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INDIAN NAVAL BUILD UP: JUSTIFICATIONS, MISSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The 1965 Indo-Pakistan war was a turning point for the Indian navy. The war exposed the structural weakness of the then Indian navy and provided the rationale for the naval lobby to become vocal in its demand for a stronger naval build up. This was the first wave of strategic consciousness which was instrumental in rapid and substantial growth of the Indian navy (see Table 1 and Appendix III for contrast and comparison). The second wave came in the wake of the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971, and the entry of the *USS Enterprise* in the Bay of Bengal in the same year. The 1971 war clearly demonstrated that the Indian navy had an important role to play in the Indian defense.

Thus, the build up which began following independence in 1947 was boosted in the 1970s and the pace accelerated in the 1980s. By 1992-93, the Indian navy consisted of 55,000 men, 15 submarines, 28 principal surface combatants, 39 patrol and coastal combatants, 9 amphibious, 121 naval aircraft, and 20 support and miscellaneous (see Appendix IV).

Currently, the Indian navy is considered as the largest among the Indian Ocean littoral states and the seventh largest in the world. It is argued that if

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the naval officials succeed in their ambitions for the Indian navy, it would become the fourth largest in the world.¹

The expansion of the Indian navy, coupled with India's ability to build a Soviet-designed nuclear-propelled submarine and other such comparable items indigenously² has generated much concern and apprehension among the littoral states of the Indian Ocean region.

In this backdrop, the present paper attempts a review of the growth of the Indian navy in the post-Independence period, explores justifications behind the build up, examines the missions and roles that the Indian navy aspires for, and finally studies the implications of such a naval build up by the Indian navy for the region and beyond. The paper contends that by now Indian naval build up has gained its own momentum, and the process is unlikely to be affected unless there are changes in the overall security perceptions of India and its navy faces a major serious financial constraint. The paper also argues that the very justification of Indian naval expansion may invoke similar justification from powers within the region and beyond, thereby setting the stage for a naval arms race both within the region and beyond.

The first section of the paper presents a discussion on the evolution and growth of the Indian navy. The second section identifies the justifications behind the growth of a huge Indian navy. The third section briefly delves into the missions and roles of the Indian navy. The paper is concluded by highlighting the implications of Indian naval build up for South Asia and beyond.

I. EVOLUTION AND GROWTH OF THE INDIAN NAVY

The history of the modern Indian Navy dates back to the seventeenth century when the East India Company had to fight naval battles with the

1. G. V. C. Naidu, "The Indian Navy and Southeast Asia," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, (Vol. 13, No. 1, June 1991), p. 73.

2. Akhter Majeed, "Indian Security Perspectives in the 1990s," *Asian Survey*, (Vol. XXX, No. 1, November 1990), p. 1088.

Portuguese and later with the Marathas. The East India Company was authorised by Charles II and James II to maintain an 'Armed Naval force' for the defence of its trade monopoly. Originally, the company had four ships, *Dragon*, *Hoscandier*, *James*, and *Solmon*. This fleet was called the 'East India Company's Marine' and then 'Bombay Marine' till 1830 when it was renamed as Royal Indian Navy. While in the case of the Army, the Government had some basic structure, however inadequate or imperfect it might have been, it could hardly be said to have a notable navy of its own at the time of independence. The small force of ships and escort vessels it possessed was merely an adjunct of the Royal Navy. Even this force was reduced further, when one-third of it went to Pakistan, together with three of the most important naval establishments. After the partition of India, the title Royal was dropped and it was known as Indian Navy from January 1950. The modernization and expansion of India's navy may broadly be divided into two phases: (a) the initial phase; (b) the phase of expansion.

The Initial Phase

Immediately following independence, a prospective plan for the navy was prepared under the guidance of Admiral Parry who was on loan from the British Admiralty. Admiral Parry recommended the gradual development of the carrier fleets. The plan called for a balanced navy, consisting of two light fleet carriers, cruisers, destroyers and auxiliary craft, and it "emphasized the necessity to build a submarine force and an air arm within a period of ten years. The plan also included proposals for setting up training establishments base repair organization and other infrastructural facilities such as headquarters, store depots, communication station, etc."³ At the time of partition of British India in 1947, the Indian navy inherited four anti-aircraft frigates, two anti-submarine frigates, one corvette, twelve minesweepers and one survey ship.⁴ In 1948, the government of India, after

3. Admiral A. K. Chatterji, "Indian Navy: 1947-87," in S. S. Gandhi (ed.) *Defence Review Annual 1988*, (New Delhi, 1989), p. 66.

4. Shahrar Chubin, "Naval Competition and Security in South West Asia," in Jonathan Alford (ed.) *Sea Power and Influence: Old Issues and New Challenges*, (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), 1980), pp. 94-105.

several meetings with British experts, accepted in principle the proposal to acquire eight fleet carriers. The first light fleet carrier was to be purchased from Britain in 1955, followed by a second carrier two years later. Two years after independence, India was able to purchase three "R" class destroyers from Britain. In 1954, three more Hunt-class destroyers, together with a fleet tanker capable of carrying 3,000 tons of furnace fuel oil joined the Indian navy.⁵ Another useful addition was a cruiser of the Fiji-class that was commissioned in 1957.⁶

Following the Sino-Indian war of 1962, the naval programme went through three phases coinciding with the wars with China and Pakistan: (1) The inter-war years between 1962 and 1965 when the navy lay largely neglected except for occasional assurance from the Defense Ministry that its claims would be shortly considered. (2) The inter-war years between 1965 and 1971 when the pro-navy forces became more assertive and vociferous. Modest beginnings were then made to re-arm the navy, and efforts were directed towards modernizing the naval shipyards under the Defense Ministry and to a programme of naval shipbuilding through indigenous sources. From a share of 4 per cent of the annual defense budgetary allocation in 1965-66, the navy received by 1970-71 9 per cent of the revenue and capital share of the three Indian Services (see Appendix I). As the navy is more capital-intensive than the army and air force, its capital share clearly demonstrates its important role in the defense of India. And this capital share rose dramatically from less than 7 per cent in 1963-64 to 34.3 per cent in 1970-71 (see Appendix I). (3) The years following the 1971 war with Pakistan when the navy for the first time in its history had demonstrated that it could play an important role in the defense of India. And dramatically, the capital share rose from 34.3 per cent in 1970-71 to almost 49 per cent in 1973-74, that is, almost 10 per cent increase within three years (see Appendix I).

5. Shahrar Chubin, *op. cit.*, pp. 318-24.

6. *Ibid*

However, among the initial concerns expressed on behalf of the Indian navy after the 1962 India-China war was the necessity to equip it with submarines. In April 1963, Defense Minister Y. B. Chavan informed the Lok Sabha that the Indian government had now accepted the need of a submarine fleet and Naval Headquarters had been asked to frame proposals.⁷ The necessity of submarines was never clearly enunciated but the fact that Pakistan had acquired one from the United States, Indonesia had acquired 6 from the Soviet Union, and China possessed 30, were major important considerations.⁸ And in the post-1965 Indo-Pakistan war phase these concerns were strongly voiced. During his visit to the United Kingdom in 1964, Chavan was reported to have been interested in acquiring, besides other equipments, 3 frigates, 3 destroyers, a submarine and a couple of minesweepers.⁹ He, however, had earlier told the Parliament about the 'vast programme' for the replacement of overaged ships.¹⁰ The attempt at acquiring British ships was a reflection of the pro-West bias that prevailed among the Defense establishment, but the visit was only marginally successful as the United Kingdom was reported to have agreed to provide India with a submarine for 2 to 3 months each year for a few years for training purposes.¹¹ Thus, the one achievement in terms of naval modernisation was the agreement for a loan of 4.7 million pounds for the modernisation and expansion of the Mayagon Docks and the construction, under license, of 3 Leander Class frigates. The government also claimed to have offers for the supply of submarines both from the UK and the Soviet Union, although a decision could be taken only after "... fully considering the financial implications and other factors."¹² Meanwhile, other infrastructural measures had also been initiated. Steps were being taken to

7. Raju G. C. Thomas, "The Politics of Indian Naval Rearmament, 1962-74," *Pacific Community*, (Vol. 6, No. 3, April 1975), p. 457.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 459.

9. *The Times of India* (New Delhi), 15 November, 1964.

10. *Times* (London), 22 September, 1964.

11. *The New York Times*, 27 November, 1964.

