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Emerging Major Powers and the International System: Significance of the Indian View*

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India's new and contested status as a nuclear power², the scale of her arms purchases,³ her investment in missile technology⁴ and the huge deployment of ground troops on the western front against Pakistan are issues of immediate concern to her South Asian neighbours. Since tension feeds on tension, war in Afghanistan, terrorist attacks in Kolkata, Delhi, Jammu and Srinagar, mounting tension between India and Pakistan over the issue of cross-border terrorism in Kashmir and the recent threat by General Pervez Musharraf to consider the first

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² Neither the five recognized nuclear weapon states, nor the signatory states of the NPT and CTBT and the members of the IAEA formally recognize India's and Pakistan's nuclear status. However, at the informal level, the major actors, above all the US administration, follow a rather pragmatic policy by engaging India in tacit negotiations and increasingly intense cooperation on nuclear safety and restrictions on technology transfer.

³ India, as Cohen reports, (2001, p. 31), "has been in the midst of a major arms buying spree. A recent purchase from Russia for more than \$4 billion worth of equipment will augment India's tank force and air fleet considerably and permit the acquisition of several important ships, including a second aircraft carrier. This included a \$3 billion agreement to produce aircraft under license and acquire modern tanks and an aircraft carrier." See "India, Russia Sign \$3 Billion arms deal," *Times of India*, December 29, 2000. Also "India, Russia Ready Military Arms Dealer," CNN.com, October 4, 2000. India has just purchased more than a thousand man-portable radar systems from Israel and is negotiating a deal on Hawk jets with the UK.

strike option as part of Pakistan's strategic response to Indian mobilisation have contributed to the seriousness of the situation. The probability of the regional conflict escalating into large scale nuclear war, or weapons of mass destruction finding their way into the hands of non-state actors, have drawn world attention to South Asia, which has had visits in quick succession by political leaders and military delegations from the United States, UK, Germany, France, China and Russia.

The paper, focused on India's capacities, perceptions and institutional arrangements for the management of security, seeks to evaluate the significance of her status as an 'emerging' power for the security environment in Asia, and its implication for the international system. It analyses the main objective both empirically, and theoretically. The empirical aspect concerns the measurement of India's economic and military resources according to the conventional indicators of power.⁵ These facts, based on experts' accounts, are supplemented by political and institutional factors which are significant for the estimation of the power of a country.

In addition, the analysis seeks to juxtapose the views of observers and actors, and locate the strategic perception of the Indian voter, an important factor in her political landscape in view of her active democratic process. These factors of contemporary politics are to be seen in the larger context of India's political and security culture, history, the structure of the political system. The issue of contextualisation needs to be understood in terms of its methodological implication at the outset, because, while all states are members of the international system, the use to which they put international politics varies from one context to another. Western nation states, products of a long process of nation building, industrialisation and state-formation, seek the promotion of national interest through their strategic initiatives. Post-colonial state-nations, engaged in the process of nation-creation, are more complex in their rhetoric. For these actors, international politics, in addition to being used as an instrument of national interest, also plays a symbolic role in the building of a national profile. The paper seeks to combine both the material and symbolic aspects of Indian policy in the concept of a *security doctrine*, one that can bring potential power into an effective focus, in the absence of which mere appurtenances of power like guns and ships are just that and

⁴ "India's Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP) comprises four missile systems: Prithvi, surface-to-surface tactical battlefield missile; Akash, medium-range surface-to-air missile; Trishul, short-range surface-to-air missile; and Nag, third-generation anti-tank missile. Trishul is getting ready for user trials. Akash and Nag are in advanced stages of development. This programme includes a development of the intermediate-range ballistic missile, Agni. The Department has developed and preserved convenience foods for the armed forces. It is vigorously pursuing the goal of technological self-reliance in defence systems through a 10-year national self-reliance mission. State-of-the-art technologies developed for missile programme, LCA and other high technology systems are being canalised to make available bio-medical equipment at a much less cost." (Singh, 1999, p. 140).

⁵ For the purpose, the paper draws on *India: Book of the Year 2002* for primary data and a broad range of expert accounts including those by Cohen (2001), Tellis (2001) and Perkovich (1999).

not much more. Since the stability of the doctrine, in addition to its coherence is an important parameter of the significance of Indian power, the paper also takes into account the problems of implementation as well.⁶

Though there is considerable force to the argument that South Asian security is crucially contingent on the India-China-Pakistan triangle,⁷ India remains the biggest power in South Asia, and her significance, in terms of how India sees herself and how others see her, is a key consideration for regional politics. The need for a sophisticated methodological analysis arises paradoxically from the fact that India is a democratic state and an open society, both of which give a false sense of visibility to India's security profile.⁸ Foreign observers, depending on their own national origin and the context, place their bets on predictions of India's next move either as the 'regional bully' or the 'regional push-over', and India, Janus-like, often proves both speculations to be right, appearing in the process to be either mystical-moral, or utterly devoid of principle or doctrine.⁹

The paper is in three parts. The first examines the state of play by *ranking India* with reference to her strategic resource endowments. The second part examines India's *strategic doctrine* and the organigram of security, and evaluates her potential power in the light of her doctrine. The third part makes a *prognosis* of the challenging path ahead for India with reference to the unsolved problems concerning her national security. The conclusion reconsiders the main issue posed in the introduction in the light of the analysis undertaken here.

INDIA AS AN *EMERGING* POWER

One of the main difficulties of approaching the theme of India's position as an emerging major power is that it is difficult to measure India's power with any degree of precision. Methods of ranking such as the one based on economic resources and military hardware, the reputational method and a 'class analysis' which measures a state's net power in relation to putative adversaries¹⁰ come up with conflicting results. The net outcome is a sense of fluidity with regard to India's rank as a power and the conclusion that India belongs to the class of countries that are always emerging but never quite arriving.

⁶ As such, the paper seeks to balance the neo-realist approach, and the constructivist approach (Wendt, 1999), which connects the world of bombs and guns with the web of meanings specific to the stakeholders. The key texts used for this purpose in this paper include Jaswant Singh, *Defending India* (Macmillan: 1999), *Official Statements of the Government of India in Context of Terrorism and Related Issues* (Ministry of External Affairs, GOI: 2002) and the recently declassified *Reforming the National Security System: Recommendation of the Group of Ministers* (GOI: 2001).

⁷ See Mitra (2001), Racine (2001).

⁸ Notwithstanding Indian openness and garrulity, the preparations for the nuclear tests in Pokhran were kept secret up to the very last moment, a fact that is considered to be a major intelligence failure on the part of the American NSA.

⁹ Notice, for example, the tremendous costs in terms of lives and prestige paid for an Indian stand on Sri Lanka and the utter silence of the Indian regime on the most important settlement just concluded between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government.

¹⁰ See Cohen (2001), pp. 25-31.

The data on the conventional criteria of power such as population, economy, military personnel and hardware, are generally accessible. In terms of gross indicators of size of the population and the economy, India is among the leading states in the world. As regards the number of inhabitants, India has the world's second largest population, having just passed the billion mark, and on current trends, could surpass China in the next few decades. India is far ahead of the United States (270 million), and other points of reference like Russia, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, Brazil, and Nigeria all of which are home to between 100 million and 250 million people. According to the World Bank's *World Development Report 1999/2000*, India's economy is gigantic in terms of overall gross national product (GNP). It ranks eleventh in the world, with a total figure of US\$421 billion, compared with China's US\$929 billion, and Japan's US\$4,090 billion. When measured by purchasing power parity (PPP) taking into account local rates of exchange, India scores higher with US\$1,661 billion, the fourth largest in the world. As international politics recognises states as the main actors, these figures should rank India among the leading 'powers' of the world. But from the point of view of relative power, these figures are misleading, for the transformation of GNP to power must take into account the ability of an actor to mobilise the economy to a war economy, and for the population to be able to sustain a war over an indefinite period. Seen in this light, the impact of India's size is modest on her relative power position because of the poor performance on the per capita indicator. India ranks low in terms of GNP per capita, with a figure of only US\$430, far below China's US\$750. On social indicators, the picture is just as dismal, for India does rather badly on the human development index of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).¹¹

India, with a huge economy and a poor population, thus presents a somewhat contradictory picture. The picture has changed since the beginning of liberalisation in the early nineties, and the quality of life is slowly going up. But, in terms of relative power, this does not help India, for both GNP per capita and the quality of life are going up even faster among her competitors. It is also an intensely politicised society, and a contentious democracy, which, as will be argued below, affects the ratio of potential power to effective force, negatively.

With regard to India's defence outlay, the state spends approximately 3 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on defence, amounting in 1998 to only US\$14 per person. By comparison, India's adversaries spend more. Pakistan spends over 6.5 percent of national income on the armed forces, and, about US\$28 per person, while China spends 5.3 percent and US\$30 per person.¹² In terms of aggregate figures, India is usually in the top dozen states in terms of overall military expenditures, ranking twelfth in 1999-2000 with spending at about US\$14 billion.¹³ This is modest compared to China's US\$40 billion or Japan's US\$37 billion, which

¹¹ See Cohen (2001) for details.

¹² See Cohen (2001), p. 29.

¹³ These and other figures in the following paragraphs are drawn from the various national entries in International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 1999-2000* (Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 20, 112, 161-63, 166-67, 186, 300-05. They are exclusive of the costs for the nuclear programme.

is equivalent to the amount spent by most major European powers. Russia spends US\$54 billion, but the United States, which spends well over US\$250 billion in military equipment and personnel is ahead of everyone else.

