Paradigm Shifts and Defense Reforms: The Case of India

Dr. Patrick Bratton
Hawai`i Pacific University

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Plan

I. Introduction: research plan
II. Imagining Future War
III. Indian Civilian-Military Subcultures
IV. Prospects for Reform
## Contrasting Theories About Military Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theorist(s)</th>
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Research Project: Understanding Defense Reform in India

I. Contrasting Theories of military change

II. Andaman and Nicobar Command:
   I. contrasted realism and organizational learning theories
   II. Organization theory seemed to work better

III. Constructivism and Kier
Traditional Model

1. Pakistan Centric:
   1. Rely on conventional Superiority
   2. Use strike corps to threaten Lahore

2. Spoilers: 1980s-Present
   1. Over nuclearization
   2. Use of violent non-state proxies
Indian Internal Conflicts

A. Border regions
   1) Kashmir
   2) Northeast

B. Naxals

C. Regional/transnational terrorism:
   A. India top targets for terrorism outside Iraq and Afghanistan 2000s
   B. Rise in sophisticated transnational groups like LeT

Looking Outward at Trouble on Many Sides

NORTHWEST, NORTH: ISLAMIC TERRORISTS, KASHMIR SEPARATISTS, BORDER DISPUTES

Conflict with Pakistan, a nuclear-armed state like India, dates to 1947. India claims that terrorists regularly infiltrate Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Kashmir. Three wars have been fought over rival claims to Jammu and Kashmir, India’s only Muslim majority state, where a violent movement to join Pakistan is entrenched.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban’s history of links with Pakistan’s intelligence services worries India, which has stepped up efforts to support Hamid Karzai’s government; this worries Pakistan’s strategic thinkers, who have long feared encirclement by India. Suicide bombers have attacked India’s embassy in Kabul twice in two years.

China and India share a 2,200-mile frontier in three sections, which China disputes as a legacy of colonial rule. The presence of the Dalai Lama in northern India is also an irritant.

NORTHEAST: SEPARATISM, INFILTRATION AND A FENCE

India claims that armed separatists from India find shelter in Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Nepal.

Within India, Maoists known as Naxalites draw inspiration from Maoists who recently took over in Nepal. And India is building a 2,500-mile fence to keep Islamist extremists and smugglers of arms and drugs from infiltrating from Bangladesh.

In Myanmar, India is trying to counter Chinese influence by aiding development projects and “engaging” the military junta there. In recent years, it has played down objections to junta repression.

SOUTHWEST: INDIA’S VIETNAM

Sri Lanka’s long civil war which ended last May with the defeat of Tamil rebels, embittered many of southern India’s Tamils, who sympathized with the minority Tamils of Sri Lanka. India was drawn into the civil war in 1987 in an unsuccessful peacekeeping role that alienated both sides. Some Indians call the fiasco “India’s Vietnam.”

Fiji and India are often at odds over India’s diplomatic support for Fiji’s ethnic Indian minority.
## Drivers for Change and Innovation in Indian Defense

1) Modernization for mechanized high-tempo conventional operations

2) Internal security, low-intensity conflict and border constabulary duties, soft security issues

3) Technology and cyber warfare vulnerabilities and capabilities

4) Need for power projection or “out of area” capabilities? And what level?
   a. “Soft power projection”: evacuations, humanitarian assistance and disaster response, peacekeeping
   b. “Hard power projection”: project power against opposing force/hostile resistance, military intervention/peace enforcement?

5) Need for “military diplomacy” and international cooperation: development of shared norms for what militaries do and how they are organized
Cold Start?

A. Problem:
   A. Pakistani militants attack via asymmetric proxies
   B. Need to find “strategic space” to use conventional superiority in limited war
   C. Indian army is large, and much is tied down with border or COIN work
   D. Takes 30 days to mobilize, too slow to credibly threaten

B. Cold Start “Doctrine”
   A. Be able to mobilize strike corps quickly
   B. Be able to provide military option to policymakers
   C. Advance quickly with shallow thrusts into Pakistani territory
   D. Destroy militant training centers, occupy land for diplomatic bargaining, threaten Lahore or communications with Lahore
Sino-Indian Rivalry: “Chindia” or Chasing the Dragon?

