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India's Navy and Its Indian Ocean Strategy: Pursuing Regional Predominance



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An Intelligence Assessment

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India's Navy and Its Indian Ocean Strategy: Pursuing Regional Predominance





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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by 
Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis. It
was coordinated with the Directorate of
Operations. 

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Comments and queries are welcome and may be
directed to the Chief, South Asia Division, NESAs, 


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**India's Navy and Its
Indian Ocean Strategy:
Pursuing Regional
Predominance**

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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 20 June 1988
was used in this report.*

We believe India considers its security concerns in the Indian Ocean over the long term are as important as those with Pakistan and China. New Delhi traditionally has relied on diplomacy to safeguard its Indian Ocean interests but lately is increasing its involvement in the internal affairs of Indian Ocean states—sometimes by military means. To support their Indian Ocean aspirations, the Indians are pursuing a naval modernization and expansion program to project power more effectively.

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New Delhi's Indian Ocean strategy centers on maritime defense and the assertion of its leadership over other regional states. It also includes supporting the internal stability of these states, protecting the interests of local Indian ethnic groups, and limiting—if not supplanting—foreign presences. New Delhi believes others in the region must not be able to threaten India militarily or be allowed to act in a way that may destabilize the area and invite outside interference in the region. India is most involved in the affairs of Sri Lanka, Maldives, Seychelles, and Mauritius but also is concerned with island states farther to the southwest and the Indian Ocean littoral countries.

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The Indian Navy can defend the country's contiguous waters and safeguard its maritime interests against threats from neighboring states, but it cannot carry out maritime power projection operations very far into the Indian Ocean or for an extended period. India lacks sufficient advanced oceangoing warships, adequate logistic capabilities, and the requisite tactical expertise to conduct sustained, modern naval operations beyond coastal areas. As a coastal force, the Navy is strongest in antisurface, antisubmarine, and mine-countermine warfare missions; it is weakest in anti-air warfare and support missions.

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India's buildup of the Army and Air Force units it would use for power projection operations extends its reach beyond that provided by the Navy. The Army's 54th Infantry Division and 50th Parachute Brigade are its frontline units for these operations, which would be supported by the Air Force's Jaguar strike aircraft and a growing fleet of transport aircraft. India's ability to conduct amphibious and airborne warfare missions gives it a strong intervention capability against Sri Lanka or the smaller Indian Ocean island states of Maldives, Seychelles, Mauritius, or Comoros. India would lose this military advantage if these island states' forces were augmented by combat units of outside powers or if it attempted to intervene in islands farther from its shores or in littoral countries it does not border.

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India's power projection capability will grow slowly and its Navy will remain largely a coastal force for the remainder of the century. The recently leased Soviet Charlie I nuclear-powered submarine—to be used more for technical and training purposes than for operational activity—and the newly purchased Bear F long-range antisubmarine warfare-maritime reconnaissance aircraft are the first naval assets India has acquired that are not aimed specifically at improving its naval capabilities over Pakistan. Planned acquisitions will increase the Navy's combat capabilities in all mission areas, but its ability to conduct sustained operations far from shore will remain weak. India's military modernization and expansion will remain primarily focused on the more immediate Pakistani threat, and its intervention in Sri Lanka will command much attention and effort at the expense of other activities. 

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A rapidly expanding force structure, coupled with a dedication to indigenous production, will limit the Navy's potential. Acquisition of more ships and aircraft is likely to outstrip India's ability to man, maintain, and control the fleet efficiently. Domestic shipbuilding is beginning to overtake foreign purchases in naval acquisitions and slow the buildup, but it will lessen military purchases from Moscow and increase opportunities for the embryonic Indo-US defense relationship. 

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Indian naval power will not challenge regular US operations in the Indian Ocean at least until the turn of the century. New Delhi's efforts to restrict outside involvement in the Indian Ocean will largely remain diplomatic. The Indian Navy not only is no match for regular US or French Indian Ocean naval deployments but also would be hard pressed to challenge Soviet or Australian forces frequently sent to the region. In an Indo-Pakistani war, however, the Indians would mount aggressive naval operations close to shore, including a blockade of Karachi, to deter and even interdict maritime shows of support for or resupply efforts to Pakistan. 

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Scope Note

This assessment examines India's Indian Ocean strategy and the capabilities of the Indian Navy and those ground and air forces that support this strategy through power projection operations. Much of the information on the

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and open sources. [Redacted]

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**India's Navy and Its
Indian Ocean Strategy:
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We believe India considers its security concerns in the Indian Ocean over the long term are as important as those with Pakistan and China. US Embassy reporting indicates New Delhi expected foreign interest in the Indian Ocean to decline after the United Kingdom's decision in 1971 to withdraw from "east of Suez." The Indians, however, have discovered that the Arab oil embargo, the Iranian revolution, and the Iran-Iraq war have increased the strategic importance of the region in the eyes of outside powers. Indian officials are concerned that instability in some regional states could invite outside intervention.¹ India has tried to counter the buildup of US and Soviet forces in the region with diplomatic efforts, including support for the UN Indian Ocean Zone of Peace proposal, but these efforts have largely been ineffective. As a result, India is pursuing naval and other military modernization and expansion programs that we believe are designed to improve its ability to secure its regional position. [redacted]

New Delhi's Goals in the Indian Ocean

India justifies its regional involvements and naval buildup by claiming they are necessary to defend its long coastline, island territories, offshore oil and mineral interests, and sea lines of communication. US Embassy reporting indicates Indian officials often point to the small but potent Pakistani Navy and the presence in the Indian Ocean of foreign warships and naval facilities to justify their concern. Indian naval officers characterize the presence of a US aircraft carrier task force in the Bay of Bengal during the Indo-Pakistani war in 1971 as a form of interference India would challenge in the future. They also refer to the need to defend offshore territories, such as Lakshadweep and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and

¹ The Indians are most concerned with instability in Sri Lanka and Seychelles. In formulating Indian Ocean policy, India also considers the island states of Mauritius, Comoros, and Madagascar; the island territories of Diego Garcia and Reunion; the states along the South and East African and the Southwest and Southeast Asian littoral; and Australia. [redacted]

The Indian Ocean Zone of Peace Proposal

The Indian Ocean Zone of Peace proposal serves as the centerpiece in New Delhi's regional diplomatic strategy. Proposed in the United Nations in 1971 by Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) and Tanzania and adopted as a declaration, the initiative envisages the Indian Ocean as an area "to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes," and proscribes regional military installations, naval maneuvers, intelligence operations, and weapons tests. New Delhi supports the proposal as a means to deny regional military access to outside powers. [redacted]

