



## The Emergence of India as New Military Power: Threat or Opportunity to Southeast Asia?

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### Abstract

South Asia is a region often tinted with crisis, conflict and war. Historically, this region is undeniably a region exposed by military activities or 'use of force'. Therefore, military development has become a main agenda in South Asian countries in hope to strengthen the defense system and ensure security and national sovereignty. The need of this military development agenda has successfully made India, which obtained independence in 1947, to emerge as a new military power through certain stages to date. This military development will give some impact on Southeast Asian countries either in the form of threat or opportunity. In threat aspect, military development by India definitely will give some implications due to geopolitical issue. However, this development can be seen is more to deterrence approach. In opportunity aspect, ASEAN should take this chance to make relation with India particularly in economic cooperation as they have done with Japan and China. The cooperation measure must be taken by setting up bilateral discussion and formulating the policy in which favor to cooperate with India. Due to this cooperation, India is seen will give some balance to Japan and China influence to Southeast Asian countries.

**Keywords:** Military Power, Military Development, Security

### 1. Introduction

Since 1947, after the independence from British, India had given attention to national development in line with the existence of India as an independent and sovereign country. Now, India can no longer be considered as an insignificant country in the international system, on the other hand, India is now a country that would become one of the world's big powers. India's rapid development in the field of economy, politics and security had an important effect to India's power in the South Asian region. India's rise and dominant role in the geopolitics of the South Asian region has placed India as the region's superpower. In line with the rapid economy and politic development, India has also given immense focus on

the military and defense development. India's success in developing its military field especially in building nuclear power had given a huge effect to the international geopolitics. India's speedy development and its rise as a military power have aroused concern among regional countries especially pertaining to security threat.

India's location as a neighboring country of East Asia and Southeast Asia has often become measurements by legislators of national policy and scholars to discuss the impact on security of other countries. China's emergence as a military power in East Asia caused concern among Southeast Asian countries. Now, Southeast Asian countries have started to pay more attention on India as India's influence on security aspect has increasingly expanded. India power on Indian Ocean is similar to China's power over the South China Sea. Southeast Asia's location that lies between South China Sea and Indian Ocean becomes a factor that has raised Southeast Asian countries concern on India's military power rise as India is a dominant power in the Indian Ocean.

## 2. Factors and Process of India's Military Development

The emergence of India as a new military power in South Asia has prompted researchers to study and describe factors and political development in South Asia. According to Chris Smith (1994) the political upheaval, conflict and war during India's early history are the many elements that have influenced Indian policies formation after achieving independence in 1947 (Chris Smith, 1994:4; Wayne Wilcox, 1972:15-16). Factors such as history, leadership, security, national interest, internal and external conflicts and the situation in the international system have given significant impact to develop the reinforcement of the defense system to strengthen the safety and security level (Chris Smith, 1994:8). The emergence of India as a new power in the region South Asia is related to the military modernization development in China during the end of 1980. Additionally, these two superpowers were involved in war related to border dispute in 1962 (Ross Babbage & Sandy Gordon, 1992:174). This conflict has left a significant impact to India in addressing and developing their military capabilities. The situation deteriorated when China attempted to expand power in Southeast Asia which has propelled India to toughen their maritime defense force in an effort to prevent the influence of China's military development in Southeast Asia and South Asia. Michael Leifer (1996:17) also stated that China's action to claim the island in South China Sea in February 1992 encouraged India to increase security surveillance in Indian Ocean waters.

Scalapino (1975:122) explained that the development of expansion and power among Soviet Union and United States has also motivated India's awareness on security threats. This factor is proven important because superpower involvement in South Asia and Southeast Asia had influenced India to increase the defense system. Expansion and competition of the superpowers in the South Asia involve aspects such as strategic alliances, military aid, containment policy, service support, technology and so forth (Joseph S. Nye Jr, 2000:59-61). Even the support and assistance of the superpowers on countries in the South Asian region is considered as factor to the increase in military technology and development. India's military modernization in late 1980s was seen by Shekhar Gupta (1975:62) as an obvious desire for India to emerge as a new military power in the region of South Asia and Asia in general. This is because if it is studied, India has allocated large amount of expenditure in the development of military during the late 1980, in fact India was one of the largest arms importer in the world between year 1985-1989.

