

Arming Without Aiming: India's Military Modernization

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Overall framework

- India is relevant to the US in many ways. This book focuses specifically on security and strategic issues,
- follow-on to India: Emerging Power.

Questions asked:

- Why has India not been willing or able to generate military power since 1947?
- What does this mean for the future?
- How would the rise of India affect American interests?

Break from the Past

- Rapid economic growth, and the expectation that affluence will contribute to military strength
- India became a nuclear weapons state: the end of strategic restraint?
- Pursuit of a “natural alliance” with the US

Debates Affecting Military Modernization

- The strategic debate: multipolarity today or when?
- The debate over the use of force: conventional and nuclear
- The modernization debate: technology vs. organizational reform
- The hardware debate: make or buy, US or Russian
- The procurement debate: is a corruption-free system possible?

Internal Security

- India's primary security threat, now recognized as such
- Massive expansion of paramilitary forces
- Twenty-year civil war cycle, especially eastern, north-eastern, and Kashmir; perpetual war within India
- Essentially defensive COIN (except KPS Gill model)

The Army's Cold Start

- Besides COIN, and Himalayan defense, the army has adopted a “cold start” strategy vis-à-vis Pakistan;
- Pakistan is emulating it as best it can
- A neo-nuclear stalemate?



Naval Power Projection



- Navy has a strategic vision that covers all of Asia, is technically adept, and is reconciled to the US naval presence.

Air Power Projection



- India's air force is running out of airplanes, has a classical "airpower" vision of the use of force.
- This does not match up with civilian priorities (defense-obsessed) or the army's (seeks air cover for ground ops)

Constraints on Military Power

- No overarching framework for turning different kinds of power into influence: ineffective National Security Council, inconsistent PMO role
- No higher defense planning, competition among the armed services and between them and Ministries of External Affairs and Finance
- Parliamentary supervision and oversight less effective than in 1944

Constraints on Military Reform

- The burden of a colonial security structure
- Influence of Nehruvian-Fabian ideology on the state system of defense production (epitomized by influence of Krishna Menon and PMS Blackett)
- Subsequent Arthur D. Little and Arun Singh reports largely ignored

Downside of Civilian Supremacy

- A relationship with the armed forces based on suspicion and disrespect for professionalism
- “Developmental requirements”—a euphemism for being a poor country, permeates security and weapons acquisition decisions
- Rebalanced relationship between center and periphery means increasing domestic political constraints on strategic and defense policy-making

Some Conclusions

- India neglects organizational modernization in favor of hardware modernization, but changes are coming
- Procurement decisions are foreign policy decisions: Russia, Israel, the US
- Will there be a tighter alliance relationship between the US India? Probably not: cannot be against Pakistan, premature to align against China; India a long-term strategic investment

More conclusions

- US needs a regional approach: CENTCOM vs PACOM, AF-Pak vs India
- Principle: support military modernization where American and Indian goals overlap.
- Afghanistan best prospect for strategic partnership with India *and* Pakistan;
- Avoid fueling both sides of an arms race, but take advantage of good relations with both countries

