

Indian Military Buildup: Impact on Regional Stability

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Abstract

Despite more than 269 million or 21.92 per cent of the total population of India living in abject poverty, the country raised its defence budget in real terms from 9 per cent in 2014-15 to 11 per cent in 2015-16 in order to modernise its defence capabilities.¹ In the past one decade, India has remained a major and important arms market for Russia and remained the largest conventional weapons' importer globally. Indian enhancement of its military budget is indicative of its hegemonic designs for South Asia. New Delhi often justifies its increasing defence posture in the light of its threat perceptions about China, but in reality, Indian military buildup is more South Asia centric. This buildup is creating a security dilemma among its neighbouring countries. In this backdrop, the paper discusses Indian military buildup in the last fifteen years and its future security implications for regional stability.

Key words: India, Regional Security, Military Buildup, Defence Budget, Arms Race.

Introduction

Though pursuance of power and security is a desire and a legal right of every state, it can often lead to insecurity for other countries. In the last fifteen years (2001-16), India has tried to revolutionise its military capacity by importing sophisticated conventional arms. Due to excessive import of conventional arms, regional stakeholders in general, and Pakistan in particular, have serious concerns. It has been one of the largest arms importer for the past 25 years, purchasing almost 75 per cent weapons from

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¹ Department of Statistics and Information Management, Reserve Bank of India, *Handbook of Statistics on the Indian Economy* (Government of India, 2016), https://rbidocs.rbi.org.in/rdocs/Publications/PDFs/OHANDB_F0651BA902A5244DFB75DA46261B53726.PDF.

Russia.² In addition, India is maintaining and developing a private arms industry in order to overcome the financial burden of its foreign imports since 2001.³ Over the past decade, spending on defence has remained between 2.3 per cent to 3 per cent of its total GDP.⁴ While analysing the different time intervals, since 1996 to the present, Indian military spending has reached 82.8 per cent.⁵ During 1998-2007, military spending was 64 per cent,⁶ and overall defence spending was only 4.9 per cent of its GDP from 1994-2003.⁷ India increased its conventional weapons purchase from 2001-05 following the announcement of its Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) with influx from major weapon suppliers around \$ 9,355 million.⁸ Russia provided 25 per cent of its arms' deliveries during this period to India.⁹ From 2005-09, Russian weapons' exports to India reached the 77 per cent mark,¹⁰ much higher than exports during 2003-07.¹¹ India's arms' imports during 2006-10 was 21 per cent higher than during 2001-05.¹² The stark rise in weapons imports during 2009-12 was due to the Indian government's focus on strengthening counterterrorism measures after the Mumbai attacks of 2008.¹³

Russia has been the largest beneficiary of Indian weapons imports. From 2004-05, Russia was the largest arms supplier to India with 25 per

² Paul Holtom, Mark Bromley, Pieter D. Wezeman and Siemon T. Wezeman, *Trends in International Arms Transfers*, fact sheet (Solna: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2012), http://books.sipri.org/product_info?c_product_id=455#.

³ Mikael Grinbaum and Susan T. Jackson, "5. The Indian Arms-Production and Military Services Industry," in *SIPRI Yearbook 2012: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), <http://www.sipriyearbook.org/view/9780199650583/sipri-9780199650583-miscMatter-5.xml>.

⁴ Nicholas R. Lombardo, "India's Defence Spending and Military Modernisation," *DIIG Current Issues*, no. 24 (2011), https://csis.org/files/publication/110329_DIIG_Current_Issues_24_Indian_Defense_Spending.pdf.

⁵ Holtom et al., *Trends in International Arms Transfers*.

⁶ Elisabeth Sköns, Catalina Perdomo, Sam Perlo-Freeman and Petter Stålenheim, "10. Military Expenditure," in *SIPRI Yearbook 2004: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), <http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2004/10>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Petter Stålenheim, Damien Fruchart, Wuyi Omitoogun and Catalina Perdomo, "8. Military Expenditure," *SIPRI Yearbook 2006: Armaments, Disarmaments and International Security* (Oxford: Oxford Press, 2006), <http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2006/08>.