How do these figures translate into actual power? Cohen (2001) mentions a multiplier effect of “low wages and generally high quality of Indian armed forces” which “magnify the effect of India’s mere US\$14 billion in defence spending.” India has the largest volunteer military establishment in the world, with well over one million regular soldiers, sailors and airmen, and nearly the same number of paramilitary forces. But, in terms of effective logistics, as we learn from Mr Jaswant Singh’s influential *Defending India* (1999), a large part of this force is tied up with other tasks and as such, should be discounted for when it comes to the calculation of national power. “The growing use of the Army for Internal Security (IS) duties, senior Army officers fear, has affected the morale and fighting qualities of the soldier by realigning his mission and adversary orientation from external to internal enemies, which can be potentially very dangerous, blunting his battlefield skills - the time he would otherwise spend in training for conventional war is spent on IS duties, providing him no rest and respite, and exposing him to, and infecting him with, the lax and corrupt values of the police and paramilitary forces. It is not the occasional but full-time ‘aid to civil power’ which is the problem.”¹⁴

Singh’s criticism of the Indian strategy of withdrawing troops from the border to employ Army personnel for the maintenance of internal security for which the Army was not intended, is echoed by the results of a high level inquiry commission set up by the Government of India which states that the withdrawal of paramilitary (Army) forces from the borders has in the past exacerbated the problems of border management (*Recommendations of the Group of Ministers* (2001), p. 60). This internal-external security link persists in recent discussions of India’s security management and underscores the necessity for political science to see both themes as connected. India’s contentious democracy and the worsening communal relations have greatly exacerbated the need for effective policing. The police are a State subject under the federal division of powers and, being under the control of India’s regional governments, are not always considered politically neutral. At the slightest outbreak of communal violence, therefore, there is a clamour for the deployment of the army. Already overstretched in view of its engagement with anti-insurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, the Northeast and sundry other trouble spots where the state is engaged in fighting Naxalites (a left-wing guerrilla), the additional demands on its personnel greatly reduce the effective fire power of the armed forces.

In contrast to armed personnel, the situation is marginally better when it comes to hardware. As we learn from Cohen (2001, p. 29) India’s armed forces have a significant number of armoured vehicles: 4,000 tanks, and about 500 armoured personnel carriers organised into 60 tank regiments, almost 200 artillery regiments, including a few equipped with short-range “Prithvi” missiles manufactured in India. To further improve and to modernize this arsenal, in 2000, India signed the biggest MBT-deal in Asia with Russia, which provides for the delivery of no less

¹⁴ Singh (1999), p. 262.

than 310 modern T-90S Main Battle Tanks, 184 of which will be build in India by licence.¹⁵ Indian airpower has an edge over Pakistan in terms of numbers, with almost double the aircraft (India has 774 combat aircraft, mostly multipurpose fighters; Pakistan has only 389). But in comparison, China is better endowed than India, with a vast armoured force, more than 8,000 tanks and more than 3,000 combat aircraft. Ironically, India, China and Pakistan share vintage Soviet air technology for a variety of reasons: China because of the old Soviet links in the early years after the second world war, India because of the years of close collaboration and technology transfer and Pakistan because of the trading relation with China! However, Cohen writes that each of these three countries possesses a small core of advanced fighters, capable of serving as delivery vehicles for nuclear weapons. India and China possess the nuclear-capable Sukhoi 30; India and Pakistan each possess a variant of the Mirage 2000, although Pakistan is the only air force in this triad that flies the advanced but rapidly ageing American F-16.

India had sought in the past to increase her room to manoeuvre against Pakistan through diversification in arms procurement which lowers the dependence on any particular arms supplier, and through a programme of indigenisation which required supply contracts to include a provision for their production in India under licence. The 1965 Indo-Pak war had demonstrated the efficacy of this strategy, for India, unlike Pakistan, was not dependent on an outside supplier for spare parts, or for continued supply. But these advantages, as the paper will argue below, have been neutralised through nuclearisation, which has helped Pakistan bridge the 'strategic depth' against India, and the ability of Pakistan to draw on both China and the USA against India. In addition, there have been allegations that Indian armed forces are suffering from waste and corruption and are under-equipped compared even with Pakistan.¹⁶ A recent 17 percent increase in defence spending will still have a limited impact on India's power projection capabilities.¹⁷

India and Pakistan are self-declared nuclear powers and their devices, with the multiplier of delivery vehicles must also be factored into the regional military balance. China is supposed to have nearly 300 deployed nuclear weapons. While the question of deployed nuclear weapons in India is still subject to speculation, India is supposed to have the capacity for building between 25 and 100 warheads, and Pakistan to have enough fissile material to produce between 10 and 15 "devices", although recent reports suggest that Pakistan holds the larger inventory.¹⁸ It remains unclear as to how many weapons are deployed at a given

¹⁵ Zulkarnen (2001), p.18.

¹⁶ See the scathing pre-Kargil critique by a BJP sympathizer, Mohan Guruswamy, "Modernise or Perish," *Indian Express*, January 26, 1998. After Kargil, he and others pointed out the considerable qualitative disadvantages held by India's larger forces when confronted with the Pakistani forces.

¹⁷ International Institute for Strategic Studies, "India's Military Spending: Prospect for Modernization," *Strategic Comments*, vol. 6 (July 2000).

¹⁸ For an analysis, confirmed in part by recently retired U.S. officials, see Robert Windrem and Tammy Kupperman, "Pakistan Nukes Outstrip India's, Officials Say," MSNBC News, at (www.msnbc.com/news/417106.asp?cpl=1[January 24, 2001]). "Pakistan, though nominally weak (compared to India) is actually stronger than it is commonly perceived." (Tellis 1999, p.730)

time, but one can safely assume that both have at least a few devices and could produce many more on fairly short notice. China is believed by some Indian analysts to have several nuclear weapons deployed in bases in Tibet. As for delivery, aircraft still remains the main mode, but Pakistan is assumed to be moving toward a missile-based capability. Some experts assert that India lags behind Pakistan in this category, with only a few short-range missiles (the Prithvi) in its inventory, and a medium-range missile (the Agni) still under development. China has nearly seventy medium-range missiles, a few long-range intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), and a dozen sea-launched medium-range missiles (India has neither an ICBM nor a sea-launch capability, although programs of both are under way). Most of these Chinese systems could theoretically target major Indian cities or Indian nuclear weapons based in northern and eastern India.¹⁹

In terms of naval power, India's fleet is smaller than China's, but anecdotal evidence suggests that it is better trained and more experienced. Indian ships range throughout the Indian Ocean, paying regular calls on ports in East Africa and Southeast Asia. Although in terms of quantity, the Indian navy is shrinking, since many obsolete vessels are being retired, and although a new carrier²⁰ may be out of (financial) reach for the Indian Navy, the quality of the Indian warships is gradually improving through the acquisition of Russian *Kashin*-Class destroyers or Russian *Granit*-SLCMs for their Kilo-Class submarines. So, the Indian Navy may currently not be able to conduct sustained operations far from base (for example in the South China Sea), but it is definitely well positioned to defend India's interests in the Bay of Bengal and in the Arabian Sea.

As far as India is concerned, a brief perusal of her nuclear programme quickly reveals a long, expensive engagement with technical development but without the backing of a well conceptualised doctrine.²¹ The programme started way back in 1944, with the founding of the Tata Institute for Fundamental Research under the leadership of the noted physicist Homi J. Bhabha who had the ear of Nehru. The original intention was to use nuclear research as a source of energy which nicely dovetailed into Nehru's economic plans for self-sufficiency in energy-deficient India. In 1948 the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) was established. In 1956 and 1960 the first two civilian nuclear reactors were opened. An inconclusive national debate about exercising this option ensued, chiefly between Homi Bhabha and V.K. Menon, India's defence minister. China tested its nuclear bomb for the first time in 1964. India, with enough nuclear material and the necessary technology, has the option of "going nuclear" for the first time in 1965. However, no clear policy evolved during these politically turbulent times of India. From 1968 onwards a second nuclear debate begins due to pressure from the West, the Soviet Union and Japan to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). India

¹⁹ Cohen (2001), p. 30. See Perkovich (1999) for a detailed account of the development of India's nuclear programme. For a projection of future growth of India's nuclear weapons programme, see Tellis (1999), p.720.

²⁰ Some sources like Jane's Navy International (January 2001) inform us that the Indian Navy is in the process of acquiring the ex-Soviet aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov, though the deal remains unfinalised to this date .

²¹ See Cohen (2001), pp. 157-171.

developed the counter argument of the “discriminatory” international nuclear order. In 1974 India tested a ‘peaceful nuclear device’ for the first time at Pokhran. During the 1970s India gained respect for its nuclear advances but failed to develop a plan for the future policies on nuclearisation. The 1980s show India developing a nuclear doctrine (Jasjit Singh 1997) of “recessed deterrence”, meaning nuclearisation to a point where deployable weapons can be produced at very short notice, but short of full weaponization, since the threat of that should suffice politically. This form of nuclearisation has gained a following, an open nuclearisation was believed to help stabilise the region and to fend off political intruders in the region, in India’s “natural sphere” of influence.

The bomb gradually came to acquire the aura of a symbol of India’s power. Support for this view ranged from the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party to others, including the socialist George Fernandes, originally opposed to the bomb, but even more opposed to the bullying by other nuclear powers. The ‘Subrahmanyam logic’, so-called after the most celebrated Indian ‘hawk’, pressuring the “nuclear haves” into disarmament while protecting India against nuclear blackmail of nuclearisation (dating back to the mid-1970s) still applies today to India’s official position.

The push towards nuclearisation appears to have been authorised by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in the late eighties after his own de-nuclearisation initiative was cold-shouldered by western powers. In Indian eyes, from 1990 on Pakistan was considered a nuclear weapons state. From 1995 to 1997 the NPT/Arms Control Regime became greatly tightened, threatening closer scrutiny of India’s nuclear programme. The advent of the Bharatiya Janata Party to power turned the bomb into a symbol of Indian nationhood and an act of peaceful resistance to international bullying. The integration of India’s search for power and her nuclearisation is however far from complete. In Cohen’s view, if at all India is to be viewed as a major power, it is “despite [and] not because of its overt nuclear capabilities.”²²

The last variable that needs to be taken into consideration with regard to national power is ‘morale’, that ultimate force-multiplier, which Cohen holds to be high in the case of India.²³ But still, the sum of parts is less than the whole. Pulling all these factors together, Cohen concludes that “for the past several decades, India has had a weak or at least highly variable reputation, as judged by the ability to influence without attempting to exercise influence, ... one that is easily written off as a regional power.”²⁴ India’s relative weakness was not fully visible at the height of the Cold War. Inevitably, her ranking has been adversely affected by the decline of the Soviet Union, though the fact does not appear to have been fully registered

²² Cohen (2001), p. 197.

