomatic official, Beijing, September 2011. The promotion of Buddhism has become an increasingly central component of India's soft power efforts, particularly under Prime Minister Modi.
66. See (then) ambassador Shyam Saran's remarks in, “INS Sudarshini Begins Historic Voyage to ASEAN Countries,” IANS, <https://in.news.yahoo.com/ins-sudarshini-begins-historic-voyage-asean-countries-141455171.html> (accessed September 15, 2012).
67. Shivshankar Menon, *Maritime Imperatives of Indian Foreign Policy*, Keynote Speech (New Delhi, India: National Maritime Foundation, September 11, 2009) [http://www.indiahabitat.org/download/Maritime\\_Imperatives.pdf](http://www.indiahabitat.org/download/Maritime_Imperatives.pdf).
68. See, *Project Mausam Launched by Secretary, Ministry of Culture* (Delhi, India: Press Information Bureau, Ministry of Culture, June 21, 2014), <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=105777>
69. Hermann Kulke, K. Kesavapany, and Vijay Sakhuja edited by, *Nagapattinam to Survarnadwipa: Reflections on the Chola Naval Expeditions to Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009).
70. See Kenneth R. Hall, *Networks of Trade, Polity, and Societal Integration in Chola-Era South India c.875–1279* (New Delhi, India: Primus Books, 2013), 211–40.
71. British Commonwealth Office, *Summary of Important Matters Concerning the Defense Services in India 1944/1945* (London, UK: British Library Asia Pacific and Africa Collections, 1945), consulted by the author in London, January 2014.
72. Two years prior, in 1942, Sir Olaf Caroe, then Foreign Secretary in Delhi, had discreetly set up a high-level working group to examine the geopolitical ramifications of a postwar transfer of power in South Asia. See Peter John Brobst, *The Future of the Great Game: Sir Olaf Caroe, India's Independence and the Defense of Asia* (Akron, OH: The University of Akron Press, 2005).
73. Even the most ardent of India's navalists struggled at first to imagine a future in which India could singlehandedly ensure its maritime security. See K. M. Pannikar, *India and the Indian Ocean: An Essay on the Influence of Sea Power on Indian History* (London, UK: Macmillan, 1945), 97.
74. Lawrence James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* (London, UK: St Martin's Griffin, 1997), 525–59, and Malcolm H. Murfett, *In Jeopardy: The Royal Navy and British Far Eastern Defense Policy 1945–1951* (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia: Oxford University Press, 1995).
75. Indian Navy, *Report on the Royal Indian Navy August 1947–August 1948* (New Delhi, India: Indian Naval Headquarters, 1948), 2–3.
76. Rear Admiral Satyindra Singh, *Blueprint to Bluewater: The Indian Navy 1951–1965* (New Delhi, India: Lancer Publishers, 1992), 38.

77. James Goldrick, *No Easy Answers: The Development of the Navies of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, 1945–1996* (Hartford, UK: Spantech & Lancer, 1997), 46. See, also, Mian Zahir Shah, *Bubbles of Water, or Anecdotes of the Pakistan Navy* (Islamabad, Pakistan: PN Book Club, 2001).
78. For an account of this period, see Rear Admiral Satyindra Singh, *Under Two Ensigns: The Indian Navy 1945–1950* (New Delhi, India: Oxford and IBH, 1986). See, also, James Goldrick, *The Parted Garment: The Royal Navy and the Development of the Indian Navy 1945–1965*, (Victoria, Australia: Royal Australian Staff College, 1987), and Chris Madsen, “The Long Goodbye: British Agency in the Creation of Navies for India and Pakistan,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 43, no. 3, 463–88.
79. Singh, *Blueprint to Bluewater*, 40.
80. For a detailed account of the evolution of Cold War alignments and politics in South Asia, see Robert J. McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India and Pakistan* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1994).