⁹ Holtom et al., *Trends in International Arms Transfers*.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Sam Perlo-Freeman and Elisabeth Sköns, "6. Arms Production," in *SIPRI Yearbook 2008: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), <http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2008/06>.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Mumbai Rocked by Deadly Attacks, *BBC News*, November 27, 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7751160.stm.

cent of the total global conventional deliveries. In this period, India remained the largest importer of arms, constituting 12 per cent of global arms transfer.¹⁴ In Asia, India was the second country to receive 20 per cent of Russian arms exports after China.¹⁵ From 2005-09, seven per cent of global arms were transferred to India, which again made it a major recipient after China. Russia was the largest arms supplier with 24 per cent of its arms sales going to India. Moreover, during these years, 15 per cent of United Kingdom's total arms were exported to India.¹⁶ Figure 1 shows country-wise expenditure on arms imports.

Figure-1
Leading Developing Nations Arms Purchasers (2004-11)

Rank	Countries	Amount Spent (\$ Million)	% of Total
1	Saudi Arabia	75,700	21
2	India	46,600	13
3	UAE	20,300	6
4	Egypt	14,300	4
5	Pakistan	13,200	4
6	Venezuela	13,100	4
7	Brazil	10,900	3
8	Algeria	10,300	3
9	Israel	9,500	3
10	South Korea	9,200	2
11	All other developing countries	145.168	39

Source: Richard F. Grimmett and Paul K. Kerr, *Conventional Arms Transfers to Developing Nations, 2004-2011*, report (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2012), <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/weapons/R42678.pdf>.

¹⁴ Holtom et al., *Trends in International Arms Transfers*.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Indian Defence Expenditure: A Quantitative Perspective

The bulk of India's arms acquisitions have been motivated by perceived external threats from Pakistan and China as well as India's ambitions to become a regional power in competition with China.¹⁷

In 2001, Indian arms manufacturers were among the top 100 companies worldwide, with earnings of around 1.9 billion dollars. This rate decreased to 1.6 billion dollars in 2002 (with 0.8 per cent of the world's total arms sales), which is 17 per cent less than 2001.¹⁸

There was a decrease in Indian military spending in 2001 due to economic constraints following sanctions after the nuclear explosions in 1998. India spent 2.9 per cent of its total GDP share on military expenditure in 2001, while the figure stands at 11.1 per cent expressed as a percentage of general government expenditure.¹⁹ In 2003, three ordinance companies of India sold around 2.3 billion dollars of arms to different states, which constitutes one per cent of the total arms of the world.²⁰ In same year, India ranked third among the top buyers, spending 12.4 billion dollars on military expenditure and 9 per cent of the total global arms transfer.²¹ During this year, India remained the largest recipient of 79 per cent of the total Russian arms.²² In 2004, three Indian arms producing companies had sales of around 2.7 billion dollars, which was one per cent of the total world share.²³ In 2003 and 2004, Indian defence budget was around 14 billion dollars, 2.3 per cent of its GDP.²⁴ With an increase in budget of 16.2 per cent in 2004,²⁵ India introduced its Cold Start Doctrine which has enhanced Indian capability to mobilise its forces within 72 hours for limited warfare, particularly against Pakistan.²⁶

¹⁷ Grinbaum and Jackson, "5. The Indian Arms-Production."

¹⁸ Sköns, Perdomo, Perlo-Freeman and Stålenheim, "10. Military Expenditure."

¹⁹ SIPRI, "SIPRI Military Expenditure Database," Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, accessed November 15, 2016, <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>.

²⁰ J. Paul Dunne and Eamon Surry, "9. Arms Production," *SIPRI Yearbook 2006: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), <http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2006/09>.

²¹ Sköns, Perdomo, Perlo-Freeman and Stålenheim, "10. Military Expenditure."

²² Sam Perlo-Freeman, Elisabeth Sköns, Carina Solmirano and Helén Wilandh, *Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2012*, fact sheet (Solna: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2013), <http://books.sipri.org/files/FS/SIPRIFS1304.pdf>.

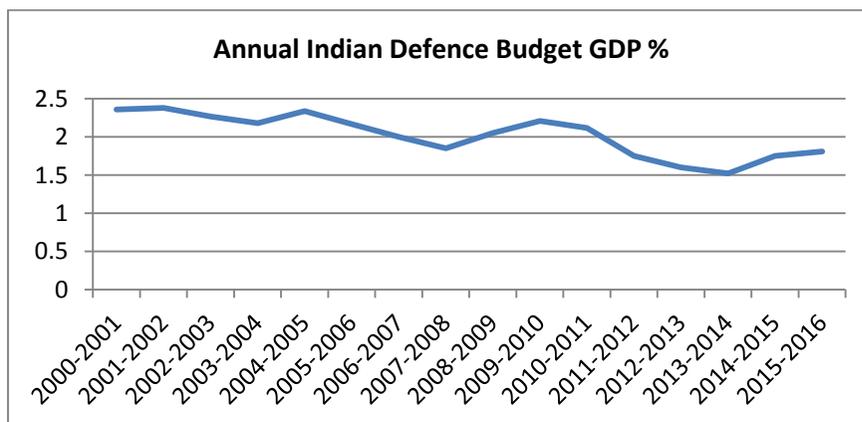
²³ Dunne and Surry, "9. Arms Production."