Since 1947 under Nehru's administration, India practiced a 'non alignment' policy and socialism (Shekhar Gupta, 1995:3). He adopted a 'do not intervene' and non-aligned policy although there were differences in ideology aspects and emphasize on peace, besides dealing conflict resolution through diplomacy (Raju G.C. Thomas, 1986:66). This is because he himself was a socialist and an idealist (Raju G.C. Thomas, 1987:275). India's defense policy under Nehru can be divided into 2 stages namely among year 1947-1949 and 1950-1962. Because India was granted independence in 1947, Nehru implemented policies that have more tendencies to economic development and did not focus on military development (Chris Smith, 1994:47). This is because India was facing an economic recession and social problems during the early phase of his administration (Amit Gupta, 1995:443). Nehru's policies directly forced budget and national budget to be more focused on economic development. This is the reason why the process of military development and military modernization was delayed during Nehru's era. Although these policies were objected by the other Indian leaders, the concentration was towards economic development.

In 1962, India-China's war directly effected and become the starting point in the change of India's defense policy. In 1962 also India's Prime Minister Nehru died and his death has opened a space for new policies implementation particularly in the development of military. The war between India and China in 1962 was favorable to China due to its strong military compare to India. This event has triggered India to develop its military power to ensure their defense and security. For this reason the allocation of expenditure on defense has recorded a high increase (Amit Gupta, 1995:443). Concentration and modernization of India's military entails all three force of defense namely land, navy and air. Additionally emphasis also was focused on the development military technology and research. India has proven its effort and has yielded success whereby in May 18 1974 India has successfully produced its first's nuclear bomb that was tested in Pokran (Amit Gupta, 1995:448; Farzana Shaikh, 2002:43). Realizing their defeat during the China-India war in 1962, India started the move to strengthen its defense and military modernization. With that, India cooperated with the Soviet to receive weaponry supply for the purpose of military developments. India-Soviet's cooperation is visibly successful in

modernizing Indian military power until the end 1980, whereby India has owned weapons equipment imported from Soviet such as cannon 155mm, T-72's tank, MIG-21, Mirage's aircraft 2000, and long-range bomber (Shekhar Gupta,1995:3). In terms of allocation, India's defense expenditure recorded an increase, for example at the end of the year 1985, an increase from 2% to 4.2% to 1989 was seen from the GDP. India's allocation and expenditure has been recorded as the world largest importers of arms with cost nearly worth US\$ 10 billion (Asian Defence Yearbook 2000-2001:51).

The superpower development and competition among United State and Soviet Union in South Asian region had aroused security threat and political instability. This is because Soviet Union's communist power evolved in Afghanistan in 1980's, while America's assistance and support has been given to Pakistani for the purpose to prevent Soviet's energy development base on 'containment policy' strategy (V. Longer,1988:56). This development has directly given security threats to India with the superpowers and United States assistance to Pakistan. Developments such as arms race, China-Pakistan relationship, United State-Pakistan and separatist rebellion in Kashmir and Punjab have raised Indian leader awareness to re-examine policies such as the neutral policy and independent region from the grip of superpower and national defense policy (Amit Gupta,1995:448). This current development has prompted India which was under the government of Prime Minister Indira Ghandi to study and make changes on national defense policies. Thus, India has made military development, implemented 'South Asian Doctrine', rejects intervention of foreign power on South Asia's countries internal problem and neutral policy. Therefore, Indira Ghandi infers if any South Asian country accepts the entry of a foreign power, it will be assumed as a threat to regional security especially South Asia. However, all changes that were made by Indira Ghandi have been deferred when she was assassinated by the Sikh militants in 1984 (Amit Gupta,1995:448).

While India was under the administration of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, major changes were made when he realized that the policies implemented previously were ineffective. Internal crisis such as the conflicts in Kashmir and Punjab and threats from outside has prompted to implement more effective new policies particularly in the development of military. This situation had caused India to undergo a more drastic move to develop its nuclear weapons. This is because through the development of nuclear it can create deterrence or prevent enemy's confrontation beside modernizing the military power (V. Longer,1988:305). To create regional peace Rajiv Ghandi implemented policies enhancing relationship with regional countries and superpowers especially Pakistan, China, Soviet Union and US. By early 1990s the international structure has undergone a big change with the collapse of the power of Soviet Union. Soviet Union's down fall gave an effect on India because Soviet Union was a very close ally and had good ties with India (Shekhar Gupta,1995:3). Thus, India realized it should develop its military capabilities more rapidly to ensure national security. This situation motivated India to develop military aspects particularly in the development of nuclear-weapons that can become a prevention of enemy's threats (Asian Defence Journal,1997:72).