1) Differences:
   a) 2014:
      a) China: GDP 10.4 trillion, 7.4% growth rate, 129 B defense
      b) India: GDP 2.05 trillion, 5.6% growth rate, 45.2 B defense
   b) China higher on indicators (infant mortality, life expectancy, etc.)
   c) China started reforms earlier (1979 vs. 1991)
   d) China has grown faster in past (8-9% vs. 5-7%)
   e) Global R&D spending PRC 14%, India 4%

* Data from IISS Military Balance, The Economist, and Guruswamy and Singh, Chasing the Dragon
China-Pakistan Relationship

A. Background:
   1) 1950s-60s
   2) Use Pakistan to hold India down
   3) Chinese aid to Pakistani nuclear and missile program
   4) Indian nuclear weapon development tied to China, not Pakistan?

B. India:
   1) Goal to “De-hyphenate”
   2) Move beyond dealing with Pakistan to larger world
   3) Concern with China-Pakistan alliance

C. Pakistan:
   1) Obsessed with Indian security threat
      a. Drives Pakistan policy towards China
      b. Drives Pakistan policy towards Afghanistan: strategic depth
      c. Use of US military aid against India
      d. Stability-Instability Paradox
   2) Danger of Pakistan as weak state
Cold Start to Two Front Doctrine?

1) China as the great unknown?
2) 2010 end to Cold Start Doctrine
3) Two Front Doctrine
4) Challenges:
   1) Mountain Strike Corps?
   2) Infrastructure catch-up
   3) Modernization of airfields
   4) Army too busy with COIN?

INDIA’S STEPS TO COUNTER THREAT FROM CHINA

- Developing long-range ballistic missile Agni-V
- Raising a new strike corps for China border
- Deployment of BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles
- Proposed air mobile artillery guns for new mountain strike corps
- Sukhoi squadron inducted in Northeast
- A network of advanced landing grounds being made operational in places from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh
- Development of military infrastructure

14 STRATEGIC RAILWAY LINES

- EASTERN Murkongseld-Pasighat-Rupali, Misamari-Tawang, North Lakimpur-Along-Silapathar
- WESTERN Patti-Ferozpur
- SOUTHERN Jodhpur-Shergarh-Phalsund, Jodhpur-Jaisalmer
- CENTRAL Rishikesh-Karanprayag-Chamoli, Dehradun-Uttarkashi, Tanakpur-Jauljibi, Tanakpur-Bageshwar
- NORTHERN Jammu-Aknoor-Poonch, Pathankot-Leh, Srinagar-Kargil-Leh
- SOUTH-WESTERN Anupgarh-Chhattisgarh-Motigarh-BKN.
Security Concerns in Indian Ocean

Net Security Provider?

Soft Power Projection?

Hard Power Projection?
## Contrasting Theories About Military Change

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## Keir Imagining War

| Civilians | Primary concern is domestic political power of military: Elected leaders: praetorian issue, votes  
Bureaucracy: power and access  
Public: pride in military, but concerned with other issues |
|---|---|
| Military | What the military believes is possible (in terms of doctrine, strategy etc.) given political and economic constraints: Army: largest service, divided: do new missions/roles detract from Army’s dominant role?  
Air Force: wants autonomy and technology  
Navy: Cinderella service, more interested in change |
### Constraints on Military Change in Indian Context

1) **Strategic Culture of Restraint:** reluctance to use hard power, projection power

2) **Autonomy and Moral Authority:** preference for soft power/moral leadership, reluctance to create formal alliances, complicates mil-to-mil cooperation

3) **Continentalist World View:** focus on territorial threats and "maritime blindness"

4) **Lack of Articulated and Open Strategic Thinking:**
   a. No formal articulation of strategy
   b. Archives closed, difficult to learn from experience and develop SOPs

5) **Lack of integration and capacity for dialogue between civilian and military leaders**
Kargil 1999

1. Questions:
   1. Why total surprise? Intelligence failure
   2. Could India fight a tightly controlled limited war under nuclear conditions?
   3. Need to reform old organizations?