12. *The Times of India* (New Delhi), 1 December, 1964.

provide the Indian navy with a fleet replenishment tanker. A naval air station (INS *Hansa*) was established at Dakolim (Goa) consequent on the purchase of 6 Sea Hawks from the UK. Manning of coastal batteries was transferred to the navy from the army and further expansion of the naval base (INS *Jarawa*) at Port Blair in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands was sanctioned.¹³

The year 1968 was a very important year for the Indian navy, for several important developments took place in that year. In July 1968, India entered the submarine era when the first of the Soviet "F" class submarine INS *Kalveri* joined the navy, and another, INS *Khandari* was commissioned at the Soviet base in Riga in December. In October 1968, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi launched the first Indian-built frigate, INS *Nilgiri* at Mazagon Docks in Bombay. In the same year, two commands were established the Western Fleet with headquarters at Bombay and the Eastern Fleet based at Vishakapatnam. It was also announced that the naval base at Goa would be upgraded and expanded to the level of that of Cochin. And on Navy Day in December of that year President Zakir Hossain and Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, before a distinguished gathering of Cabinet Ministers, Defense Ministry officials and highranking naval officers, declared that "the Navy had come of age".¹⁴ Following these developments, in 1969, two Petya-class destroyer escorts, INS *Kamorta* and *Kadmata*, joined the Indian navy. A submarine depot ship, INS *AMBA* was also acquired in 1969, and a helicopter squadron, composed of *AL-III*s was set up at Goa with a view to meeting the logistics and air sea rescue requirements of the navy. Construction of the Naval Dockyard at Vishakapatnam started in August 1969 and new training establishments at Goa, Cochin and Lake Chilka (Orissa) were established to cater to increased manpower requirements.¹⁵

13. Ravindra Tomar, "Development of the Indian Navy: An Overstated Case?," (Strategic and Defense Studies Centre, Canberra, Working Paper, No. 26, September 1980), p. 4.

14. Raju G. C. Thomas, "The Politics of Indian Naval Rearmament, 1962-74," *op. cit.*, p. 469.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

Viewed thus, this period may be considered as the beginning of the process of systematic planning and an improvement on the halting and hesitant nature of naval procurement that the earlier years had witnessed.¹⁶ There was also a change in the composition of ship types as much smaller ships, i.e., Petya and Osa-class vessels with emphasis on missiles and speed joined the fleet.¹⁷ The submarine wing was also strengthened with the acquisition of the third INS *Karani* and fourth INS *Kursura* submarines in February and May 1970 respectively.¹⁸ To upgrade the range and effectiveness of anti-submarine operations a Sea King ASW Helicopter squadron, INAS 330 was sanctioned, and the same became operational in April 1971.¹⁹

The Phase Of Expansion

In 1969-70, a new naval plan for the 1970s was drawn up. While a balanced fleet of ships, submarines and naval aircrafts was achieved under the first (1960s) plan, the second plan envisaged "... optimum use of existing ships and their phased replacement by the Leander Class.... An important feature of the plan was ... a greater reliance on indigenous construction in future so as to eliminate ... dependence on purchase of ships from abroad ... also ... the buildup (of) necessary infrastructure in the country for shipbuilding and logistic facilities for the support of ... (the) expanding fleet."²⁰

The most important change in policy, however, was the decision to move away from a predominantly British-oriented to a more Soviet-oriented fleet. By 1975 the "Go-Soviet" policy was manifest in the new composition of vessels. During 1975 (see Table 1), the Indian naval force consisted of 1 aircraft carrier, 2 cruisers, 3 destroyers, 26 frigates (10 Soviet Petya-class), 17 patrol boats, 8 minesweepers, 4 amphibious, 8 submarines (all Soviet "F" class) and 89 naval aircrafts.

16. *The Times of India* (New Delhi), 4 August, 1970.

17. Ravindra Tomar, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*

20. As quoted in *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

The post-1975 period witnessed orders for 8 OSA, 8 Nanuchka and 2 Kashin-class vessels, 5 Ka-25 Hormone ASW helicopters, 92 SSN-11, 8 SSN-2, and 144 SSN-9 missiles from the Soviet Union, and 8 Sea Harriers, together with 5 Sea King ASW helicopters from Britain.²¹ Added to these, the aircraft carrier and the OSA class boats were modernized, while the fifth Leander frigate INS *Taragiri* and Sea King ASW helicopters were commissioned in May 1980.²²

Perhaps the most significant achievements in naval power are the two aircraft carriers and land-based long-range aircrafts. India acquired its first aircraft carrier INS *Vikrant* (ex-HMS *Hercules*) in 1961. The second aircraft carrier INS *Viraat* (ex-HMS *Hermes*) joined the Indian navy in 1987. Acquisition of the second aircraft carrier, naval air arm, expansion of submarine wing, plan to build nuclear-propelled submarines indigenously and other entries into the Indian navy were possible during this period because of the highest capital share received by the navy during Indira Gandhi period. The post-Indira Gandhi period (uptil 1986-87) also showed more or less the same trend in terms of total capital expenditure by the navy. In consonance with the previous trend, during the Rajiv Gandhi period, whereas the army received preference over the remaining two Services in terms of overall allocations, the navy and air force received more importance in the capital expenditure. In 1985-86, the capital expenditure of the defence budget was Rs. 967 crores. By 1989-90, the figure rose to Rs. 4229 crores. In 1984-85, the shares of the army, navy and air force were 38.6 per cent, 49.6 per cent, and 11.8 per cent respectively (see Appendix II). The previous highest share, as mentioned earlier, was 49 per cent in 1973-74. The share of navy although came down to 42.6 per cent in 1985-86 as compared to 1984-85, it went up again to 44.8 per cent of the total capital expenditure in 1986-87. During this period India successfully negotiated the second aircraft carrier and expanded its submarine fleet from 8 in 1986-87 to 11 in 1987-88 (see Table 1).

21. Raju G. C. Thomas, "The Indian Navy in the Seventies," *Pacific Affairs* (Vol. 48, No. 4, Winter 1975-76), p. 503.

22. *Ibid.*

The second aircraft carrier INS *Viraat* is equipped with many advanced and sophisticated computer-aided systems. It can also carry relatively more aircrafts than INS *Vikrant* can. A third carrier, India's first indigenously built with the help of French technology, will be commissioned in 1997.²³

Another significant acquisition comprises the 5 updated TU-142M anti-submarine and naval reconnaissance aircraft from the Soviet Union, known as "Bear F."²⁴ The induction of II-38 in 1978, coupled with ASW helicopters, registered a marked improvement in India's reconnaissance and ASW capabilities. The introduction of the TU-142M has meant a major qualitative improvement in the sense it "flies at near sonic speed and has a range of 12,000 km or 16 hours 45 minutes non-stop flight and space."²⁵ Table 1 presents the trend of growth in the force structure of the Indian navy since 1965.

Table 1 : Indian Naval Build Up From 1965 to 1992-93

Item	Year									
	1965	1975	1985	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93
Aircraft Carrier	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
Cruisers	2	2	1							
Destroyers	3	3	3	3	4	5	5	5	5	5
Frigates	8	26	23	23	21	24	21	20	21	21
Corvettes			3	4	4	5	8	10	13	14
FAC(G)				14	14	14				
Missile Craft						13	13	12	9	8
Patrol Craft			8	9	9	14	13	15	18	17
Patrol Boat		17								
Minewweepers/ Minewarfare	6	8	19	18	18	17	20	20	22	20
Amphibious	2	4	13	11	13	10	10	10	9	9
Submarines		8	8	8	11	14	17	19	17	15
Naval Aircraft	39	89	62	50	50	81	84	114	121	121
Support & Miscellaneous						18	18	18	20	20

Source : *The Military Balance*, 1965-93, (IISS, London).

23. The Indian Naval Chief Admiral Jayant Nadkar ni disclosed the likely year when India would be in possession of a third-carrier fleet at a Commanders' Conference. See, *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 10 June 1989.

24. *The Hindu* (international weekly edition), 14 May, 1988.

25. *Ibid.*

Given India's regional responsibilities and trading patterns the above growth would seem to be a modest response to rapidly changing circumstances in the Indian Ocean. Additions to the fleet since 1985, however, have caused more concern.