India has implemented its nuclear development program to protect national interest, security and create balance of power through quantity and quality of strategic arms possession. These strategic weapons refer to nuclear weapons or modern weaponry of mass destruction and are able to provide an advantage to a country. This decision is considered a rational decision because India thinks the world is in state of anarchy and in moving towards military modernization. India is developing a powerful military not only in the field of modern defense but also in the aspect nuclear, biology, and chemical (NBC) weapons (Ashok Kapur,1997:113;Mohd Rashid Darham,1996:44). This is because India thinks ownership of nuclear weapons can ensure India's survival, security and progress (Francois Heisbourg,1998/1999:78). When China carried out their nuclear-weapons test in Lop Nor on the 16th of October 1964, this made India realize the importance of nuclear-weapons as device to prevent confrontation in the field of military politics (East Asian Strategic Review,2002:109). Concern towards China's nuclear-weapon threat occurred because of two reasons namely, unresolved border problem and China channeling nuclear program aid to Islamabad. Since China's nuclear weapon test was executed, New Delhi has been actively practicing nuclear choices (Avery Goldstein,2000:251). Furthermore India has tried to develop a medium (IRBM) and long distance (ICBM) missile (Bary Buzan,2002:9). Soviet Union has given help in terms of expertise and 2 nuclear reactors to India in 1992. India also received help from Israel for the purpose of countering Islamic bomb (Asian Military Review,December 1993:38-40).

Edward Mead Earle (1973: 418-420) has underlined 6 key features to emerge as a maritime power are history, physical location, size of region, national population character and institutions of the country to be a maritime power. The maritime interest is base on the need to provide security coverage to hundreds of archipelago, thousands of kilometers of beach, a wide Exclusive Economic Zone area (EEZ) and geographical position interest and the strategic location of the Indian subcontinent which is located in the middle of Europe and East Asia (K.M. Panikkar,1995:93). This situation has prompted India to design a maritime defense strategy that incorporates capacity and military force that directly protects the nation from land, air and sea which includes land borders, archipelago province, maritime asset and important trade routes. India also aims to develop a navy that can operate transcending geo-strategic area covering the entire Indian Ocean and South-East Asia. This includes the purchase of Admiral Gorshkov aircraft carrier, three Kvirok and two kilo submarines for the navy (Asian Military Review,November 1999:26). India's territorial maritime defense interest has started since the 1960s following the development competition of big powers in Asia Pacific and South Asia that could

threaten India's security (Chris Smith,1994:70. Although since 1960s India has not develop its maritime defense strategy extensively but this development will provide significant capacity to ensure security on its strategic territories Chris Smith,1994:65).

Besides strategic weapon development, India has also implemented a long term plan of conventional military development called the 20 years plan to modernize the defense forces. They allocated USD 20 billions to purchase artillery, tanks, ammonization, surveillance system and visual night aid (Military Review, November 1999:39). This plan involved the purchase of modern and sophisticated defense equipment such as 310 T 90 tanks, Unmanned Aircraft Vehicles (UAVs), 155mm Howitzers cannons, land missile on air, rocket launcher and other equipment (Jane's Defence Weekly, January 2001:32.). This military development is not just limited to the army, India has also give attention to its air force development which provides modern and sophisticated air defense equipment. They have purchased equipment and aircraft such as the Advanced Jet Trainers, Dassault Mirage 2000s, SU-30 aircrafts, Tupolev Tu bomber-22M3 (Backfire) and many more (Asian military Review, February-March 2000:74). Their Air force has also large allocation which amounted to USD\$30 billion to purchase aircraft and training, surveyor aircraft, AWACS, missile and repair of air defense equipment. For the navy, the Indian government has allocated as much as USD\$20 billion to buy 2 airplane carrier tankers, submarines, missiles and surveyor aircrafts besides having cooperation with foreign country in defense.

