

Reorienting Indian Military Grand Strategy

Defensive Territoriality to Offensive Oceanic in the Indo-Pacific

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In 2017, China overtook the United States in gross domestic product (GDP), if measured in purchasing power parity.¹ Strategic circles worldwide have been in a quandary over the consequences, for, after all, despite the confusing nature of international relations, there is still a remnant of world governance, over which the world's hegemon presides. As a measure of the world's concern, a conference was convened in February 2019 by the Washington-based Office of Net Assessment to discuss the consequences of the possible forthcoming loss of hegemony by the United States. The organizers were taken aback when most participants implied that this feared loss of hegemony would not occur. The conference concluded inconclusively, suggesting that much further discussion was required on the nature of hegemony.

It would be wise of the Indian strategic community to do its own analysis, particularly if the concept of the Indo-Pacific is a forthcoming reality. To dissect the rise and fall of the national GDP of countries, we are largely dependent on the work of Angus Maddison, according to whom, for over 500 years, China has in fact had the largest GDP; except for perhaps the year 1700 when, at the height of the Moghul Empire, India assumed the first position.² Yet, in 1767, Robert Clive defeated Siraj-ud-Doula at Plassey, extracting from Mir Jafar³ £160,000, equivalent to £21 million (2019) and £500,000, equivalent to £70 million (2019), which formed the corpus of founding the British Indian Army, London's sword arm in Eurasian battles for two centuries.

In 1890 Great Britain, in a remarkable demonstration of hegemonic power, mounted a punitive expedition against the Mahdi in Sudan for the murder of the British agent Charles George Gordon. Traversing 1,000 miles up the Nile, a combined force of British and Indian troops decisively defeated the Mahdi's forces at Omdurman,⁴ giving rise to the famous ditty "we have the Maxim gun [machine gun], and they have not." A year later, the British undertook the infamous opium wars against the world's number one GDP power—China. Peking at the time had under arms the largest army in the world, but no significant Navy, demonstrating in the early twentieth century that a powerful continental country could be insig-

nificant as a hegemonic power. Britain's GDP at the time was only the fourth largest, indicating the link between GDP and hegemonic power *could* be tenuous. In the nineteenth century, and even later, Britain's GDP was only a fraction of China's, but there was little doubt in the mind of the world as to who the hegemon was, even though sometime in the late nineteenth century the United States overtook both China and the United Kingdom in GDP. In actual hegemonic power, the narrative is completely different from that of the competition over GDP—hence it is easy to understand the skepticism of the general audience at the Washington conference over discussing the impending loss of US hegemony.

The economic decline of the United Kingdom began during World War I. Britain was forced to borrow heavily, mostly from the United States, so much so that the national debt to the United States increased from £650 million in 1914 to £7.4 billion in 1919.⁵ The total debt of the United Kingdom at the end of the world war was £1.78 trillion, or 86.5 percent of its GDP. The total war cost over £3 trillion, and in 1920–21 resulted in the deepest recession Britain had ever experienced. The economic woes of the country led to the United States in usurping the world's economic lead by the mid-1930s. Nevertheless, during WWI Britain demonstrated world hegemony by sitting with France and parceling out among themselves the collapsed Ottoman empire in the Middle East. Called the Sykes–Picot Agreement,⁶ the Middle East was carved up into French and British spheres of influence, by drawing several straight lines marking the boundaries of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Israel, and Lebanon. In an exercise of supreme hegemonic power, the Middle East countries came into existence, without regard to ethnic or sectarian characteristics.

In the meanwhile, the United States was quickly rising, even though some said that it had already risen in 1890, when its GDP overtook that of Great Britain. Hegemony was unpopular in Washington as it was considered imperialistic. The first writer to suggest a world role for the United States was Alfred Mahan, the naval strategist who said that a great power must control the sea lanes, for which foreign bases were necessary.⁷ These words were echoed almost verbatim by the 19th Communist Party Congress in Beijing, which spoke of China becoming a world power by 2050. Bankrupted by the expenditures of WWII and the money that Great Britain had borrowed from the United States and backed up by the huge fleet of aircraft carriers that the US Navy had built against Japan, Washington quite smoothly slipped into the vacant hegemonic slot left by Britain. Consider this—the United States took 55 years, from 1890 to 1945, to translate economic superiority into hegemony. Can China do it in 30 years? Perhaps it can. New Delhi needs to know, because to live under Beijing's hegemony is not going to be easy.

India and the Hegemon

The Indian ruling congress party very early after independence opted for a policy of nonalignment and, looking back 70 years, it can be said that the policy benefited India on all fronts. Diplomatically, the closeness to the erstwhile USSR rescued India in the international forum on Kashmir for many years. Simultaneously the country was virtually fed by American PL 480 wheat for over a decade. These are not the only two examples, but many more can be produced to show New Delhi taking advantage of both sides for the country's benefit. After the Cold War ended, New Delhi quickly shed its anti-US stance in the Indian Ocean, recognizing the global maritime hegemony of the United States. Joint exercises quickly followed, while Russia continued strategic assistance in the nuclear and submarine programs. Over the years, New Delhi has found itself comfortable living under US hegemony and has even slowly begun to depend on it against a rising China. Today, the Quad exists as an idea, if not a formal alliance. Diplomatically also the nuclear deal with the United States and efforts to end India's technological isolation have pushed Washington and New Delhi closer. If we make any realistic deductions from Xi Jinping's declaration at the 19th party congress, it must be that Beijing intends to become a great power, a maritime hegemon, and participant in making the new world order. While the contours of this new world order are yet to emerge, the Belt and Road Initiative gives us a clear idea as to the global reach of China in 2050.⁸ At that stage it will be too late for New Delhi to make up its mind on the core of its foreign policy. This is because Beijing, by accessing Pacific and Indian Ocean ports, would already be able to challenge US maritime hegemony in India's neighborhood. Pakistan would automatically be part of the greater Chinese alliance, while India will be outside it. Hence, India's choice would already have been made—to be hostile to Beijing's world.

