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Strategic Posture in the Eastern Ocean

Maritime Military Strategy in Support of the Nation's Look East Policy - The

Incoherent Shoals

Vice Adm.(retd.) Vijay Shankar

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Table of Contents

<i>Section I</i>	
Absence of Theory as a Preamble.....	3
<i>Section II</i>	
The Strategic Approach	6
<i>Section III</i>	
A Hundred Battles: Chinese Security Perceptions.....	11
<i>Section IV</i>	
The Eastern Ocean	23
<i>Section V</i>	
Vision, Force Planning, Mission and Values.....	36
<i>Section VI</i>	
Economics - Capital Investments.....	42
<i>Section VII</i>	
Scenario Building and Wargaming	47
<i>Conclusion</i>	59
<i>Acknowledgement</i>	65

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Section I

Absence of Theory as a Preamble

Nations develop power in all its dimensions to assure the well being of the State, security of the nation and the development of its people. National Strategies are formulated to chart a long term course in order to justifiably seize and exploit (peacefully in the main) opportunities that the global environment offers and, where perceived distortions to their concept of sovereignty exist, to iron them out and bring about a favourable situation. The singular purpose of national strategy is that of advancing the state. In this context the nation's strategic posture is a declaration, more by deed than articulation of its orientation, will and intent. The strategic posture purports to mould and shape a future that would benefit its larger objectives of development. The process is always fraught with the hazards of conflicting interests and therefore it demands the weight of the nation's comprehensive power both soft and hard. In an era when the face of soft power is that of an Assange and its voice (of this same era), that of Gandhi, Gibran, Amartya, Che and Osama; a critical instrument to uphold posture is the State's military power.

It was Clausewitz who first noted an area of darkness when it came to characterizing the complex relationship between national strategy and the military resources that were needed to muscle and enable that strategy. He perceived this region of obscurity as one caused by a lack of an understanding of the nature of power and the need to sculpt it in a manner that it promoted national strategy. Specifically within the framework of the military as a tool he identified this as a failure to distinguish between

the maintenance of armed forces and their use in pursuit of larger objectives.¹ In *Book II* of Clausewitz's *On War*, while discussing 'The Theory of War,' he notes,

“Even if we break down war into its various activities, we will find that the difficulties are not uniform throughout. The more physical the activity, the less the difficulties will be. The more the activity becomes intellectual and turns into motives which exercise a determining influence on the commander's will, the more the difficulties will increase. Thus it is easier to use theory to organize, plan and conduct an engagement than it is to use it in determining the engagement's purpose.”²

This quandary was not unique to Clausewitz's period as the dilemma continues to contemporary times when the momentum that propels the development of armed forces builds logic of growth that defies purpose and is often self fulfilling.

The absence of a cogent theory which integrates the promotion, nurturing and maintenance of force with a convincing contract for use is one of the first imperatives that the State must seek to reconcile. From this resolution emerges the concept of 'Strategic Poise.' India's armed forces have traditionally evolved to cope with operational scenarios. At genesis, this may have been attributed to the military's role in creation and upholding colonial empire, however, post-independence; to have deliberately brought about a separation between the armed forces and the strategic decision making process was a paradox that defied norms of nation building progression. The American strategist, George Tanham incisively argued, that India had problems developing a robust security policy including a strong military force because the country was bereft of coherent strategic thought.³

The operational canvas (inexplicable not to have been apparent), is a transient that abhors futuristic force planning. So it was, year-after-every-five-year the planner was condemned to an exercise that perceived possible threats and acquiring/building force structures that attempted to cope with those threats. It was, therefore, the 'immediate intimidation' of the changing global scenario that drove plans and consequently resulted in the accretion of forces. Unfortunately, this inspiration of the instantaneous intimidation

was and continues to be the pretender that serves to fill the strategic space. The significant pitfall that plagues the operational perspective is the struggle to catch up and keep pace with a future that the planner neither seeks to shape nor forecast and contend with. The malaise of our current strategic situation is, therefore, the emerging time, technology and planning gap in the materialization of appropriate force structures that work to shape the future. The case of our strategic maritime posture as a function (or dysfunction) of the declared 'Look East' policy is the study in point.

It is equally true that maxims that suggest strategic actions are often misleading in their efforts towards precision; at which time the question will invariably arise as to what good is a theory that inhibits application and how is one (if at all) then, to arrive at any rational conclusions? That any strategic situation places before the planner a host of considerations and an infinite set of varied combinations is a fact. Which really is the object of a theory; it makes transparent the complexity of a problem and invites the necessary intellectual rigour to not just 'chart a course' but also to analyze and cater for the hurdles that may beset the course as we set out to implement the strategy. Most importantly a theory determines, in the perception of the planner, the standard or the acceptability of a situation. It permits us to form judgment and make decisions as to which side of the normal our strategy is likely to take us. As Julian Corbett so eloquently put it "If, then the theoretical study of strategy be approached in this way – if, that is, it be regarded not as a substitute for judgment and experience, but as a means to fertilise both..."⁴ On a different plane, we continue to persist with our dogmatic views on maritime strategy; army strategy and aero space strategies almost as if they were distinct branches of knowledge without areas of convergence. It is the theory that underscores the intimate relationship between the elements of power and brings into perspective its indivisibility and the imperatives of a holistic joint approach to the formulation and implementation of a strategy.

Section II

The Strategic Approach

The strategic approach, primarily, derives from two critical characteristics of the international system. The first of these is the endemic instability of protagonists involved in the system; whether it is their politics, national interests, alliances or even their historical antagonisms which when interacts with the larger global setting cause's friction, a sense of deprivation and generates a chemistry of volatility. The second is the function of a state as a sovereign entity that is charged with guardianship of certain specific and, at times, unique set of values every so often contrary and at others in opposition to the larger system.