²⁴ Sköns et al., "10. Military Expenditure."

²⁵ Holtom et al., *Trends in International Arms Transfers*.

²⁶ Perlo-Freeman et al., "4. Military Expenditure."

Figure-2



Source: Department of Statistics and Information Management, Reserve Bank of India, *Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy*.

Russian arms' supplies to India in 2005 were seen as 'operational marketing.'²⁷ Again three Indian companies were ranked in the top 100 with arms sales of 3 billion dollars,²⁸ comprising 1.1 per cent of the total arms sales of the world.²⁹ Ranked 10th in the world in 2006, India's excessive arms spending (28 billion dollars) was around 81.7 per cent of South Asia's total defence spending.³⁰ Total arms sales was 1.1 per cent of the total world arms share.³¹ Moreover, India sold 3.7 billion dollars of arms to other states.³² Later in 2007, Russia sold its latest military weapons, missiles and sub systems to different states in which India was the major importer. In 2008, India ranked 10th in the top 15 military expenditure states, with almost 30 billion dollars in military expenditure. This was 2.1 per cent of the total world share, and constituted 2.5 per cent of the Indian economy.³³ Its military expenditure in 2009 was 36.3 billion dollars, 13 per cent more than 2008.³⁴ According to the official statistics, India exported 70 million dollars of its arms to other states; and both India and Russia signed a military cooperation agreement in which Russia agreed that it would provide India arms for another ten years.³⁵ In 2010, India spent 41.3 billion

²⁷ Holtom et al., *Trends in International Arms Transfers*.

²⁸ Perlo-Freeman and Sköns, "6. Arms Production."

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Stålenheim et al., "8. Military Expenditure."

³¹ Perlo-Freeman and Sköns, "6. Arms Production."

³² Dunne and Surry, "9. Arms Production."

³³ Stålenheim et al., "8. Military Expenditure."

³⁴ Stålenheim et al., "8. Military Expenditure."

³⁵ Grinbaum and Jackson, "5. The Indian Arms-Production."

dollars on defence, which is 2.8 per cent lower than 2009, but 54 per cent more as compared to 2001.³⁶

In 2011, India established its position as the largest recipient of arms, with military expenditure of 48.9 billion, 66 per cent more as recorded in 2002. It constituted 2.6 per cent of the total Indian GDP. The military spending of India was around 46.1 billion dollars in 2012, which was 2.5 per cent of the total GDP.³⁷ In 2013, the country became the largest arms importer by importing 14 per cent arms worldwide.³⁸ Moreover, it refused to publish the list of transfers of guided missiles and arms deals with Russia. These weapons substantially increased the state’s ability to threaten or attack small targets without putting its military personnel in harm’s way. In 2014, India increased its major and small arms imports by one per cent and remained the top importer of major and small arms with 15 per cent of the world’s share.³⁹ In the same year, neighbouring Pakistan decreased its arms imports by one per cent.⁴⁰

Figure-3: India’s Defence Budget 2009-16



Source: Ritika Behal, “Indian Defence Budget 2015-16: An Analysis,” *Defence ProAc, Defence Production and Acquisition News*, accessed February 22, 2016, <http://www.defproac.com/?p=2079>.

³⁶ Perlo-Freeman et al., “4. Military Expenditure.”

³⁷ Sam Perlo-Freeman, Elisabeth Sköns, Carina Solmirano and Helén Wilandh, *Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2012*, fact sheet (Solna: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2013), <http://books.sipri.org/files/FS/SIPRIFS1304.pdf>.

³⁸ SIPRI, *SIPRI Yearbook 2014: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2016-03/SIPRIYB14Summary.pdf>.