²³ “ It is more difficult to measure the relative quality of Indian forces, since much depends on leadership, both civilian and military. However, the Indian military, when adequately led and given a clear and reasonable objective, can obviously perform extremely well, albeit at a low to intermediate level of technological sophistication. The Indian armed forces certainly compare favourably with those of Pakistan and China, although they would have a hard time coping with naval or air units from a truly advanced military power.”

²⁴ Cohen (2001), p. 26.

by Indian policy makers. India, of course, continues to be regarded wearily by her neighbours but any comparison with her neighbours is seen by Indian policy makers as condescending towards India and unappreciative of her true power.

India's ambiguous profile results from the hiatus between self-perception and the evaluation by others. This is compounded by the contradiction between nostalgic self-perception as a major player in the international arena at par with China, the real attainment of which would require a commensurate strategic engagement, and the current commitments in South Asia which restrict her strategic vision and engagement basically to the region. This hiatus between the perception of India and her self-perception also causes her to shuttle uneasily between grandstanding on the one hand, and inexplicable acquiescence with situations that are contrary to her interests or declared principles on the other, lowering, in the process, her credibility even further.

Thus, though India, buoyed by the aspirations of her increasingly vocal middle class has been reaching out for a global market and a global role, in terms of power-ranking, the intentions have not become a reality. As Sandy Gordon suggests, the complexity and difficulty of the South Asian environment, have forced India's attention to focus more on the problems associated with its immediate neighbourhood and on nation-building than those of the Indian Ocean region, let alone the world. "This fact is not without irony. While it is the problems of the neighbourhood that have largely driven India's military build-up, it is also those very problems that continue to limit its strategic reach."²⁵

With regard to the Asian strategic landscape, thus, India's position remains unspecified. While quite clearly the leading military power on the subcontinent, India is not accepted as the paramount power. Indeed, the Indian analyst Raju Thomas argues that "India does not yet have clear superiority in the event of a combined attack by Pakistan and China, a point borne out by the situation on the border with Pakistan, where because of demands on Indian forces elsewhere, Pakistan is still able to match India almost division for division."²⁶ Currently, as the trusted ally of the USA, the ban on the supply of arms lifted, the General resoundingly voted in as President, though the October elections might still throw a spanner in the works, Pakistan is in a strong position militarily *vis-à-vis* India. India has been making efforts to counter this by attempting to revive closer relations with Russia and undertaking high level diplomatic exchanges with China. But then, from Pakistan's point of view, this is more than balanced by the growing weakness of the NDA government of Delhi, fraught with religious tension in India, and the beleaguered position of Prime Minister Vajpayee within his own party, facing a growing challenge from more robust proponents of *hindutva*.

What does this make out of India in so far as her rank is concerned? Cohen's cryptic description of India as "a different great power", being as unspecific as her status as an 'emerging' power, is not of much help. But his detailed reasoning is certainly worth reproducing in full.

²⁵ See Babbage and Gordon (1992), p. 171.

²⁶ Babbage and Gordon (1992), p. 172.

Although India's ability to extend its military power or play a balancing role elsewhere remains relatively modest, this power is increasing, as is the skill with which that power is now wielded. In the economic arena, Indian influence is mixed: while it does have significant capabilities in advanced and high technology, it was slow to develop an export capability of any consequence. This, also, is changing. On balance, India has long been regarded as a state that has failed to live up to expectations. Indians, of course, argue that there are reasons for this lack of performance, the primary being that New Delhi remains enmeshed in a needless conflict with Pakistan that prevents it from becoming a major power. But even the propensity to blame others for India's ills is changing, and a new sense of confidence has become apparent in the past several years.

Though India may be the weakest of the great states and still unable to do some important things, it is capable of surprises. It cannot be ignored, but neither will it act like a great power at all times. Like China, which periodically pleads that it is still a "third world" state, India will have one foot in the "developing" world and one in the world of advanced economic and military powers for the indefinite future.²⁷

THE INDIAN STRATEGIC DOCTRINE

The strategic doctrine of a country is an indispensable instrument for the effective measurement of its ranking, for the strategic vision, calculations and propensities towards risk-taking that the doctrine contains, provide important clues to the transformation of potential power into effective force. *Panchasheela*, the five principles of peaceful coexistence to which Jawaharlal Nehru gave an institutional expression in terms of the Non-aligned Movement provided a complete if not coherent statement of India's strategic doctrine at the height of the Cold War.²⁸ However, though the Nehruvian consensus has lost its aura as much in India's domestic politics as in her international affairs, no single coherent doctrine has emerged to take its place. New generations of policy makers, voters, parties and major changes in the regional and international contexts have influenced the development of strategic thinking. Each of the major wars of South Asia, or war-like incidents mentioned by Jaswant Singh (table 1) have sparked off both bouts of doctrine elaboration by the government and political controversies around them. Our search for a strategic doctrine would draw on the discourse that these incidents gave rise to in Indian politics.

²⁷ Cohen (2001), p. 35.

²⁸ See Mansingh (1984), pp. 13-25 for a brief review of the core principles of non-alignment and the modifications made to them by Indira Gandhi.

Table 1**MAJOR MILITARY OPERATIONS OF INDIA (1947-97)²⁹****A. Inter-State Wars**

1947-48	The First Indo-Pak Conflict
1962	Sino-Indian Border War
1965	The Second Indo-Pak War
1971	The Third Indo-Pak War: Creation of Bangladesh

B. Other Internal Military Operations

1947	Punjab Boundary Force
1947	Junagarh deployment
1948	Hyderabad police action
1961	Liberation of Goa
1984	Operation Bluestar

C. Counter-insurgency Operations

1954-74	Anti-insurgency operations in Nagaland
1965-67	Anti-insurgency operations in Mizoram
1971	Anti-insurgency operations in Tripura and Mizoram.
1985-90	Anti-terrorist deployments in Punjab
1989-	Anti-terrorist deployments in Jammu & Kashmir
1991	Anti-insurgency operation in Assam: Operation Rhino

As things stood at the outset, foreign policy and strategic planning were almost exclusively in the hands of Nehru and his close advisers during his tenure as Prime Minister until 1964. More recently, this formerly relatively closed circle of policy experts has opened up to allow regional political forces (which have come to wield influence as coalition partners at the centre) to air their respective views on strategic planning. Essentially, for Cohen defence and strategic planning has come from one voice (Nehru's) in the early years to many voices and coalitions in more recent times.

The Nehruvian Tradition of strategic thinking, which went through many metamorphoses under his successors, namely Lal Bahadur Shastri (1964-66), Indira Gandhi (1966-77, 80-84) and Rajiv Gandhi (1984-89), represents a mix of liberal internationalism and a "strong state" approach. It was originally characterised by a sceptical view of the US and a reliance on the Soviet Union and

²⁹ Jaswant Singh (1999), pp. 142-143.

support for other anticolonial movements. Nehru acknowledged the problems facing a weak state in the international system and consequently aimed at co-operation where possible and necessary. The “Militant Nehruvians” entered the scene after India’s defeat in the 1962 Indo-Chinese border war. They shared Nehru’s suspicion of the unbalanced international power system but rather endorse the use of force. They emphasised threats to India. Subcontinental dominance became the goal of foreign policy. Pakistan, China and the US were seen as essentially hostile towards India. This thinking persisted from 1972 to about 1992.

According to Cohen, the Nehruvian origins of strategic thinking in post-independence India have been enriched by two additional currents which he calls, respectively, realists and revivalists, to distinguish them from the overall idealism of Jawaharlal Nehru. The realists started as offshoots from the generally liberal, market oriented, pro-American Swatantra party in the mid-1960s. The realists (Cohen counts foreign minister Jaswant Singh and K.C. Pant, one-time Special Envoy to Kashmir (now the Deputy Chief of the Planning Commission), as examples), share with Nehruvians the belief in India’s inherent greatness and with militant Nehruvians an inclination towards the use of force when perceived necessary. They hold a more pragmatic view of Sino-Indian and Indo-US relations. Realists support increased economic openness and integration with the international market forces. The revivalists take a more regional perspective, stemming from their preoccupation with indianizing South Asia, which they see as essentially the main theatre of action for Indian foreign policy. They, like the realists deem nuclearization necessary. For Cohen the modern synthesis of realist and revivalist perspectives is Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee.³⁰

Nehru saw himself first and foremost as a great moderniser and as such, social and economic development was the cornerstone of his political thinking. Defence as a political and strategic issue was mainly used to advance these objectives. Nehru was deeply distrustful of the military as such and the Indian military establishment. Not surprisingly, no coherent security doctrine developed during the period of Nehru’s stewardship, non-alignment being an overall guide to the ways and means of avoiding conflict rather than a strategy of the enhancement of national power and security. India established good neighbourly relations with her smaller neighbours on the basis of treaties with Bhutan 1949, Sikkim 1950, Nepal 1950, Burma 1951 and Ceylon 1954/1964. Force, during this phase was used primarily for domestic purposes, the invasion of Goa in 1961 being the exception.

The period during the Indo-China war of 1962 and the Indo-Pak war of 1971 caused a major re-thinking, for India had to conceptualise the possibility of a war on two fronts. The increase in defence allocation during this period, and increased military co-operation with the West saw the beginning of a greater security consciousness. After Indira Gandhi came to power in 1966 she displayed a greater willingness to link politics and military affairs. She also turned India firmly in the direction of the Soviet Union with the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation, signed on 9 August 1971. After 1971, the balance of power in South Asia was altered significantly, with the defeat of Pakistan in 1971, the emergence

³⁰ Cohen (2001), p. 47.

of Bangladesh and the “peaceful nuclear explosion” of 1974 which gave yet another indication of an ‘Indira Doctrine’, which visualised India as the hegemonic power of South Asia.³¹

The defeat of Indira Gandhi in the Parliamentary elections of 1977 and the ushering in of the first Janata government in Delhi under the leadership of Morarji Desai, seen at that time as pro-American, tilted the balance away from the Soviet Union, but at the same time, introduced another dose of uncertainty to India’s strategic vision. This changed again in 1980 with the return of Indira, but the period of 1980 to 1984 saw India isolated, and funds for defence spending getting scarce. Increased US support to Pakistan after the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan saw India’s return to reliance on the Soviet Union and greater Soviet arms imports in India.