Clearly, the leasing of a Soviet *Charli* class nuclear-powered submarine (the INS *Chakra*) in early 1988 has generated a lot of controversy. It is when the potential of this major force multiplier is considered in light of the acquisition of India's second aircraft carrier in mid-1987, and the navy's stated determination to purchase or build a third carrier in the near future, that legitimate questions begin to be raised about India's strategic purpose. Figures for 1989 show basically the same force layout as in 1988 with the notable difference being that three more conventional submarines have been added to the underwater inventory, thereby bringing the number of submarines upto 14. The number rose to 19 including one-nuclear-powered in 1990. Although, figures for 1992 show the almost same force layout as in 1991, yet 1992 figures show acquisition of 7 more naval aircraft, thus raising total number of naval aircraft upto 121 in 1992 as compared to 114 in 1991. According to available reports, by the end of the century the USSR (former) might sell to India five to seven nuclear submarines of the *Victor 3* class (a 1979 project) and *Charli 2* (able to carry cruise missiles).²⁶ Furthermore, Indian naval authorities plan to have five aircraft carriers: two in the eastern and two in the western marine zones, i.e., in the eastern and western parts of the Indian Ocean and one under reconstruction.²⁷ Added to these are the successful efforts given by the Indian government to strengthen its naval programme through indigenously built naval equipments. India was able to develop a German-designed *IIDW* type-1500 submarine, a Soviet-designed nuclear-propelled submarine and Mig fighters planes, British-designed Leander class frigates, French-designed Corvettes, German-designed Dornier coast guard air patrol, and GE-LM type-2500 marine

26. M. V. Bratersky and S. I. Lunyov, "India at the End of the Century: Transformation into an Asian Regional Power," *Asian Survey*, (Vol. XXX, No. 10, October 1990), p. 936.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 937.

adapted gas engines as well as India's first indigenously designed and constructed missile corvette INS *Khurki* which was commissioned on 23 August, 1989. The Naval Design Organisation has developed several ship designs, the most complex of them being the new frigates of the Godavari-class.²⁸ These additions helped in beefing up the Indian navy further by adding new dimension in the growth process of the navy. The process will take India on the path of self-reliance and accelerate its power projection capability. The growth of Indian submarine arm was well summed up by Rear Admiral S. C. Anand: "... In these 25 years the Indian Navy's submarine arms has expanded. We today operate some of the most advanced and sophisticated submarines. We operated and maintained a nuclear-propelled submarine for three years. And we have built two sophisticated boats indigenously. This is an enviable record for any navy, and for over '25 years young' submarines arm, it is certainly a matter of pride."²⁹

Currently, the Indian navy has three principal commands: Western, Eastern, and Southern plus two sub-commands: Submarine, and Naval Air, with bases in Bombay (Headquarters Western Command), Goa (Headquarters Naval Air), Cochin (Headquarters Southern Command), and Visakhapatnam (Headquarters Eastern and Submarines).

II. JUSTIFICATIONS FOR NAVAL GROWTH

Indian naval build up is a part of the overall defence strategy of India. Past experiences have vividly demonstrated that an effective power projection capability cannot be achieved without a formidable navy. Needless to say that in the absence of a formidable navy, India's maritime interests are bound to be at stake.

Indian regional policy has developed from the so-called "Indira Doctrine" by which India claimed the right to intervene in the affairs of neighbouring states if internal disorder threatened Indian security. This regional policy

28. Akhter Majeed, "Indian Security Perspectives in the 1990s," *op. cit.*, p. 1088.

29. F. A. S. Bokhari, "Alarming build-up of Indian Navy," *The Pakistan Times* (Karachi), January 8, 1993, p. 8.

clearly envisages the important role of the Indian navy in the defense of India. The interventions in Sri Lanka (July 1987-March 1990) and the Maldives (November 1988) confirmed New Delhi's calculated commitment of its military powers to the furtherance of its political objectives. In achieving these political objectives the Indian navy played an important role.

The Sri Lanka Accord was a watershed in South Asian history because it was a clear signal to India's neighbours not to play external powers against it. The "Exchange of Letters" between the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President Jayawardene of Sri Lanka, annexed to the Indo-Sri Lanka accord makes this quite clear explaining about how India envisages its relationship with neighbourhood. If the Sri Lankan episode reflects India's objectives to implement the "Indira Doctrine", the ongoing development of Indian navy could represent, argued one Western naval analyst, an important step towards extending its tenets to the larger Indian Ocean region.³⁰ Naval build up is, however, only one stage in a much more complex process. On a wider plane the main components of New Delhi's Indian Ocean policy would include:

- (a) a general expansion of India's military forces, particularly the navy;
- (b) reduced extra-regional influence in the region, especially in terms of naval deployments;
- (c) the removal of Pakistan as a security threat, by military or political means;
- (d) the broadening of regional economic ties; and
- (e) an expressed intention of protecting the wider population of Indian origin in the region.³¹

Thus, justifications for naval expansion by the Indian navy have not grown overnight. From time to time the Indian navy gave different justifications for its naval expansion. These justifications have their roots in

30. Paul George, "Indian Naval Expansion," (Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security, Working Paper 32, February 1991), p. 11.

31. Elkin, Jerrold F. and Major W. Andrew Ritesel, "New Delhi's Indian Ocean Policy," *Naval War College Review*, (Vol. XL, No. 4, Autumn 1987), pp. 50-51.

the geo-strategic environments of India. The justifications that India gives for its naval expansion are the deterrence and defense against sea-borne threats that may put Indian independence in jeopardy. New Delhi's arguments for its naval expansion may broadly be discussed under two headlines: a) the strategic justification, and b) the economic justification.

The Strategic Justification

Themistocles, a Greek writer, once said that "he who commands the sea has command of everything."³² It was Alfred T. Mahan, an American naval strategist who said in 1911: "Whoever controls the Indian Ocean dominates Asia ... in the 21st century the destiny of the world will be decided on its waves."³³ Bernard Brodie has stressed the need with the objectives of building up maritime power, to acquire and develop those weapons, installations and geographical circumstances which enable a nation to control transportation over the seas³⁴ so that it is strong enough "to control and regulate the movement of ships at sea"³⁵ both during peace and war-time. The Indian strategic mindset seemed to have been greatly influenced by the above theorisation. As clearly argued by one of the Indian diplomat-strategists K. M. Pannikar, the long-term goal of the Indian government ought to be "to develop India as a naval power in the seas vital to her and maintain supremacy in the Indian Ocean."³⁶ It is often argued that India should vigorously build up its naval strength and cite the invasion of India by the former colonial powers such as the Portuguese, the Dutch, the French, and finally the British from the east. As argued by Pannikar, "while to other countries the Indian Ocean is only one of the important oceanic areas, to India it is a vital sea. Her lifelines are concentrated in that area, her freedom is dependent on the freedom of the water surface. No industrial

32. As cited in Major Rashid Iqbal, "Maritime strategy for Pakistan," *The Citadel*, The Command and Staff College, Quetta, Vol. V, No. 1/88, p. 125.

33. *The Muslim*, 12 January, 1988.

34. Bernard Brodie, *A Guide to Naval Strategy*, (Princeton, 1944), p. 2.

35. Richmond and Carbett cited by D. M. Suchman. *The Education of a Navy*, (London 1965), p. 188.

36. As cited in Ghani Eirabi's "Naval imbalances in the Indian Ocean," *The Muslim* (Magazine section), 26 February, 1988, p. 1.

development, no commercial growth, no stable political structure is possible for her unless her shores are protected."³⁷

Power Vacuum Factor. Clearly, one factor that strongly supported the case for immediate Indian naval expansion was the British decision in 1968 to withdraw its forces east of Suez. With the British withdrawal from east of Suez in 1968, a power vacuum was created in the Indian Ocean. Since then extra-regional powers found it strategically lucrative to fill in the vacuum, and in view of that they formulated their policies. This, in turn, was not to the liking of India whose security objectives are analogous to the fundamental strategic goals of the British: to deny any extra-regional power a role in the affairs of South Asia and to be the dominant power in the region. While the extra-regional powers began competing to expand their naval power in the Indian Ocean following the creation of power vacuum, a belief got embedded among the naval officers of the Indian navy that India could successfully fill in the power vacuum created by the British withdrawal from the east of Suez. And since then the case for Indian naval expansion was built on the vague concept of "sea power."³⁸ In December 1966, the concept was enunciated by the Chief of Naval Staff (designate) Admiral A. K. Chatterji: "Concept of sea-power is not that of naval ships or naval aircraft operating by themselves; sea-power is a combination of many factors but above all it means a flourishing mercantile fleet, a sea-faring community, a commerce minded people, and a Navy capable of defending our shipping at sea."³⁹ This statement was followed in March 1968 by another in which Admiral Chatterji claimed that the Indian navy would eventually be in complete charge of the Indian Ocean after the withdrawal of the British fleet east of Suez.⁴⁰

The Shah of Iran, who since the British announcement in February 1968, had nurtured the desire of filling up this power vacuum, in a military

37. K. M. Pannikar, *India and the Indian Ocean* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1945), p. 84.

38. Raju G. C. Thomas, "The Indian Navy in the Seventies," *op. cit.*, p. 505.

39. Vice Admiral A. K. Chatterji, "India and Sea Power," *The Hindu*, 11 December, 1966 as quoted in Raju G. C. Thomas, "The Indian Navy in the Seventies," *op. cit.*, p. 505.