This military development process has made India emergence as a new military power when India came forward as a nuclear power. The world was stunned by the threat during the South Asia conflict in 1998 (India and Pakistan) that can bring to the use of nuclear in the clash (Muhd Izhar Abu Samah,2001:46-47). Directly the conflict among these two states has enlightened the world with the emergence of India as a military power and as a developed nation in the field of nuclear technology. According to Zin Mahmud (2002:30-31):-

*"In terms of strength, India exceeds Pakistani, although both have nuclear weapons. Yet India's nuclear power is greater than Pakistan's. In terms of population and economic strength, Indian is also in a higher position than Pakistan."*

### 3. Security Threats Analysis on ASEAN

The emergence of India as South Asia's military power had raised other countries concern especially Southeast Asian countries on the impact on security. In reality, India's emergence as a military power would in fact present a security threat, either directly or indirect on Southeast Asian countries because of its geographical location with South Asia. This emergence has a similar scenario when the Southeast Asian Nations (SAN) were worried when China emerged as a military power. The geographical location aspect is a measurement for Southeast Asia countries' concern which is located near to East Asia and is compel to share the South China Sea (SCS).

China's action in claiming the right on a particular region in SCS using military approach has become a standard for researches to predict India's superpower actions. SAN had witnessed China utilizing the gunboat diplomacy in SCS which several times had trigger military tension with SAN the armed forces in SCS (Newsweek,1995:10;B.A Hamzah,1998:160 161). The close geography location of Southeast Asian Nation (SAN) and China, besides the fact that they share the South China Sea (SCS) has become a platform for researches to assess the impact of India's emergence. India's power over the Indian Ocean and its close sea position with Southeast Asia region has become subject to SAN's concern.

*"As China is on the verge of developing its maritime capability, it is looking at its southern shores more cautiously. It is also vital for China to fight any challenges that come from the south given its conflicting territorial claims. It is also important for China to be able in position to control the sea lanes during times of crises or escalation of tension... If China needs to be recognized as a superpower its ability to control the southern sea is vital (K.S Balakrishnan,1999:50)"*

The emergence of China as a superpower and SAN's concern are almost similar to the anxiety on the emergence of India. The close geography location with the region has become a factor that triggers SAN's concern. At the same time, India's authority in the Indian Ocean which is an ocean that connects Southeast Asia with the West is almost a similar scenario as China's control on SCS. The Southeast Asian region is situated amidst the two of the world's very important ocean; Indian Ocean to the west and South China Sea to the east which is dominated by two superpowers of the world that is India and China. SAN's concern on India is not only about geographical aspect but also involved other factors such as politics, military and regional threats.

In analyzing the impact of India's emergence towards SAN, it is necessary to examine the early history and relations of India with SAN. At an early stage especially during the establishment of ASEAN, India had its own different opinion with SAN. SAN's objective to set up ASEAN is to create a non-aligned zone of freedom and peace. In other words, ASEAN tries to avoid the domination of any superpower over the Southeast Asian region (Zin Mahmud,2005:11 14). From India's point of view, ASEAN is established as another political pact and defense similar to the establishment of SEATO (Southeast Asian Treaty Organization) supported by the United States. India had been uncomfortable ever since the US facilitated Pakistan, particularly when it sent airplane carrier tanker, USS Enterprise, to the Indian Ocean during the Indo-Pakistan war in the year 1971 (K.S Balakrishnan, 2000:51). It had influenced India to strengthen its relationship with

the Soviet Union. Nevertheless India had not objected or opposed the establishment of ASEAN. Although India is concerned with the expansion of superpowers, especially the US in the Asia Pacific, yet India is not against the presence of Soviet Union in this region. It had raised conflict of interest between India and ASEAN, whereby during the Cold War ASEAN had been more comfortable with the presence the United States than the Soviet Union (K.S Balakrishnan, 2002:32).

The early relationship of India-ASEAN was also influenced by ASEAN criticizing India's action during Pakistan's internal crisis in 1971. According to ASEAN, India should not have interfered in the conflict between West Pakistan and East Pakistan (Bangladesh). India's military presence supporting West Pakistan was seen as meddling in the internal affairs of a country's sovereign. This incident had soured India-ASEAN's relationship. ASEAN had tried to improve the relationship with India by inviting India as an ASEAN's dialogue partner in the 1970s, however it was aborted when India resorted to recognizing the Vietnam's puppet government in Cambodia in 1979. It is contrary to ASEAN's stance that opposed Vietnam's invasion and occupation over Cambodia. This state of affairs had caused the ASEAN-India relationship to deteriorate. The Communist regime Vietcong control on Vietnam backed by Soviet Union in 1975 indicated US's defeat and withdrawal. It had indirectly opened a room for India to strengthen the relationship with Vietnam's communist regime.