³⁹ SIPRI, *SIPRI Year Book 2015: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2016-03/YB-15-Summary-EN.pdf>.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Impact on Regional Stability

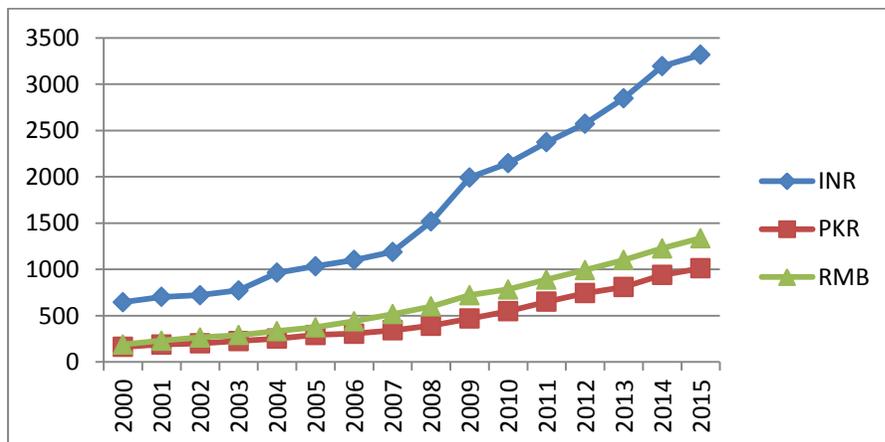
India has been raising its military budget by 7 to 9 per cent every year over the last decade in order to modernise its defence.⁴¹ In the coming decade, it plans to raise its military spending even further. It has been importing large quantities of sophisticated weapons and weapon systems, which is raising concerns of its neighbouring states. Indian scholars often claim that India is competing with China by improving its defence posture. Indian officials also assert that China is the major security challenge to Indian national security.⁴² However, both these countries do not share a plain terrain. Weapons such as T-90 Bhishma Main Battle Tank, Arjun Main Battle Tank, T-72 Ajeya Main Battle Tank, Vijayanta Tank and T-55 Main Battle Tank are designed for plain terrain, likely to be used against Pakistan. Production, upgradation and import of these MBTs further increases the possibilities of implementation of Cold Start Doctrine (CSD), which was introduced by Indian Army in 2004. Currently, India is heavily investing in production of Arjun MBT. A total of 800 T-90 tanks are presently operational with the Indian Army, while more than 1000 would be inducted by 2020.⁴³ These developments could harm deterrence between the two South Asian nuclear powers.

⁴¹ Iskander Rehman, *India: The Next Superpower?: The Military Dimensions of India's Rise*, report (London: London School of Economics and Political Science, 2012), [http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/43444/1/India_the%20military%20dimensions%20of%20India's%20rise\(lsero\).pdf](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/43444/1/India_the%20military%20dimensions%20of%20India's%20rise(lsero).pdf).

⁴² Gurmeet Kanwal, "India's Military Modernisation: Plans and Strategic Underpinnings," (policy brief, National Bureau of Asian Research, Washington, D.C., September 24, 2012), <http://www.nbr.org/research/activity.aspx?id=275#.UqnWcdKVPWN>.

⁴³ Indian Defence and Security Analysis, "Indian Army Main Battle Tanks (MBTs)," *Indian Defence Analysis*, December 23, 2012, <http://defenceforumindia.com/indian-army-main-battle-tanks-mbts-1192>.

Figure-4
Military Expenditures 2000-15 in Local Currencies (India, Pakistan and China)



Source: SIPRI, “World Military Expenditures from 2000-2015 in Local Currencies,” Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, accessed October 26, 2016, <https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/Milex-local-currency.pdf>.

Deterrence between Pakistan and India is very important for the peace and stability in the region. SIPRI data is evidence that Indian military budget since 2008 has been on a rising trajectory, which is compelling Pakistan and China to increase their defence expenditures. Therefore, since 2008, both these countries have also increased their defence budget. Former President of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf considered deterrence between Pakistan and India as a critical factor which averted full-scale war between the two nuclear powers of South Asia in the 2002-03 standoffs.⁴⁴ The ongoing Indian military modernisation would bring vast power differential between Pakistani and Indian armies. Consequently, the growing conventional military disparity will bring reduction in strategic stability in South Asia. Indian military modernisation will also likely increase its aggression against the neighbouring states generally and particularly against Pakistan. Since 2013, the Indian Army has been frequently violating the Indo-Pak ceasefire agreement by shelling the civilian population. Indian Army committed a series of Line of Control (LoC) ceasefire violations along Kashmir and Sialkot sectors in 2014. More than 50 Pakistani citizens