40. *The Times* (London), 4 March, 1968 as mentioned in Raju G. C. Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 505.

action, occupied three disputed Gulf islands of Greater Strait of Hormuz. The Shah's action amply signified that with the departure of the British, Iran had taken on the role of a preeminent power in the region and assumed the responsibility of policeman of the Gulf. The Shah's action was felt in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and other Gulf states. These states with their petro-dollars began acquiring sophisticated weapons.⁴¹ The huge piling up of arms in Iran and the Arab states became a cause of apprehension for New Delhi which found in it the probability of these arms finding their way to Pakistan in the event of any future war with India. This apprehension of India was not without grounds given these states' close ties with Pakistan.

Pakistan Factor : Since their emergence as separate states both India and Pakistan became each other's adversary number one. Pakistan views India as an 'aggressor', which it believes has the evil design to absorb it, and India views Pakistan as 'hostile'. New Delhi has always aspired for a military preponderance in South Asia, while Pakistan always aspired for a parity. Until the 1965 war, the subcontinental strategic rivalry was overtly land-oriented. Following the 1965 and 1971 wars both started beefing up their navies. In this common endeavour, the former Soviet Union acted as a crucial factor in modernising the Indian navy by helping to develop its submarine wing. It is important to note that about 70 per cent of all current Indian defense equipment are Soviet-made. It is said that currently 27 of the Indian navy's 43 principal combatants--16 conventional submarines and 11 surface ships--are of Soviet origin and Soviet weapons systems are fitted to most frigates and corvettes.⁴² By contrast, in the case of Pakistan, America and China played the crucial role. Since 1982 Pakistani naval acquisitions from America included 4 Gearing-class destroyers, 4 Brook class anti-aircraft and 4 Garcia-class anti-submarine frigates, and several Harpoon anti-ship missiles. In addition to these, Pakistan procured several missile-armed patrol boats from China; 2 Leander-class frigates and a Country-class destroyer

41. R. Jahtinen, *Arms in the Persian Gulf* (Washington, 1974).

42. *Jane's Defence Weekly*, November 20, 1991.

from Britain; and an Agosta-class conventional submarine and several Exocet anti-ship missiles from France.⁴³ Pakistan has significantly increased its efforts to match India in terms of naval build up in recent times, doubling for example, its principal surface combatants to 17 ships during the 1980-90 period. Pakistan's response to India's, build up has obviously had a spiralling effect on India, pushing the latter to go for further naval expansion. It has been rumoured that China is soon going to offer a nuclear-powered submarine to Pakistan.⁴⁴ Should it really so happen, India will further justify its naval growth.

China Factor : One of the initial arguments put forward for a major Indian naval armament programme in the early 1960s was to counter a possible Chinese thrust into Bay of Bengal. Three decades ago, the Indian Defense Minister Chavan indicated the concern on such Chinese intentions and capabilities and informed the Lok Sabha in 1963 that the Indian government had accepted the necessity of a submarine fleet.⁴⁵

Although the Chinese navy comprised over a thousand vessels in the 1980s, with its principal surface combatants increased from 38 to 56 ships during 1980-90, a destroyer and logistic support ship ventured into the Indian Ocean for the first time in 1965.⁴⁶ The Indian government expressed concern over the possible deployment of Chinese strategic nuclear missile submarines in the Indian Ocean, and the expansion of China's strategic frontiers. The Indian government also feared that a superpower naval arms race in the Indian Ocean would bring about client-state relations in the area, give rise to a Chinese naval presence (in order to counter the naval presence of the superpowers), and encourage superpower intervention against littoral states.⁴⁷

43. See, *The Military Balance*, 1980-81 to 1989-90, (IISS, London).

44. Paul George, "Indian Naval Expansion," *op. cit.*, p. 19.

45. Raju G. C. Thomas, "The Politics of Indian Naval Re-armament, 1962-74," *op. cit.*, p. 457.

46. See *The Military Balance*, 1980-81 to 1989-90, (IISS, London).

47. S. P. Seth, "The Indian Ocean and Indo-American relations," *Asian Survey*, (August 1975), pp. 648-52 and 654-56.

In the current strategic context, India is clearly the dominant power in South Asia. By contrast, China has the vast potentials to dominate Southeast Asia. For reason of geography, national interests of New Delhi and Beijing overlap in the countries of Southeast Asia but their rivalry is most likely to focus on their maritime presence in the South Asian region. China's development for forward naval facilities in the southern Guanzhou military region, the development of outposts on the Parcel and Spartly islands and a "historical tradition" of Chinese naval activities in the Indian Ocean make India suspicious of China's maritime interests towards the region. It is argued that the Chinese naval build up in the South China Sea located on the northeast side of Southwest Asia was directed to contain Indian naval expansion in the Indian Ocean. China's naval installations at Pescadores (Pengshu), Pratas (Dongsha), Parcels (Xisha) and around the Spartlys (Nansha) have appeared to be increasingly menacing to India.⁴⁸

Added to these are the normalisation of relations between China and the former Soviet Union and the restoration of diplomatic ties between China and Indonesia after a long break of twenty three years. To New Delhi the Sino-Russian *rapprochement* has given China an opportunity to redirect its military might against India. China's traditionally close military ties with some of the South Asian countries, particularly Pakistan adds to the Indian rationale for military build up. "Given the emphasis," as one western naval analyst cogently puts: "in Chinese naval strategy on submarine warfare, it is perhaps not surprising that India appears to be developing a sea-denial strategy to meet further threats to its interests."⁴⁹

Indonesia Factor : Indonesia under the rule of Sukarno spent a billion dollar grant from the former Soviet Union to acquire a formidable naval force consisting of 12 submarines, an equal number of missile boats, backed by a heavy cruiser, and 18 destroyers and frigates.⁵⁰ Indian strategists and politicians are unlikely to forget Sukarno's vision of a "Greater Indonesia"

48. *The Times of India* (New Delhi), 24 March, 1992.

49. Paul George, "Indian Naval Expansion," *op. cit.*, p. 20.

50. Dilip Mukerjee, "Suharto Reduces Armed Forces," *The Times of India* (New Delhi), 25 February, 1974.

that would include all the Malay peoples of Southeast Asia, his support for Pakistan in the Kashmir dispute and the Indo-Pak war of 1965 when Indonesia offered to support Pakistan by carrying out diversionary naval attack on the Andaman islands.⁵¹ Martadinata, the Indonesian Naval Commander-in-Chief, discussed about the possible Indonesian naval cooperation with the Pakistani Air Marshal M. Asghar Khan. At one point the Indonesian naval chief asked the Pakistani air chief, "Don't you (M. Asghar Khan) want us to take over the Andaman Islands? A look at the map will show that the Andaman and Nicobar islands are an extension of Sumatra and are in any case between East Pakistan and Indonesia. What right have the Indians to be there?"⁵² In addition, close relations between China and Indonesia under Sukarno prompted India to perceive a Beijing-Islamabad-Jakarta axis directed against itself. Consequently, during that period, it was felt that India would be most vulnerable on its southern flank with the navy as the weakest link in the defense perimeter.⁵³ As a result, India embarked on its programme to expand its own navy in the Cold-War era to meet a future possible naval threat from the above powers.

Although under the rule of Suharto Indonesia slowed down the pace of military build up, it continued to beef up its naval power. Recent acquisition in the Indonesian navy is indeed its response to Indian naval expansion in the vicinity of the Strait of Malacca which is strategically and economically very vital for Indonesia and all other South East Asian countries including China and Japan. By 1992-93 (see Appendix III), Indonesian navy consisted of 44,000 men, 2 submarines, 17 frigates, 4 missile craft, 2 torpedo craft, 42 patrol craft, 2 minewarfare, 16 amphibious, 18 support and miscellaneous, 33 naval aircraft. India's justification for its naval expansion is drawn not only from Indonesia's joining of the race but

51. P. S. Jayaramu, *India's National Security and Foreign Policy*, (ABC Publishing House, New Delhi, 1987), p. 100.

52. As quoted in M. Asghar Khan, *The First Round Indo-Pakistan War 1965*, (Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., India, 1979), p. 45.