In fact Vietnam-China's strained relationship since the Sino-Vietnamese war in 1979 was a great opportunity for India to strengthen its relationship with China's enemy (R.S Sassheen, 1987:111). India also viewed US's withdrawal from Vietnam as an opportunity for China to conquer Southeast Asia (Pushpinder Singh, 1987:60). India's high concern of China's development in Southeast Asia for India was involved in the Sino-India war in 1962 (Asian Defense and Diplomacy, May 2005:10-11). To avoid SAN misunderstanding India's relationship with Vietnam and Russia, India through Indira Gandhi adopted a wise approach to support the decision during the ASEAN Conference in Bali 1976, for the purpose of creating regional peace and stability.

Military modernization and development of India had also influence SAN's perception on India. Rajiv Gandhi's decision to develop the navy force to strengthen the control of Indian Ocean had aroused SAN's concern. India's choices led by Rajiv Gandhi, in several South Asian ethnic conflicts particularly involving ethnic Indian in Sri Lanka, Maldives and Fiji had also raised SAN's concern (Zin Mahmud, 2005:11-14). This is because ethnic Indians is a large ethnic community in several SAN countries. Hence, ASEAN is worried of any conflict with Indian ethnic in SAN that will open an opportunity to India to interfere in internal affairs. In strengthen its control over Indian Ocean, India has rapidly developed its maritime defense strategy by combining capacity and military force directed to the national defense of land, air and sea including land border, archipelago, maritime asset and important trade route. Indian also intends to develop its navy that can operate beyond geo-strategic area, covering the entire Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia. USS Enterprise's presence in the Indian Ocean during the Indo-Pakistan war in 1971 to aid Pakistan had vested a large awareness on India to emerge as a maritime power in its interest in the Indian Ocean.

*“U-S Pakistani ties annoyed India relation with Washington in many ways. The 1971 Indo-Pakistani War for the first time witnessed the threat of their alliance with the US. US dispatched its aircraft carrier USS Enterprise during the war. Though India was able to liberate Bangladesh, it for the first time learned the importance of protecting Indian Ocean. It was at this time India realised that it must be a maritime power in the region and to ensure that no countries are able to dictate terms in the Indian Ocean”* (K.S Balakrishnan, 2000:51-52).

The interest to defend Indian Territory had started since 1960, following the development competition of big powers in the Asia Pacific and South Asia that could threaten India's security. Although since 1960 India had not extensively developed its maritime defense strategy, the military development had still enable India to protect its strategic territories. India perceives its control on Indian Ocean as important considering it is a route linking Europe and East Asia (K.M Panikkar, 1995:93). India's aims to develop several military harbors in some islands neighboring Southeast Asian countries, also raised concern. India's military settlement proposal in Nicobar and Andaman islands of Benggal Bay had received Indonesia's protest due its extremely close location to Indonesian territory.

Although India is prioritizing developments in South Asia, the expanding influence of China in Asia Pacific is alarming India. This is because China have started strengthening ties with Myanmar and Bangladesh, two countries sharing borders with India (Haris Zalkapli, 2005:24-25). Additionally, China's decision to develop Tibet and Xinjiang rapidly stimulated India's interest, as both of these areas sharing borders with the western part of India. China-Pakistan and China-Myanmar relationship equally had elevated India's concern on China (Philips HJ Davies, 2001:55). Similarly, close diplomatic ties and India-Vietnam's military cooperation also had provoked China's attention. This is because military training between India, Korea Selatan and Vietnam and witnessing India sending five warships and Kilo submarines in October and November of 2002 has enabled India to experience training South China Sea. In term of nuclear threats, SAN is increasingly worried about nuclear crisis between India and China. This is because the geography of Southeast Asia is located in the heart of both superpower nations.

On the 16th of May 2001, India's Prime Minister on an official visit to Malaysia had delivered a speech on India's decision to maintain the defense doctrine that uses nuclear weapons as device of deterrence and respect ASEAN's stand for regional peace. (Asian Defense and Diplomacy, December 2002:27). Although in 2001 India had announced its up-to-date ability in successfully developing a sub based deterrent that is capable to strike in seconds, the nuclear doctrine practiced by India is not a first strike policy (Asian Defense and Diplomacy, December 2002:27). India's nuclear development success can directly be deterrence towards China (Dipankar Banerjee, 1999:12-14). Even though this is a miraculous achievement and pride to India, for Southeast Asia it is a disturbing development. This is because ballistic missile blast from Indian Ocean will need to pass over Southeast Asia and South China Sea to reach to China. On the other hand, land ballistic missile would pass areas that are neighboring Southeast Asia to reach the target in China. ASEAN's airspace would also be use if India decides to explode its airborne nuclear deterrent towards China (Philips HJ Davies, 2001:55).