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The proposal has not been confirmed as a resolution and has encountered mixed reaction from the international community, we believe largely because of its fundamental ambiguity over intrusive, foreign versus legitimate, littoral power naval activity. Most major Western countries reject the proposal as denying them necessary access to a region vital to their national interests, critical to their strategic defense, and where they maintain treaty and even some sovereign responsibilities. The Soviets support the proposal in principle but try to focus attention on the US naval facility at Diego Garcia and away from their own naval deployments and accesses. Many littoral states' interpretations of the proposal have diverged from India's over the years, in our judgment because they suspect India's intentions and do not wish to face New Delhi's growing interests and power without the potential check of foreign powers' presence. [redacted]

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cite the Falklands war in 1982 as an illustration of the vulnerability of undefended island possessions. India depends on the sea for most of its oil—receiving about 40 percent in imports from the Persian Gulf and

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about two-thirds of domestic production from the offshore oilfields of the Bombay High. The International Seabed Authority recently allotted to India a 52,000-square-kilometer seabed mineral exploration zone in the central Indian Ocean. The Indians also are determined to protect their foreign trade, which is almost completely dependent upon shipping and which they consider vital to their economic development. [redacted]

We believe that, beyond defense, New Delhi's primary regional goal is to assert its preeminence over other Indian Ocean countries—those along the littoral and the island states. New Delhi uses a combination of diplomatic and military pressure in trying to secure recognition of Indian leadership from regional states. Although India may not need to exercise its military muscle against these states to secure their acknowledgment of this leadership, New Delhi, in our judgment, wants to underscore that it will not allow these countries to act in ways detrimental to Indian interests. Indian relations with Nepal—where New Delhi takes advantage of strong ties and military superiority to influence Kathmandu's foreign and defense policies and restrict outside involvement—are often cited by scholars as the archetype of the relationship it wants with Indian Ocean states. [redacted]

In our judgment, safeguarding the internal stability of the regional states and protecting the interests of Indian ethnic groups are secondary goals in New Delhi's Indian Ocean strategy. US Embassy officials report New Delhi views instability in Indian Ocean countries as openings for the foreign involvement that could challenge its leadership. Before its intervention in Sri Lanka, New Delhi was disturbed that its rivals, Pakistan and China, provided most of Colombo's foreign military aid, according to US Embassy reporting, and feared that the United States or the United Kingdom would gain access to the Sri Lankan port of Trincomalee. We believe New Delhi demonstrates its support for ethnic Indian communities in Indian Ocean states, such as Sri Lanka, Seychelles, and Mauritius, to underscore its regional leadership, to protect its economic interests, to counteract domestic criticism, and to head off refugee problems. [redacted]

We believe India's long-range strategic goal is to restrict, and eventually eliminate, the foreign presence in the region. New Delhi has supported diplomatic initiatives, like the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace proposal, and has encouraged regional groupings, such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Organization of African Unity, the Gulf Cooperation Council, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, to limit foreign, especially superpower, involvement in these regions—with little effect. Although India is many years from presenting a credible challenge to the superpowers in the Indian Ocean, we believe it is building up the forces that would be necessary to demonstrate its intentions. [redacted]

Increasing Indian Involvement

In our judgment, New Delhi over the last few years has been assuming a more paternalistic role toward Indian Ocean states and trying to cultivate their support for its regional policies. India is becoming more involved in the affairs of these countries by expanding diplomatic ties and increasing commerce, security training, and ship visits. We believe New Delhi hopes its expanded presence will help counter, if not supplant, foreign involvement in the region. For instance, provisions in the 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan accord allowing India potential veto powers over foreign ship visits and communications facilities in Sri Lanka appear aimed at limiting US access to the island, although these provisions have not been exercised. [redacted]

Sri Lanka

New Delhi's determination to influence regional states' internal matters is most striking in Sri Lanka. India has involved itself heavily in trying to achieve a solution to the island's four-year-long ethnic conflict—first by [redacted] supporting the Tamil insurgents, then by enforcing a peace accord between the Tamils and the majority Sinhalese. India began supporting the Tamils in the early 1980s to assuage the

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The Indian Diaspora

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Over 10 million ethnic Indians live overseas. Indian expatriates first established themselves in early migrations throughout the British Empire mainly as indentured servants and unskilled workers, then in a second wave of migration beginning shortly after World War II of skilled workers to Southwest Asia and Africa, and most recently in an exodus of highly educated people to the developed countries of Europe and North America. [redacted]

Hindu is generally the only likely candidate for prime minister and other groups can only gain influence through coalitions with Hindu factions. [redacted]

Seychelles. Only a few hundred of Seychelles's nearly 70,000 people are of Indian descent, but this middle-class minority monopolizes the islands' important retail and import-export trade. [redacted]

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In our judgment, New Delhi is interested in maintaining cultural ties to these communities and recognizes the role overseas Indians can play in securing host-country support for Indian policies. Still, India appears to believe there are limits to what it can do in support of its expatriates, as illustrated most recently in its reluctance to interfere in Fiji despite its anxiety over the interests of Fiji's Indian community during that country's coup. [redacted]

South Africa. About 950,000 ethnic Indians live in South Africa and constitute about 3 percent of the population. They largely include middle-class workers, retailers, and professionals who, together with the country's so-called Colored or mixed race individuals occupy a social and economic niche between the ruling white community and the disenfranchised blacks. [redacted]

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East Africa. Ethnic Indians generally make up about 1 percent of the populations of these countries, although the 30,000 on Zanzibar in Tanzania constitute about 8 percent of that island's population. No Indian community has much political power. [redacted]

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Sri Lanka. Two million Ceylon Tamils, about 13 percent of the island's population, live primarily in the north and east. They are ethnically related to about 50 million Tamils in southern India and are engaged in a separatist struggle with the Sinhalese-dominated government in Colombo. Another approximately 850,000 Indian Tamils in central Sri Lanka, descendants of workers brought by the British from southern India to work the tea plantations, are more closely related to the Tamils in southern India but are officially stateless because neither Sri Lanka nor India wants to accept total sovereign responsibility for them. [redacted]

Arabian Peninsula and Persian Gulf. Most countries in this area have large Indian communities, with Saudi Arabia's 400,000—nearly 3 percent of its population—the largest. They are mainly skilled workers with no political influence. [redacted]

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Mauritius. About 70 percent of the island's 1 million people are of ethnic Indian origin—51 percent Hindu and 17 percent Muslim. Because of the powerful role cultural affiliation plays in Mauritian politics, a

Southeast Asia. Singapore's 150,000 and Malaysia's 800,000 ethnic Indians constitute 6 and 5 percent, respectively, of the national populations—the highest concentrations in the area. Other countries have only a few thousand. None of these communities exercise much political clout. [redacted]

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indignation felt by its own sizable Tamil community in southern India at the Sri Lankan Tamils' plight and to forge a counterweight against what New Delhi perceived as Colombo's increasingly independent foreign policy. India also was concerned because increasing violence threatened Sri Lanka's internal stability, sped the flow of Tamil refugees to southern India, and led Colombo to seek aid from Pakistan, China, and the United States. New Delhi apparently pressured Colombo to sign a peace accord after an intimidating show of Indian airpower over northern Sri Lanka in June 1987 in which India dropped relief supplies to Tamil civilians. Indian military intervention in northern and eastern Sri Lanka quickly followed and the number of troops reached over 50,000 by the spring of 1988. Although US Embassy reporting indicates the Indians plan to guarantee security for local elections this summer and to begin withdrawing their forces, we believe residual resistance will require some Indian military presence at least through Sri Lanka's presidential election in 1989. [redacted]