⁴⁴ “No-Win Situation Vital to Peace Says Musharraf,” *News International*, August 12, 2003; “Pak’s Conventional Deterrence Averted War: Musharraf,” *Rediff.com*, June 22, 2002.

lost their lives during these ceasefire violations in 2014.⁴⁵ Moreover, border shelling damaged houses and schools in nearby villages in Sialkot.⁴⁶

Fears that India's military modernisation is adversely affecting Indo-Pak deterrence extends beyond the subcontinent. For example, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense Peter Lavoy contends that 'India's military modernisation programme has led to a growing disparity between the Indian and Pakistani conventional military capabilities,'⁴⁷ the result of which 'will be either a regional arms race and/or a lowering of the nuclear threshold.'⁴⁸ Renowned South Asian expert Rodney Jones has argued for nearly a decade that 'the growing conventional force imbalance between India and Pakistan has destabilising effects on their nuclear relationship.'⁴⁹ Since border disputes are haunting their bilateral relationship, therefore, a severe conflict can emerge at any time as it happened in 1999, during the Kargil crisis. Jones believes that 'India is outstripping Pakistan in revolutionary military assets such as high-performance aircrafts, wide-area communications, reconnaissance, and battlefield awareness.'⁵⁰ Indeed, a number of researchers in Washington, including at the Carnegie Endowment, the Congressional Research Service, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Hudson Institute have endorsed Michael Krepon that 'Pakistan's recent embrace of the utility of tactical nuclear weapons and broader Pakistani efforts to enhance the quality and quantity of their nuclear arsenal is a result of India's growing conventional capabilities and its more proactive and aggressive military plans.'⁵¹ The same opinion has been shared by renowned nuclear strategist Paul Bracken who argues that 'India has

⁴⁵ Frank Jack Daniel, "Kashmir Shelling, Spat over Pak Aid Mar Run-up to Kerry Trip," *Reuters*, January 6, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-pakistan-idUSKBN0KF0DR20150106>.

⁴⁶ "100 Houses Damaged in Indian Shelling," *Nation*, August 6, 2015.

⁴⁷ Peter R. Lavoy, "Islamabad's Nuclear Posture: Its Premises and Implementation," in *Pakistan's Nuclear Future: Worries Beyond War*, ed. Henry D. Sokolski (Carlisle: U.S. Army War College, 2008), 158.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Rodney W. Jones, "Conventional Military Imbalance and Strategic Stability in South Asia," (research paper no. 1, South Asian Strategic Stability Unit, Bradford, 2005), http://www.policyarchitects.org/pdf/Conventional_imbalance_RJones.pdf.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵¹ Michael Krepon, "Tactical Nukes in South Asia," Arms Control Wonk, April 18, 2012, <http://krepon.armscontrolwonk.com/archive/3419/tac-nukes-in-south-asia>; Toby Dalton and Jaclyn Tandler, *Understanding the Arms 'Race' in South Asia*, report (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2012), http://carnegieendowment.org/files/south_asia_arms_race.pdf; Paul K. Kerr and Mary Beth Nikitin, "Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons: Proliferation and Security Issues," Council on Foreign Relations, February 23, 2010, <http://www.cfr.org/pakistan/crs-pakistans-nuclear-weapons-proliferation-security-issues/p22605>; Gregory D. Koblenz, *Strategic Stability in the Second Nuclear Age* (Washington, D.C.: Council on Foreign Relations, 2014), ; Richard Weitz, "South Asia's Nuclear Arms Racing," *Diplomat*, October 1, 2011, <http://thediplomat.com/2011/10/south-asias-nuclear-arms-racing/>.

invested heavily in satellites, advanced radars, signals intelligence, and reconnaissance' assets to cultivate new military capabilities.⁵² He further argues that 'as India develops transformative military capabilities, this conventional asymmetry increases the danger of the conventional and non-conventional arms race.'⁵³

An arms race in South Asia due to Indian military buildup cannot be denied, irrespective of the fact that it carries strategic as well as economic burden. It hinders sustainable people-centric development processes. In fact, states divert their resources in order to ensure their territorial integrity and sovereignty. Inflation, economic deprivation, lack of basic social services and fragile national economies are some of the consequences of an arms race which this region has been facing since the last decade or so.⁵⁴