Security is the main objective of India in conducting its nuclear weapons development program. India views its nuclear weapon development program as efforts to prevent confrontations from Pakistan and China. Therefore, India has positioned its military at all borders with both countries and located their nuclear weapons that are always ready to face threats (Suhaimi Mokhtar, Mac 2002:62). Indian is also very careful with Pakistan because the conflict among these two nations may trigger war that has happen in 1971 (Asian Defence Journal, 1997:78). India's firmness in safeguarding the security through the position of military forces at its border was perform tactically and began in December 2001. President Vladimir Putin speculated that, "they (India) do not want war, but they will go to war when the circumstances forced them to do so" (Suhaimi Mokhtar, August 2002:49). In easier words, "nuclear weapons can prevent nuclear weapons" and India can always be ready to face nuclear threat from the foreign countries (Kenneth Waltz, 1979:188-189). This theory is an idea that can convince one country to guarantee the safety of the country under threats (Asian Defence Journal, 1997:72). The ownership of nuclear weapons will cause the aggressor to cancel its intention when they find out that the stated country has nuclear weapons (Howard H. Letner, 1997:210). To this date, India's security is said to be guaranteed base on the theory of deterrence.

Although the India-China early relation was majorly influenced by border conflicts that resulted in military development, yet it does not mean the cold relationship will continue. This is because, both countries are always attempting to repair their relationship and tackle the misunderstanding. Since year 1962, both countries have carried out 15 settlement negotiations to resolve the crisis of their 2,500 miles border (Asian Defense and Diplomacy, May 2005:12). Although negotiations constantly failed, it demonstrated both country seriousness and readiness to find solution through diplomacy. India-China's relationship improved after Indian Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee's official visit to China in 2003. It was a visit focusing towards restoration of the relationship and overcoming unsolved problems. This visit can be concluded that both countries were not attempting to threaten one another. Vajpayee explained that:-

*"The simple truth is that there is no objective reason for discord between us, and neither of us is a threat to the other. this simple profound principles should form the badrock of the future India-China partnership"* (Asian Defence And Diplomacy, August 2003:9)

India-China's relationship restoration was reinforced through military cooperation and training between both countries. Being both maritime superpower nations that controls Indian Ocean and South China Sea the ties can be built through training and military cooperation. Hence, in November 2004 witness the first time ever India and China conducted a joint military training (Asian Defense and Diplomacy, December 2003-Januari 2004). It is the extended collaboration of both countries at ministry level, after the head of state effort in 2003. This tie has brought new radiance in the relation between both countries and could lessen Southeast Asia's concern of a clash between the two superpowers.

Although Southeast Asia had long worried about the current development of India's political and military, it does not mean that Southeast Asia has doubted India. This is because Southeast Asian Nation (SAN) had already adopted a constructive engagement approach with India, especially to strengthen diplomatic ties and economic cooperation of India-SAN (Mustafa Climb, 2001:43-44). ASEAN had invited India to become a dialogue partner to ASEAN and performed close economic cooperation for India is a strong country in terms of economic development (K.S Balakrishnan, 2001:5-6). The Indian government had given positive reaction on ASEAN efforts whereby India had helped the security cooperation through ASEAN and ARF. In fact India collaborated in the Confident Building Measure of ASEAN by engaging in a friendly visit and carrying out joint military training. These efforts had increase understanding between countries and enhanced each others trust. India had attempted to convince the trust of SAN by proving that India is not a power that will threaten SAN's security where India invited those nations to visit and survey its military harbor in Andaman and Nicobar islands. In fact to strengthen the present relationship, India participated in SAN's informal security and military activities, such as taking part in the Langkawi International Maritime and Air Exhibition (LIMA) in Langkawi.

#### **4. The Opportunity Analysis that can be Achieved by ASEAN**

The emergence of India as a new power regardless whether it is viewed from military, politics and economical aspects must be seen from a positive angle. Hence, what are ASEAN's opportunities with India's emergence as a new power?