It is too early to conclude whether Beijing's attempt to become the world's hegemon by 2050 will succeed, or, whether the world might find itself divided into two spheres of influence. Being a geographical neighbor of China's with an adversarial relationship on the border, India is going to find it difficult to pursue a policy of strategic autonomy, particularly with an underfunded armed force. This is especially so if military thinkers continue to tread an intellectual rut, concerned only with a strategy of territorial integrity. In the post-Cold War world, India has adjusted to living under US hegemony, although New Delhi has disagreements with some US overseas deployments. There is some level of comfort that the United States as a hegemon is still a liberal democracy. How will India adjust to a hegemon who is a dictatorial, one-party state with an adversarial relationship over a 2,500-km border, and has intentions to dominate the Indian Ocean with access

through Pakistan and Myanmar? In January 2020, while the world was combining to sanction Myanmar over the international court's judgment of genocide against the Rohingyas, Beijing first blocked the motion in the security council and second sent Xi Jinping to Naypaydew to sign a gasoline agreement from Yunnan to the Bay of Bengal.⁹

The theater of future conflict is undoubtedly the Indian Ocean with China attempting to dominate the geopolitics of Southeast Asia, the North Arabian Sea, and the south Indian Ocean. The People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) will have adequate carrier battle group numbers to operate in the Indian and Atlantic oceans. Off their own coast they will probably follow a strong sea denial strategy based on missiles, shore-based airpower, and submarines. Should our navy to follow a Mahanian strategy of protecting sea lanes only, it will be met by skeptical political thinkers, resulting in diminished funding. The Navy will have to find an aggressively positioned role in the changed hegemonic world, where it will have to influence Beijing's strategy in the Indian Ocean. The strategy will have to be relevant in a post-Mahanian world for three reasons.

- Mahan based his strategy on the narrative of maritime conflict between 1650 and 1815. Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man* pertinently points out that there were only two real democracies in 1815. In 2010, there are almost 140 democracies, even if they are somewhat imperfect. Democracies do not make war on other democracies, and hence, the likelihood of war has greatly diminished. Wars on commerce, involving the severing of sea lanes are more in the past and globalization and the World Trade Organization have made safe sea lanes a universal objective. Navies structured only to protect sea lanes are out of date.
- Mahan's world did not know nuclear weapons. The advent of weapons of mass destruction has actually been a dampener to conventional wars, and the war at sea against the economies of the enemy.
- In a world where the hegemon is changing, the great worry is the stability of geopolitics. Large navies could become the primary influencer of changing geopolitics, along with financial inducements that alter the voting pattern in the General Assembly. We are now looking at the post-Mahanian world where navies are coercive instruments, backing diplomacy, rather than sea lane interdictors.

The failure of India's maritime strategy to create resonance in Delhi has resulted in severe underfunding, amounting to just 14 percent of the defense budget. On the other hand, the Army's disproportionate share of 61 percent of the budget

has resulted in the Indian Army aggregating 1,250,000 soldiers, who outnumber the PLA by 265,000. Yet a combination of factors, such as adverse geography, Beijing's vast financial resources, and the huge Chinese expenditure in border infrastructure, ensures that India can only take a defensive posture in the Himalayas. No punitive offensive strategy is possible despite spending 61 percent of the \$72 billion defense budget. To live as the neighbor of a rogue hegemon, some conventional deterrent must be evolved. The land option has been attempted and despite spending the lion's share of national funds, it has proved to be a failure. This article investigates a new oceanic option, using the lessons of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), leveraging the Quad, to create information dominance and to create a punitive strategy. Options such as cyber warfare and the use of artificial intelligence were examined, but New Delhi has left it too late to start catching up with China, which has had a head start.

Leveraging the Quad: Regaining the Advantage in an Asymmetrical Conflict with China

There are few to no chances of democracies achieving strategic surprise in great power conflicts, which is why the exclamation of the standard lookout on a Pakistani destroyer patrolling off Karachi on the night of 4 December 1971 was explicit. He shouted in Urdu that he saw a red fireball approaching. From the top to the lowest ordinary seaman, this remark was the only warning of the Indian Navy's surprise missile attack on Karachi.¹⁰ Such instances are rare, testified by Secretary Robert Work when he answered in an interview that the US Navy would probably have to receive the first blow in a conflict with China. That said, it should not have led to the humiliation of a US Navy destroyer, which was brought to a standstill by a bunch of fishing boats crowding the path of the destroyer, who then hijacked its towed sonar. In India, a democracy, we may also have to accept that the events of Nathu La and Galwan are only going to recur on a geopolitical scale as Beijing strives for world hegemony. How can the Indian Navy craft a strategy to regain the competitive advantage, lost by others in what will eventually turn into a battle of the first salvo? This article contends that the limitation of being a democracy need not mean compulsory humiliation, and that regaining the competitive advantage is a compulsory strategy for democracies. The Indian Navy is chosen to lead such a tri-service strategy. This must be done with care, so that the limited action does not lead to open war, while simultaneously ensuring that escalation remains within our control.

Oil Imports—China’s Achilles’ Heel

Much literature already exists on the relatively invincible front presented by China, particularly in the continental domain. In the maritime arena the “carrier killer” ballistic missile threatens to erode the general US naval supremacy in the west pacific. For such a country, the oil imports passing through the Indian Ocean seem to present an acutely unguarded front. Particularly so if the normal PLAN presence in the Indian Ocean is limited to the incoming and outgoing ships of the Somalia patrol. That said, let it be clear that there are no plans to attack or sink unguarded Chinese or third party flagged oil tankers. China’s Achilles’ heel is being identified with the purpose of creating a threat chain that will lead to the limiting of the intended battlespace over which information domination is sought, and therefore an area where PLAN numerical superiority will be inconsequential. The oil will indeed be threatened but the eventual targets are unquestionably PLAN combatant vessels, who will be deployed in response to an oil sea line of communication (SLOC) crisis.

The Area of Oil Vulnerability and Beijing’s Strategic Choices

China was at one stage self-sufficient in oil, but its impressive economic growth makes it the most oil import-dependent country in the world.¹¹ To arrive at a limited geographical area through which its oil import passes it is necessary to identify the sources of its import. According to the CIA factbook, 44 percent of China’s oil comes through the strait of Hormuz and the Red Sea, rounding Sri Lanka, and the traffic flowing through the strait of Malacca. Another 21 percent originates in countries such as Angola, Congo, Venezuela, the United Kingdom, which rounds the Cape of Good Hope and transits through either the Malacca strait or the Indonesian straits. The second-largest single source of Chinese oil, Russia, sends 15 percent of the total imports mostly via continental pipelines and a small amount by rail. The remainder of Chinese oil consumption is locally produced. What Chinese sources loosely refer to as the “Malacca dilemma” is actually a geographical area as shown in the figure (Fig 2). Naturally, it follows that if India decides to intercept Chinese oil, the effort will have to be concentrated in that part of the Indian Ocean before the oil tankers transit the choke points. Intercepted tankers can be held in a holding area off the Nicobar Islands belonging to India.