Seychelles

A year before the Sri Lankan accord, New Delhi intervened to calm unrest in Seychelles, in an apparent attempt to extend its "policeman" role further into the Indian Ocean. [redacted]

[redacted] because of internal political tension there. The destroyer arrived firing a 21-gun salute, an unusual show of force, and stayed for a six-day visit, which received prominent coverage in the local press. According to sources of the US Embassy in New Delhi, Seychelles President Rene indicated privately that he would welcome Indian intervention in the event of a coup or other military threat to his regime. In June 1987, New Delhi acceded to Rene's request to keep a visiting Indian frigate in Victoria harbor as a show of force during an anticipated mercenary attack, which never occurred. In our judgment, New Delhi's support for the Rene regime marks the first stages of India's assumption of a role previously played by the Soviet Union. Indian officials probably calculate a positive response serves New Delhi's interest of denying Indian Ocean access to outside powers. [redacted]

Mauritius

New Delhi has expanded its involvement in Mauritian internal affairs, although less obtrusively than in Sri Lanka and Seychelles. The US Embassy in Port Louis reports Indian influence in Mauritius counters the Soviets' attempts to develop their interests there and works to limit French efforts to project influence from Reunion. India's External Affairs Minister made an official visit to Mauritius in July 1987, shortly before the Mauritian elections, during which he pledged a grant of \$7 million to finance several Mauritian development projects. [redacted]

[redacted] In 1986, India established a satellite tracking station on Mauritius—New Delhi's first extraterritorial installation in the Indian Ocean. India also supports Mauritius's claim to Diego Garcia. [redacted]

Maldives

We believe India relies mostly on its proximity and the absence of other powerful states close by to support its position in Maldivian affairs. New Delhi provides some financial support to Male and promotes Indo-Maldivian cultural exchange programs. The Indians recently established two textile mills in Maldives to produce fabric to be sold to the United States and Western Europe, thereby avoiding the purchasers' quotas on Indian-produced fabric. [redacted]

Africa

India has limited its efforts in east Africa and the immediate offshore island states, Madagascar and Comoros, largely to political overtures, working hard in international forums as well as bilaterally to develop relations. Its longstanding support for black African opposition to apartheid gains political points with these states, as do its small-scale aid and military training programs. Although Tanzania, Kenya, and Mozambique are among the nine countries separately listed in India's latest budget as recipients of grants and loans, aid to African states accounted for only about 10 percent of Indian assistance to other countries. [redacted]

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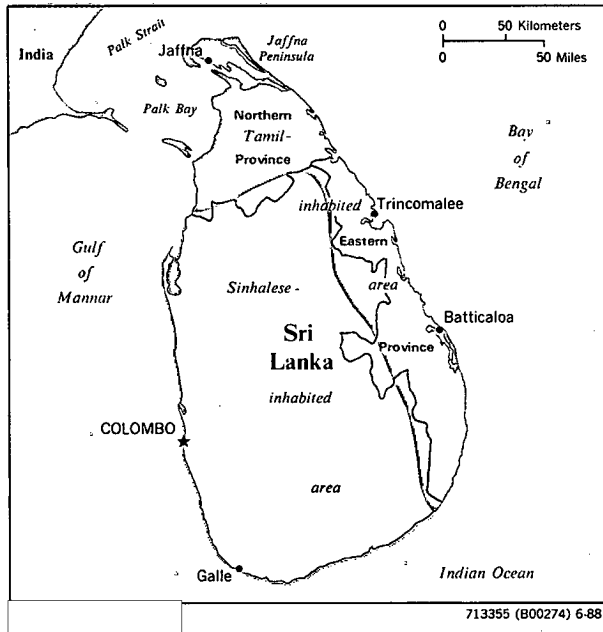
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Operation Pawan: The Sri Lankan Intervention



Within hours of the signing in July 1987 of the Indo-Sri Lankan peace accord to end the fighting between the Tamils and Sinhalese in Sri Lanka, Indian troops were flown into the island's northern Jaffna Peninsula to serve as a "peacekeeping force." [redacted] forces had been on increased alert in southern India at least since early June, when New Delhi airdropped supplies into Jaffna to provide relief to Tamil civilians suffering under the government's three-month blockade of the insurgent-held peninsula. Although the Indians may have planned originally to fight the Sri Lankan Army, the accord called for Indian troops to secure key areas in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, monitor and enforce the cease-fire, and assist Sri Lankan authorities in receiving weapons surrendered by the insurgents, according to US Embassy reporting. [redacted]

The Indian occupation of northern and eastern Sri Lanka was swift. [redacted] US Embassy reporting indicate approximately 3,000 troops from the 54th Infantry Division, augmented by BMP armored personnel carriers, were airlifted to the Jaffna Peninsula in a matter of days and established a line separating Sri Lankan security forces from the insurgents. The aircraft—IL-76s and AN-32s—then began transporting Sri Lankan Army units south to Colombo, where they were needed to quell Sinhalese rioters. Within a few days, the Indian Navy began ferrying additional 54th Division troops to Trincomalee. This force, also about 3,000 strong with some BMPs, secured the city and moved north and north-west. It soon linked up with troops moving out from Jaffna and then moved south to Batticaloa—relieving Sri Lankan Army units and helping accept surrendered arms from the insurgents. [redacted]

India's intervention became more involved and protracted than New Delhi initially anticipated. Airlift and sealift had brought about 10,000 Indian troops from four different divisions or separate brigades to Sri Lanka by the end of the first two weeks of intervention, according to various sources. Opposition to the accord from hardline Tamil insurgents turned increasingly violent, and in October Indian forces began combat operations to take territory from insurgent control and enforce the provisions of the accord. Six months, 40,000 reinforcements, and about 1,500 casualties later, Indian troops firmly established themselves in Sri Lanka's north and east and forced the insurgents back to their rural bases. Still, insurgent activity persists, including the ability to bring illicit arms into the island despite an Indo-Sri Lankan naval blockade. US Embassy reporting indicates the Indians plan to guarantee local elections in the Northern and Eastern Provinces in summer 1988 and to begin withdrawing their forces. [redacted]

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Figure 1. Indian Army troops disembark from Air Force transports during the Sri Lankan intervention.

Southeast Asia

India appears least interested in or capable of expanding its influence in Southeast Asia. Although India's volume of trade is greater here than in Africa, the sophisticated and technologically developed Southeast Asian economies do not present the same untapped potential for India. Indian minorities have far less influence in these countries than do local Chinese communities. Most of these countries remain suspicious of India's relationship with the Soviet Union, in some cases believing New Delhi has granted or plans to grant Moscow basing rights in India.