Moreover, countries behave more assertively in regional politics once they acquire sophisticated conventional weapons. In recent years, India has influenced Afghanistan and engaged it militarily, economically and politically. Various arms transfer and strategic cooperation deals have been inked between the two in recent years.⁵⁵ Pakistan views such developments with concern and considers this cooperation a national security challenge.⁵⁶

Lack of resources, opportunities for human development and human security often leads people to extremism and militancy. In case of India, resources, which should be spent on the development and prosperity of its people, are being spent on death machines. Despite more than 362 million or 29.5 per cent of the total population of India living in abject poverty, its defence budget is swelling with an unprecedented pace. It stands at 130th among 188 countries in the Human Development Index.⁵⁷ It is 76th in the world corruption index.⁵⁸ Effects of such marginalisation are noticeable in the uprisings and movements in various parts of India, whether they are over environmental issues, for basic rights or against

⁵² Paul Bracken, "The Problem from Hell: South Asia's Arms Race," *Diplomat*, November 29, 2012, <http://thediplomat.com/2012/11/nuclear-south-asia-the-problem-from-hell/>.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ J. Paul Dunne, "The Economic Effects of Military Expenditure in Developing Countries," (paper, Economics Group, Middlesex University Business School, London, 2000), <http://carecon.org.uk/Chula/MILLDCSnew.pdf>.

⁵⁵ Ministry of External Affairs, "Text of Agreement on Strategic Partnership between the Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan" (Government of India, 2011), <http://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/5383/Text+of+Agreement+on+Strategic+Partnership+between+the+R+epublic+of+India+and+the+Islamic+Republic+of+Afghanistan>.

⁵⁶ Ahmed Rashid, "Viewpoint: India Risks Destabilising Afghanistan," May 7, 2014, *BBC News*, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-27258566>.

⁵⁷ UNDP, "Human Development Report 2015: Work for Human Development," Human Development Report (New York: United Nations Development Programme)..

⁵⁸ "India Corruption Rank 2015-16," *Trading Economics*, accessed October 25, 2016, <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/india/corruption-rank>.

corruption or for equality.⁵⁹ Moreover, the growing extremism and contending voices of ethnic and religious groups can further weaken the regional security apparatus. Non-state actors often find fertile grounds in economically and politically deprived communities.

Likewise, expanding military assets may also exacerbate strategic competition between China and India.⁶⁰ 'In 2009, India established two new mountain-infantry divisions, followed by the raising of India's first offensive Strike Corps in 2013, all for the Eastern Sector of the border dispute with China.'⁶¹ Over the years, India has developed long-range ballistic missiles with a five thousand kilometer range. Strategists believe that while medium range ballistic missiles are meant for Pakistan, development of long-range ballistic missiles are supposedly intended to target China.

India has put extensive efforts into developing its indigenous air craft carriers and nuclear submarines.⁶² It has purchased sensor-fused bombs, Apache helicopters, P8-I surveillance aircraft, M-777 howitzers, C-130J and C-17 transport aircraft, and a large amphibious transport dock.⁶³ India has gradually increased its joint military exercises with the U.S. According to a recent report, the U.S. has conducted the most joint military exercises with India than any other country in recent years.⁶⁴ Such activities create negative perceptions amongst the Chinese policy-making circles as well as on regional peace and security. Currently, India and China have 1325,000

⁵⁹ Mahendra Prasad Singh, "New Social Movements and Alternative Politics: India in a Comparative Theoretical Perspective," *Social Sciences.in*, September 12, 2014, <http://socialsciences.in/article/new-social-movements-and-alternative-politics-india-comparative-theoretical-perspective>; Bina Rai, "New Social Movements in India: An Aspect of Environmental Movements," *International Journal of Science and Research* 4, no. 9 (2015): 1918-1921, <https://www.ijsr.net/archive/v4i9/SUB158569.pdf>; "9 Powerful Citizen Led Movements in India that Changed the Nation Forever," *Better India*, January 13, 2015,

<http://www.thebetterindia.com/18248/most-powerful-social-citizens-movements-in-india/>.

⁶⁰ "China to Increase Defence Spending by 7-8 per cent in 2016-Official," *Guardian*, March 4, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/04/china-to-increase-defence-spending-by-7-8-in-2016-official>.