Holding Chinese oil is not an end in itself but is meant to provoke an expected reaction. Therefore, China’s calculations on its oil import vulnerability cannot be different from the calculations made in Washington or New Delhi. In the year 2019, before the onset of the covid pandemic, China’s oil consumption was roughly 650 million tons, which converts to between 1.5 and 1.8 million metric

tons per day. This amount of oil could on average be carried by between seven and nine 200,000-ton oil tankers per day. Although we have no specific evidence, China should need to unload seven to nine super tankers a day to keep its economy running. This much is clear to all concerned. Beijing's national security strategy must be taking cognizance of this vulnerability. Once these tankers transit the straits and enter the South China Sea, they enter an area of Chinese maritime superiority, but before they do so, what is Beijing's calculation? Do they believe that their SLOCs in the Indian Ocean are safe because the United States assures them that the Quad strategy is a "free and open" Indo-Pacific? If that is so, are they assured that they can be expansionist and aggressive on the Himalayan border, and be guaranteed that no punishment will be imposed in the Indian Ocean? This must be the case because there is no explanation for their aggression in the Galwan valley against India in 2020.

This chain of events clearly must be broken. For the United States to take an opposing stand against China in the South China Sea and guarantee the safety of China's oil in the Indian Ocean is a contradictory stand and minimal to national interests. So far New Delhi has not raised this issue with Washington, despite the first discussion paper "Striking Back" being sent to the government of India, recommending the abandoning of the "free and open" assurance.¹²

Influencing Beijing's Strategic Choices

The grand strategy is not to force a conflict over intercepted oil tankers, but to stress to Beijing's strategists that rogue behavior, whether against India in the Himalayas generally or against world order will have bad consequences. As China tends to challenge the US hegemony, there will be increasing compulsion by the democracies to compel China to abide by the rules. A threat to Chinese oil in the Indian Ocean is of world benefit and particularly so for India. But those who make strategic choices in Beijing are shrewd, headed by Xi Jinping. When they think through possible consequences, the results must go way beyond the diversion of oil imports and point toward a maritime disaster.

The PLAN is a growing force, with China's shipyards already outbuilding the US Navy. Beijing would therefore want to contest the interception and diversion of their oil. So, when they make their assessment, they will rapidly arrive at the area in the Indian Ocean that they will have to contest and dominate. This area would be no different from the one that India also must dominate. Hence, we arrive at a common perception of the battlespace.



Figure 1. Pictorial Representation of the Eastern Battlespace (Source : Author)

Dominating the Battlespace off Malacca and the Indonesian Straits

It has already been argued that a Sino-Indian conflict, in general, would be an asymmetric one.¹³ However, this does not create any anxiety, because India with the nonlethal assistance of the Quad intends to dominate the battlespace through the superior information-gathering maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) assets of the US, Japanese, and Australian navies. The history of conflict is replete with examples of the RMA being utilized to gain victory against asymmetric odds. Indian security analysts should be more than familiar with any number of occasions when Indian armies, superior in manpower, were swept aside by more technologically advanced foreign invaders, eventually leading to India losing its freedom. So, numbers are clearly irrelevant. It is assessed that in nominal times the average number of PLAN combatants in the Indian Ocean are few. If and when Chinese oil begins to get intercepted, reinforcements would be sent, but this is where superior geography kicks in. The PLAN reinforcing fleet would have to transit either singly or en masse through one of the straits westward.

If the entire relevant geographical area, even beyond the battlespace, could be subdivided into areas of surveillance responsibility, it should be possible to locate

and track all PLAN combatants well before they transit the straits. (See map in Fig 2) It is envisaged that PLAN combatants would be reported to the waiting Indian Fleet, days before they even get to the straits, thereby giving the missile-armed Indian Fleet information dominance of the battlespace. Tactically, Chinese and Indian surface-to-surface missiles are of comparable ranges, but with information dominance the Indian side will have the advantage of the first salvo. The presumption is that the world is still working on the lessons of the RMA demonstrated in Desert Storm, that the side that delivers more and accurate ordinance based on the information dominance of the battlespace will win. It is admitted that allowing events to escalate to a full-fledged naval war is neither sensible nor advisable. However, the democracies, including India, are forced to accept that Beijing tends to use its superior force against smaller powers only to terminate the escalation at a moment of Beijing's choosing. This must be prevented by making it evident to Chinese strategists that the costs of an adventure on land, air, or sea will be speedily and devastatingly countered.



Figure 2. Quad Members Areas of Maritime Search Responsibility (Source : Author)

Force must clearly be altered with diplomacy, so that the intended initial punitive action can be terminated before a full-fledged war. Termination, for Beijing, is going to be a painful decision, taken only because the alternative is worse. This perception can be given to Beijing only by transmitting the understanding that

due to the Quad, information dominance will always remain with the democracies. There is a presumption here, and that is that PLAN headquarters might also provide the Chinese task force with maritime patrol aircraft cover after they transit the straits. Currently, Beijing has no airfields from which air cover can be provided in the Indian Ocean west of the Indonesian straits. However, to be doubly sure, this issue is dealt with in the succeeding paragraph.

Ensuring Air Dominance in the Battlespace and Denying MDA to the Adversary

As amplified in the first part of the paper entitled “Striking Back¹⁴,” rarely has India mounted a tri-service response to Chinese aggression. Beijing has taken it for granted that as the generally weaker power, India would never do anything to widen a war of territorial aggression. That this article recommends a punitive response may come as a strategic surprise, but for the fact that the loss of Indian lives would ordinarily be countered by a declaration of a counterattack at a place and time of our choosing. This warning is inevitable, even if it means some loss of surprise. The big assumption is that along with battlespace dominance, we will simultaneously deny the Chinese any ability to fly their MPAs in the same area. To achieve this, we will need the cooperation of the Indian Air Force (IAF), possibly operating out of Car Nicobar. This punitive air force base will need upgrading of its infrastructure to enable the basing of possibly four airborne early warning (AEW) aircraft, such as the US Navy’s E2C as well as a squadron of fighter aircraft, whose primary purpose will be to suppress Chinese MPA and AEW flights in the battlespace.

Clearly the Quad will have to be a party to the overall strategy and to ensure air coordination. It must be reiterated that the United States, Japan, and Australia are not being considered as alliance partners, but collaboration partners with whom an intelligence-sharing agreement already exists. So, in terms of capital assets, we are only short of an upgraded air force base at Car Nicobar, as well as the required air assets. Maritime strategy is therefore no longer a single service function and necessarily needs Air Force cooperation.