81. Quoted in Singh, *Blueprint to Bluewater*, 61.
82. India’s first naval agreement with the Soviet Union was announced in the Lok Sabha on September 7, 1965. Australian naval historian James Goldrick has described in depth the extent to which India’s naval command was emotionally torn between its lingering cultural connection to the West, and the pressing urgency of acquiring new platforms. Goldrick, *No Easy Answers*, 31–4. In 1966, British diplomats posted in Delhi noted that, “There is no doubt that the decision to ‘go Russian’ was taken with real regret by the Indian Navy staff many of whom still protest, however unrealistically, that it will not affect their attitude to ourselves.” Note from A. C. Galsworthy to John Denson, “Relations with the Indian Navy-U.K. Relations with the Indian Armed Forces,” 3–5, December 12, 1966, *Commonwealth Relations Office*, National Archives London Digital Collection, accessed by the author at the U.S. Library of Congress, Washington D.C., July 21, 2015.
83. On the capital-intensive nature of navies and the different lead times inherent to creating an effective navy versus an effective army, see Todd Sandler and Keith Hartley, *The Economics of Defense* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 161–63, and Mackubin Thomas Owens, “Why Planning Naval Forces is Different,” *Defense and Security Analysis*, 9, no. 1 (1999), 43–50.
84. See Admiral S. N. Kohli, *USI National Security Lectures: The Indian Ocean and India’s Maritime Security* (New Delhi, India: United Services Institution of India, 1981), 77.
85. Steven I. Wilkinson, *Army and Nation: The Military and Indian Democracy Since Independence* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).
86. Vice Admiral Mihir K. Roy, *War in the Indian Ocean* (New Delhi, India: Lancer Publishers, 1995), 81, 91.
87. See R. D. Pradhan, *1965 War: Defense Minister Y.B. Chavan’s Diary of India-Pakistan War* (New Delhi, India: Atlantic Publishers, 2007), 117.
88. In his memoirs, Pakistani Air Marshal Mohammed Ashgar Khan described how in the course of discussions with President Soekarno and Indonesian Admiral Martadinata, Jakarta offered to try and seize the Andaman and Nicobar archipelago. President Soekarno also dispatched a small naval task force, composed of Soviet-designed submarines and missile boats to Karachi, but they only arrived once hostilities had ended. For Air Marshal Khan’s narration of these discussions, see Mohammed Ashgar Khan, *First Round: Indo-Pakistan War 1965* (Delhi, India: Vikas Publishing House, 1979), 43–5.

89. See the recollections of L. K. Jha, principal secretary to the Prime Minister, quoted in Vice Admiral G. M. Hiranandani, *Transition to Triumph: Indian Navy 1965–1975* (New Delhi, India: Lancer Publishers, 2000), 40–2.
90. Admiral S. N. Kohli, *We Dared: Maritime Operations in the 1971 Indo-Pak War* (New Delhi, India: Lancer Publishers, 1989), 3.
91. Major General Ian Cardozo, *The Sinking of INS Khukri: Survivors' Stories* (New Delhi, India: Roli Books, 2006), 10.
92. Hiranandani, *Transition to Triumph*, 35.
93. For detailed accounts of Islamabad's genocidal actions in Bangladesh, see Gary Bass, *The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2013); Srinath Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).
94. See, "The Rediff Interview/Admiral S.M. Nanda: Karachi Burned for Seven Days," *Rediff India Abroad*, <http://www.rediff.com/news/2007/jan/22inter.htm> (accessed January 18, 2007).
95. Admiral S.M. Nanda at a press conference in Jamnagar, November 1971. "The Rediff Interview/Admiral S.M. Nanda."
96. For three detailed (if somewhat hagiographical) accounts of the Indian Navy's operations during the 1971 war, S.M. Nanda, *The Man Who Bombed Karachi* (Delhi, India: Harper Collins, 2004); and Hiranandani, *Transition to Triumph*; Ranjit Rai, *A Nation and its Navy at War* (New Delhi, India: Lancer International, 1987).
97. Certain aspects of the Navy's initial accounts have been contested, with some claiming that the fuel tanks were destroyed by air-launched ordnance, rather than by offshore strikes. See Sushant Singh, "December 4, 1971: When the Navy Got Credit For IAF's strikes on Karachi Oil Tanks," *The Indian Express*, <http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/december-4-1971-when-navy-got-credit-for-iafs-strikes-on-karachi-oil-tanks/> (accessed December 4, 2015).