53. G. V. C. Naidu, "The Indian Navy and Southeast Asia," *op. cit.*, p. 76.

as already indicated, from growing indication of Indonesia's naval cooperation with China which has also been reportedly courting Singapore.⁵⁴

Post-Cold War Realities The end of the Cold War and collapse of the Soviet Union have radically changed the security environment both at regional and global levels. In the changed context, although both India and the US are trying to explore avenues of cooperation, Washington's formulated new policies in the wake of the post-Cold War period with regard to the north-western part and the south-east and eastern parts of the Indian Ocean region merit proper scrutiny. Washington's policies centring these areas of the Indian Ocean show that the US will virtually remain the regional police man in the Indian Ocean region. The former US President George Bush during his visit to Australia, Singapore, and Japan in January 1992 made it explicitly clear that though the Cold War has come to an end and Russia is no longer a threat to the US interests anywhere in the world, even then the US is not going to withdraw totally from any part of the region which is of vital interests to it. About the US presence in Asia Bush made it known that "Asian allies should not fear a US retreat from the region in the aftermath of the Cold War,"⁵⁵ as the US is going to keep its presence in the region. Thus, post-Cold War realities also may give India justification to expand its navy.

The Economic Justification

It is argued that India requires a strong and well-balanced navy to protect its mainland and the island territories of Andaman, Nicobar, and Lakhshadweep (the Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi islands collectively known as Lakhshadweep). The island Lakhshadweep lies in the Arabian Sea 100 nautical miles off southwest coast of India. The Andaman and Nicobar islands are close to the Strait of Malacca at the eastern edge of the Bay of

54. *The Globe and Mail*, July 5, 1990.

55. As quoted in S. S. Bhattacharya, "Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, *Strategic Analysis*, (Vol. XV, No. 5, August 1992), p. 427.

Bengal. With a 7,000 km long coastline, India has 10 major, 20 intermediate and 150 minor ports. Moreover, India has 2 million sq. km of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) which is nearly two-thirds of its land area and the twelfth largest EEZ in the world. The Law of the Sea Conference also provides for a Continental Shelf up to a depth of 200 metres for the exploitation of sea-bed resources in some areas of the Indian Ocean.

India's crucial oil links with the Middle East and its trading routes to the Gulf markets, where Indian goods and services realise a large component of the nation's foreign exchange earnings, traverse the Indian Ocean. In a broader perspective, the Indian Ocean hosts critical Indian economic links involving its seaborne trade and commerce. Nearly 97 to 98 per cent of India's trade (over US \$ 20 billion) is carried out by sea. Of these 98 per cent, about 40 per cent constitute crude oil imports which are of vital importance for the industrial growth of India. The oil inflow to India from the Gulf countries is much more vital for New Delhi than some of the major powers which have a military presence in the region in order to protect their oil supplies. India's seaborne trade consisting nearly 15 per cent of its GNP⁵⁶ and its merchant fleet of more than 400 ships represent highly visible economic assets on the high seas. Currently, the major source of oil production is the Bombay High, off the West Coast. The crude oil supply from this source alone constitutes nearly 36 per cent of India's total oil consumption. In addition, about 40 per cent of Indian industry is concentrated in western India, including atomic research centres, atomic power stations, and major manufacturing plants in the Bombay and Ahmedabad region, which would be vulnerable to attack from the seas off the western coast. Furthermore, sea provides a wealth of both living and non-living resources. And India, which supports deep sea-fishing, today ranks the seventh position among the world's top 45 fishing countries.⁵⁷ Besides, other maritime interests and objectives of India include undertaking

56. *The Telegraph*, 26 February, 1988.

57. Vice Admiral M. K. Roy, "Navy and National Development," *The Hindustan Times*, 13 February, 1984.

mining activities in the deep sea-bed in the Indian Ocean, in the areas assigned to it under the Law of the Sea Conference; the halting of poaching and illegal fishing in Indian waters; and the security of its stake in Antarctica.

III. THE MISSIONS OF THE INDIAN NAVY

The stated objectives of the Indian navy is quite clear--the protection of the nation and its assets/interests from any sea-based threat. This includes the protection of the vital sea-lanes, sea-borne trade, off-shore assets, EEZ and island territories, and above all maintaining a "presence" in the waters around the peninsula so that Indian national interests are not threatened.

India, which had always been a maritime nation, has legitimized the creation and modernization of a balanced naval fleet in view of the mission of its navy. India's maritime interests have been summarized as having four discernible facets: (1) protection from threats via the sea; (2) acquisition of new capabilities for exploitation of the vast mineral and fish resources of the seabed; (3) protection of growing seaborne trade including uninterrupted supply of critically needed energy and high technology imports and exports of agricultural and industrial products; (4) promotion of its influence in the Indian Ocean region and states of the littoral region and to exercise its power in order to enforce outcomes favourable to its interests.⁵⁸

On a deeper reflection the concept, "defense of the nation's maritime interests", appears to include four missions which the Indian navy aspires to achieve. These are: (1) maritime surveillance of foreign navies; (2) presence and show-the-flag; (3) minimal deterrence; and (4) power projection.

Maritime surveillance

The components of sea power include the capability for maritime surveillance of sealanes and foreign vessels ensuring the safety of ships and mariners especially during tropical storms and the provision of navigational

58. Gary Sojka, "The Missions of the Indian Navy," *Naval War College Review*, (Vol. 36, No. 1, January-February, 1983), pp. 4-5.

aids to ships and mariners. The Indian navy's surveillance envelope--already reaching well beyond the Persian Gulf in the west and the straits of Malacca in the east--will be extended to the far reaches of the southern Indian Ocean along an arc tangential to Madagascar--Tropic of Capricorn--North Australian basin. Policing the seas in peace time may assume several forms. The navy is entrusted with the task of any incursions into the Indian waters by unauthorised vessels and has indeed been involved in frequent searches and the apprehension of erring vessels. Protection of 2 million sq. km. of EEZ as well as 7,000 km long coastline and 1, 284 islands and islets and widely dispersed of sea lanes of communications have also tasked the navy with a wide range of important responsibilities such as safety of off-shore platforms and sea-bed resources, anti-smuggling drives, combating narco-terrorism, oil spills and other natural and environmental disasters.

Presence and show-the-flag

Another peace-time role of the navy is generally known as "showing the flag" by visiting foreign ports to upgrade relations and foster good neighbourliness and friendship. Presence and show-the-flag missions in the Indian Ocean littoral capitalize on the fact that there are large Indian communities in the region and that India perceives safeguarding their welfare as part of its extended responsibilities. Consistent with this rationale, Indian navy ships have made port calls in virtually every country in the Persian Gulf-Indian Ocean littoral and have participated in occasional joint naval exercises with Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, and Australia.

Minimal deterrence

Generally, the chief role of the Indian navy during peace time is deterrence. The high mobility, endurance, and three-dimensional capability of a naval task force provides a proven instrument of diplomacy for deterring potential mischief-makers or for supporting friendly states. Minimal deterrence is considered as the low cost translation of "defense of the nation's maritime interests." The objective behind is to convey to a potential

adversary that the costs India could extract in any conflict would be so disproportionately high as to dissuade an opponent from doing anything that may jeopardize the Indian interests.

Power Projection

Power projection currently constitutes an important dimension of Indian naval capabilities. By the early 1980s, the character of the Indian Ocean went under a radical change and India immediately perceived a threat to its own regional pre-eminence in the presence of superior navies in the Ocean, which it suspected were part of a calculated strategy with disruptive intentions. As Mrs. Gandhi argued: "the Ocean has brought conquerors to India in the past. Today we find it churning with danger. The frantically increasing pace of militarization in the Indian Ocean makes the 3, 500 miles of our coastline more vulnerable. How can we acquiesce in any theory which tries to justify the threat to our own security environment or condones the existence of foreign bases and cruising fleets?"⁵⁹ Such perception transformed the orientation of the Indian navy. What was originally a sea control/shore defense orientation based on the general considerations relating to nations with a long coastline and generally directed against Pakistan steadily gave way to a power projection orientation.⁶⁰ As one Indian defense analyst succinctly put: "India is currently trying to establish sea-control *vis-a-vis* Pakistan and expanding its sea-denial capability in the Indian Ocean *vis-a-vis* the superpowers."⁶¹ The Indian navy, therefore, seems to have a mission of power projection. The Indian navy's power projection capability was clearly demonstrated with regard to Sri Lanka (July 1987-April 1990) and the Maldives (November 1988). The Indian navy carried out the surveillance of the Palk Straits, transported the vast majority of military personnel and material between the two countries, shelled Liberation Tigers of Tamil

59. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, to the Commonwealth Heads of Government, Asia-Pacific Region, Opening Address, New Delhi, 4 September, 1980.