The Indian Navy

Mission and Organization

New Delhi relies on its Navy to support its Indian Ocean strategy. The Indian Navy is responsible for the traditional naval missions of securing the nation's 7,000 kilometers of coastline, safeguarding the country's maritime interests, and conducting naval warfare against enemy forces. Although the Navy's main focus is Pakistan, we believe recent naval modernization and expansion efforts suggest New Delhi is placing more emphasis on power projection into the Indian Ocean.

[Redacted]

ants,³ India's Navy is the largest of those of the Indian Ocean states. The Navy also has about 50 fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft for various maritime missions. Headquartered in New Delhi, the Navy deploys most of its ships from the Western and Eastern Naval Commands, at Bombay and Vishakhapatnam, respectively, and has a small number of training ships in the Southern Naval Command at Cochin.

Force Structure

The Fleet. Two modernized World War II-era light aircraft carriers are the heart of the Indian fleet. The INS Viraat (the ex-HMS Hermes) arrived in India last year, and the older INS Vikrant will return to operational status when it completes its refit at Bombay next year. The Indians then will be able to keep at least one carrier operational at all times as well as station a carrier on each coast. Eight Sea Harrier V/STOL fighter-bombers assigned to the Viraat provide the carrier force's strike power, although recent

have lost one of these aircraft in a crash and use another only as a source for spare parts for the rest. The Navy has 64 Sea Eagle antiship missiles with which to arm the Harriers. Up to six of the Navy's 14 Sea King antisubmarine warfare helicopters also will be carrier-deployed and,

[Redacted]

Land-based aircraft complement the carrier force in a variety of maritime aviation roles. The Navy has five TU-142M Bear Fs and five IL-38 May aircraft for maritime patrol and antisubmarine warfare missions. In addition to the Sea Kings, nine Alouette III helicopters, five KA-25 Hormone helicopters, and three KA-28 Helix helicopters are available for short-range antisubmarine warfare duties. Most of these helicopters are often deployed on larger surface ships.

[Redacted]

replacing the aging Canberra bombers in a maritime strike role and will soon be armed with Sea Eagle missiles.

³ Warships over 500 tons displacement, submarines, and any vessel armed with antiship missiles.

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In addition to the two aircraft carriers, the Indian Navy's surface fleet includes 45 other major combatants—26 of them armed with a total of about 100 Styx-class antiship missile launchers. The Indians have five Kashin-class guided-missile destroyers and three indigenously designed and produced Godavari-class guided-missile frigates. The Godavaris essentially are stretched, broad-beamed versions of the six Leander-class antisubmarine frigates. India has modernized its two old Whitby-class frigates by installing missile launchers removed from Osa-class missile boats, but three older Leopard-class frigates mount only guns and are kept in the training squadron. The Navy's eight Petya-class light frigates also mount only guns. The three Nanuchka-class, two Tarantul-class, and 13 Osa-class guided-missile boats are the fleet's smallest antiship missile-armed combatants.



Figure 2. Prime Minister Gandhi and senior defense officials welcome India's Charlie I-class nuclear-powered submarine, INS Chakra, leased from the Soviet Union.

The Navy has augmented its aging submarine fleet of eight Soviet-built Foxtrot-class submarines with four Soviet-built Kilo-class and two West German-built Type 1500 submarines. The Indians leased a Charlie I-class nuclear-powered submarine from the Soviets earlier this year, but we believe it will be used more for training and technical familiarization purposes than in an operational role. All of these submarines are armed with torpedoes for antiship missions. Reporting is unclear on whether the Charlie I-class submarine carries any of the eight antiship missiles for which it was originally configured.

Bases and Facilities. India's three principal naval bases are at Bombay, Vishakhapatnam, and Cochin. Bombay serves as home port for over half of India's warships, and its shipyard is where most of the country's major ship construction and repair occur. Vishakhapatnam is the Navy's primary facility for technical training and for submarine repair.

indicate the naval base is undergoing considerable expansion and becoming increasingly important as a major repair facility for a variety of ships. Cochin is the Navy's principal advanced training base and home port of the training squadron.

Other, less important naval facilities include Mormagao and Goa on the west coast, Madras and Calcutta on the east coast, and Port Blair in the Andaman Islands. Mormagao is a major merchant port and minor shipyard, and nearby Goa is the primary base for the Navy's air arm. Ships are not permanently stationed in either Madras or Calcutta, but the Navy often uses Madras as a temporary staging base—ships involved in the Sri Lankan intervention operate from there—and Calcutta's shipyards are producing surface combatants for the fleet. Port Blair does not host permanent deployments, but it is the usual staging base for India's annual triservice exercises. The Indians recently acquired nine mobile coastal defense missile launchers from the Soviets that probably will be deployed this year to some naval installations where they will improve India's antiship defense and free some vessels dedicated to coastal protection for other missions.

Strengths and Vulnerabilities

In our judgment, the Indian Navy can defend the country's contiguous waters and safeguard its

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Naval Forces of Selected Indian Ocean Powers

	Major Combatants ^a	Other Craft	Total
Littoral powers			
India	62	71	133
Indonesia ^b	17	71	88
Australia ^b	13	45	58
Saudi Arabia	17	30	47
Pakistan	21	21	42
Outside powers ^c			
United States	21	12	33
USSR	4	14	18
France	4	9	13
United Kingdom	3	2	5

^a Warships over 500 tons displacement, submarines, and vessels armed with antiship missiles.

^b These countries have Pacific Ocean commitments as well.

^c These numbers represent normal deployments in the Indian Ocean and adjacent waters, including the Persian Gulf. The United States and the United Kingdom have a naval base in Diego Garcia, France has naval bases in Reunion and Djibouti, and the Soviets have naval access to Ethiopia and South Yemen.

maritime interests against threats from neighboring states, but it cannot carry out credible power projection operations very far into the Indian Ocean. We believe India lacks sufficient advanced oceangoing warships, adequate support capabilities, and the requisite tactical expertise to conduct sustained, modern naval operations beyond coastal areas. Our assessments of critical naval mission areas reveal specific shortcomings that we believe retard power projection.

Antisurface Warfare. India's maritime strike aircraft—Sea Harriers and Jaguars—are its most potent antisurface warfare assets, but we believe they will face problems engaging targets far from shore. The short-range Sea Harriers must deploy from small aircraft carriers capable of, but not designed for, long-range operations and are vulnerable to the advanced antiship munitions prevalent among other Indian



Figure 4. Indian Sea Harrier on carrier flight deck. Older Alize, which the Harrier replaced, is in background.

Ocean fleets. The land-based Jaguars are under the control of the Indian Air Force, a situation that presents operational problems involving parochially minded services with virtually no institutionalized joint planning or doctrine. Moreover, only one Jaguar squadron is being armed with Sea Eagle antiship missiles, leaving other land-based aircraft sent on maritime strike missions to rely on less capable antiship weapons such as guns, rockets, and bombs.