And how could ASEAN take the opportunity of this emergence as a new big power? The method that can be used by ASEAN through this emergence of power is to have a bilateral cooperation among the two regions. However this method could only be perceived as “a very slow move”. In stimulating a political, economy, social and security cooperation plan, ASEAN must apply a formula which was previously used (the success in penetrating East Asia’s economy) by performing face to face meetings with Indian leaders and this opportunity should be used as well as possible by both of the country’s leaders to increase economic cooperation plan which should be able to achieve a win-win situation. ASEAN should also execute a bilateral economic dialogue between ASEAN and India, similar to the successful economy dialogue, artificial rubber forum 1974, which persuaded Japan to make an economic cooperation.

When ASEAN put together an economic cooperation with the East Asian region, Japan was the pioneering country of that successful cooperation. Moreover, this economic cooperation expanded to other countries in that region i.e China, South Korea and Taiwan. The continuity of this cooperation created the existence of ASEAN 3 and also EAC which has a role in giving opportunities and profitable trading for both parties. Hence, ASEAN should implement the formula that has been applied before to succeed in performing the cooperation with South Asian countries. This formula should make India a pioneering country to penetrate the market and economic cycle of South Asia. ASEAN should be aware that the importance of India’s power importance is similar to the power of Japanese and China, if it is viewed from the regional economic context. South Asia consist of various countries, namely Pakistan, Bangladeshi, Sri Lanka, Nepal and India. The population in South Asia is said to exceed 1 billion people, which directly will cater a profitable prospect to ASEAN’s economy. Certainly there is a market for ASEAN products and at the same time India can benefit from the ASEAN market that has a population more than 450 million people.

In making this effort successful, discussion and cooperation of the highest level should be carried out effectively. The same move used during ASEAN’s co-operation with Japan can be exercised, which is to conduct meetings and discussions with Japanese highest leaders that eventually formed the Fukuda Doctrine and Look East policy. Hence, a close relationship between leaders and countries needs to be performed as the base of the cooperation that will be conducted. This will provide the chance to mutually discuss on strategic interests between both sides. Whereas in the second stage is through ministerial level that can have the role to implement the decision and agreement which was made by the head of the government. In fact this effort should not face any large difficulty because of the existing relationship between Southeast Asian countries and India, which have been around since the previous government era until the present government.

Dato' Sri Najib’s visit in 7 June 2006 to India had demonstrated that Malaysia had began to utilize the formula to foster cooperation with India, which is Malaysia’s 10th export destination. Malaysia’s awareness has been influenced by India economic growth rate which attained 7-8% a year and the market strength that undeniably has brought a healthy economy cycle for Malaysia-India. In fact, from the figures of Malaysia-India’s bilateral trade relationship, in 2005 recorded USD 3.9 billion Malaysian exports went to India while the total import from India recorded USD 1.1 billion. South Asian interest is not only subjected to the economical, but also in term of strategy and security. It is a well know fact that Southeast Asia has constantly been a field of motive to expand influence and power by countries whether from Asia or the non Asian countries.

In this context, India is seen as a power that can balance China’s power to ensure the stability in South East Asia. History has proven that both superpowers have been involved in war in 1962. The emergence of China and its military modernization in early 1990’s had a effect called security dilemma on ASEAN and India. This concern was felt by both parties with China’s influence and strength which is increasingly growing in Asia Pacific. Therefore, ASEAN will need other big forces involvement especially India to offset the rising of China. At the same time, India can make ASEAN a partner and shield of any possible threat from China.

In a wide context, India’s power can be a countervailing power to create balance of power from the domination of China, Japan and the United State on Southeast Asia regional interest. China and India expansion of power over Southeast Asia has indirectly raise security threats to ASEAN. Consequently, ASEAN's desire to employ diplomatic and economic ties with both countries will certainly be fruitful because both countries have strategic interests in South-East Asia. At the same time, settlement between both parties has permitted ASEAN to enable a balance of power through direct relationship and economic cooperation. In fact, without realizing it this situation has created deterrence system toward any superpower that tries to threatened Southeast Asia’s security. To fulfill this objective, ASEAN should examine the existing weakness and flaws. ASEAN must reevaluate the planning and strategy that has already been implemented. For sure it requires a more effective formula in activating ASEAN and India's cooperation. ASEAN should make the formula that has been implemented in moving the cooperation with India and South Asia. In other words, ASEAN should not take for granted this opportunity. Surely, ASEAN will be at lost if this chance was taken by another country.