98. The term "naval suasion," used to describe the political application of naval force, was coined by Edward Luttwak. Edward Luttwak, *The Political Uses of Seapower* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 4.
99. For an account of the decision-making leading to the deployment of the USS Enterprise, see Bass, *The Blood Telegram*, 311–8. For the United States, this deployment had "for a brief period (...) displayed a flexible force with enormous firepower at a point of decision." *Means of Measuring Naval Power with Special Reference to U.S. and Soviet Activities in the Indian Ocean* (Washington, DC: Foreign Affairs Division, Congressional Research Office, May 1974), consulted by the author at the U.S. Library of Congress, Washington D.C., June 29, 2015.
100. N. Krishnan, *No Way but Surrender: An Account of the Indo-Pakistan War in the Bay of Bengal, 1971* (New Delhi, India: Vikas, 1980), 52–6.
101. See Raju C. Thomas, *Indian Security Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 155.
102. See Yogesh Joshi, *NPIHP Working Paper #6: The Imagined Arsenal: India's Nuclear Decision-Making 1973–1976* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars, 2015), 31–2, [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/WP6-The%20Imagined%20Arsenal\\_2.pdf](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/WP6-The%20Imagined%20Arsenal_2.pdf).
103. Raju C. Thomas, "The Indian Navy in the Seventies," *Pacific Affairs*, 78, no. 4 (1975), 500–18.
104. This scrappy turf war is described in Admiral G. M. Hiranandani, *Transition to Eminence: The Indian Navy 1976–1990* (New Delhi, India: Lancer Publishers, 2005), 102–3.



105. See Major General D.K. Palit, "Outmoded Imperial Concepts," *Hindustan Times* (December 27, 1969), and Brigadier N.B. Grant, "Navy's Blue Water Obsession," *Journal of the United Services Institute of India* 119, no. 497 (July–September 1989): 269–275.
106. Harvey M. Sapolsky, "The Interservice Competition Solution," *MIT Defense and Arms Control Studies Program: Breakthroughs*, 5, no. 1 (1996): 1–3, <http://web.mit.edu/ssp/publications/breakthroughs/1996-Spring.pdf>
107. See Ross H. Munro, "Superpower Rising: Propelled by an Arms Buildup, India Asserts its Place on the World Stage," *Time Magazine* (April 1989, 6–13).
108. See C. Uday Bhaskar, "The Navy as an Instrument of Foreign Policy: The Indian Experience," in *The Rise of the Indian Navy: Internal Vulnerabilities, External Challenges*, edited by Harsh V. Pant (London, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 41–55, and Major General Harikat Singh, *Intervention in Sri Lanka: The IPKF Experience Retold* (New Delhi, India: Manohar Books, 2007).
109. From 1990 to 1998, the Navy's share of the total defense budget fluctuated in-between 11.5 and 14.5 percent. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the Indian Navy no longer benefited from "politically friendly" prices when purchasing Russian platforms and equipment, and struggled to finance its modernization efforts. See Rahul Roy Chaudhury, "Indian Naval Expenditure in the 1990s," *Strategic Analysis*, 22, no. 5 (1998): 675–90.
110. "India: Navy," *Jane's World Navies*, Updated August 29, 2016.
111. "Navy to Have 200 Warships in 10 Years: Official," *Outlook*, <http://news.outlookindia.com/items.aspx?artid=817238> (accessed November 13, 2013).
112. Rahul Bedi, "Interview: Admiral Devendra Kumar Joshi, Chief of Naval Staff, Indian Navy," *Jane's Defense Weekly* (January 15, 2013).
113. Ankit Panda, "India Approves \$8 Billion Plan for Nuclear Subs, Stealth Frigates," *The Diplomat*, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/02/india-approves-8-billion-plan-for-nuclear-subs-stealth-frigates/> (accessed February 19, 2015).