In retrospect, the period that intervened during the two assassinations, of Indira Gandhi in 1984 by her Sikh body guards and Rajiv Gandhi by Tamil terrorists in 1989, were one of continued Indira ‘doctrine’ which saw attempts to expand India’s influence in South Asia and hostility towards China, Pakistan and the US grew stronger. Missile programmes were initiated after 1983 and defence spending doubled from 1980 to 1989. Operations Siachen (1984) and Brasstacks (1986-87) occurred. Support was lent to the Tamil Tigers (1987-90) and an Indian intervention in Malé took place in 1988.

Though the onset of liberalisation of the Indian economy in 1991 prepared the ground for a rapprochement with the United States, the contradictory pulls within India’s strategic thinking continued from 1990 to 1999. The collapse of the Soviet Union necessitated a radical change in policy, while economic reforms in India necessitated budget cuts, affecting the military adversely. This might have opened a window of opportunity for Pakistan, which, taking advantage of the onset of militancy in Kashmir started supporting cross border insurgency in Kashmir and covert military operations. While on the political front the unilateralist Gujral doctrine and subsequently, the BJP initiatives for a diplomatic deal with Pakistan first of the Lahore bus trip and subsequently the Agra summit continued, the Pakistani military operated on more conservative lines and sought to take advantage of the perceived weakness of the Indian military establishment. One consequence was the war in Kargil in 1999, but the forceful reaction of India’s army once again underscored the need for a coherent Indian strategic doctrine.

The conceptual disarray and the lack of strategic vision that characterise Indian thinking on strategic and security issues to this point, in Jaswant Singh’s view, can be attributed partly to the lack of mapping skills, geographical knowledge of the North-east and North-west frontiers but to a great degree to the perceived lack of necessity with regard to the exact delineation of India’s external borders in continuation with the practice during the British colonial period. It was seen as contrary to British interests to have exact borders. The British found the separation of their spheres of influence from those of their rivals through “buffer zones” as a more effective strategy. The continuation of this policy, however, assumed the continuation of the power that the British were able to mobilise as an imperial

³¹ See Mansingh (1984).

power. The continuation of these soft frontiers, particularly with China was to be a major contributory cause to the conflict of 1962.³²

All modern states, as Tilly has argued, seek to develop an integrated security doctrine that combines internal and external security, basically to safeguard the interests of the ruling elites.³³ That India did not go in that direction during the crucial two decades following independence is an issue of great theoretical interest. Could this be the consequence of the lack of a strategic culture in India?

The issue has been investigated at length by Jaswant Singh. The fact that though India is a full-fledged state with all the rights and obligations due to a state under the conventions of the international system and still one has to discuss why India has not pursued national power like others is of particular significance. It arises in this form primarily because of the attribution of a non-strategic, spiritual culture to India by colonial anthropology. In its loose, idealistic formulation, *Panchasheela* appears to give institutional form to this non-strategic attitude. Singh, taking issue against this reading of Indian history, shows how, buried under the layers of spiritual rhetoric and rituals there was a strategic culture and appropriate institutions in pre-modern India. As a key member of the current government and one of its main strategists, Singh argues that the present government has been able to build on this basis in order to bring in a new institutional arrangement, leading to a new organigram of security management.

Since the existence of a tradition of strategic culture in India is not often acknowledged by specialists in the field, it is important to take cognisance of it at this stage. The evidence that Singh builds his assertions on comes chiefly from Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, a text on governance that has been traced to four centuries before Christ. The text has an obsessive occupation with "spies, secrets, and treachery. When listing the virtues of a king, Kautilya includes, along with energy, controlling his sensual nature, cultivating his intellect, and associating with his elders, the need to keep 'a watchful eye by means of spies'."³⁴ Kautilya gave great importance to gathering intelligence.

This establishment of spies to be created to serve the king should include the apostate monk, the seeming householder, the seeming trader, the seeming ascetic, as well as the secret agent

³² Jaswant Singh (1999), p. 186.

³³ As Skocpol and Charles Tilly, suggest "If *protection rackets* represent crime at its smoothest, then war making and state making - quintessential protection rackets with the added advantage of legitimacy - qualify as our largest example of organized crime. Tilly then goes on to define the functions of states in terms of the following: *War making*: Eliminating or neutralizing their own rivals outside the territories in which they have clear and continuous priority as wielders of force; *State making*: Eliminating or neutralizing their rivals inside those territories; *Protection*: Eliminating or neutralizing the enemies of their *clients*; *Extraction*: Acquiring the means of carrying out the first three activities - war making, state making, and protection." "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime" See Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol, eds., *Bringing the State Back in* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1985) (p. 169, emphasis added).

³⁴ Jaswant Singh (1999), p. 12.

[the brave, the poison-giver, and the benign nun]'. They should spy on the councillors, the chaplain, the commander-in-chief, the crown-prince, the chief palace usher, the chief of the palace guards, the director, the administrator, the director of stores, the commandant, the city judge, the director of factories, the council of ministers, the superintendents, the chief of the army staff, the commandant of the fort, the commandant of the frontier-fort, the forest chieftain too, and that also in his own territory.³⁵

Exactly why India's strategic tradition failed to develop on the same lines as the modern state in the west is a larger debate on India's state tradition, which need not detain us here. The important point here is that the loss of autonomy in the wake of foreign invasion caused India's strategic culture to get internalised, and got obsessed with the curbing the enemy within rather than combating external foes. This, Singh contends, "created a yawning chasm of mutual suspicion between the state and the citizen. This signal failure, the establishment of a confident, viable and efficient Indian state, nourished by effective institutional instruments, and sustained by a willing and co-operative citizenry has become a political and cultural trait; it both prescribes the form and constricts the functioning of the Indian state, even today. In the process it has prevented India from developing a proper strategic doctrine."

The 'rediscovery' of India's strategic culture has now become the basis of an avid discourse within India's security establishment. Singh's *Defending India* (1999) in a way has set the pace but there are several other texts (Air Commodore Jasjit Singh's *Asian Security in the 21st Century*, 1999) that have come out with institutional arrangements that base themselves on this revival of India's security culture. Jaswant Singh's evocation of how this security culture formed the basis of the continuation of Indian resistance to foreign aggression is of great interest.

The remarkable aspect is not that this pacifist thought developed but that despite it so much else about warfare as an instrument of policy, about the craft of war, about valour and heroism remained. That despite the combined cultural influences of such pacifist faiths, Islamic conquest of just parts of India needed many centuries of strife; that even at the height of its glory and spread the Mughal Empire did not encompass the whole of India, and that it was in reality not so much a 'Mughal' empire as a political-military alliance, a coalition of the principal Rajput feudatories of the period and the Mughals. ...These were, by any standards, achievements which were not possible without a highly developed sense of military craft; but of a larger strategic culture, alas, they remained largely innocent. As Jadunath Sarkar, the foremost Indian historian of ancient and Mughal military affairs, has observed, 'these armies were largely levy, improvised for national defence under threat of invasion', and while

³⁵ Jaswant Singh (1999), p. 13.

‘the Indian defenders were brave... each man fought to the death in isolation ...’³⁶

Quoting extensively from the writings of the main actors involved in some of India’s recent security issues, particularly the disastrous experience of the Indian Peace Keeping Force in Sri Lanka, Singh shows the negative consequences of the absence of a clear strategic doctrine. The result of the new thinking, and the rise to power and influence of a new defence elite are major changes in the institutional arrangement of Indian security. Partly under the impulse of this new thinking, the BJP-led government of India set up a Group of Ministers (GoM) whose recommendations have now come up with the rudiments of a strategic doctrine. The report takes the first comprehensive look at all challenges to the national security of India, both internal and external. Members of the group of ministers were L.K. Advani (then-Home), George Fernandes (then-Defense), Jaswant Singh (then-External) and Yashwant Sinha (then-Finance). Its task was the identification of problems and possible solutions in the areas of intelligence, internal security, border management and defence.

The report employs a new (at least in India) concept of national security which defines four elements as being conditional for its existence: military might, economic strength, internal cohesion and technological prowess (p.6). This marks a departure from the former equation of national security with military power. The report states the necessity for an overhaul of the national security system since it is identified as being essentially 50 years old. A pragmatic view is taken on the lasting US status as the sole superpower (p. 7):

US pre-eminence in the global strategic architecture is unlikely to diminish in the foreseeable future. Meaningful broad-based engagement with the United States spanning political, economic and technological interests and commonalties, will impact beneficially on our external security concerns with a resultant albeit less visible impact on our internal security environment.

Non-state actors, particularly terrorists, are identified as one of the main targets of future activity in enhancing the national security profile of India. China and Pakistan are mentioned as the main concerns in the report. “The rapid economic growth of China in the last few years coupled with its ambitious military modernisation programme will enable it to attain near superpower status by 2020. [...] Special note must be taken of China’s wide-ranging defence modernisation with a special focus on force-multipliers and high technology weapon systems.” “Pakistan will continue to pose a threat to India’s security in the future also. Its traditional hostility and single-minded aim of destabilising India, is not focused just on Kashmir but on a search for parity [...] As a result of Pakistan’s political and economic instability, its military regime may act irrationally, particularly in view of its propensity to function through terrorist outfits [...] Pakistan believes that

³⁶ Jaswant Singh (1999), p. 15.

nuclear weapons can compensate for ‘conventional military inferiority’; its leaders have not concealed their desire to use nuclear weapons against India.”³⁷

The discussion of the assumptions that go into Pakistani decision-making are indicative of the thinking at the high-test level of the government of India with regard to the Indian strategic doctrine. There is every indication that there are similar deliberations in process with regard to China as well. In view of the sensitivity of the issue, the declassified report has withheld this information, but the report makes an oblique reference to the unsettled problems with regard to China through a general reference to the problems of India’s borders which are undefined and undemarcated on the ground. The report acknowledges that disputed and unsettled borders are matters of contention. In addition, it mentions the porousness of borders due to their artificial character (i.e., not necessarily corresponding to natural boundaries), lack of clear accountability for border security, command and control problems arising out of divided responsibility among too many different forces deemed to be responsible for border management duties, and finally, the unsatisfactory equipment situation, lacking in night vision and surveillance capacity are mentioned as major problems facing India’s security management.