## 5. Conclusion

The development of military in India is a long term process. It had considered political, sovereignty and security interest in protecting security and sovereignty of the country. Generally India’s military development process experienced

modernization based on several phases and current development. The interest of the country to strengthen Indian defense system has started since India achieved independence in 1947. However, the development process experienced a weak phase especially between 1947-1962. This is because at that time India was still very young, which was after the independence in 1947 and has emphasized more on the economic development and the process of nation building. However, India's defeat in the China-India war in 1962 because of the border crisis has become a starting point to the military development and a more effective security system. Since that date it has been proven that India has started developing and modernizing its military continuously, besides implementing effective interrelationship strategy in protecting the security and sovereignty of India.

This process has successfully placed India as a new military power in South Asia and Asian region. This is clearly undeniable, although the cold war has ended, India has cleverly arranged strategies to be independent from Soviet Union, especially in securing equipment and defense technology. India has begun to create good relations with superpowers such as United States and Britain to ensure security and technology sharing. Moreover, the collapse of Soviet Union has enlightened India to be independent in building its security system. Indisputably, India's effort has been fruitful when India has successfully become a country of nuclear power after producing nuclear weapons which possesses medium range (IRBM) and intercontinental range (ICBM) in 1998. India has realized, its emergence as superpower has affected other countries especially Southeast Asia.

The emergence of India as a new power with an increasingly significant international geopolitical and economy has raised concern among the region, especially in Southeast Asia. Hence, Southeast Asia faced similar dilemma when China emerged as one of the world's superpower and its control of the South China Sea. China's actions such as utilizing the gunboat diplomacy in its quest to claim territories that are overlapping with Southeast Asian countries has become a caution to Southeast Asia in dealing with this particular superpower. Therefore, India's emergence in modernizing its defense force, including the navy which has brought the success of India to master the Indian Ocean, have started to alarm Southeast Asia. Southeast Asia's geographical location which is close to the Indian Ocean has become a measurement to evaluate India's action on Southeast Asia. Southeast Asia's experience in dealing and facing China's political behavior have begun to stimulate debate on India's actions.

In fact India has realized that its emergence as a superpower has affected other countries, especially Southeast Asia. India's emergence however is not seen as a security threat on Southeast Asian countries. The military development and modernization developed in India is aimed to face threats and meet the requirement of a defense system as a sovereign country. Similarly, its development of strategic weapons is aimed to spawn a system of deterrence to avoid enemy threats on India. India has firmly declared that it will not employ the first use doctrine of nuclear weapon. This is because India is not a country that practices aggressive principles on other countries; on the other hand India emphasizes more on stability, harmony and prosperity aspects. The navy development and modernization is a relevant move taken by India, as India from a geopolitical point of view dominates the South Asian region, similar to China who somewhat dominates South China Sea. India's presence as a new power in the international geopolitical arena has indirectly created a system of deterrence to Southeast Asia to balance China's influence and avoid security threats. Hence, India has taken certain measures to ensure its rise does not threaten other nation's security. India has taken an approach to restore the relationship with Southeast Asian countries by holding cooperation and creating close diplomatic ties. India has also restored its relationship with world superpowers including United States and China in the efforts to guarantee its objective in becoming a superpower.

From an opportunity angle, India's emergence as a new power has provided Southeast Asian countries to capitalize in developing political and economy stability and prosperity. India at the moment is an economically strong nation; in fact India has the ability to offer economic opportunity to Southeast Asian countries, such as how China has offered to the Southeast Asian countries at the moment. In Southeast Asia's effort to take advantage in exploring sources and economy prosperity in South Asia, India is the key to the entrance of the region. The South Asian region does not only offer economic opportunity through India, there are various countries that have fertile economic assets which are yet to be explored. Certainly, South Asia and India promise a handsome prospect to Southeast Asia. Close geographical location, including land route facility is the basic that can be used by the Southeast Asian countries to pioneer economic opportunity in India and South Asian. Similarly from India's perspective, the Southeast Asian region also promises prosperity to India from economical and political aspects. Similar interests between India and Southeast Asia have raised the awareness of both sides to build a good relationship between both countries, either formal or informal.

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