114. On India's quest for a robust sea-based deterrent, see Andrew C. Winner, "The Future of India's Undersea Deterrent," in *Strategy in the Second Nuclear Age: Power, Ambition, and the Ultimate Weapon*, edited by Toshi Yoshihara and James R. Holmes (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2012), 161–81, and Iskander Rehman, *Murky Waters: Naval Nuclear Dynamics in the Indian Ocean* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2015), <http://carnegieendowment.org/2015/03/09/murky-waters-naval-nuclear-dynamics-in-indian-ocean>.
115. See Walter Ladwig, "Drivers of Indian Naval Expansion," in *The Rise of the Indian Navy: Internal Vulnerabilities, External Challenges*, edited by Harsh Pant (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2012), 19–41.
116. Rajat Pandit, "Delays in Warship Refits Hitting Operational Readiness: CAG," *The Times of India*, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/India/Delays-in-warship-refits-hitting-operational-readiness-CAG/articleshow/30755350.cms> (accessed February 21, 2014).
117. "Challenges for India's New Naval Chief," *IISS Strategic Comments*, no. 16, 2014.
118. "India: Navy," *Jane's World Navies*, Updated August 29, 2016. Retired Indian Vice Admiral Anup Singh recently commented on this issue, noting that, "Our story has been one of accretions being always short of depletions." See VADM. Anup Singh, "The Game Changer," *Force* (December, 2013).
119. Rahul Bedi, "Indian Navy Programs Face Long Delays, Cost Overruns," *Jane's Defense Weekly* (April 29, 2016).

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121. "The Challenges Facing India's Navy," *Jane's World Navies* (May, 2014).
122. Despite the ubiquity of computer systems in the offices of the Defense Acquisition Council (DAC), most paperwork is still treated manually.
123. Lt. Gen. Katoch, "Surrendering Funds Has Put Brakes on India's Military Modernization," *First Post*, <http://www.firstpost.com/india/defence-budget-surrendering-funds-has-put-brakes-on-indias-military-modernisation-2660566.html> (accessed March 7, 2016).
124. For detailed statistics on the Indian Navy's officer shortfall, see *Demands for Grants (2015–2016) Navy and Air Force (Demand no.24 + 25)* (New Delhi, India: Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defense, April 2015), [http://164.100.47.134/lsscommittee/Defence/16\\_Defence\\_8.pdf](http://164.100.47.134/lsscommittee/Defence/16_Defence_8.pdf) See, also, Major General Satbir Singh, "Indian Armed Forces Woes," *Indian Strategic Studies*, <http://strategicstudyindia.blogspot.com/2014/02/indian-armed-forces-woes.html> (accessed February 27, 2014).
125. As of June 2013, the IN faced a shortfall of 1999 officers and 13373 sailors. "The Challenges Facing India's Navy," *Jane's World Navies*, May 2014.
126. Bharat Karnad, "Indian Navy Cast Adrift," *The New Indian Express* <http://www.newindianexpress.com/opinion/Indian-Navy-Cast-Adrift/2014/03/07/article2094542.ece> (accessed March 07, 2014). In the course of the past two years, India's fleet suffered a series of mishaps, ranging from an accidental explosion aboard a fully-armed Kilo class submarine, which led to the death of 21 sailors and officers, to ships running aground. In February 2014, after another accident aboard a Kilo class boat led to additional casualties, Admiral D.K. Joshi, then Indian Chief of Naval Staff, resigned. When interviewed a few months after his resignation, the Admiral openly deplored the delays he had experienced in obtaining timely repairs and key spare parts (such as submarine batteries) for his fleet. See, "Quit Due to Dysfunctional Environment in Navy, Admiral Joshi Says," *The Times of India*, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Quit-due-to-dysfunctional-environment-in-Navy-Admiral-Joshi-says/article-show/44808803.cms> (accessed October 15, 2014).
127. The budgetary allocation for last year (2016) was the lowest, in percentage, in decades, standing at a mere 1.71 percent of GDP. See Sushant Singh, "Defense Budget Raises Serious Questions About India's National Security Plans," *The Indian Express*, <http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/arun-jaitley-defence-budget-raises-serious-questions-about-indias-national-security-plans/> (accessed March 1, 2016).