The report makes explicit references to the lack of synchronisation among and between the three departments in the MoD, including the relevant elements of Defence Finance.

The functioning of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) has, to date, revealed serious weaknesses in its ability to provide single military advice to the government, and resolve substantive inter-Service doctrinal, planning, policy and operational issues adequately. [...]The present system governing Defence acquisitions suffers from a lack of integrated planning[...]. Ideally, the Government’s national security objectives should lead to a formulation of defence objectives, which, in turn, define defence policy and the directives of the Defence Minister. This is not the case at present. [...]The defence planning process is greatly handicapped by the absence of a national security doctrine[...]. Military capability cannot exist in isolation from broader societal trends and many of the factors that buttress the military ethos are at odds with trends in civilian society. As transparency increases and an active media highlights the business of military life, the ability to maintain a different but acceptable military ethos has come under strain. Finding, identifying, educating, motivating and retaining quality manpower has become difficult and steps need to be taken to optimise the attractiveness of a Service career. [...] There is also no synergy between academic research and Government’s requirements. Whereas academic research is carried out more or less in a policy vacuum, official agencies undertake their policy making tasks in the

³⁷ GoM Report (2001), p. 10.

absence of the wealth of information available with the academic community.³⁸

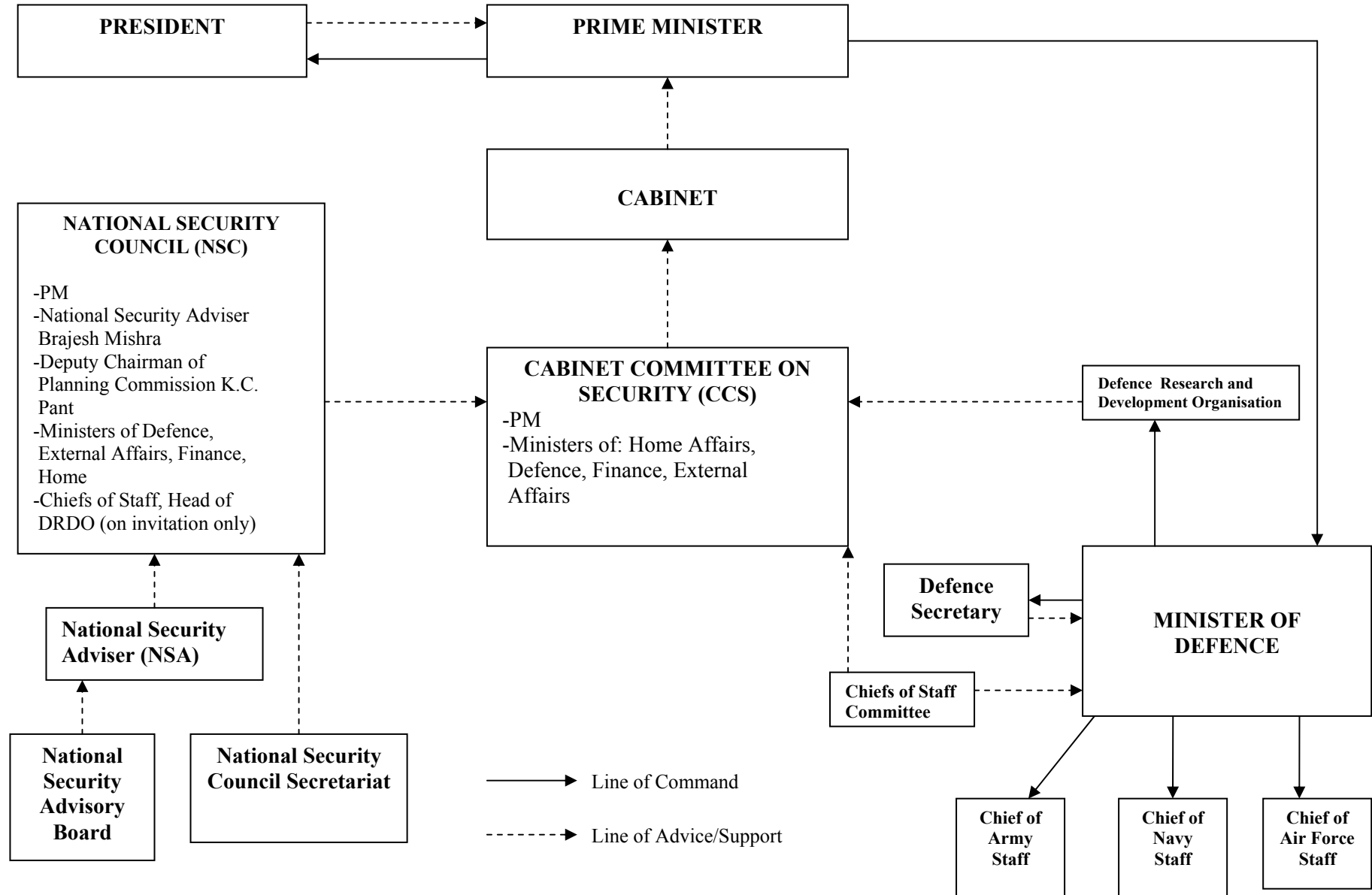
Extensive reforms are suggested, including, the intensification of defence production and increased efficiency and profitability, involvement of the private sector, improvement of the Indian Army's image by enhancing media and public relations and professional dissemination of information on India and its military (power, interests, past campaigns). The Report also incorporates the recommendations which came out of the Kargil Review Committee's work in its appendices. They include inter alia the recommendation of an image overhaul for the Indian army and many suggestions which were taken up by the GoM in the present report.³⁹

The new structure can be represented in terms of the following organigram. (see Figure 1)

³⁸ GoM Report (2001), pp. 96-99.

³⁹ GoM Report (2001), pp. 121-123.

FIGURE 1: ORGANIGRAM OF SECURITY MANAGEMENT



The main objective of the innovations in India's security management apparatus is to provide what the GoM refer to as 'single military advice', the failure of which has been pointed out by astute observers like Rohan Gunaratna as one of the contributing factors to the failure of the IPKF to subdue the Tamil Tigers and to some extent, the failure of India to make a headway in Kashmir. The new institutional arrangement of Indian security seeks to achieve a greater unity of purpose and focus in implementation through co-ordination among the three wings of the military forces, the paramilitary, the security services of the State governments and the various civilian agencies responsible for policy formulation, procurement and implementation. But, how likely are the innovations in the security management structure likely to be effective?

The institutional innovations for greater co-ordination have been greeted by India's top military brass as positive developments.⁴⁰ But in view of the lack of inter-party consensus about the core parameters of the security doctrine (witness the controversy over Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance, for example) and the contradictory attitudes that characterise Indian public opinion, the likelihood of effective implementation of the security doctrine in the coherent form in which it is conceptualised by the Group of Ministers Report (2001), and given institutional form in the organigram, appears rather low.

India's active media and contentious democracy provide effective conditions for an influential role of Indian public opinion in the formulation and implementation of strategic decisions. The relatively low number of people in the data reported in Table-2, who claim not to have heard the names of countries of the region, considering the fact that the data were gleaned from a national random sample of the Indian electorate (CSDS National Election Study, Post-Poll Survey 1999), show first of all that Indian security and foreign policy are both firmly in the realm of national political consciousness, a fact that no government in politically contentious India can afford to ignore. But, while the Indian public appear to be conscious of the problem of security, what do they really want from their government? The data, reported in Table-3, show a public that is agitated but indecisive. Whereas Table-2 shows the perception of Pakistan as India's 'public enemy number one', with regard to the right course of action to follow, the Indian public is surprisingly conciliatory. Significantly more people agree that 'India should make efforts to develop friendly relations with Pakistan' compared to those who disagree.⁴¹ On the general issue of "war as the only solution to Indo-Pakistan problem", the number of those who disagree far exceeds those who agree (while, a substantial number express no opinion), but these conciliatory and peace-like opinions are contradicted by the strong support for "increased spending on the

⁴⁰ Interview with former Chairman of the Indian Chiefs of Staff Committee, General V.P. Malik (Retd.), Bonn, 11 April 2002.

⁴¹ This finding is comparable in greater support for conciliation with Pakistan rather than war also reported in the findings of the National Election Survey of 1996. See Mitra and Singh (1999), p. 149.

army even if it increases the burden on ordinary people”, with over half of the total sample agreeing to the proposition and less than a fifth expressing their disagreement.

Table 2. Public Opinion on State-to-State Relations

Now I will read the names of some countries. Have you heard the name of these countries?	<i>(If yes)</i> How is their relationship with India- Friend, neither friend nor enemy or enemy?				
	Yes	No	Friend	Neither	Enemy
Nepal	65.3	34.7	41.3	16.8	1.7
America	70.3	29.7	27.1	25.9	11.1
Pakistan	82.9	17.1	6.9	7.4	64.2
Bangladesh	65.5	34.5	32.5	21.4	5.7
China	64.3	35.7	21.7	23.4	13.0
Sri Lanka	66.5	33.5	36.1	21.0	3.3
Russia	61.9	38.1	42.1	12.7	1.4

Table 3. Public Opinion on Security Issues

Q: Now I will talk about some specific issues on which different people have different opinions. I will read out some statements to which you may agree or disagree.

Statements	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree
India should make efforts to develop friendly relations with Pakistan. Do you...	42.4	33.9	23.7
Country should increase spending on army even if it increases the burden on ordinary people. Do you...	50.1	32.6	17.3
War is the only solution to Indo-Pakistan problem. Do you...	25.2	35.6	39.1

PROGNOSIS

Sophisticated observers of the Indian scene like Stephen Cohen and Sandy Gordon have reported on India's ambitions for great power status. At least in terms of rhetoric, quite discernibly, an attitude to that effect often lurks behind the moral postures and grandstanding by India's leaders, when they are asked to pronounce themselves on global problems. How much of this is empty rhetoric and should necessarily be discounted for Indian garrulity, and how much of it is for real, which India's counter players can ignore only at their peril? This section attempts to answer this question with reference to a series of specific issues.