The Kashins and Godavaris are India's only true oceangoing surface warfare combatants armed with modern antiship missiles. Although these ships carry the improved version of the Soviet Styx missile system, we believe the Styx is still inferior to the Sea Eagle or other Western antiship missiles, such as the Harpoon and Exocet, that are used by other fleets in the region. The Whitbys are armed with older versions of the Styx missile system. The Nanuchkas carry the improved Styx missile system, but their small size and fixed missile launchers inhibit their capabilities in high seas. The other missile boats are smaller than the Nanuchkas and carry the older Styx system.

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India's submarine force constitutes a potent antisurface threat, but only close to shore. Each of the diesel-electric submarines can carry between 14 and 22 antiship torpedoes, but the submarines' relatively small sizes and the Navy's insufficiency in support ships and other assets for coordinated deployments limit the submarines' ability to conduct independent operations far from shore or for extended periods. The older Foxtrots are India's largest submarines, but they

indicates they suffer from hull corrosion and faulty torpedo tubes despite recent overhauls in the Soviet Union. US naval intelligence reporting indicates the Charlie I nuclear-powered submarine will carry up to 14 antiship torpedoes from India's existing inventory. The possibility remains, however, that it is also armed with up to eight SS-N-7 antiship missiles. Although the Charlie I's weapons load and extended operating range give it a credible open-sea antisurface capability, we believe its Soviet ownership and questionable maintenance status would limit its usefulness during hostilities.

Antisubmarine Warfare. In our judgment, India's antisubmarine warfare capabilities are less adequate the farther from shore subsurface threats occur. Its most capable antisubmarine warfare ships are the Kashins, the Godavaris, and the Leanders, all of which carry antisubmarine warfare helicopters and an array of antisubmarine rockets, depth charges, and

than one-third of Indian surface warships have towed or variable depth sonars capable of finding submarines hiding beneath temperature layers that deflect sonar waves, masking noise emanating from submarines. None have long-range antisubmarine weapons. India's submarines' relatively small sizes, slow speeds, and lack of support vessels make them ill suited for antisubmarine warfare operations beyond coastal waters.

We believe India's airborne antisubmarine warfare assets also are inadequate, despite the acquisition earlier this year of TU-142M Bear F long-range antisubmarine warfare aircraft to augment the shorter range IL-38 Mays. In our judgment, the Bear Fs are the most capable antisubmarine warfare aircraft in India's inventory, although the Soviets often

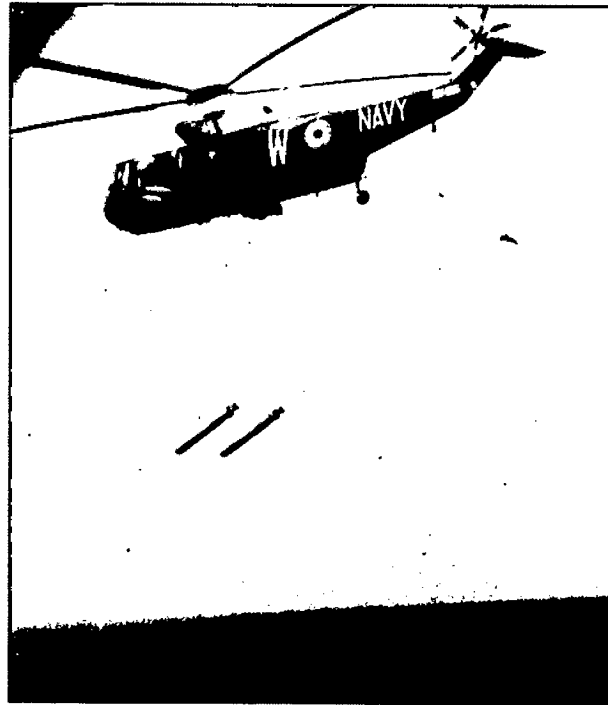


Figure 5. Indian Sea King helicopter practices antisubmarine warfare operations.

cannot track non-Soviet submarines with their Bear F's. The long range of the Bear F at least enhances its

are overloaded for their power plants, a problem that has adversely affected performance and caused one to crash during trials.

The KA-28 Helix antisubmarine warfare helicopters, however, are newer and more capable than the Hormones.

Antiair Warfare. In our judgment, the Indian Navy's ability to defend against air attacks is weak. The SA-N-1s on the Kashins are the only medium-range naval surface-to-air missile systems in the Navy's inventory. The Godavaris and Nanuchkas mount the shorter range SA-N-4 system. The newer aircraft

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carrier—the INS Viraat—and the Leanders carry even shorter range Seacat surface-to-air missiles. Close-in air defense is provided by shipboard anti-aircraft guns. India must rely on its maritime aircraft to intercept hostile aircraft beyond the range of the fleet's missile and gun systems. We believe the small number of these aircraft, the lack of early warning aircraft to detect air threats, and the limitations of the surface-to-air missile force leaves the fleet especially vulnerable to sea-skimming missiles—and even more so the farther they operate from shore.

Mine and Countermine Warfare. India possesses enough sea mines and delivery systems to present a credible naval mine warfare threat. On the basis of

has over 1,000 operable contact-moored and bottom-sea mines, more than enough to restrict passage at several ports and maritime traffic choke points in the Indian Ocean.⁴ About 30 surface ships and submarines in the fleet are configured for minelaying, although other ships could perform the same mission at reduced efficiency. Indian aircraft, notably the Bear F's, could deliver mines quicker and at greater distances.

The Indian Navy has a modest countermine capability. In our judgment, its 17 mine countermeasures craft, mainly Soviet-built Natya-class and smaller, inshore Yevgenya-class minesweepers, can sweep moored mines but have only basic capabilities against bottom-laying mines. The Indians have no minehunting craft. We believe India's long coastline and numerous ports present ample mine warfare targets for an opponent and could place significant demands on the mine countermeasures force.

Support Operations. In our judgment, India cannot support major naval operations far from shore or for extended periods. In contrast to the fair number and quality of its base facilities, the Navy's afloat support is austere. The fleet has only two West German-built replenishment tankers, which can provide oil and fresh water to naval forces at sea, and no capability for underway replenishment of ammunition, spares, or

⁴ The US Navy used only 36 mines to constrict Haiphong harbor for 300 days during the Vietnam war.

dry provisions. The only afloat repair ship, a Soviet-built submarine tender, has not deployed from port in years. Help from Indian merchant ships would ease the problem, in our judgment, but the Indians do not practice large-scale mobilization of the merchant fleet in logistic support operations. Moreover,

maintenance and repair at sea, returning to port for even minor work. The diversity and age of naval equipment aggravate maintenance support problems.

the materiel condition of Indian ships is often far below Western standards. The fleet's maintenance pattern is generally two years of operational duty followed by a six-month refit period, which removes a major portion of the force structure from sea duty at any given time.