128. A nation's "conversion capability," or ability to convert resources into a well-balanced, trained, and technologically proficient force is a key metric when gauging its military power. See Ashley Tellis, Janice Bially, Christopher Layne, and Melissa McPherson, *Measuring National Power in the Postindustrial Age* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2000), 143.
129. Sarah McDowall, Jan Zalewski, and Poornima Subramaniam, "Himalayan Discord—China and India's Border Predicament," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, January 29, 2013; Gordon Fairclough, "India Races to Bolster Border Infrastructure, Chasing China," *The Wall Street Journal* (October 30, 2014), <http://www.wsj.com/articles/india-races-to-bolster-border-infrastructure-chasing-china-1414705082>
130. See Jeff M. Smith, *Cold Peace: China-India Rivalry in the Twenty-First Century* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books: 2014), 35. See, also, Rahul Bedi, "Indian Army



Begins Recruitment for Sikkim Scouts Border Force,” *Jane’s Defense Weekly* (April 04, 2014).

131. The mountain strike corps was initially to comprise two infantry divisions, one artillery division equipped with lightweight howitzers, and two light armored brigades. See Rahul Bedi, “Indian Finance Ministry Approves 90, 000 Mountain Strike Corps,” *Jane’s Defense Weekly* (May 29, 2013).
132. Personnel costs have increasingly dominated the Army’s budget, rising from approximately 70 percent in 2013 to 72 percent in 2016. As an element of comparison, personnel costs only accounted for 22 percent and 17.5 percent, respectively, of the Navy’s budget in 2013 and 2016. Author’s calculations derived from the data compiled in *IHS Jane’s Defense Budgets: India Defense Budget* (Updated January 21, 2016).
133. See Anit Mukherjee, “The Big Military Challenge,” *The Indian Express*, <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/narendra-modi-military-india-defence-mano-har-parrikar/> (accessed January 25, 2016).
134. Dean Nelson, “India-Pakistan Border Clashes Lead Over Thirty Killed,” *The Telegraph*, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/india/11151959/India-Pakistan-border-clashes-leave-over-30-killed.html> (accessed October 9, 2014).
135. On the natural tendency for nations to slight their security commitments to either a continental or maritime theater, see Colin S. Gray, *The Navy in the Post-Cold War World: The Uses and Value of Strategic Sea Power* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 1994), 64; and Theodore Ropp, “Continental Doctrines of Sea Power,” in Edward Mead Earle, *Makers of Modern Strategy: Military Thought from Machiavelli to Hitler* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1941), 446–57.
136. Raja Menon, “A Mountain Strike Corps is Not the Only Option,” *The Hindu*, <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/a-mountain-strike-corps-is-not-the-only-option/article4963979.ece> (accessed July 29, 2013).
137. A distant blockade of China in the Indian Ocean would present numerous challenges, ranging from the difficulties in screening and identifying merchandise bound for China to the blunting effect of Chinese rationing and stockpiling. See Gabriel S. Collins and William S. Murray, “No Oil for the Lamps of China,” *Naval War College Review*, 61, No. 2, 2008, and Evan Braden Montgomery, “Reconsidering a Naval Blockade of China: A Response to Mirski,” *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 36, no. 4 (2013): 615–623.
138. See Bruce A. Elleman and S.C.M. Paine, “Conclusions: Naval Blockades and the Future of Seapower,” in *Naval Blockades and Seapower: Strategies and Counter-Strategies*, edited by Bruce A. Elleman and S.C.M. Paine (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006).
139. Zorawar Daulet Singh, “India’s Geostrategy and China: Mackinder Versus Mahan,” *Journal of Defense Studies*, 7, no. 3 (2013): 137–141. This debate has been well summarized in Shashank Joshi, “The Future of Indian Seapower: Navalists Versus Continentalists,” *RUSI Analysis*, <https://www.rusi.org/analysis/commentary/ref:C520CA2CF18FE4/#.Va6jfpVikq> (accessed August 15, 2013).