India and the International System

At the height of the Cold War, *Panchasheela*, the 'five principles of peaceful coexistence', spelt out the ideal state of an international system from the Indian point of view. The ideal scenario for India was to be a world of largely status quo powers where just national interests would be mediated through international law, arbitration and fair use of the natural resources of the world. In such a perfect world, it was assumed by Nehru, India, whose commitment to the third way between the east and the west, communism and capitalism, hallowed by the legacy of Aśoka and Gandhi, would play an important role, one that the world would see as both natural and legitimate. Major powers would act responsibly to keep order and promote justice in their parts of the globe. International politics would be governed by mature and responsible states that would not meddle in the affairs of others.⁴² In his terse description of Indian expectations during the early years after Independence when the foundations of her foreign policy were being laid, Cohen points out how little thought Indians gave to how the policies of such states could be co-ordinated or how deviance from the system by rogue states could be sanctioned. The fact that India got a hearing in international conflicts and played a mediating role with some distinction was attributed to the inherent virtue of the Indian position and not to contextual factors such as the bipolar world where India played a pivotal role. The Nehruvians, taken in by the hectoring tone and pedagogical intents of their leader, assumed that the Soviets were committed to peace and that the United States would eventually retreat to its own hemisphere and cease its interference elsewhere around the world. Failing that, in the short term, the United States and to a lesser extent its allies and dependencies, such as Japan, could possibly be "educated" into the proper norms of international behaviour.⁴³

⁴² See Cohen (2001), p. 55.

⁴³ Cohen's comments on this Indian *folie du grandeur* are characteristically harsh but accurate. "The cold war allowed India to play (in its own eyes) an exaggerated role on the international stage for many years, where it could moralize about the inequities of bipolarity and the "cold war mentality" while still benefiting materially and politically from its ties to both the Soviet Union and the United States and its skill at playing one against the other." See Cohen (2001), p. 55.

During the Cold War India could afford to sit on the fence rather than entering a conflict or siding with one bloc or another, rationalising its nonengagement in moral terms. Similarly, Cohen explains, India, a large, important and democratic power, did not need to join an alliance. However, the emergence of Sino-Soviet rivalry, the decline of global bipolarity, and most crucially, the humiliating defeat of India in the 1962 Indo-China conflict forced India to rethink many of the assumptions that went into the *Panchasheela*. The positioning of India in the international arena today requires nothing short of two paradigm-shifts, from non-alignment to a world based on alliances, and from a state-centric mode of thinking to an international arena where non-state actors are an increasingly important presence.

India does not have much of a choice with regard to holding aloof from the world. Her declared status as a nuclear power invites an engagement by the world, which her poverty and peacelike gestures of an earlier period did not. Her commitment to liberalisation of the economy, while opening up opportunities for her vigorous and vibrant middle classes, also puts an obligation on the part of the government to engage with the rich, capitalist world. The Hindu nationalist sentiments of her government require her to engage with states where overseas Indian communities, or Hindu minorities are under grave threat. Finally, being energy-deficient, India needs to maintain good ties with some of the major oil producers, whose sympathies are mainly with Pakistan.

Global and Regional Security Regimes

Under the impact of the new contextual and indigenous developments, India is re-examining its approach to international and regional organisations. Nehru was a great supporter of international peacekeeping and mediation initiatives⁴⁴ and, a staunch advocate of Asian regional co-operation, it was Nehru who organised the Asian Relations Conference even before India achieved independence. In the new scheme of things, with much of the world clamouring for mediation in Kashmir, and India holding out obstinately, claiming that Kashmir is an internal problem of India, the Indian position needs to be looked at seriously afresh. This holds out both a challenge and an opportunity. The United Nations, as Cohen suggests, can be a dangerous place for India where, if Kashmir comes to a vote in the General Assembly, “India runs the risk of having its Kashmir policies come under critical scrutiny, and perhaps fresh UN resolutions, and even sanctions.”⁴⁵ On the other hand, a proper deal can expedite India’s case for a seat on the Security Council. The problem is similar in nature though different in scale with regard to India’s security links with her South Asian neighbours. Although the remote sources of India’s insecurity often lie within the territories of her neighbours, India has so far refused to have the issues discussed as a common problem of South Asia, preferring, instead, to take things up at the bilateral level. There is a structural

⁴⁴ In fact, the Constitution of India mandates co-operation with international bodies, including the United Nations. See Constitution of India, Article 51.

⁴⁵ Cohen (2001), p. 55.

problem here that India needs to solve. As Cohen points out, regional co-operation will only work when one of two conditions exists. The first is the presence of a benevolent, dominant regional power that can regulate regional behaviour, or the existence of a set of regional players with roughly similar resource endowments, or similar threat perceptions from outside the region. The leading role of the United States in the western hemisphere, and the successful regional organisations in Europe and South East Asia are pointed out as examples of these conditions. However, neither condition obtains in South Asia.⁴⁶ A successful solution to the issue of joint management of security threats at the regional level will reduce India's security burden and increase her support from regional powers at the international arena, but, for reasons to be discussed below, India might not find it easy to move in that direction.

India, Pakistan and Kashmir

For all purposes, India is at war in Kashmir. It is a war of attrition, which India cannot manage to win and Pakistan cannot afford to lose. South Asian discourse on this issue is particularly rich in analogies and allusions. Cohen cites an observation by G. Parthasarathy, a former adviser to Indira Gandhi, that an India-Pakistan reconciliation is like trying to treat two patients whose only disease is an allergy to each other.⁴⁷ An all-party resolution of the Indian Parliament, voted unanimously by the Lok Sabha in 1995, affirms Kashmir as an integral part of Indian territory and Kashmir as India's internal problem. Any move away from that, liable to be perceived in India as 'giving in to the demand for plebiscite in Kashmir' can thus be blocked both by opportunist political parties or determined special interests. A 'land for peace deal' in Kashmir, under these circumstances, is difficult to conceptualise, nor is the Israeli experience in this regard particularly encouraging. In addition, beleaguered with similar problems with secessionist movements in the Northeast, the Indian fear of 'setting the wrong example' has to be seen as realistic.⁴⁸ The following statement, made by Mr Brajesh Mishra, one-time Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Vajpayee (now National Security Adviser), to the G-8 Ambassadors and High Commissioners captures the essence of the Indian position on this contentious issue:

The Government of India has repeatedly expressed its view that all differences between India and Pakistan, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, must be settled peacefully through direct negotiations between the two countries in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration. However, for the dialogue to begin again the Government of Pakistan must take credible, firm, substantive and visible action against terrorist groups

⁴⁶ Cohen (2001), p. 58.

⁴⁷ Cohen (2001), p. 62.

⁴⁸ For a critique of the Indian position opposing "mediation" on Kashmir, see P.R. Chari, "Advantages of Third Party Mediation Are Cited," *India Abroad*, July 30, 1999.

operating in Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of India from its soil and the territories it controls today. Until that happens the Government of India will maintain the heightened vigilance on the Line of Control and the International Border as also keep in place the other measures, which have been taken in the last few days.⁴⁹

India's future procurement problems

In view of the above, it is difficult to imagine how India can afford to reduce the heavy outlay of resources in regional security in the short term, which only adds to the overall burden of security. Other, contextual factors make it even harder for India to meet these needs financially. Cohen summarises these arguments in terms of the following, namely, the cessation of defence credits from the erstwhile Soviet Union forcing the Indian military procurements to be done on a 'cash and carry' basis, the economic restructuring in Russia and CIS leading to persistent demands for steep price hikes for defence exports to India, and, the steep fall in the exchange value of the rupee, resulting in an equally steep increase in the debt repayment obligations for past purchases from both Western and Russian supply sources.⁵⁰

The consequences are the erosion and depletion of the already lean defence resources, which is likely to continue into the foreseeable future. Hence, India's defence financial planning will continue to be out of sync with the Services' force planning and also because Russian and CIS pressures will persist owing to the 70-85 per cent dependency on ex-Soviet military equipment. This situation cannot be reversed quickly because the effects of, at best, a slower devaluation of the Indian currency relative to hard currency will mean restrictions on what and how much a shrinking defence rupee can buy from alternative Western sources. India's defence demands are caught in a pincer of rising rouble and dollar value conjoined to, dearer internationally available military hardware, spares and services. Therefore, almost any reasonable level of funding of defence programmes will be found to be inadequate to sustain the existing and planned force structure.

A thaw in India-China relations?

The easing of tension in India-China relations can help India free up some of the resources tied up in the Northeast. From all indications, such efforts are afoot. But the legacy of 1962 is hard to live down. In addition, the relative freedom of political expression and association in India which results in periodic movements in favour of human riots in Tibet, particularly on the occasion of high level visits from China set limits to India's room for manoeuvre. Beijing has supported separatist and autonomist groups within India in the past. Stephen Cohen is sceptical of any chances of early breakthroughs. "As its own requirements for middle Eastern oil draw it into the Indian Ocean, China could also emerge as a

⁴⁹ GOI, Official Statements (2002), p. 198. Also see "Epilogue: A Restive Relationship Enters a New Century," in Ganguly (2002), pp. 134-143.

⁵⁰ Cohen (2001), p. 230.

naval rival to India. The realists in Delhi see China continuing its strategy of encircling and counterbalancing India, preventing it from achieving its rightful dominance of the Subcontinent. This next decade is seen as a transition period, when India must cope with expanding Chinese power, achieve a working relationship with the Americans, and cautiously use each to balance the other's military, economic, and strategic influence. India's new balancing act combines appeasement of China on the issues of Tibet and Taiwan with the pursuit of improved ties with China's other potential balancers, especially Vietnam and Russia."⁵¹ There are shared interests such as the threat of terrorism combined with increasingly restive Muslim minorities. Both sides clearly need to search for a political formula that will allow for minor adjustments in their respective claims so that political honour is served on both sides.

India and the 'small' South Asian neighbours

The so-called 'small' neighbours, namely Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, are comparable in terms of population to larger European states. The epithet 'small' is indicative of an approach that is part of India's problem in the region. In addition, there are historic and demographic reasons that contribute to the complexity of the problem. Soft borders, illegal immigration, terrorism, smuggling, drugs, water resources and the treatment of minorities are among the factors that create pressures on India to intervene in what these countries perceive strictly as their domestic affairs. Cohen reports two positive developments in this regard. First of all, the revolution in economic policy that has swept over India makes it a far more attractive country for all of its neighbours and the more developed states of Southeast Asia. Indian management expertise, technology, and organisational skills are now widely exported to the rest of Asia, giving substance to the Indian claim that it is a major power. Secondly, India's democracy is having a great impact on many of its Asian neighbours. For the smaller states of the region, India is something of a model of how to peacefully manage a multiethnic, multireligious state.