Operational Expertise. Weaknesses in tactical doctrine, training, and intelligence are likely to retard the

Indian Navy still relies on grease-pencil boards and sound phones to engage surface targets—practices at least 15 years out of date. The fleet conducts exercises in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal throughout the year and makes annual port visit cruises to Red Sea, East African and Southwest Indian Ocean, and

cate, however, that Indian naval exercises tend to be short, set-piece affairs involving only modest realistic combat training, and the port visit cruises test little operational capability because of their nontactical nature. We believe the Navy's unwillingness to exercise with foreign navies and the limited exposure its personnel have had abroad seriously limit its combat potential.

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Expansion and Modernization

We believe that aggressive acquisition and shipbuilding programs will enhance the Indian Navy's future combat capabilities in all its mission areas. We expect the fleet's ability to project power very far into the Indian Ocean will grow slowly, however, and the Navy will remain largely a coastal force for the remainder of the century. In fact, we believe the growing force structure will add to the Indians' support problems and ultimately hinder the Navy from reaching its full operational potential. [redacted]

The Navy almost certainly will rely mainly on foreign purchases to upgrade maritime aviation. [redacted]

[redacted] additional Sea Harrier aircraft and 44 more Sea Eagle antiship missiles from the British—enough to deploy and arm a Harrier squadron on each aircraft carrier as well as one on land. India also is considering buying up to 20 more Sea King antisubmarine warfare helicopters and arming some of them with Sea Eagle missiles for strike missions. The Indians are also interested in an airborne early warning version of the Sea King. The Navy plans to replace its older KA-25 Hormone antisubmarine warfare helicopters with KA-28 Helix models and to augment its long-range patrol and antisubmarine warfare force with up to three more TU-142M Bear F aircraft. It also plans to arm a version of the Advanced Light Helicopter, which India is building with West German assistance, for antisubmarine warfare missions. The Navy is interested in buying four of the Coast Guard's Dornier 228 short-range maritime patrol aircraft, being built in India under West German license, and eventually arming them with antiship missiles. [redacted]

We believe that India's growing emphasis on indigenous production over foreign purchases will be felt most in the surface fleet. We calculate that over the next five years the Navy will receive three more Tarantuls and four more Natyas from the Soviets.

[redacted] the Indians have started building the first four of a planned 12 indigenously designed Khukri-class light guided-missile frigates at [redacted]

[redacted] design and build its own class of guided-missile cruiser for deployment in the 1990s as well as its own aircraft carrier by the end of the century. The Indians

The Indian Coast Guard

Formally inaugurated in 1978, the Indian Coast Guard is the country's maritime paramilitary force and is organized under the Ministry of Defense. The Coast Guard operates about 35 patrol craft, two old British-built Blackwood-class frigates previously used by the Indian Navy, and a handful of short-range aircraft. Its mission is to patrol 7,000 kilometers of coastline, protect India's fishing industry, apprehend poachers and smugglers, conduct search and rescue operations, monitor sea pollution, safeguard offshore oil installations, and assist the Navy in maintaining the security of island territories. Coast Guard headquarters is in New Delhi, with regional commands based in Bombay, Madras, and Port Blair. [redacted]

The Coast Guard's ability to fulfill its mission frees the Navy to project its orientation farther from shore. The US Embassy in New Delhi reports the Navy has shifted some of its erstwhile responsibilities to the Coast Guard, such as offshore oil protection and security of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and will turn over more as the Coast Guard's capabilities increase. The Coast Guard plans to acquire more patrol vessels and aircraft, including up to 36 Dornier 228 short-range maritime patrol aircraft produced in India under West German license, according to the [redacted]

Guard personnel are detailed from the Navy and, during hostilities, the Coast Guard comes under the Navy's command. [redacted]

are modifying the Tarantuls they are building under Soviet license with Western systems and plan to design and build their own class of missile boats. India is considering several Western mine countermeasures ship designs for coproduction, and are interested in buying as many as 2,000 sea mines plus licensed production rights from Western sources. The Indians are building a replenishment ship similar to their two existing oilers. [redacted]

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We expect that India will improve its submarine force through both purchases and production, and may acquire a small number of nuclear-powered submarines for a significant increase in power projection capabilities. The Indians have contracted for three more Soviet Kilo-class submarines, are building two Type 1500 German submarines, and plan to build two larger Type 1700 boats.

the Indians are negotiating with the Soviets for the purchase of nuclear-powered submarines, perhaps three Victor I-class boats. Such a force, along with the Bear F aircraft, would improve New Delhi's ability at least to monitor—if not threaten—foreign naval deployments throughout the northern Indian Ocean.

The Indians are improving their naval bases to keep pace with their expanding Navy. is building a major base at Karwar, south of Goa, as a larger and safer haven for the Western Command, but we do not expect it to be completed until the mid-1990s.

Port Blair and a nearby airfield are being expanded, which would allow larger ships and patrol aircraft to stage from the Andaman Islands for longer term deployments near the Malacca Straits. The Indians are building a very-low-frequency radio transmitting station near Cochin, which we believe would be critical in maintaining communications with long-range submarine patrols—such as those conducted by nuclear-powered submarines.

In our judgment, such a rapidly expanding force structure—coupled with India's determination to develop its indigenous production capability—will prevent the Navy from operating at its full potential. More ships and aircraft are likely to outstrip India's ability to man, maintain, and control the fleet effi-

especially in the technical fields, which we believe will only worsen as employment opportunities elsewhere draw young men away from the services. New Delhi's growing emphasis on producing indigenous subsystems for foreign-purchased items or designing and producing major items on its own is creating new problems, such as unsatisfactory performances or delays in design and production.

Role of Ground and Air Forces in Power Projection

Indian naval power projection operations are not likely to take place in isolation from the other military services, and New Delhi is preparing the Army and

squadron with escort task forces annually in joint operations with the Army and Air Force, usually in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Some recent exercises have taken place on India's west coast and have involved airborne operations, while others have included civilian ships that help boost the Navy's lift and logistic support capacity. The Indian military also has gained experience in sea and air logistic support operations during the Sri Lankan intervention.

We believe the Indians can marshal sufficient naval and civilian transport craft to lift up to two infantry brigades with accompanying armor and artillery—up to 5,000 men—in a single unopposed amphibious operation. The Navy has nine Polnocny-class medium landing ships, a larger indigenously produced Magar-class tank landing ship, and nine smaller utility landing craft stationed with its amphibious squadron at Vishakhapatnam. the Indians are building another Magar-class ship, at 5,500 tons displacement the country's largest indigenously produced naval vessel, at Calcutta and plan to launch it this year.