Diplomacy and Maritime Strategy

The Indian Foreign Service and the Indian Navy are the only two government services whose jurisdiction of work lies totally outside the borders of the country. It would stand to reason that the two services should work in close coordination. The nature of this coordination has been well articulated by the military strategic thinker Carl von Clausewitz, who famously stated that “war is politics by other

means.”There is theoretically a Clausewitzian line which marks the division where the possibly eventual failure of diplomacy leads to war.¹⁵ So, though war and diplomacy are closely interlinked, the rules and principles for their conduct are vastly different. Indian maritime strategy has been revised several times over the years, but there has never been an institutional method to coordinate its writing between the Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Navy. This lacuna has now come to the fore because we are transiting from a continental to an oceanic strategy. The maritime strategy being proposed now requires a nod from the Quad and a prior international understanding arrived at in defining the mechanics of instant MPA intelligence sharing.

In the first half century of the life of independent India, the national security problem was rightly considered to be territorial. In a territory-dominated national strategy the Indian Army, as the prime actor, was allocated most of the defense budget. The dominance of the Army in national security was demonstrated when, at the end of the 1971 war the Shimla Agreement, akin to a peace treaty, covered only territorial subjects and the only service officer who went to Shimla was from the army.¹⁶ As Indian economic and military power grew the need was expressed, mostly by Services Headquarters, for a coordinating National Security Council, which came about initially with the Vajpayee government. But with the absence of a Chief of Defence Staff, military, air, and naval strategies continued to be written in silos. Some amount of navy–air coordination occurred with the Navy taking over maritime air patrol duties, the acquisition by the Air Force of maritime strike Jaguar aircraft, the foundation of Southern Air Command, and the operation of Su-30 aircraft from Thanjavur.

Nevertheless, Indian diplomacy has concentrated mainly on Pakistan, China, and the United States. With the Navy reaching out both east and west, and the acceptance of the concept of the Indo-Pacific backed by a powerful Quad, the need for the Navy and the foreign office to work together has vastly increased. Dominating the battlespace over the straits will have a diplomatic fallout, which fortunately is fielded partially by the vast worldwide reach of the US foreign office. Diplomacy will be urgently required for what is being proposed in the succeeding paragraphs. The southernmost tip of the Nicobar Islands is only 65 miles from Indonesia. An Indian strategy to dominate the approaches to the Malacca strait will require the assuaging of the concerns of Indonesia, which is a primary diplomatic task better performed by a Quad initiative. In fact, much of the diplomatic fallout from instituting this strategy could best be achieved by an Indo-US initiative. Particularly so when the United States understands that we wish to challenge the Chinese concentration of power in the strait of Hormuz and the Bab-el-Mandap. There are all manner of world powers with their toes in these

waters, each trying to solve different geopolitical problems. The spaces that are being designated as concerned battlespaces include neutral powers with powerful armed forces of their own. In the eastern battlespace Singapore, with its significant air force, is no push over. Similarly so with the powers in the Arabian Peninsula being concerned with the western battlespace. The ideal and long-term solution might lie in expanding the Quad with powers such as Singapore and Oman.

So clearly, the proposed new maritime strategy has a strong diplomatic component, in which an anti-China United States potentially plays the biggest role. While India may still be opposed to a formal alliance, moving closer to the United States appears inevitable. In the central reaches of the Indian Ocean, far away from the proposed airbases in Car Nicobar and Masirah, and far from Agaléga, the only large airbase is at Diego Garcia.¹⁷ Despite India's previously unfortunate stand on this island during the Cold War, sustained carrier operations in the central and south Indian Ocean will need the use of Diego Garcia as a diversionary airfield. Undoubtedly a successful implementation of this maritime strategy depends on the large diplomatic fallout being fielded with the help of the United States. In fact, ending the old acrimony over Diego Garcia and obtaining permission for landing rights there would be the clearest peacetime signal to Beijing not to intimidate India in the Himalayas.



Figure 3. Pictorial Representation of the Western Battlespace (Source: Author)

Replicating Battlespace Dominance over the North Arabian Sea, Hormuz, and the Bab-El-Mandap

Creating battlespace domination over the eastern straits is a grand way of inducing the PLAN to attempt to interfere with the quarantining of Chinese super tankers, and thereby walk into a trap. It answers immediately the likely adverse reaction to the title of this paper from strategists who have been comfortable with the status quo of territoriality as a national strategy. Gaining dominance over the straits does not however constitute an entire national or national maritime strategy. Traditionally the Indian Navy has overtly focused on the North Arabian Sea because of the recurring wars with Pakistan. No one will however deny the Gulf is an area of great overseas importance to India. It is the primary source of the country's oil imports. If taken as a whole, it is India's foremost trading partner. It is home to around seven million Indian expatriates whose remittances to their home country amounts to \$30 billion a year.

Militarily, the Indian Navy had insufficient resources to protect these overseas interests, and as a result, Indian-flagged tankers suffered the greatest damage during the Iran-Iraq war, which saw no Indian contribution to the multilateral tanker escort force. So, an overall Indian maritime strategy has obviously to factor in the country's interests in the Gulf. The area is also, as stated earlier, the source of 44 percent of China's oil imports and a vulnerability that could prevent Beijing's aggressive foray against India. Strategically this area is likely to see the major interest of Beijing, as it has already established its overseas base, unchallenged, at Djibouti. From satellite photos of the work going on at Djibouti, there is no doubt it is meant to serve as a tri-service base in the Indian Ocean in general, and the Gulf area in particular. Development has also taken place at Gwadar, whose future is as yet uncertain. It may not, as summarized earlier, be a gas terminal for an overland pipeline into Xinjiang.