India's nuclear policy

All available indicators point towards an Indian nuclear program, but "one without clear purpose or direction."⁵² Indian public opinion supports the bomb, but not for warlike purposes. India is engaged in the production of weapons and missiles but, unlike other countries similarly engaged, there are no plans for or policies about sale or diffusion of such technology. A.P.J. Kalam, one of India's leading military scientists and the 'father' of India's missile programme, has urged India to get into the business of missile sales in order to break up the "monopolies" of the dominant powers and their unfair regulating mechanisms, such as the Missile Technology Control Regime. Kalam's rejection of the MTCR (Missile Technology Control

⁵¹ Cohen (2001), p. 56.

⁵² Cohen (2001), chapter 6.

Regime) reflects the ambiguous, often contradictory Indian stance on international regimes to restrict proliferation of nuclear and missile technology. Accordingly, in the course of negotiations on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in the mid-1990s, India, which initially had been a committed advocate, turned to its most outspoken opponent. Finally, in a move to save both parties face, India accepted the provisions of the CTBT and declared a moratorium on nuclear tests in 1999 without formally signing the treaty. India continues to reject the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as well as any binding commitment to full-scope safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). As IAEA regularities prohibit exports of nuclear technology into states, which do not accept safeguards, India's nuclear energy sector has been cut off from urgently needed know-how and hardware. Since India's nuclear test of 1974, technology imports from the West almost ceased, which led to a steady decline in the efficiency of the civilian nuclear energy sector. Nuclear energy has never been produced cost-effectively and until the mid-1990s, India produced no more than 1500 megawatts of nuclear power, as compared to the target of 10,000 megawatts planned in 1985, and less than 2% of India's overall power supply.⁵³

India and the Indian Ocean

"India is a maritime nation strategically straddling the Indian Ocean, with a substantive sea borne trade. The country's economic well-being is thus very closely linked to our ability to keep our sea-lanes free and open at all times."⁵⁴

Rahul Roy-Chaudhury goes into more detail to drive this point home:

Virtually all of India's foreign trade, some 97 per cent in volume, is transported over the sea; in 1994-95 this accounted for an estimated 20 per cent of GNP. In addition, as much as 80 per cent of India's demand for oil is met from the sea, either carried aboard ships (46 per cent) or extracted from offshore areas (34 per cent).⁵⁵

Unfortunately, it seems that up to now, India has not actually developed an Indian Ocean policy, not even an Indian Ocean economic policy. Despite some efforts of some institutions like the Institute for Defence and Strategic Analyses (IDSA) or the Society of Indian Ocean Studies (SIOS), both in Delhi, there is no maritime strategic doctrine as such in India. According to, for example, Commodore C.

⁵³ Abdul Kalam, then director of the Defense Research Development Organisation, now the President of India, quoted in "Boom for Boom," *India Today*, April 26, 1999. For a fuller study of regional proliferation, regional attitudes, and erstwhile suggestions for averting a nuclear arms race, see Stephen P. Cohen, ed., *Nuclear Proliferation in South Asia: The Prospects for Arms Control* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1990).

⁵⁴ Mishra (2000), p. 59.

⁵⁵ Roy-Chaudhury, Rahul: "India", in: Bateman, Sam/Bates, Stephen (Hrsg.): *Regional Maritime Management and Security* (Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No. 124). Canberra: Australian National University/Strategic and Defence Studies Centre 1998, p. 19-27 (19).

Uday Bhaskar⁵⁶, there is neither an understanding of India's maritime history nor an Indian Ocean awareness. India is part of the Indian Ocean region, but that is not very important for its foreign policy, especially so since all conflicts with neighbouring states are situated at India's land borders. In the perception of most Indian specialists on maritime affairs, an Indian Ocean awareness began to develop because of the importance of SLOCs (Sea Lines of Communication) and the EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zones) only very recently.

Perhaps the most important factor for this neglect is that the current security environment in the Indian Ocean is being perceived as a stable and overall positive low threat environment. Compared with the superpower conflict in the 1970s and 1980s, the security situation has improved considerably since the beginning of the 1990s. Also, there is a consensus among naval officers interviewed that those major sea powers which are capable of disrupting the SLOCs are agreed that the Indian Ocean should remain peaceful. So, in the opinion of all Indian experts, today, there is no power competition visible in this area. Somewhat surprisingly, both the United States Navy and the Chinese Navy (People's Liberation Army Navy, PLAN) are not seen as threatening by Indian naval officers, either. In the wake of the events of September 11, the USN and the Indian Navy even embarked on a bilateral policing of SLOCs in the Arabian Sea.

In the Indian perception of today, the only possible source of threat to stability in the Indian Ocean are non-state actors like pirates (mainly in Bay of Bengal and the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea), drug traffickers, gun runners or fish poachers. However, India is well aware of the fact that the Indian Navy does create some unease, especially among Bay of Bengal rim states like Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar. The reason for this is, in the opinion of the experts, a capability mismatch between the Indian Navy and other regional navies. For this reason, a process of confidence building has been encouraged by the Indian Navy, like invitations for port visits or invitation of delegates from countries with only a small navy or no navy at all. Milan in the Bay of Bengal (now Milan East) can be mentioned as a successful example of such confidence building measures. In 1999, Milan was introduced to the Arabian Sea as Milan West, where naval cooperation already exists between the Indian Navy and the navies of Iraq, Iran, Oman and the United Arab Emirates. Whether the new Milan West will be as successful as Milan East remains to be seen – in the eyes of some Indian naval officers, the success of Milan East was due to the happy fact that “the trouble maker [Pakistan] is not present there”.⁵⁷ In the Arabian Sea he is present, and both states' navies are trapped in something akin to a naval Cold War.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Interviewed by Mr. Peter Lehr, M.A. and Ms. Maike Tuchner on August 27, 2000 for the research project “Panchayati Raj in the Indian Ocean – Towards a Maritime Security Regime?”, funded by the Fritz Thyssen- Foundation, Cologne.

⁵⁷ Confidential interview with a high ranking Indian flag officer, August 2000, in Delhi.

⁵⁸ Sakhuja, Vijay: “Cold War in the Arabian Sea”, *Strategic Analysis*, Vol. XXV, No. 3 (June 2001), pp. 371-384. Talking about troublemakers: There is still much distrust between the Indian Navy and the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). Although Australian naval officers usually claim that they are only fulfilling their duties in regard of the Five Power

Ambivalent attitudes towards the United States

A lot of Indian dilemmas are summed up in terms of the Indian ambivalence towards the United States. The Indian public and policy makers alike have problems understanding why the United States, itself a secular state and a democracy, is not able to support both when it comes to India, as against Pakistan, and to a limited extent, against China. The fact that the United States decries atrocities against minorities in India but accepts the institutional discrimination against minorities in Pakistan raises questions about the real American intentions in Asia. But, as part of the war against terrorism, American presence has been considerably reinforced in the region, and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future.

India has remained ambivalent with regard to the United States in the recent past. Thus, during the Operation Desert Storm against Iraq, the world was first treated to pictures of a smiling Indian foreign minister in Baghdad, then the grant of refuelling facilities to American aircraft, which were promptly withdrawn when the Indian anti-American lobby got wind of it. Americans, who had their fall-back arrangements anyway and needed an Indian show of support for propaganda purposes, were not amused. On the other hand, the supportive rhetoric of the United States in the 1962 India-China war did not translate into actual support on the ground and the sending of the *USS Enterprise* to the Bay of Bengal at the height of the India-Pakistan war of 1971 remains a reminder of American incomprehension of South Asian realities and insensitivity towards Indian sentiments. The increasingly visible and politically active Indian-American lobby in the United States and accommodation of American interests in the Indian Ocean are two factors that the current government appears to have taken on board with regard to the conceptualisation and implementation of Indian policy.

CONCLUSION

Five decades after Independence, the state in India has come to its own. The stirring words of Nehru's "Freedom at Midnight" speech, "... the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance" have found a home in the institutional infrastructure of the Indian state. Surreptitiously present, like all strong states, the Republic became explicit at moments of crisis, be it Ayodhya, Kargil or Gujarat. The strategic doctrine, whose outer contours have been analysed in this article, is symbolic of the extension of high stateness to the area of national security. Long a reserve of the elite, national security, signifying the power of India's contentious

Defence Arrangements (FPDA), Indian naval officers often complain about their ships being buzzed and Indian military aircraft being formatted by Australian Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA). This may or may not be a misperception, but it shows that there is still a lot of work ahead of all to improve this sad situation.

democracy, has now become an integral part of her national political discourse. The result is a strategic doctrine that remains fuzzy but promises to be stable.

With regard to India's role in regional and international politics, there are three major lobbies in the Indian strategic policy community today. The most visible are the advocates of 'firm India'. Their idea that India should project itself as a firm, powerful state and be able to use force freely was the dominant strategic theme in Indian policy. The line of thinking, powerfully introduced into Indian politics by Indira Gandhi, continues to be actively represented by those who advocate the bomb as a symbol of national power.⁵⁹ This lobby criticises the Simla agreement, signed after the 1971 Indo-Pak war, for having been too generous with Pakistan. Some strategists, such as the influential K. Subrahmanyam, have taken Indian governments to task over the years for yielding to American trade pressures and pressures on India's nuclear program. Subrahmanyam has argued that India needed to build up its own defence industry, which would enable it to respond to pressures from the United States or China by engaging in its own sale of missiles and advanced military technology. This lobby is likely to view the 1988-90 "peacekeeping" operation in Sri Lanka, which turned into a military catastrophe, as a success, because it demonstrated that "India has evolved a 'will to act' to preserve its vital national interests."⁶⁰ The second major voice in India's strategic community are the peace-mongering 'conciliatory India' lobby. These leaders and specialists "question the strategies of defence-led economic development, a boastful military profile, and too quick intervention in the affairs of neighbours. They would prefer to deal with Pakistan and China by territorial compromise and negotiation, displaying military power only to supplement diplomacy. Those who hold this position suggest that the nuclear program be deferred or limited and have been marginally more inclined to accept a limited outside role in regional affairs."⁶¹ While this lobby would not advocate a plebiscite outright, it still pitches its hope in a successful solution to the Kashmir imbroglio through effective extension of Indian democracy to Kashmir, the holding of free and fair elections and the eventual accommodation of Kashmiri nationalism within the framework of the Indian state.⁶² While, not surprisingly, the Indian military privately favours the firm India line, there are strong advocates of the conciliatory India even among the top brass." A number of eminent retired senior officers have spoken and written

⁵⁹ Cohen cites the former Indian diplomat U.S. Bajpai, who concluded: "When our image weakened as a result of the 1962 military setback it emboldened Ayub Khan to test whether one Pakistani was not equal to ten Indians. Our weak image was responsible for the Chinese decision to arm the [rebellious northeast tribal groups such as the] Nagas and Mizos and to extend support to a Maoist revolutionary group in West Bengal, the Naxalites. Finally, our weak image tempted Yahya Khan to force ten million refugees into our territory." See U.S. Bajpai, *India's Security: The Politico-Strategic Environment* (New Delhi: Lancers, 1983), pp. 65-66.