India's 54th Infantry Division—about 16,000 strong—is the Army's frontline force for amphibious warfare. The 54th Division, now deployed to Sri Lanka but usually stationed in the south, is experienced in landing operations and its 91st Brigade—about 2,500 strong—often is deployed in the Navy's

pendent brigade also now in Sri Lanka but usually stationed in southern India, is also trained in amphibious operations and is designated to be deployed to the Andaman Islands should the archipelago ever be threatened. Other units stationed in southern and

independently of the Navy's operations.

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Figure 6
India's Intervention Forces

Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative.



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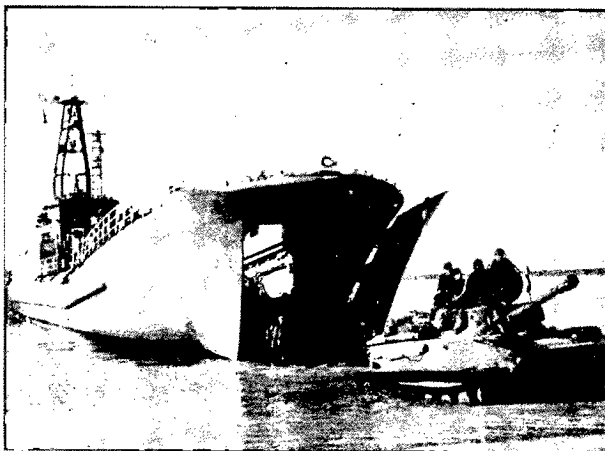


Figure 7. Indian Army PT-76 tank rolls ashore from a Navy Polnocny-class landing ship during a joint service exercise.

central India with no immediate border commitments would probably be ordered to provide follow-on echelons in a larger intervention.

has proposed the creation of a standing marine force, patterned after the US Marine Corps, and appears to be planning to use the 54th Division or the 340th Brigade as its nucleus. The Army also is planning to buy about 150 upgraded Swedish IKV-91 amphibious tanks, some of which we believe would replace the 54th Division's aging tanks.

India also is improving its ability to deploy airborne forces and support intervention forces with airpower. The Air Force has 10 Soviet-built IL-76 heavy transport aircraft and about 100 AN-32 medium transport aircraft and plans to buy 15 more IL-76s and 20 more AN-32s. The Air Force also is augmenting its fleet of Soviet-built MI-8 transport helicopters with larger, more powerful MI-17s. These aircraft can deploy all of the 4,500-man 50th Parachute Brigade, the only major Army unit specifically trained in parachute or heliborne operations, to areas immediately adjacent to India, or deliver about 1,250 paratroops as far as 2,600 nautical miles from base—enough, we believe, to seize an airfield where military and civilian transport aircraft could land more troops. The Army has another 4,500 paratroopers in smaller units separate from the 50th Parachute Brigade that it also can use

in airborne operations.

ans are interested in developing an aerial refueling capability, which would extend the range of their air operations.

We believe India's amphibious and airborne forces give it a credible intervention capability close to home but that overcoming a determined defense or conducting long-range operations would present severe problems. Although the Indians conduct joint service exercises, the lack of joint doctrine or a command structure beyond personal relationships among senior commanders creates operational difficulties that could be exploited by an opposing force, in our judgment. We believe the Indians could successfully defend their island territories or mount strong counterattacks against hostile forces occupying them and could intervene with large numbers of troops in nearby states. Amphibious operations farther from India—beyond the arc traced from Pakistan to Maldives and to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands—run higher risks because Indian moves would be detected earlier and because greater burdens would be placed on India's support capability for long-range naval operations.

We believe the Indians would rely on airborne forces for longer range power projection. Enough paratroops could be sent in an initial lift to defeat the defense forces of the small island states of the Indian Ocean—Maldives, Seychelles, Mauritius, and Comoros—and pave the way for more forces, in our judgment. We believe a force as small as a combat brigade deployed by an extraregional power to any of these countries, however, would be sufficient to tip the scales against the Indians. In our judgment, India does not pose a credible military threat to other equally or more remote countries, such as Madagascar or countries along the Indian Ocean littoral that do not border India.

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***A Hypothetical Scenario: An Indian Intervention
Opposed by Force***

Unlike the invited and initially unopposed intervention in Sri Lanka, Indian troops could be tasked to establish themselves in a remote area against hostile forces. Likely settings for scenarios of opposed intervention would include the Karachi area in an Indo-Pakistani war, southern Sri Lanka if Sinhalese Marxists seriously threatened Colombo, or Seychelles or Mauritius following an attempted military coup. India has practiced opposed intervention operations in annual triservice exercises and during its Brass Tacks maneuvers in 1987. On the basis of our evaluation of these exercises, we believe India would have difficulty in conducting opposed amphibious and airborne operations in general, but it would still succeed in the above scenarios. []

We believe Indian naval and air forces would go into action first to establish local sea control and air superiority. The naval task force would probably be built around an aircraft carrier and include up to two guided-missile destroyers, two guided-missile frigates, two antisubmarine warfare frigates, three submarines, two mine countermeasures ships, one replenishment ship, a few guided-missile boats, and the amphibious squadron. Once deployed in the combat area, the guided-missile destroyers and frigates and at least one submarine would try to sink or chase away opposing surface ships. The antisubmarine warfare frigates and the other submarine, with help from the antisubmarine warfare helicopters on the carrier and the destroyers, would deal with enemy submarines. Sea Harriers from the aircraft carrier would fly combat air patrols as their primary mission, shooting down enemy aircraft in the vicinity, and

would be tasked with a secondary antiship mission. The Sea Harrier force could be augmented with land-based aircraft if the operation were close enough to India to be within their range. []

With local security established, the amphibious craft would approach the landing beach. Surface ships would fire their guns at land targets close to shore, while the Sea Harriers would fly strike missions against hardened emplacements and targets farther inland. Infantry would land first with tanks to establish a beachhead, with the rest of the tanks and the artillery coming in later waves. With the beach secured and most of the ground force landed, the troops would leave a small force behind and push inland. They would try to link up quickly with airborne formations dropped in the enemy's rear area and advance to seize a port or an airfield where transport ships or aircraft could disembark larger numbers of troops and equipment. []

Airborne operations would be carried out just before or simultaneously with the amphibious attack—interposing blocking forces and seizing key communication centers in the enemy's rear. Land-based aircraft or Sea Harriers would establish air superiority over the drop zones, if necessary, after which transport aircraft would fly in and drop paratroops. Again, infantry would land first with light vehicles and guns, while most of the heavier equipment would be dropped or be airlifted in later. Helicopters could be used as well if the drop zones were within their range from Indian territory. []

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Outlook

New Delhi will continue to look for ways to assert its regional leadership, in our judgment, and will remain suspicious of the motives behind what it perceives as a growing foreign presence in the region. We believe India's growing status as regional leader, internal instability in many Indian Ocean states, and its expanding military forces are increasing the chances for outright Indian intervention throughout the area. We believe only a small chance exists that India will be forced to withdraw ignominiously from Sri Lanka, but even then New Delhi's appetite for regional intervention under its assumed leadership role would be only temporarily upset. [redacted]