60. Ashely J. Tellis, "The Naval Balance in the Indian Subcontinent," *Asian Survey*, (Vol. XXV, No. 12, December 1985), p. 1193

61. G. V. C. Naidu, "The Indian Navy and Southeast Asia," *op. cit.*, p. 79.

Eelam (LTTE) coastal bastions, and implemented commando operations against LTTE assets. During the Maldives operation, the navy's maritime reconnaissance capability and the rapid deployment of frigates played a critical role in the suppression of an attempted coup against a legitimate government.

Table 2 shows a long-term naval profile of the Indian navy for the period 1988-2010 as projected by a Pakistani source which indicates expansion of the Indian navy almost in all major sections aiming at bolstering its power projection capability.

Table 2 : Projected Naval Profile of the Indian Navy 1988-2010

	1988	1995	2010
Surface			
Aircraft Carrier	2	1	3-4
Cruiser	-	1	3
Destroyer	4	6	24
Frigate	23	24	26
Missile Corvette	5	20	44
Gun Boat	14	14	12
Minesweeper	19	23	28
Amphibious Vessel	19	19	16
Fleet Auxiliary	12	12	12
Subsurface			
Nuclear-powered Submarine	1	3	4
Disel	13	19	24
Naval Aviation			
Strike Aircraft	22	40	80
Surveillance/ASW Aircraft	32	50	75
Helicopter	51	62	92

Source: *The Muslim*, 18 March 1988.

The Indian navy's mission in conflict situation is what is known as 'sea control'. Sea control, one of the oldest notions in maritime strategy, is the gaining and maintaining of general naval supremacy with a view to

controlling vital sea areas in order to protect lines of communication and commerce by ensuring local superiority in an area of naval operations. Sea control is, thus, the result of independent operations or in coordination with other services to create a situation in which the planned tasks of the fleet can be accomplished without being adversely affected by the opponent. In the words of Admiral S. N. Kohli: "In times of war, the Navy must defend our coastline, our offshore interests, our outlying islands, and our sea lines of communication. This role must be prosecuted positively and vigorously to frustrate the enemy attempts to control the seas and to secure sea control for ourselves."⁶²

IV. IMPLIICATIONS

The naval expansion by the Indian navy has caused considerable concern and misgivings among South Asian countries and their beyond.

India's immediate neighbours, including Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Pakistan, which find themselves victims of New Delhi's 'coercive diplomacy', are quite reasonably concerned by Indian naval expansion. Their maritime interests may be potentially affected by such an ongoing naval expansion by the Indian navy. The relatively weaker countries particularly have a fear-psychosis of having to play a subservient role at the dictates of New Delhi's naval power. During a hypothetical conflict situation, for example, should India want to deny sea-route to any merchant ship or any other vessel through the Indian Ocean for any of the neighbouring countries of India, it could readily do so. India may go to the extent of blockading the vital sea lines of communications should the smaller littoral countries of the Indian Ocean dare to act contrary to New Delhi's interests. Concern about Indian naval build up has been expressed by a Bangladeshi scholar: "Pragmatism dictates that Bangladesh should be wary of Indian naval ambition. The significant enhancement of India's naval capabilities since 1971 is but a prelude to increased naval projections over a

62. S. N. Kohli, *Sea Power and the Indian Ocean: With Special Reference to India*, (Tata McGraw-Hill Publishing Company Limited, New Delhi, 1979), p. 33. (emphasis is added).

vaster area that are likely to manifest in the coming decade. With the dispute over the maritime boundary still to be settled, which will affect Bangladesh's share of the oceans and its resources, Bangladesh cannot afford to be complacent about India's growing naval might and its readiness to force an issue if need be."⁶³

The fear-psychosis of near countries has been compounded following India's interventions in Sri Lanka and the Maldives. The controversial presence of Indian troops in Sri Lanka from 1987 to 1990, and India's successful efforts to foil a coup attempt in the Maldives in November 1988 (in both cases the Indian navy played a role), are manifestations of the role of a major power. Former Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi categorically stressed in his letter of 27 July 1987, addressed to the President of Sri Lanka, that "Trincomalee or any other ports in Sri Lanka will not be made available for military use by any country in manner prejudicial to India's interest."⁶⁴

The impacts of Indian naval expansion on the neighbouring countries of India have been very aptly articulated by one Western naval expert in the following words: "There is little doubt that as the Indian Navy continues to grow according to current plans, its overarching strategy of deterrence by denial will be permanently cemented into a drastic alteration of the regional balance of power. Implicitly, that will make India a power broker capable of conditioning all regional political outcomes, even if only to prevent these outcomes from having an adverse impact on its own insular conceptions of security. By the very structure of this objective, an Indian Navy powerful enough to inhibit extra-regional operations in the Ocean also *ipso facto* becomes a force instrument capable of dominating and coercing the smaller regional states. The fears of these states are exacerbated by the fact that

63. Shaukat Hassan, "Bangladesh Foreign Policy: Introductory Remarks" in M. G. Kabir and Shaukat Hassan (eds.) *Issues and Challenges Facing Bangladesh Foreign Policy*, (Bangladesh Society of International Studies, 1989), p. 30.

64. See the exchange of letters in *Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of July 1987*, edited by Shelton U. Kodikara (Delhiwala-Sri Lanka: Sridevi Printers Limited, 1989), pp. 213-15.

current Indian naval instruments hold the promise of developing into capabilities more potent and more suited to offensive operation than they presently are .."⁶⁵

Pakistan, which has persistently wanted militarily to be at par with India, will reject to play second-fiddle to India as Indian naval expansion threatens Pakistan more than any other littoral countries of the Indian Ocean region.

According to one Pakistani analyst the consequences of India's naval expansion can be horrendous for Pakistan. He contends that the Indian navy with its two carrier task forces that provide mobile air bases and nuclear powered submarine that can stay longer underwater has acquired important instruments of power projection. Pakistan fears the increasingly offensive complexion of the Indian navy more than any state in the Indian Ocean region.⁶⁶ When seen from the perspective of their long historical relations, grounds of the Pakistani fears become clear.

India's relations with Pakistan have not been free of tension for historical and psychological reasons which have virtually locked them in a state of interminable mutual distrust, endemic animosities, and power rivalry. These have, in turn, subjected the subcontinental political climate into a conflictual pattern of 'bi-polarised antagonism'. Pakistan and India have a longstanding and unresolved Kashmir dispute on which three wars had been fought. Both reckon that yet another war on the issue may be too expensive for either party but relations between the two have far from improved in recent times. Pakistan's relatively high ratio of defence spending is largely attributed to its urge to attain parity in military power *vis-a-vis* India.

65. Ashely Tellis, "Securing the Barrack: The Logic, Structure and Objectives of India's Naval Expansion," in Robert H. Bruce (ed.) *The Modern Indian Navy and the Indian Ocean: Developments and Implications*, (Studies in Indian Ocean Maritime Affairs No. 2, Centre for Indian Ocean Regional Studies, Curtin University of Technology & Australian Institute of International Affairs, 1989), pp. 43-44.

66. Rasul B. Rais, "Indian Naval Developments: Implications for Pakistan," in Robert H. Bruce (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 122.

One estimate shows that Pakistan spends 6 per cent of its gross national product (GNP), whereas India spends approximately 3-4 per cent of its GNP on defence.⁶⁷ Despite this, it has not been able to acquire, what one Pakistani analyst argued, "optimal naval deterrence."⁶⁸

Indian naval expansion obviously poses a serious security threat to Pakistan's major port of Karachi and the rest of its short coastline. During the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war, the Western Fleet of the Indian navy in coordination of its air force readily blockaded the Pakistani coast and bombarded Karachi port setting ablaze shore installations and oil dumps with some limited resistance posed by Pakistan air force. Those raids still keep haunting the Pakistani defense planners. As cogently argued by another Pakistani analyst: "Until we acquire a reasonable measure of strength at least the ability to defend our sea-shore installations, coastal shipping and vital sea-lanes we shall be written off by the world as drones, not worth saving. Pakistan's dependence on critical imports such as oil through a single port is so complete that India could blockade us into submission without firing a shot. We must assign top priority to . . . expanding and modernising the navy which proved to be Pakistan's Achilles heel in the 1971 war with India . . . all that we need defend now is a twin funnel of a sea running from below Karachi west along the Mekran coast and narrowing southwest along the Arabian peninsula into the Red Sea. The two sea-lanes are of critical importance to our national survival and we should prepare ourselves to defend them with all that it stakes."⁶⁹ Pakistan's awareness of its vulnerability from the sea and the need of paying greater attention to the modernization of naval defence are obvious, which have prompted the Pakistani navy to expand, thereby setting the stage for a major Indo-Pakistani naval arms race (see Appendix II) in the 1990s.