⁶¹ Jeff M. Smith, "India and China: The End of Cold Peace?" *National Interest*, February 10, 2014, <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/india-china-the-end-cold-peace-9853>.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Brahma Chellaney, "Arming India into Dependency," *Hindu*, January 14, 2014, <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/arming-india-into-dependency/article5574316.ece>.

and 2335,000 active military personnel.⁶⁵ On the other hand, Pakistan has 620,000 active military personnel.⁶⁶

Territorial disputes in the region, particularly the Kashmir dispute and Sino-Indo territorial disputes have further negatively affected the security situation of the region. With an aggressive Indian military posture, these territorial disputes can become flashpoints between the two regional giants. Moreover, the flashpoint between India and Pakistan is Kashmir. India has deployed 400,000 regular and 350,000 para-military forces in a disputed territory.⁶⁷ Indian human rights atrocities in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IoK), and ceasefire border violations can trigger an armed conflict between the two countries.

Way Forward

There are chances that the dream of lasting peace in South Asia would remain a dream, if the international community does not bar India from increasing its military assets. Unfortunately, over the years the international community has spent its resources and time on efforts to limit nonconventional weapons in South Asia. Many initiatives including reduction of fissile material, nuclear risk reduction measures, establishment of frameworks for confidence-building measures have been proposed since 1998.⁶⁸ However, the dangers associated with a conventional arms race has remained an ignored subject.⁶⁹ Therefore, under the restrictive cloud of nonconventional weapons, the Indian military establishment has stockpiled and imported large quantities of nonconventional weapons over the last one decade or so. Therefore, the international community needs to divert its attention to nonconventional arms trade in general, and establish frameworks for restraining such imports in the region.

⁶⁵ "World Military Power Comparison Results for India vs China," Global Fire Power, January 21, 2016, <http://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-comparison-detail.asp?form=form&country1=India&country2=China>.

⁶⁶ "Pakistan Military Strength: Current Military Capabilities and Available Firepower for 2016 Detailed," Global Fire Power, accessed November 15, 2016, http://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.asp?country_id=pakistan.

⁶⁷ Ayaz Ahmed Khan, "Indian Military Buildup Threatens South Asia," *Defence Journal*, (2001), <http://www.defencejournal.com/2001/october/military.htm>.

⁶⁸ Stephen Philip Cohen, "Nuclear Weapons and Nuclear War in South Asia: An Unknowable Future," (Paper Presented, United Nations University Conference, Tokyo, 2002), <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/cohens20020501.pdf>.

⁶⁹ Geoff Harris, s.v. "Effects of Arms Races and War on Development," in *United Nations Educational Scientific, and Cultural Organization-Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems (UNESCO-EOLSS)*, accessed November 16, 2016, <http://www.eolss.net/sample-chapters/c13/e6-28a-05-03.pdf>.

Moreover, a perception has been developed among the security analysts that exclusionary and discriminatory policies have been developed against Pakistan in the region for several years. For instance, the U.S. on the one hand, signed the Indo-U.S. civil nuclear deal and is supportive of India's membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), while on the other hand, it has rejected subsidising Pakistan for its F-16s fighter jets,⁷⁰ and is rather pressurising the government to sign the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT).⁷¹ Though, South Asian security apparatus revolves around India due to its geography, size and population, however, Pakistan is a vital player and cannot be excluded from emerging regional security structures. Well-balanced conventional forces of both countries are the key towards effective deterrence in the region. However, growing international arms export to India, while imposing embargos on Pakistan's conventional arms imports would likely compel Pakistan to seek new alliances for the improvement of its national defence.

Joint economic development can be highly effective for strengthening the regional security of South Asia. In this regard, the Chinese model of shared development is the most effective and a recent example which needs to be followed by India and Pakistan. Under the One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative, China has pledged to invest 46 billion dollars in Pakistan under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The CPEC is a key towards regional connectivity, which offers shorter trade route to various South Asian, Central Asian and West Asian countries. It is encouraging that Pakistan wants India to join CPEC for shared development in the region.⁷² Such offers of joint economic development should be welcomed by India for the sake of human development and prosperity.

Furthermore, South Asia in general, and India in particular is energy scarce. Efforts were made to import gas from West Asia in the early 1990s by initiating the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline project. However, during the early negotiating stages, India withdrew from the project based on security concerns.⁷³ However, India is still part of the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline, which will provide 33

⁷⁰ Franz-Stefan Gady, "U.S. Won't Subsidise Pakistan's Purchase of F-16 Fighter Jets," *Diplomat*, May 4, 2016, <http://thediplomat.com/2016/05/us-wont-subsidize-pakistans-purchase-of-f-16-fighter-jets/>.