Pakistan will remain the primary obstacle to India's regional ambitions and, therefore, the focus of India's military modernization and expansion, in our judgment. India's naval advantage over Pakistan—we believe already greater than both its ground and air advantages—will increase over time, providing a safety margin India believes it needs to expand power projection forces at the expense of shorter range assets. We believe Pakistan's naval programs, although far more modest than India's, will help the Pakistani fleet retain over the next few years the ability to threaten India's west coast, commercial shipping, and Navy during an Indo-Pakistani war—a conflict neither side believes is ever very far away. [redacted]

India's power projection capabilities will grow slowly. New Delhi's determination to build its indigenous ship production capacity is slowing the recent spurt of naval growth—a trend we believe will continue as the Indians search for designs, subsystems, and technology transfer agreements for domestic production as opposed to quicker acquisitions through outright foreign purchases. The Navy has no plans to acquire additional replenishment ships or develop the organization and infrastructure necessary to support long-range naval operations for sustained periods. [redacted]

[redacted] Although not yet a major political issue in India, recent increases in

defense spending are generating public criticism that we believe, along with other budgetary demands, may over time limit the pace of naval growth. [redacted]

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Implications for the United States

In our judgment, New Delhi's efforts to restrict outside involvement in the Indian Ocean will largely remain diplomatic. India will continue to be cautious in its use of military force, especially if it risks confrontation with the superpowers. We believe the Indians will continue pressing the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace proposal in international forums and spotlighting both the US and British presence in Diego Garcia and rumors of potential US military facilities in Pakistan to underscore their concern over increasing extraregional presences. Despite India's persistent calls for a regional ban on nuclear weapons, we do not believe its diplomatic pressure will extend to serious efforts for a nuclear-free zone. It has not demanded nonnuclear assurances from visiting ships, and its lease of the Soviet nuclear-powered submarine would publicly compromise such a stand. [redacted]

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We believe India's emphasis on indigenous naval production will lessen military purchases from Moscow and increase the opportunities for the embryonic Indo-US defense relationship. The Indians have chosen to build their own Khukri-class light guided-missile frigates instead of buying Soviet Koni-class models and have canceled plans for follow-on purchases of Kashin-class guided-missile destroyers while pressing ahead with plans to build their own class of similar vessels. [redacted]

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boats they are building, despite strong Soviet protests, and also plan to use these engines in the cruisers they are designing. India is interested in buying US Harpoon antiship missiles, apparently aware of the fleet's shortcomings in Soviet weaponry of that type. Senior Indian naval officers visiting the United States two years ago asked specifically to visit the naval base at San Diego and mentioned they may be interested in US help in building the new base at Karwar. [redacted]

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We do not believe Indian naval power can effectively challenge regular US operations in the Indian Ocean, at least until the next century. The Indians will be able to monitor US naval movements better with the Bear F aircraft and the nuclear-powered submarine but will not soon develop the capability to shadow US deployments regularly. Despite its support of Mauritius's claim to Diego Garcia, India has shown no inclination to challenge the US presence there on anything but diplomatic grounds. In our judgment, Indian naval forces are no match for regular US or French Indian Ocean naval deployments and would be hard pressed to challenge the Soviet or Australian task forces frequently present. In an Indo-Pakistani war, we believe the Indians would try to restrict foreign interference through aggressive naval operations close to shore, including a naval blockade of Karachi, to deter and even interdict maritime shows of support or resupply efforts to Pakistan.

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Appendix

India's Nuclear-Powered Submarine Program and the Lease of a Soviet Nuclear-Powered Submarine

[redacted] Moscow offered to sell nuclear-powered submarines to India as early as 1976 but apparently had not included sufficiently sophisticated systems or technology transfer rights to tempt the [redacted]

[redacted] indicates the Indians began designing their own submarine nuclear power plant in 1976 with a prototype originally scheduled to be ready by 1991, although we believe some preliminary work must have been going on since the late 1960s. [redacted] New Delhi decided to abandon this plutonium-based program in the early 1980s and to begin a new one based [redacted]

[redacted] was facing severe technical roadblocks and that India might need to acquire more foreign technology to get the project moving. We believe that the Indians are making some advances in their nuclear propulsion program but will not be able to construct a working prototype until the next century. [redacted]

The Lease Agreement

Speculation about an Indian purchase of a Soviet nuclear-powered submarine grew after the visit of the Indian chief of naval staff to Moscow in July 1987. [redacted]

In early January 1988, the Indian and the Soviet press announced the USSR was leasing a nuclear-powered submarine to India. [redacted] the lease was for three years and no nuclear weapons were included in the deal. [redacted]

[redacted] it was a Charlie I-class nuclear-powered submarine, renamed the INS Chakra, that sailed from Vladivostok. We believe the Soviets may have been unwilling to sell as modern a vessel as India was seeking and offered the

Charlie I under lease as a compromise. [redacted]

Strategic Implications

We believe New Delhi will use the Charlie I more for technical and training purposes than for operational activity. Leasing, as opposed to purchasing, gives the Indians a less expensive, immediately available craft to enable them to become familiar with nuclear propulsion technology and the operation of a nuclear-powered submarine. The Indians appear to be evaluating the submarine in port and in shakedown cruises, [redacted]

[redacted] are finding themselves at a disadvantage in making these evaluations because the Soviets are unwilling to provide technical data or allow sufficient access to the propulsion system. We believe the Indians will use whatever knowledge they gain to decide whether to try to purchase Soviet nuclear-powered submarines outright or revitalize their own maritime nuclear propulsion program. [redacted]

Because a nuclear-powered submarine's submerged time and time-on-station capability are longer than those of a diesel model, the Charlie I could enhance the Indian Navy's ability to monitor the strategic approaches to the Indian Ocean as well as other countries' regional naval deployments. In our judgment, however, a single nuclear-powered submarine will only marginally increase India's naval capabilities. We believe the Indians will be careful to limit the involvement of the Soviet-owned submarine in potential confrontations so as not to embarrass Moscow. Moreover, the Charlie I-class is an older type of submarine with which the Soviets have reliability and safety problems, which we believe further curtails its operational potential with the Indian Navy. [redacted]

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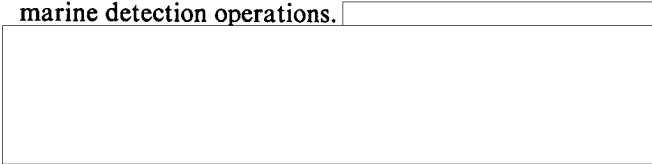
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Indian acquisition of several nuclear-powered submarines would have more impact. We believe the Indians will use whatever nuclear-powered submarine force they eventually acquire, along with long-range maritime patrol aircraft, to monitor US naval deployments throughout the northern Indian Ocean and underscore their regional power ambitions. The unique acoustic conditions in the Indian Ocean severely hinder submarine detection operations.



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