140. For a thorough examination of this debate throughout history, see Colin S. Gray, *The Leverage of Seapower: The Strategic Advantage of Navies in War* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1992). For an Indian perspective on the continental/maritime debate, see Raja Menon, *Maritime Strategy and Continental Wars* (London, UK: Frank Cass, 1998).
141. During both the Kargil War and the 2001–2 standoff with Pakistan, the Indian Navy surged elements from its Eastern and Western Fleets in order to engage in coercive maneuvering in the Arabian Sea.
142. In particular, the development of Pakistan’s submarine fleet, the dispersion of its naval assets among several different ports along the Makran coast, and the acquisition from China of a large number of C-802 anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs). See

- Iskander Rehman, "Tomorrow or Yesterday's Fleet? The Indian Navy's Operational Challenges," in *India's Naval Strategy and Asian Security*, edited by C. Raja Mohan and Anit Mukherjee (New York, NY: Routledge, 2015).
143. For Pakistan's naval nuclear ambitions, see Muhammad Azam Khan, "S-2: Options for the Pakistan Navy," *Naval War College Review*, 63, no. 3 (2010), 85–104, and Iskander Rehman, *Murky Waters*, 7–25.
  144. For an analysis of China's concerns over India's naval threat to its seaborne trade, see Toshi Yoshihara, "Chinese Views of India in the Indian Ocean: A Geopolitical Perspective," *Strategic Analysis*, 36, no. 3 (2012), 489–500.
  145. On the question of Chinese overseas basing, see Daniel J. Kostecka, "Places Rather than Bases: The Chinese Navy's Emerging Support Network in the Indian Ocean," *Naval War College Review*, 64, no. 1 (2008), 59–78, and Andrew S. Erickson and Gabriel B. Collins, "Dragon Tracks: Emerging Chinese Access Points in the Indian Ocean Region," *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 18, 2015), <http://amti.csis.org/dragon-tracks-emerging-chinese-access-points-in-the-indian-ocean-region/>
  146. The importance of moral forces in warfare, or the "will to war" was perhaps the most rigorously explored by Carl von Clausewitz. For a seminal analysis of Clausewitz's thinking on such issues, see Raymond Aron, *Clausewitz: Philosopher of War* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 117–44.
  147. For an interesting discussion of the concept of threat-in-being and its applications in the naval domain, see John B. Hattendorf, "The Idea of a Fleet-in-Being in Historical Perspective," *Naval War College Review*, 67, no. 1 (Winter 2014), 44–61.
  148. Some military theorists have termed this phenomenon "virtual attrition," in opposition to physical attrition. See John Stillion and Bryan Clark, *What it Takes to Win: Succeeding in 21st Century Battle Network Competitions* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2015), 4.
  149. For a succinct introduction to the role of naval stand-off strike in contemporary warfare see Dale E. Knutsen, *Strike Warfare in the 21st Century: An Introduction to Non-Nuclear Attack by Sea* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2012). For a discussion of how the U.S. Navy embraced precision strike as a means of asserting the service's combat relevance in the Post-Cold War era, see Peter D. Haynes, *Toward a New Maritime Strategy: American Naval Thinking in the Post-Cold War Era* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2015), 9–11.
  150. Emily O. Goldman has described how, over the interwar period, a highly diversified threat environment complicated Britain's strategic assessment and undermined its political-military coordination. Emily O. Goldman, "Thinking about Strategy Absent the Enemy," *Security Studies*, 4, no. 4 (Autumn 1994), 40–85. On the difficulty of forging effective strategy in times of peace, see Talbot C. Imlay and Monica Duffy Toft, edited by, *The Fog of Peace and War Planning: Military and Strategic Planning Under Uncertainty* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2006).
  151. See Sam Roggeven, "Jaishankar: India Becoming a Leading Power," *The Lowy Interpreter*, <http://www.loyyinterpreter.org/post/2015/03/17/Jaishankar-india-leading-power.aspx> (accessed March 17, 2015).