⁷¹ Shaiq Hussain, "Pakistan Decides not to Sign FMCT despite U.S. Pressure," *Pakistan Today*, August 15, 2011, <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2011/08/15/national/pakistan-decides-not-to-sign-fmct-despite-us-pressure/>.

⁷² Tughral Yamin, "Economic Advantages of CPEC for India," (conference proceedings, Islamabad, September 20-21, 2016).

⁷³ Muhammad Saleem Mazhar and Naheed S. Goraya, "Challenges in Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline," *NDU Journal XXVII* (2013): 163-178, http://ndu.edu.pk/issra/issra_pub/NDU-Journal2013.pdf.

billion cubic metre gas to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India for thirty years.⁷⁴ Energy cooperation in these two pipelines may improve the relationship between Pakistan and India. The concept of interdependence through energy cooperation can reduce the mistrust and security concerns which are directly proportional to the military buildup and arms race.

Lastly, multilateral consultative security mechanisms should be established at the regional level for the promotion of regional security. A combination of international and regional players can help in establishing new mechanisms and initiatives, which may be helpful in restraining Indian military buildup. For instance, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)⁷⁵ (now called the Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE]) ‘played a major role in winding down the Cold War in favour of détente (e.g. via arms control)’:⁷⁶

CSCE was not an organisation, but a process of ‘conference diplomacy’. The CSCE process was launched during the détente phase of the Cold War in the early seventies, this being a time when both East and West had come to realise that they had to co-exist for an indefinite period, and that this co-existence had better be peaceful. The latter was far from inevitable given the huge concentration of weapons, conventional as well as nuclear, on European soil.⁷⁷

A similar agreement can be penned down through effective multilateral diplomacy in South Asia. Though, reduction of defence expenditures in the region is directly proportional to the Indian defence budget, but an agreement of mutual reduction of defence budget between India and Pakistan can be achieved through multilateral diplomacy.

⁷⁴ Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, “India Poised to Benefit as Equal Stakeholder in TAPI Gas Pipeline,” *Economic Times*, December 3, 2015, <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/oil-gas/india-poised-to-benefit-as-equal-stakeholder-in-tapi-gas-pipeline/articleshow/50020924.cms>.

⁷⁵ Lamberto Zannier, “The Proliferation of Weapons and Expertise: NATO Helps Tackle the Problem,” *NATO Review* 40, no. 4 (1992): 26-30; and OSCE, “Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe,” Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe, November 19, 1990, <http://www.osce.org/library/14087?download=true>.

⁷⁶ Bjørn Møller, “European Security: The Role of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe,” (working paper no.30, Crisis States Research Centre, London, 2008), <http://www.lse.ac.uk/internationalDevelopment/research/crisisStates/download/wp/wpSeries2/WP302.pdf>.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

Conclusion

Indian military buildup has created a serious security dilemma among the regional states, particularly for Pakistan and China. This buildup can affect the economic and security situation of the region. The recent (September 2016) outcry over India's supposed execution of surgical strikes in Pakistan⁷⁸ and its persistent LoC violations are practical manifestations of its offensive posture and overconfidence in its conventional force superiority. The ongoing Indian military modernisation is designed to inflict maximum damage to its neighbours generally, and Pakistan particularly. It is the high time that the international community pressurises the Indian security establishment to refrain from further advancement in military capabilities both qualitatively and quantitatively, as it is compelling other South Asian countries to divert their social development budget to defence expenditure. ■

⁷⁸ C.f. Syed Sammer Abbas, "Army Rubbishes Indian 'Surgical Strikes' Claim as Two Pakistani Soldiers Killed at LoC," *Dawn*, September 29, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1286881>; Atika Rehman, "What is a 'Surgical Strike'?" *Dawn*, September 29, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1286893>; "Indo-Pak Conflict after the Indian Army's Surgical Strikes against Terrorist Launch-Pads in Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir," *The Economic Times*, October 8, 2016, <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/indo-pak-conflict-after-the-indian-armys-surgical-strikes-against-terrorist-launch-pads-in-pakistan-occupied-kashmir/liveblog/54582502.cms>; Shawn Snow, "Is India Capable of a Surgical Strike in Pakistan Controlled Kashmir?" *Diplomat*, September 30, 2016, <http://thediplomat.com/2016/09/is-india-capable-of-a-surgical-strike-in-pakistan-controlled-kashmir/>; "Kashmir Attack: India Launches Strikes Against Militants," *BBC News*, September 30, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-37504308>.