2. Reform:
   2. Group of Ministers Task Forces and Report 2001
<table>
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<td><strong>Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>MoD-Service Integration</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Service Jointness</strong></td>
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## Military and Civilian Subcultures

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<td>Navy</td>
<td>Air Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>Army Futurists</td>
<td>Army Traditionalists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defence Intellectuals</td>
<td>Bureaucracy?</td>
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<td>Politicians</td>
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Civil-Military Relations

A. Civilian control:
   1) System set in late 1940s
   2) Separation of MoD and Services
   3) Lack of constructive dialogue
   4) Autonomous military
   5) No “jointness” in military
   6) Paradox:
      a. Military complain about lack of influence
      b. Military like (and chose) autonomy
Public Opinion

Indian public feels that for India, the important tools to achieve its goals include the military and nuclear weapons.

Figure 8: The instruments of Indian foreign policy

Now about what India needs to achieve its foreign policy goals. Please say whether you personally think each of the following is important or not important for India to achieve its foreign policy goals.

- A strong military: 95% very important, 5% not important
- India having a good image in the world: 78% very important, 19% somewhat important, 2% not important
- Wise political leadership: 78% very important, 19% somewhat important, 2% not important
- Strong political leadership: 75% very important, 22% somewhat important, 1% not important
- Nuclear weapons: 79% very important, 17% somewhat important, 3% not important
- Strong countries as partners for India: 72% very important, 24% somewhat important, 2% not important
- Effective intelligence services: 66% very important, 29% somewhat important, 1% not important
- An effective Ministry of External Affairs: 68% very important, 25% somewhat important, 2% not important

Note: all poll data from Lowy India Poll 2013
Public Opinion

However, the major security and political issues that concern them are “governance” and soft security issues:
KRC and GoM Results

A. Compromise

B. No CDS, COSC and IDS, not effective

C. Two “experimental commands”
   1) Functional: Strategic Forces Command
      a. Nuclear
      b. Conceptual/training command
   2) Theatre: Andaman and Nicobar
      a. Policing role
      b. Conceptual training laboratory
Lost Opportunities 2001-14?

A. Assessment:
   1) GoM wanted assessment after 5 years
   2) Narendra Chandra Task Force 2011-13

B. Future?
   1) Doubtful more theatre commands near future
   2) No CDS
      a. 2012 civ-mil crisis with Army Chief VK Singh
      b. Watered down CoCS?
   3) Functional commands: space, special forces, cyber

C. Those who call for reform and paradigm shift in Indian security are not dominant:
   1) Focus on governance and internal security
   2) The need for power projection and “the China threat” are contested and not universally agreed upon (reluctance to muscle flex)
   3) No paradigm shift to make radical reform necessary
1. **Indian Ocean Region Focus:**
   1. **India as leader of South Asia:**
      1. SAARC leaders (+Tibet) invited inauguration
      2. Modi/India as leader of South Asia
      3. Border settlement with Bangladesh
   2. **Maritime Focus:** “removing the maritime cataract”
      1. Maritime security and navy
      2. Modi’s “Maritime Vision”
      3. Mountain strike corps scaled back for maritime?
   3. **Reaching out to Diaspora:**
      1. Visits to Mauritius, Fiji
      2. US, Australia, Canada etc.

2. **Improve defense cooperation:** make in India, skill India
   1. **US:**
      1. Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia Pacific and Indian Ocean Regions
      2. Defense Trade and Technology Initiative: aircraft carriers, UAVs, etc.
   2. Russia, France, Israel, Japan

3. **Defence reform:**
   1. Procurement and development, “Make in India”?
   2. COCS and functional commands (Special Ops, Space, Cyber)?
   3. One Rank, one pension issue has derailed government’s relationship with military
Conclusions?

Defense Reforms and Modernization remain slow
“RMA has passed India by”
Focus on replacing obsolescent equipment,
rather than qualitative updates to combat
capabilities

No consensus on need for change:
Civilians ambivalent:
Concerns over domestic power
Defense not electoral issue

Military divided
Meet current demands
Meeting future challenges

Watch maritime and defence cooperation issues