At present the PLAN does not have a major force deployment in the Indian Ocean. This is probably not for a lack of desire, but a result of the compulsion to concentrate on defending China's aggressive policies against Taiwan and the South China Sea islands. So, it makes sense for India to create battlespace dominance west of the Malacca and Indonesian straits as stated earlier. But the day is not far off when the PLAN presence in the Indian Ocean is upgraded to a permanent task force to support its oil SLOCs, its gas investments off Tanzania, and to reinforce its geopolitics in the littoral. A defensive dominance of the north Arabian Sea by India would be necessary as a counterweight to Djibouti, and also to the Sino-Pakistan strategic cooperation if it is enhanced to more than mere supply of hardware. The Indian Navy operates two fleets and there would be ad-

equate forces to deploy off Malacca and Djibouti. The lacuna will be the necessity for airpower, both for air dominance and to ward off a People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) deployment to Djibouti. A few options present themselves. The first is to imitate Japan and get US cooperation to use the airstrip in camp Lemonier in Djibouti.¹⁸ Considering the Chinese presence in Djibouti this might mean a bold or a foolhardy step. The United States and Japan could probably be pressured under the Quad agreement to lease land at the US camp. An alternative could be an old Royal Air Force airbase on Masirah Island off Oman. Considering the friendly relations with Oman and the frequent routine visits of the Indian Navy to Salalah, Oman might be willing to permit basing rights at Masirah. The Indian base being built at Agaléga does not become relevant to creating battlespace dominance in the Gulf of Aden and the strait of Hormuz. An unlikely option would be to task the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force's P-3C Orions already based at Djibouti, but this airpower is clearly inadequate to create dominance without fighter aircraft also being operated to create a dominant battlespace.

Historically, the Indian Navy has focused only westwards because of the old animosities with Pakistan. But the bilateral climate is thawing even as this article is being written. The long-term apprehension is however about the chances of survival of an increasingly radicalized Pakistani populace, combined with the possible state failure of Afghanistan a few years after the US withdrawal. All possible scenarios look bleak, as war games played in India have indicated, about Pakistan-Afghan relationships after the possible victory of the Taliban against the Afghan National Army. Could the Afghanistan irredentist claim for Pashtunistan resurface? Could al-Qaeda and the Islamic State take refuge in a Talibanized Afghanistan, as they are doing even now with the US forces present? Could radicalization overwhelm both Afghanistan and Pakistan? India's own geopolitical objectives are limited to helping Afghanistan become a modern state and to utilize Chabahar port as access to central Asia. All these strategic interests, and the necessity to block Beijing in the Gulf of Aden and the Hormuz straits, need a strong Indian presence in the seas off this area. Admittedly the geopolitics in the region are fraught with the Shia-Sunni overlay between Iran and the Arab states. The arbiter is the United States, and Washington might be uncomfortable with an Indian presence in the Gulf, unless it is assumed that it is a friendly one, deployed against China and the Islamic radicals. In any case, US support would be an absolute necessity to obtain the use of Masirah or the airfield at Camp Lemonier.

Reducing the Sino-Pak Threat of a Two-Front Land War

To land up with two bitterly hostile neighbors, out of five, must indicate some catastrophic errors in New Delhi's foreign policy. Both enmities are as old as the

country's independence. Beijing's hostility goes back even earlier to its attack on India in 1962. Mao Zedong misunderstood Jawaharlal Nehru's vision of a new Asia as patronizing bourgeois fantasy.¹⁹ Pakistan's enmity came out of the bitterness over Kashmir's loss, but pure military adventurism motivated its 1965 attack on India, a country seven times its size. 75 years have passed, and this enmity has only grown into threats of a two-front war, which in the minds of the sensible, is a bizarre idea. The government has given no directives to the armed forces on preparing for a two-front war, as it cannot, having stunted the defense budget of 1.8 percent of the GDP.

Attempts have been made over the years to make peace. Notable instances are Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Beijing in 1988 and the remarkable but tragic visit of Prime Minister Vajpayee to Lahore in 1999. However, these two visits alone do not reflect enough determination on the part of the government to make a breakthrough in creating peace. The resultant tragedy is that 75 years after independence, India's grand strategy has been reduced to a trifling territoriality. This preoccupation with territoriality has stunted India's eventual growth and rise to become a regional power by shutting off all windows to the outside world. New Delhi is rife with talk and some desultory writing of how the Chinese, from the time of Zhou Enlai, offered a territorial settlement with a swap between Aksai Chin (for China) and Arunachal Pradesh (for India).²⁰ There is no authoritative source of why and when it was turned down. But there is fair unanimity in Delhi that, for India, to accept a swap, and the "loss" of some territory, would require a bold prime Minister with an overwhelming majority in parliament. It would seem logical that a territorial settlement would require "give-and-take." The Indian parliament is prepared to take but would viciously oppose any give—even of barren, inhospitable, strategically useless territory.

The relationship with Pakistan has been truly volatile. There was a time when there was a comprehensive dialogue and talk of reopening trade and the border. The shattering of these dreams could be ascribed to General Musharaff, personally, and catastrophically to the fallout from the collapse of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and the spewing out of terrorists. This led to the attack on the Indian parliament and the near-war threat in 2002. Remaking peace with Pakistan then became hostage to Indian domestic politics and the internal political dangers of a soft stance toward Islamabad. However, all is not lost. The nascent perception in Pakistan that they will never rule in the valley of Kashmir has grown and we now have a situation where Islamabad has, at least, laid down conditions for the resumption of Indo-Pak talks. The big takeaway is that the two states have no basic war-threatening quarrel. This has been borne out the number of Indo-Pak war

games played under Indian auspices, all of which had a catastrophic Pakistan terror attack on Indian soil as the *causus belli*.²¹

Does all this lead an Indian analyst to conclude that a two-front war threat exists? The hawks in India believe that it does, and that it could even be a simultaneous attack with prospects of collusion in the nuclear sphere. These assessments exist in Delhi but are held by only a fringe. Even a Sino-Indian border skirmish is unlikely to lead to an open war because the strategic geopolitical objectives for a Sino-Indian or a Sino-Pak-Indian war simply do not exist. This article is based on the presumption that a punitive Indian capability against a Pakistan misadventure already exists and that with an oceanic battlespace dominance strategy in the Indian Ocean, a punitive capability against Beijing also can be built up.

But what of the political desire for peace? Niall Ferguson, in his new book *DOOM*,²² avers that eventually most, if not all catastrophes in the world can eventually be ascribed to politics. If one follows this line of thinking, one can speculate as to whether, even if the parliament attack occurred in 2002, should it have taken 19 years to restart peace talks with Pakistan? Is it then fair to throw up one's hands in New Delhi and lament that we face a two-front war for no fault of our own? It is true, foreign policy in India is made in the Prime Minister's Office, which proves Ferguson's theory that India faces an unwinnable two-front war owing eventually to political incompetence. Where, for instance, in India are the great negotiators of other treaties worldwide? Indian diplomats, when told that it took eight years to negotiate the SALT I nuclear arms control treaty and that it took four years to negotiate the SALT II treaty, merely look like deer caught in headlights. Compared to these marathon negotiations, the Lahore treaty was negotiated in under four days, and the warning of ballistic missile launches agreed to in a day. Eventually the buck is passed down to the Army, which has 1.2 million service members and laments that it is inadequate for a two-front war. This is monumental incompetence by both the Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of External Affairs, with more blame on the former. It might even be fair to accuse the government of deliberately not conducting serious negotiations with China and Pakistan for reasons of domestic competitive nationalism.