⁶⁰ Manoj Joshi, "Commitment in Sri Lanka," *The Hindu* (International Edition), May 19, 1990.

⁶¹ Cohen (2001), p. 61.

⁶² See Ganguly (2002).

publicly in favour of “peace and disarmament” in South Asia.⁶³ Others have written scathingly about incompetent management of India’s various wars and conflicts.⁶⁴ Finally, there is a third trend whose adherents are the advocates of ‘Didactic India’, of India as a civilisational state who see India’s culture as a resource, a part of her inherent greatness, a valuable diplomatic asset, and that others must become cognisant of the moral quality of Indian foreign and strategic policy. There is much public endorsement of this line, the promotion of Indian culture abroad, and the extolling of her democracy for the benefit of the international community.⁶⁵ The efforts to tie in the Indian diaspora for the promotion of Indian culture abroad is part of this strategy.⁶⁶ The opening paragraph of Prime Minister Vajpayee’s New Year message to the nation, for example, pulls together these sentiments:

To our brave jawans, security forces, and policemen guarding our borders and vital installations; to our hard-working kisans who have ensured our food security; to our workers and managers who, with their sweat and toil, are making India an economic power; to our talented software professionals who have burnished India’s image abroad; to our children and youth, who are the future of our nation; indeed, to every Indian who in his or her own way is contributing to nation-building, I wish happiness and prosperity in the New Year. I also send my felicitations to all Non-Resident Indians and persons of Indian origin, who, despite the distance in space and time that separates them from us, have maintained unbreakable social, cultural, spiritual and emotional ties with India.⁶⁷

The Prime Minister’s address represents a superbly crafted blend of all three trends depicted above. At a superficial level, one could attribute the three currents described above to the three major formations of Indian politics, but that would not be right for there are advocates of all three in each major party. It is important here

⁶³ Major General E. D’Souza (retired), “Generals for Peace and Disarmament,” *Indian Defense Review*, July 1989, pp. 116-121.

⁶⁴ See L. Chibber, “India-Pakistan Reconciliation: The Impact on International Security,” in Kanti P. Bajpai and Stephen P. Cohen, eds., *South Asia after the Cold War: International Perspectives* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1993).

⁶⁵ India’s civilisational mission lurks just below the surface of Prime Minister Vajpayee’s New Year message to the nation:

“I am reminded here of the inspiring vision of Maharshi Aurobindo, which he set out in his historic radio broadcast for August 15, 1947. ‘I have always held and said that India was arising, not to serve her own material interests only, to achieve expansion, greatness, power, and prosperity certainly not like others to acquire domination of other peoples, but to live also for God and the world as a helper and leader of the whole human race.’” GOI, Official Statements (2002), p. 202.

⁶⁶ There is considerable evidence of a large-scale governmental effort to use the American-resident Indian community to advance Indian interests. The process was begun in 1970, when lobbying efforts of both Indians and sympathetic Americans were coordinated from the Embassy in Washington. More recently the Indian government has created a ministry for “persons of Indian origin” (PIOs) and “non-resident Indians” (NRIs).

⁶⁷ GOI, Official Statements (2002), p. 200.

to note that the militant Hindu nationalists took the initiatives to send Prime Minister Vajpayee on the bus diplomacy to Lahore, and invited General Musharraf, for many, the main architect of the failure of Lahore and the betrayal of Kargil. The Congress, long identified with the firm India policy of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi might have turned of late to a conciliatory tone out of political opportunism, but in power, it might come back to where the NDA government currently locates itself. As such, even though the current situation with regard to the Indian profile is not as cohesive as one might wish it to be, one can safely predict its stability despite the current instability of India's domestic politics.

As we have already seen in the analysis of the public opinion, the Indian electorate itself speaks in many voices. It is therefore quite likely that India will continue to look in all three directions at the same time, at least for some time to come, and that the Indian doctrine will be anomalous but stable. In anticipation of this short term stability, India's symbol producers are busy giving an institutional shape to the new symbols of cultural nationalism, seen in the tone and content of cultural diplomacy including festivals of India, attempts by overseas Indian populations (especially in America) to influence foreign policy, and attempts to directly manipulate foreign public opinion in Western democracies.⁶⁸ According to K. Subrahmanyam, India needs to expand contacts with the American defence community and encourage the Indian business community and other resident Indians to help make its case. The same approach can be used with India's neighbours, the people of South Asia, who are predisposed to India in any case because of a common cultural background. This also comes across in the names given to military equipment, such as the Agni missile and the Arjun tank, names drawn from Sanskrit or Indian traditions that show the world that Indian science and industry can make "sophisticated" systems. Such weapons are projected, both for domestic consumption and international propaganda, as symbols of India's 'civilizational accomplishments.'

On the basis of his analysis of India as an emerging power, Stephen Cohen (2001) came up with four conclusions. These are: India is essentially a status quo power (e.g. territorially); the army's capabilities have greatly increased in the last decades; domestic and foreign policy are inseparably linked; and, India holds no clear strategic vision for a future among major powers. Though harsh in tone, these statements, particularly the fourth of his assertions, is substantially accurate. They need careful consideration, for an insecure India can only contribute to the greater insecurity of an already fragile region.

Cohen tempers his overall evaluation of India with an allusion to the path dependency of the current Indian predicament. "A generation ago India placed its chips on the Soviet Union, economic autarky, and military might. It lost all three bets. The past decade has seen a wrenching reappraisal of Indian grand strategy in

⁶⁸ See Tanham's core essay, "Indian Strategic Thought: An Interpretive Essay," originally a RAND study, reprinted in Kanti P. Bajpai and Amitabh Mattoo, eds., *Securing India: Strategic Thought and Practice, Essays by George K. Tanham with Commentaries* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1996), pp. 28-111.

a changing international environment.”⁶⁹ A coherent Indian security doctrine will need to achieve nothing less than two paradigm-shifts simultaneously, the first, as argued in the previous section, to eschew the verbiage and institutional relics of the cold war such as the ‘non-aligned movement’ and ‘Afro-Asian solidarity’, and the second, to take stock of the burdens of globalisation which entail both the vision and will power to accept a necessary shrinking of sovereignty, and the vision to engage with situations that do not have any apparent links to national interest. *In addition*, India will need to provide for the imponderables of national, regional and international politics such as another vicious communal riot in the same scale as in Gujarat with the BJP in the opposition, a revival of Pakistan-Bangladesh-Saudi Arabia ties on an anti-India Islamic front, or the impact of the next energy crisis on India’s liquidity. How realistic then are India’s prospects of achieving at least the uncontested status of a regional power, (comparable to China in East Asia whose pre-eminent role is grudgingly accepted by both Taiwan and Japan) and as such, a credible bulwark of an international security regime?

For an answer to the above question, one needs to consider Cohen’s assertion that India can be “still a strong state, when necessary”,⁷⁰ a phenomenon seen in its true light in the mass mobilisation in the wake of the Kargil conflict of 1999. India’s domestic political stability, governance and rates of net growth of inflation, despite short-term fluctuations, continues to be healthy, according to Cohen (2001), Sachs et. al. (1999). Observers of the Indian scene explain the resilience of India’s security apparatus despite the impression of chaos and uncertainty in terms of the continued control of the national government on increasingly powerful regions, and to mobilise the full resources of the state for the governance or defence of any particular region. The residual legacy of the steel frame of the *raj*, enhanced through the addition of modern technology and accountability, continue to be effectively present. Despite occasional outbreaks of police rebellion and corruption, the management of security and accommodation of dissidence through democratic accommodation and new institutional arrangements continue to be effective antidotes to violent or separatist movement.⁷¹ This is most evident in the northeast, “where yesterday’s student radicals have become today’s members of government and have their hands full trying to cope with their revolutionary successors.”⁷² In terms of commitments to the promotion of national power and

⁶⁹ Cohen (2001), p. 54.

⁷⁰ Cohen (2001), p. 113.

⁷¹ For the strategies available for dealing with separatist or insurrectionary movements or state-level violence in India, see Ved Marwah, *Uncivil Wars: Pathologies of Terrorism in India* (New Delhi: Indus, 1995). Cohen expresses this method in the words of an actor. “In its crudest form, the strategy at both the state and national levels is, in the words of a senior IPS officer, to ‘hit them over the head with a hammer, then teach them to play the piano,’ which means apply massive (and sometimes brutal) force to contain any group that proclaims that it wants to leave the Union, but after that deal with the leadership politically in whatever way is necessary.” See Cohen (2001), p. 113.

⁷² The Nagas (many of whom were Christians and had strong foreign links to both China and Christian missionaries) were eventually beaten down after a ten-year insurrection. More recently, separatist Mizos and Bodos, Assamese, Manipuris, and tribal guerrillas in Tripura have taken up arms and bombed trains in protest against New Delhi. Since these

security while remaining committed to the spatial parameters of the geographic status quo, one can be cautiously optimistic about India's future prospects as a regional power.

movements were in a distant corner of India, public and international access could be tightly controlled, and since the numbers involved were relatively small, they never received much publicity in the human rights community.

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