  152. Christopher Hemmer has argued that the existence of a clearly articulated national security policy can help "knit choices together over time," and "minimize fratricide between policies." See Christopher Hemmer, *American Pendulum: Recurring Debates in U.S. Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 4.
  153. As an Australian defense planning expert notes, "Clear guidance about the priority order of risks and possible adversaries is a necessary condition for the development of

- a focused and coherent planning framework.” See Stephan Fruhling, *Defense Planning and Uncertainty: Preparing for the Next Asia-Pacific War* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), 205. See also Colin Gray, “Coping with Uncertainty: Dilemmas of Defense Planning,” *Comparative Strategy*, 27, no. 4 (2008), 324–31.
154. On grand strategy as an “investment issue,” see G. John Ikenberry, “Liberal Order Building,” in *American Strategy After the Bush Doctrine*, edited by Melvyn P. Leffler and Jeffrey W. Legro (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 85–109.
  155. Klaus Knorr, *The War Potential of Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1956), and Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York, NY: Random House, 1987).
  156. Randall L. Schweller, *Unanswered Threats: Political Constraints on the Balance of Power* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 46–69.
  157. See, for example, Kotera M. Bhimaya, *Civil-Military Relations: A Comparative Study of India and Pakistan* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1997), [http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/rgs\\_dissertations/2006/RGSD136.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/rgs_dissertations/2006/RGSD136.pdf); Anit Mukherjee, “Civil-Military Relations in Crisis,” *India in Transition*, University of Pennsylvania, Center for the Advanced Study of India, <https://casi.sas.upenn.edu/iit/mukherjee> (accessed September 24, 2012); and Veena Kukreja, *Civil-Military Relations in South Asia: Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India* (New Delhi, India: Sage Publications, 1991).
  158. See Rajesh Rajagopalan, “India’s Unrealized Power,” in *Strategic Asia 2015–2016: Foundations of National Power in the Asia-Pacific*, edited by Ashley Tellis et al. (Seattle, WA: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2015), 161–91. See, also, Carnes Lord, “China and Maritime Transformations,” in *China Goes to Sea: Maritime Transformations in Comparative Historical Perspective* edited by Andrew S. Erickson, Lyle G. Goldstein, and Carnes Lord (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2009), 510.
  159. Mukherjee, “The Big Military Challenge.”
  160. Cohen and Dasgupta, *Arming Without Aiming*, 147.
  161. Anit Mukherjee, “The Absent Dialogue: Civil-Military Relations and Military Effectiveness in India” (Phd Dissertation in Political Science, Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies, 2012).
  162. For the distinction in-between unified and divided models of democratic civil-military arrangements, see Deborah Avant, “Political Institutions and Military Effectiveness: Contemporary United States and United Kingdom,” in *Creating Military Power: The Sources of Military Effectiveness*, edited by Risa A. Brooks and Elizabeth A. Stanley (Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 2007), 80–106.
  163. See *China’s Military Strategy-Part IV Building and Development of China’s Armed Forces* (Beijing, China: The State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China, 2015), [http://english.gov.cn/archive/white\\_paper/2014/08/23/content\\_281474982986506.htm](http://english.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2014/08/23/content_281474982986506.htm)
  164. C. Raja Mohan, “Narendra Modi and the Ocean: Maritime Power and Responsibility,” *The Indian Express*, <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/modi-and-the-ocean-maritime-power-and-responsibility/> (accessed March 12, 2015).
  165. See Abhijit Singh, *Deciphering Chinese Submarine Deployments in the Indian Ocean*, (New Delhi, India: Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses Strategic Comments), [http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/DecipheringChinasSubmarineDeploymentsintheIndianOceanRegion\\_asingh\\_080715.html](http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/DecipheringChinasSubmarineDeploymentsintheIndianOceanRegion_asingh_080715.html) (accessed July 8, 2015).

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167. Author's interview of U.S. defense officials, U.S. Embassy, New Delhi, December 10, 2015.
168. Author's discussion with an Indian naval officer involved in the drafting of the 2015 Maritime Security Strategy, New Delhi, March 16, 2015.