Coaxing the Indian Air Force to Go Expeditionary

Indian strategic culture prides itself on never having projected power—wrongly, as it happens. Until some South Indian historians such as Neelkanth Shastri entered the field of writing their version, the near-millennium of Indian expansion to Southeast Asia was largely ignored. Post-independence, when India took the leadership of the nonaligned movement and the anti-colonial initiative, it was embarrassing to admit that the Pallava Empire had expanded into Kampuchea

and was probably ended by the Cholas, another Tamil dynasty. Indians, when they go to Southeast Asia, exhibit split personalities in holding onto the theory of never expanding out of India, while simultaneously being hugely proud when the Thai and Indonesians put on the Ramayana in ballet. Upon gaining independence, the navy was led by Royal Navy officers, who transmitted to their Indian juniors that the entire Indian Ocean, including the oceanic islands, were the operational area of the Indian Navy. The Indian Navy inherited many of the outward-looking oceanic ideas from their British tutors, although earlier, Whitehall mandarins had conspired to downgrade the old Royal Indian Navy into a kind of coastguard, with the responsibility for India's maritime defense resting with the Commander in Chief Far East Fleet in Singapore. With a pitiful share of the defense budget the Indian Navy was hard-pressed to even show the flag in Singapore, the Gulf, and East Africa.

India has changed, and with it the strategic thinking of the Indian Navy. Not so much in the case of the Indian Army and Air Force, both of which are deeply tied to territoriality, with the Army almost demanding that the air force devote its major force to supporting ground operations. The Indian Air Force has perhaps not been so fortunate in inheriting the legacy of the Royal Air Force, whose moment of glory came with defending its homeland successfully in the Battle of Britain. The Indian Navy's outward look probably has two seminal dates. The first is the year 1986 when it acquired a second aircraft carrier and leased a nuclear-powered submarine. The second date was perhaps 2020 when the Chinese provoked an assault on Galwan, and many strategists began to ask whether the navy could not do anything. 2020 made it clear that the rise of China could have disastrous consequences for its neighbor—India. Merely defending the Line of Actual Control is not a viably deterrent national strategy—and that is all the Army can do. Only the Navy, supported by the Air Force, can craft a punitive strategy, choosing carefully from any of Beijing's weaknesses. This article opts for an oceanic strategy and the domination of three chosen battlespaces—the approaches to the Indonesian straits, the north Arabian Sea, and the oceanic expanse immediately south of Sri Lanka.

In the first two battlespaces, there is the need for air dominance, and this requires the IAF to think of going expeditionary, based at Car Nicobar and Masirah. Such a prospect would normally excite air strategists, but doubts exist about the Indian Air Headquarters. This doubt comes from ditching a comfortable and long-held view on airpower and becoming a little more like the US Air Force, representing national power backing a regional strategy.²³ Strategic writing on Indian airpower is sparse, so it is problematic predicting what the reaction of Air Headquarters would be to being based outside the territorial boundaries of India.

This is despite the rumors of an Indian airbase at Aini and Farkhor, Tajikistan.²⁴ There is little open-source information on either air base except that the lead was taken by India's Research and Analysis Wing intelligence agency. If there had been any keenness in Air HQ for an overseas base, Tajikistan could have been the first. There is some strategic writing that the IAF is happy to not be a tactical air force, as earlier, and is now a strategic air force. The evidence for this is slight, except for the long ranges of operation of the SU-30 fighters and the acquisition of some air-to-air refueling capacity. But this is precisely why the claim to be a strategic air force is worrying. Does merely flying over a long-distance target create air dominance? Many would hold such a view, and the bold decision to fly Indian paratroopers from Agra to Male to restore the elected government might serve as some proof. But air dominance requires 24/7 airpower and if the Air Force can be relied upon to work permanently from Car Nicobar and Masirah, India can create both Eastern and Western battlespace dominance.



Figure 4. Central Indian Ocean Battlespace & China's Oil Routes

Domination of the Central Indian Ocean Battlespace

The eastern battlespace by itself is more of a quick-reaction counterstrategy to another Chinese attack in the Himalayas inflicting casualties on the Indian Army.

Geography, which is favorable to India and disadvantageous for a Chinese Indian Ocean presence, enables us to choose the battlespace, at least temporarily. This tactic has its origins in Army doctrine, where there exists the concept of a “kill zone” or “killing ground.” Easy to set up and simple to execute, all it requires is prior coordination with the Quad. The domination of the eastern battlespace does not constitute an entire strategy, for it presumes a weak initial PLAN presence in the Indian Ocean, and consequently, a rush of reinforcements that enter through the geographically constricted kill zone. If the PLAN presence in the Indian Ocean is already considerable, we need a more extensive strategy, of which the domination of the Arabian sea battlespace is a part, focusing on a threat to Djibouti and Gwadar. The threat to Djibouti should be made overt, even in peacetime, creating a reluctance on the PLAN to base their assets there.

We need however to link these two battlespaces with an oceanic strategy, possibly based around three of the Indian Navy’s aircraft carriers, forming three carrier battle groups creating oceanic battlespace dominance over the SLOCs of the Indian Ocean, Hambantota, and the Chinese developments at Colombo and the general thrust of the Belt and Road into the Indian Ocean. Fortunately, the western part of this oceanic space has Indian access to bases in Agaléga and Seychelles, with a friendly Mauritius to the south. The eastern portion is bereft of friendly bases, except for the Australian presence in the Cocos Islands. The ideal center spot in this area is taken by Diego Garcia, with its extensive facilities, but is presumably available only for an alliance partner or in the eventuality of general Chinese aggression—and American participation.