The mutual adversary image of India and Pakistan has not changed in the post-Cold War period. Pakistan is no longer a partner of the US in the

67. Rasul B. Rais, *op. cit.*, footnote 14, p. 129.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

69. "India in the Indian Ocean," *The Dawn* (Karachi), 21 July, 1989.

way it was during the Cold War period, and has currently fallen from the grace of Washington which has cut off military and economic aid to the former because of Islamabad's alleged involvement in acquiring nuclear weapons. The US has recently asked Pakistan to return its 8 frigates which the latter took on lease from the former. The lease expires in 1993.⁷⁰ The return of the frigates will create an acute imbalance in the Pakistani navy, thereby mounting Pakistan's anxieties. Although the Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has hinted France as an alternative source of supply, it remains to be seen how readily Islamabad gets firm assurances from a quarter, and until that happens Pakistan's worries are bound to increase manifold.

Besides Pakistan several states of Southeast Asia--Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore--have voiced their apprehensions at the naval growth of India.

In late 1980, Mohamad Jusuf, the Defense Minister of Indonesia, stated that North Sumatra was very vulnerable to threats from major power rivalry in the Indian Ocean. Indonesia was more explicit in identifying India in June 1989, when at a meeting in New Delhi, Indonesia's naval chief, Admiral Rakefendo, formally conveyed to the Indian officials his government's concern over India's naval expansion. In an interview with *Indonesian Times*, Indonesia's former Deputy Prime Minister, Hardy, quoted "Indian strategists who admitted that India had the motives and intentions of expanding influence in Southeast Asia, and perhaps, to fill one day the vacuum left by the possibility of U.S. withdrawal from the Western Pacific region."⁷¹ According to a *Time* report, an Indonesian army colonel described his government as "concerned" about India's longer-term intentions, explaining this to be the main reason for the Indonesian decision to build a large naval base on Sumatra that would provide quick access to the Bay of Bengal.⁷²

70. *The Daily Star* (Dhaka) 27 December, 1992.

71. "Southeast Asian Countries Should Watch Indian Military Development," *The Indonesian Times*, 16 August, 1989.

72. Ross H. Munro, "Super Power Rising: Propelled by an Arms Buildup, India Asserts its Place on the World Stage," *Time*, 3 April 1989, p. 9.

It should be mentioned here that India's forward maritime strategy is reflected in giving strategic importance to the Andaman and Nicobar islands in the Bay of Bengal. While the first naval air station and a floating dock was commissioned at Port Blair, the first district headquarters of the Coast Guard was established in the Campbell area, due north across the South Andaman island. The geostrategic importance of these islands is due to the fact that they guard the approaches to the Indian Ocean from the Malacca Straits and South Java. In giving importance to these islands what is often ignored by the Indian analysts is the fact that these islands are only 90 miles away from Indonesia, while they are about 900 miles far off the Indian mainland. Seen from the strategic perspective, Indonesia has more legitimacy and strategic grounds to keep vigilance over these islands, for they directly impinge on its security perimeter. Hence, power projection by the Indian navy reaching these islands is bound to be of discomfort for Indonesia. The result is that these two countries appear to be locked in a naval arms race (See Appendix III) with the Indonesian government's decision to build a large naval base on Sumatra. Considering the stakes of China and Japan in the region both geopolitically as well as economically as the vital maritime route, the possibility of these two countries in joining the race cannot also be ruled out.

According to former Malaysian Defense Minister, Ahmad Rithaiddin, India's growing naval capability to project power well beyond its border has caused "some alarm and concern in East Asia and Western Pacific." He further said that India must show its neighbours, including Malaysia and other countries in Southeast Asia, that it does not have any ambitions to interfere in regional affairs.⁷³ A Malaysian defense analyst J. N. Mak has argued that "India is very definitely looming larger on the defense consciousness of countries in this part of the world."⁷⁴ In 1991 Malaysian government had expressed its intention of acquiring more survey ships and

73. "East Asia and Western Pacific Brace for an Ascendant India," *The International Herald Tribune*, 4 October, 1989.

74. *Ibid.*

acquisition of four Swedish submarines from Kockums to expand its navy.⁷⁵ The acquisition of the Kockums submarines will be spread over several years, but probably all within the Sixth Malaysian Plan of 1991-95. Thus, Malaysia, too, has embarked upon naval modernisation programme (see Appendix III).

Singapore's response was conveyed by Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew when he visited Thailand in 1988. He identified both China and India as potentially troublesome for the regional countries.⁷⁶ It is worth reflecting here that currently Singaporean navy has 198 naval aircraft and 18 patrol boat/craft. Acquisitions of these naval items have outnumbered India's acquisitions of the above items (see Appendix III). Thus, like Indonesia and Malaysia, Singapore also has beefed up its navy (see Appendix III).

Beyond South and Southeast Asia the country which has voiced much concern about Indian naval build up is Australia. In Australia, unofficial defence analysts and commentators, notably A. W. Grazebrook writing in *Pacific Defence Reporter*, have since the late 1970s questioned the motives behind the Indian naval expansion.⁷⁷ Australia has been concerned that during the 1980s the Indian navy expanded in size and capabilities to the point where it could pose a threat to Australia or Australian maritime interests, if New Delhi decided to use it for such a purpose.⁷⁸

At the end of the 1980s the issue was brought into a sharper focus, as Defence Minister Kim Beazley repeatedly drew attention in 1988-89 to India's growing military, and especially, naval capabilities. The Minister stressed that he was not claiming that there was an Indian naval threat to Australia's security: he was, rather, merely alluding to an 'intriguing' phenomenon which was beginning to affect Australia's strategic environment. In any case, he still conveyed the impression that the extension of India's strategic reach was potentially damaging to Australian

75. *Defence and Foreign Affairs Weekly*, March 18-24, 1990.

76. *The Sunday Times* (London), 15 October 1989.

77. Tim Huxley, "India's Naval Expansion and Australia," *Contemporary South Asia* (Vol. 1, No. 3, 1992), p. 411.

78. *Ibid.*

interests and was a matter of concern to defence policy-makers in Canberra. According to Beazley, " ... any development of a force projection capability in our general region must interest us ... In India's case the possession of a substantial number of carriers, the possibility of balanced carrier battle groups and submarines, poses possibilities for extensively increased Indian influence at the major eastern Indian Ocean choke points." ⁷⁹

To some degree, the concern expressed by Beazley over India's growing naval power almost certainly reflected genuine anxiety over a changing strategic environment in the Indian Ocean--an anxiety shared not only with unofficial commentators like Grazebrook, but also with official defence circles in other countries on the Ocean's eastern littoral.⁸⁰

For many Australians concerned about the changing naval balance in the Indian Ocean, the emergence of India as a major naval power seemed to alter Australia's strategic environment permanently. One aspect of this Australian concern-- at least until the effective cessation of the Cold War at the end of the 1980s--was with New Delhi's traditional international alignment with Moscow. This alignment potentially pitted Australia, closely allied with Washington through the ANZUS treaty, and India against each other in the event of superpower conflict. But more important was the fact that India is a regional power: its navy will remain, indeed its local preeminence has been enhanced, even if the major extra-regional powers withdraw their navies from the Indian Ocean under any future arms control arrangement.⁸¹

One specific and important facet of official Australian anxiety concerned the effect that India's naval expansion might have on countries to the north of Australia. In his series of speeches in 1988-89, which included discussion of India's naval expansion, Kim Beazley often quoted the concern expressed by his Malaysian counterpart regarding this manifestation of the changing regional balance of power.⁸² From Australian perspective, there were

79. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 412.