The dominance of the Indian Ocean is, however, classic maritime strategy going back to the writing of Mahan. “Whoever dominates the Indian Ocean will dominate Asia” is a quote that many seek to own. For India, as Panikkar said, the Indian Ocean is an area that it must dominate. But how is that domination to occur? The Mahanian recommendation was of course achieving sea control by winning a decisive battle. It must be remembered that Mahan based his strategic conclusion on the maritime history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Even so he was prescient to imply that the dominance of the Indian Ocean would have worldwide geopolitical significance. Panikkar, the first Indian maritime strategist, while bemoaning India’s continental strategy, visualized an “iron ring” around the subcontinent, which again amounted to a defensive oceanic strategy. In the twenty-first century the rise of China overshadows all other geopolitical developments. Panikkar also continued the possible emergence of Chinese sea power, so he recommended an ocean strategy based on “Singapore, Ceylon, Mauritius and Socotra.”²⁵

What we must contribute to the wise men who succeed us is the method of gaining maritime dominance although Panikkar, even in 1949, foresaw the importance of airpower. Ever since operation Desert Storm and the revelation of the current RMA, we must incorporate into any idea of oceanic dominance the importance of information dominance and the velocity of ordinance delivery. So, this article has considered the doctrine of modern warfare, and concluded that, starved of funds for 70 years, the Indian Navy must use some patchwork to create oceanic dominance. The eastern and western battlespaces reduce by half the overall area where we must achieve oceanic dominance. However, even the application of the RMA does not alleviate the budgeting crisis and hence, the idea in this article of coaxing the Indian Air Force into an expeditionary role to provide airpower in the western and mid-eastern battlespaces. Every Chief of Naval Staff has repeatedly stressed that India should not forego the advantage that geography has bestowed upon it with a peninsula thrusting 1,500 miles into the Indian Ocean, while the Chinese are hobbled by their geography, restricted to just two points of entry into the Indian Ocean.

The strategy contained in Mahan's seminal work was most probably a recommendation for the United States to follow the example of Great Britain in pursuing greatness through an oceanic maritime strategy. Mahan's writing preceded the advent of the submarine, and he never considered an oceanic sea-denial strategy. In the twenty-first century we have a different geopolitical scenario. China, an essentially continental power, aspires to world domination but realizes that without at least partially challenging US maritime dominance a world power status is unachievable. It has however entered an intense competition in the western Pacific with its aggressive South China Sea expansion and left the Indian Ocean relatively undefended. This is India's opportunity to fashion a modified Mahanian idea of sea domination that includes escalatory sea denial, thereby balancing the situation in the Himalayas with expanding sea denial in the Indian Ocean. This is a nuanced strategy where the use of the classic sea denial weapon, the submarine, would be a blunt instrument. A major submarine deployment is purely offensive and cannot be controlled from headquarters and hence the idea of offensively escalated sea denial through total sea control. This is a peacetime strategy too, where, as stated earlier, we influence the choices Beijing thinks it has regarding its unprotected Indian Ocean SLOCs.

Ideally, this strategy would be executed by an aircraft-heavy navy. Historical underfunding has left the navy with only two aircraft carriers, but two operational carriers are the minimum requirement provided we use geography wisely and that the Air Force can be coaxed into an expeditionary role. By varying the areas where we choose to exercise Malabar and other Quad joint forums, we convey to the

Chinese in peacetime that their SLOCs are safe as long as Beijing follows a rule-based order. And that, in the eventuality of China acting aggressively and in an expansionist manner, we will hold its oil as hostage.

Financial Restructuring to Shift to an Oceanic Strategy

When looking at what India spends on defense, it would be possible to come to two entirely opposite conclusions. The first is that it is quite modest, when one says that it is 2.15 percent of the GDP. That perception would encourage those who opine that it is too small to be tinkered with in any way. The other way of looking at what India spends is to declare that India has the third-largest defense budget in the world. This is next to the United States, a world power, and China, an aspiring world power. Even more surprisingly, India's expenditure is larger than Russia's when it is plain to any onlooker that Russia "does" far more with its military than India. Russia, with its budget of \$61.7 billion, is handily outspent by India's \$72.9 billion—which would come as an unpleasant surprise to most Indian analysts. With its \$61.7 billion, Russia almost balances the United States in Europe, has the world's second-largest air force, and the world's third-largest navy. All this is quite apart from maintaining a balance of the strategic deterrence with the United States, with an impressive triad. When adjusted in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms China's defense budget, which is nominally at \$252 billion, balloons to \$510 billion while India's expenditure rises from \$72.9 billion to \$310 billion.

The question that rises uppermost in one's mind is—What does India do with all the money? The answer to that comes from looking at the individual share of the each of the armed services as a percentage of the total. The share of the Indian Army is 61 percent, while that of the Navy and Air force is 14 percent and 20 percent respectively. The Army, let it be clearly understood, performs only the territorial defense of the country, so that means that India spends \$40.68 billion of its defense budget on territorial defense. This is almost as much as the entire defense spending of Japan (\$49.1 billion) and South Korea (\$45.7 billion) and not much less than France (\$52.7 billion) and Germany (\$52.8 billion). Much more worrying is the proportion of the Indian Army budget of \$40.68 billion that is consumed by the costs of modernization and personnel costs. The Army spends four times its modernization budget on personnel, who number 1,250,000. A table of the starting salary of soldiers in the US, Chinese, and Indian armies is revealing.

Starting salary, US Army	\$1,733 per month
Starting salary, People's Liberation Army... ..	\$106 per month
Starting salary, Indian Army	\$370 per month

This is where the diversion on the subject of the defense budget enters emotional territory. Let us be clear that no argument is being made to even imply that the

Indian soldier should not be compensated for his valorous service. All over India, public opinion is unambiguous that the Indian Army is the most respected government institution. What we are looking at is the ratio of expenditure between equipment modernization percentage costs of the three services: Army 18 percent, Navy 54 percent, and Air Force 59 percent. Clearly, these figures are worrying. Because of the unfavorable external environment and the national grand strategy of territoriality, the Army is called upon to repeatedly fight brush fire wars, as in Kargil and Ladakh. The deep and unanswered question that arises is whether the Army's total personnel strength of 1,250,000 makes strategic sense when it spends only 18 percent of its overall budget on equipment and modernization.

The issue becomes particularly acute when we learn that the "overwhelming" force being brought to bear on the Himalayan border is by a PLA whose active-duty strength is 975,000—a figure that is 265,000 less than the active-duty strength of the Indian Army. The first conclusion that can be drawn is that whatever other explanation might exist, our grand strategy needs to shift from territoriality to an oceanic strategy. What this article hopes to convey is that defensive territoriality in an acceptable strategy but remaining on the defensive does NOT require a 1,250,000-soldier army. An offensive, deterrent strategy against China is much better achieved by an oceanic strategy bolstered by an expeditionary air force. Some explanations made by a few analysts need to be addressed. The reason given for an overwhelming Army personnel strength is that India may face a two-front war. This argument has risen lately after Doklam, although there are no facts on the ground to support such a thesis. In any case, it is not for the armed forces alone to assume that they face a two-front war. The Raksha Mantri's directive to the Chiefs of Staff Committee must clearly stipulate such a threat, which can only come if our foreign policy has totally failed. In any case, if there is talk in strategic circles of a two-front war, the government needs to bring out a white paper clarifying the issue one way or another.

Downsizing Army Numbers

This paper recommends that the personnel strength of the Army be reduced by 200,000 over a five-year period, while simultaneously shifting slowly to an oceanic strategy by further strengthening the equipment for the Army and the navy and Air Force. It is estimated an approximate sum of Rs. 3,000 crores can be saved annually by reducing the army's personnel strength by 200,000. This amount should be subdivided equally between the three services, to bolster the capital expenditure of all. In any case, we are visualizing a more equipment-oriented army, a third aircraft carrier for the navy, and two new bases/squadrons for the Air Force at Can Nicobar and Masirah. It would take about five years to downsize

Army numbers, so the transformation could be conducted over a decade. The service that stands to benefit the most is the Army itself. Much of its hardware is almost half a century old, and an additional infusion of Rs. 10,000 crores annually would rejuvenate its offensive strength by reequipping its three armored divisions and all its infantry combat vehicles, commencing in four- or five-years' time and stretched out over a decade. It is also worthwhile to note the much-demanded third aircraft carrier could easily be afforded, as the latest queen Elizabeth, the British carrier, was built for \$2.2 billion—which comes out to Rs. 32,000 crores. The Air Force would also be strengthened by two additional overseas bases and squadrons thereby making India a genuine regional military power and supreme in the Indian Ocean.

In the disastrous 1962 war with China, the PLA had adopted the communist system of compulsory military service and had millions of soldiers under arms. Sometime later, probably in the late 1980s or early 1990s, the PLA was downsized to its present strength of 975,000. Beijing had obviously made a calculated decision and did not pluck this number out of thin air, knowing that it had an active border with India. Unconfirmed reports suggest that the Central Military Commission was hugely impressed by the performance of US forces in operation Desert Storm and decided to adopt a Chinese version of the RMA. Today, although the Indian Army outnumbers the PLA Ground Forces, the PLA hugely outnumbers the Indian Army in main battle tanks and infantry fighting vehicles, and has 3,600 self-propelled artillery guns and four times the number of helicopters. The PLA is a lean, swift, and mechanized army, hugely outnumbering the Indian Army in mobility and artillery. The only responsibility that the PLA has that the Indian Army does not is the amphibious warfare theater against Taiwan. The conclusion that can be drawn is that the Indian Army is seriously in need of reorganizing. Structured as it is, it can defend Indian territory adequately, but it can never deter the PLA from choosing the time and place to try and readjust the Line of Control by aggression.

To explain to a limited audience in India the process of modernizing the Indian Army, the serving Chief of Army Staff expounded on the steps taken to use indigenous sources to modernize army equipment. However, he left a big hole in that he was unable to explain how the Indian Army intended to exploit the RMA regarding mountain warfare, when the current RMA is firstly offensive and secondly depends on air superiority. India could perhaps achieve air superiority in Ladakh, but no authority in Delhi would agree to widening the air to include the use of airpower on the Line of Actual Control. As the foremost authority on mountain warfare in the world, can the Indian Army evolve a new RMA for the mountains? Or are we, at the end of it all, abandoning all the lessons of the Desert

Storm RMA, like situational awareness and a fast deployment tempo, and relapsing into slugging it out soldier to soldier? The more we look at our strategic situation on the Himalayan border, the greater the conviction that we, in India, have cornered ourselves into a trap of our own making. By claiming 61 percent of the defense budget and denying a bigger air force, by denying any attempt to take the offensive, by refusing to widen the war, and by pouring all our money into infantry formation, we have with our unfavorable geography maneuvered ourselves into a losing cul-de-sac.

For our ambitions to be a regional power and for our diplomats to speak with authority in world forums, we need the backing of either economic or military power. The tragedy is that after spending \$72 billion, we appear as a country with only an immense army but no regional clout. Our foreign policy could do with the stiffening of a regional navy to back the words of our diplomats in the long years of peace, and for an offensive capacity in case of war.

Conclusion

If the contents of this article are accepted in the Ministry of Defence in Delhi, there will result much intellectual and financial reorientation. A \$3 trillion economy, which India's is, with hopes of growing to five and even 10 trillion in the foreseeable future, will be a regional Asian power. It cannot be solely a continental power with a large army and no power projection capability. The Army has given great service to the nation, first in holding it together, and second in defending its vast multiethnic, multi-religious fabric. In the twenty-first century, a sole preoccupation with defending territorial boundaries is out of phase with world affairs. Only the power projection capability of a domestic India can prevent the aggression of a hegemonic China in the reaches of the Indian Ocean. The million-man Army was created when manpower was relatively cheap, which now it is not. The pay and allowances and the recurring expenditure of the Army absorbs 82 percent of the Army's own budget, which is 61 percent of the total defense budget.

Blocking China's oceanic expansion will allow downsizing the manpower of the Army and a saving of thousands of crores, which can bolster the capital expenditure of all the three armed services. Not least of all will the Army itself benefit, since much of its firepower is of vintage origin. Certainly, an air force wedded to defending territorial airspace is an anachronism in the twenty-first century. The scenario in which defense strategies are to be made in this century will center around a risen China. Rarely has such a situation occurred, where the preoccupation of the democracies will mainly consist of deterring a rising, rogue, autocratic hegemon. Much of our earlier strategic literature needs a revisit and traditional legacies of thought need to be recast to meet the strategic scenario of this century. 🌐

Rear Admiral Raja Menon, Indian Navy, Retired

Rear Admiral Menon retired in 1994 as Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Operations). A submarine specialist, he pioneered the development of the new submarine arm of the Indian Navy and was therefore exposed at an early stage to policy, finance, and strategy. He was a member of the Arun Singh Committee to restructure the national defense setup in India and a member of the Defence University Committee. Admiral Menon is a visiting lecturer at all institutes of higher study of the Indian armed forces and was instrumental in organizing the first nuclear management course for Indian service officers. He is a consultant to the Indian Net Assessment Directorate. With two master's degrees in defense studies, Admiral Menon writes regularly for journals and newspapers in India and abroad. His publications include *Maritime Strategy and Continental Wars* (1988), *A Nuclear Strategy for India* (2000), and *The Indian Navy: A Photo Essay* (2000). *The Long View from Delhi: The Grand Strategy of Indian Foreign Policy* published in India and the US, 2010

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