80. *Ibid.*

81. *Ibid.*

82. *Ibid.*, p. 413.

legitimate grounds for concern that India's naval expansion might have a knock-on effect in terms of stimulating the further and perhaps competitive proliferation of military power amongst Australia's South East Asian neighbours.⁸³

Although following the end of the Cold War India and some of the ASEAN countries (especially Malaysia) are planning to foster joint military cooperation, yet articles published in the Indian news media tend to justify continued Indian naval build up on the ground of a perceived naval alliance by the three major Islamic states of Iran, Pakistan, and Indonesia as well as on the basis of a possible entry of the Chinese navy into the Indian Ocean at the behest of some of the littoral states.⁸⁴ Raju G. C. Thomas, a prominent Indian naval expert subscribed to this view in one of his 1990 article.⁸⁵ In any event, joint military cooperation between India and some of the ASEAN countries does not imply that parties concerned would either scale down their navies or stop expanding their navies. A naval arms race among the concerned powers in the Indian Ocean region, therefore, seems to be the inevitable reality even in the post-Cold War era.

83. *Ibid.*

84. See two articles by Harvey Stockwin, "Chinese Ambitions in South China Sea," *The Times of India* (New Delhi), 2 March, 1988 & "Prolonging Tension in South China Sea," *The Times of India* (New Delhi), 3 March, 1990.

85. Raju G. C. Thomas, "Military Balance in South Asia," *Strategic Studies Journal*, (Vol. 3, No. 1 & 2, 1990), p. 43.

Appendix I

The Share of the Three Indian Services in the Annual Defense Budget

Rs/Crs	1962-63	1963-64	1964-65	1965-66	1966-67	1967-68	1968-69	1969-70	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73*	1973-74*
Rev Total												
(Actuals)	436.8	727.9	715.8	790.9	834.1	906.4	970.1	1013.5	1103.0	1390.1	1427.4	1447.4
Army %	77.5	78.4	78.6	77.6	77.9	78.4	77.6	75.6	74.0	75.1	75.3	71.1
Ar Fc %	17.8	18.5	18.0	18.6	17.9	17.3	18.2	19.8	20.7	19.9	16.6	22.9
Navy %	4.7	3.1	3.3	3.8	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.6	5.2	5.0	5.1	6.0
Cap Total**												
(Actuals)	40.6	88.0	73.8	70.4	71.0	76.4	78.7	97.4	117.0	139.9	160.0	147.8
Army %	45.7	53.4	58.1	53.9	55.4	56.4	52.0	52.9	51.1	50.0	45.2	38.5
Ar Fc %	41.0	39.8	34.6	38.4	36.8	31.0	25.0	18.2	14.6	17.0	15.2	12.7
Navy %	13.3	6.8	7.3	7.7	7.8	12.6	23.0	28.9	34.3	33.0	39.6	48.8
Rev, Cap, NonEF**												
(Actuals)	495.7	834.3	810.1	884.9	907.6	1008.8	1078.9	1145.5	1265.1	1580.8	1644.4	1655.6
Army %	75.6	76.2	77.2	76.2	76.1	77.3	76.3	74.3	72.7	73.5	72.9	69.0
Ar Fc %	19.1	20.3	19.1	19.7	19.4	17.9	18.2	19.1	19.5	19.2	18.6	21.3
Navy %	5.3	3.5	3.7	4.1	4.5	4.8	5.5	6.6	7.8	7.3	8.5	9.7
% age Increase of Previous Yr												
Army % Incr.	-	69.5	- 1.6	7.8	5.7	9.4	5.5	3.5	8.0	26.5	3.1	-4.7
Ar Fc % Incr.	-	79.3	- 8.8	12.6	1.1	2.8	8.7	11.2	12.7	22.7	- 0.1	16.2
Navy % Incr.	-	10.0	3.2	22.2	12.3	19.7	21.4	27.0	31.5	16.7	18.6	17.7

* The figures for 1972-73 are Revised Estimates; those for 1973-74 are from Budget Estimates.

** Note that Capital Total expenses on Manufacturing and Research Establishments that were directly assigned to one of the three Services If also excludes "Outlay on Industrial and other Organisations" which are the 8 public sector undertakings under the Defence Ministry.

*** Non-effective charges refer pensions, awards, etc.

Source : Figures computed from the annual *Defense Services Estimates* 1962-63 to 1973-74, Ministry of Defense, Government of India, New Delhi, as adapted from Raju G. C. Thomas, "The Politics of Indian Naval Re-Armament, 1962-1974," *op. cit.*, p. 455.

Appendix II
The Share of the Three Indian Services in the Annual Defense Budget

(Rs/Crs)	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	1987-88	1988-89	1989-90	1990-91
Rev Total							
(Actuals)	5924	7020	9179	8860	9473	10271	n.a.
						(RE)	
Army %	67.1	65.6	67.5	73.5	72.3	72.5	n.a.
Ar Fc %	24.3	25.2	23.3	18.0	18.8	18.1	n.a.
Navy %	8.6	8.4	8.0	8.0	8.2	8.1	n.a.
Cap Total							
(Actuals)	611	967	1298	3107	3727	4229	4803
						(RE)	(BE)
Army %	38.6	27.4	26.9	25.2	26.9	28.5	29.6
Ar Fc %	11.8	9.3	8.0	37.7	34.2	31.5	31.5
Navy %	49.6	42.6	44.8	26.6	27.1	26.4	26.5

Note : n.a. = Not available.

RE = Revised estimates; BE = Budget estimates.

Source : Figures collated from the annual *Defense Services Estimates*, 1984-85 to 1990-91, Ministry of Defense, Government of India, New Delhi.

Appendix III
Comparative Naval Buildup : India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Australia, Malaysia, and Singapore
1991-72-1992-93

Item	Country											
	India		Pakistan		Indonesia		Australia		Malaysia		Singapore	
	1971-72-1992-93		1971-72-1992-93		1971-72-1992-93		1971-72-1992-93		1971-72-1992-93		1971-72-1992-93	
Personnel	40,000	55,000	10,000	20,000	34,000	44,000	17,820	15,300	3,000	10,500	5,00	4,500
Aircraft Carrier	1	2					1					
Submarine	4	15	4	6	12	2	4	5				
Cruiser	2		1		1							
Destroyer	3	5	2	3	4		5	3				
Destroyer Escort	9		3				6					
Destroyer (GM)							3					
Destroyer Tender							1					
Frigate (general purpose)	1		2									
Frigate		21		10	11	17		8	2	4		
Corvettes		14										6
Missile craft		8		8		4				8		6
Torpedo craft				4		2						
Anti-Submarine	5											
Anti-aircraft	3											
Patrol boat/craft	10	17	6	13	20	42		19		29		18
Fast Patrol boat									4			3
Motor torpedo boat					30							
Other patrol boat									24			

Contd.

Appendix III (Contd.)

Comperative Naval Buildup : India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Australia, Malaysia, and Singapore
1991-72-1992-93

Item	Country										
	India		Pakistan		Indonesia		Australia		Malaysia		Singapore
	1971-72-1992-93		1971-72-1992-93		1971-72-1992-93		1971-72-1992-93		1971-72-1992-93		1971-72-1992-93
Minesweepers/	4	20	8		21	2		5	6	5	1
Minewarfare											
Landing Ship	1				6						
Seaward Defense Boat	11				25						1
Coastal Escorts					18						
Motor gun boats					18						
Fast troop transport							1				
Amphibious		9				16				2	5
Naval aircraft	76	121	2	13	37	33	1	15		6	198
Support & Miscellaneous		20				18				3	

Source: *The Military Balance* 1971-72 and 1992-93, (IISS, London).

Appendix IV
Major Navies of the World and their Force Levels

Item	Country							
	USA	Russia	U K	France	Italy	China	India*	Japan
Personnel	546,650	320,000	62,100	64,900	48,000	2,60,000	55,000	44,000
Submarines(total)	110	250	21	17	8	46	15	17
Strategic (nuclear)	25	55	2	4	-	1	-	-
Tactical	87	183	19	13	-	44	-	13
Principal Surface Combatants	118	192	43	41	29	54	28	64
Patrol and Coastal Combatants	30	305	27	23	15	860	39	11
Amphibious	65	80	6	9	2	61	9	6
Naval Aircraft	266(a)	1,390(b)	198(c)	194(d)	38(e)	945(f)	121(g)	171(h)
Support and Miscellaneous	162	685	32	37	34	150	20	18

Note : * Since INS *Chakra* returned to Russia.

- (a) 224 cbt ac, 42 armed hel; (b) 1,100 cbt ac, 290 armed hel; (c) 45 cbt ac, 153 armed hel;
 (d) 145 cbt ac, 52 armed hel; (e) 2 cbt ac, 36 armed hel; (f) 880 shore-based cbt ac, 65 armed
 hel; (g) 46 cbt ac, 75 armed hel; (h) 99 cbt ac, (plus 15 in store), 72 armed hel.

Source : *The Military Balance 1992-93* (IISS, London, 1992)