Instability of the actors within the international system is more a reflection of the realism that pervades international relationships. From political theory, the Morgenthauvian narrative finds an irresistible attraction when attempting to explain contemporary relations between states. The six principles of political realism that he enunciated may be summarized as follows⁵:

- Political realism believes that politics like society in general is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature.
- The main signpost that helps political realism to find its way across the canvas of international politics is the concept of national interests defined in terms of power. This concept provides the link between reason trying to understand international politics and the facts to be understood. It sets politics as an autonomous sphere of action and understanding apart from other spheres such as economics, religion etc. The definition in terms of power imposes certain intellectual discipline making the theoretical understanding of politics possible. In practice it provides for continuity in foreign policy consistent with the original understanding of national interests.

- Realism assumes that national interests, which may have only selective universal validity, do not give the idea an absolute meaning; that is, national interests maybe dynamic.
- Political realism recognizes the moral significance of action. It also places in perspective the natural tensions that arise between moral factors and successful political action. In choosing between the two, political action invariably prevails.
- Morality is not a collective feature of international relations. It distinguishes and differentiates between what is good for the individual as opposed to what is best for the state. This aspect of political realism makes nations unable to resist the seduction to clothe their own particular aspirations as high morality of creation. The political realist while understanding the existence and relevance of standards of thought other than political ones cannot but subordinate the standards to those of politics.

The function of the sovereign state as a guardian and as a unique entity with its own set of values all of which are absolute in nature would, in this day and era, appear to be an anachronism particularly so with the globalizing trends that technology and the economics of development have wrought. Through history the definition of sovereignty has had varied connotations, from the mystical in medieval times to the more practical of modern times. Beginning with the mirror image of the Maker, the King embodied in him, the temporal as well as the Divine; to the more contemporary understanding of sovereignty as a singular political feature that denotes authority within a well defined territory. Political philosophers of the likes of Kautilya, Machiavelli, Bodin and Hobbes set into motion and spread the idea of a sovereign state and in practice suggested the need for selective circumscription in perception of what construed supreme authority. That, however, was not the case; the dynamics that the idea generated did not permit the concept to keep pace with either the demand of the times or the changes that technology had fashioned. Three very obvious inconsistencies in the concept of a State remain an enduring source of aberration within the larger international system, the latter which at times holds in derision the individual nature of a State's interests.

These contradictions may be summarized as below:

- The internal dimension of sovereignty promotes vigorously, centralism at a point in history when the demand is for more plurality and democracy.
- Sovereignty makes inconceivable international laws, universal regulation or a supra-state that runs contrary to national interests.
- Supremacy of a state is a chimera given the emergence of a networked and globalised world with vast differentials in military and economic power and demands.

The strategic approach intends to put in place the means of achieving one's national objectives given the contrary pulls and pressures of endemic instability and the sovereignty of states. Former Indian Defense and Foreign Minister, Jaswant Singh, suggests that unless India as a society comes together more effectively, it is unlikely to generate the requisite military power to pursue an active security policy.⁶

Causes of Conflict

We have thus far noted that in the formulation of a national strategy and a development of a strategic posture there is a continuous hazard of a conflict being precipitated on account of the intrinsic instability of the global order and of the awkward contradictions that divergent interests pose. Historians have through the ages, attempted to explain this state of affairs that promotes conflict. Arnold Toynbee in the 9th Volume of *A Study of History* believed that war and peace were cyclic. Large scale wars were invariably followed by a breathing space of peace. This pattern, he postulated could be explained by the war weariness theory which posits that intense wars of a widespread nature cause such a deep impression on the mind and spirit that it places a natural demand to prevent the infliction of such misery on the immediate future. This from an antipodal perspective would imply a natural anxiety towards long periods of peace. One cannot but note that the promotion of such theories do not either stand the test of logic or of the times, for the suggestion is, nations are likened to the individual and therefore reflect emotions such as weariness and exhaustion, that is the period of exhaustion and

convalescence would naturally be followed by exuberance which would lead to war. The causes of conflict candidly cannot be put down in such simplistic terms.

If we were to look at the two defining characteristics of the international systems as mentioned earlier, it is apparent that instability and the concept of sovereignty play a disproportionate role in the roots of conflict and yet there are a host of other factors that influence relations between nations. Kissinger in his survey of the United States' strategic problem⁷ very precisely pointed out the fact that war was not just a continuation of politics but that politics and military strategy merged at every point. A complex strategic theory may be so intellectually satisfying that the difficulties of its employment in moments of great tension and confusion may be overlooked (resulting in exactly what was sought to be avoided). He, further in the same essay, underscores that the nature of power is such today that "if risks have become incomparably greater, the essential principles of strategy have remained the same; the characteristics of which are governed by offensive, defensive and deterrent power". It is therefore a combination of power and diplomacy that would in effect serve to, not just assure stability, but also shield against conflicts. Strategic posture of a nation would therefore serve to balance out the influences that provoke friction.

Development of a Strategic Posture

We have thus far highlighted the hazards that the absence of theory precipitates in strategic thought by causing a chasm between the maintenance of forces and its use; resulting in the operational perspective prevailing. This in turn puts nations in a persistent tail-chase to understand and contend with contemporary challenges. This is particularly so in India's context where the strategic approach has, by design at times and by default at others, been given short shrift. There is an awkward laxity in all this for it abdicates the responsibility to fashion the future.

India's strategic objectives in the East were first articulated in 1991 in Prime Minister P.V. Narsimha Rao's 'Look East' policy and were pursued by successive governments. Our present Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in elaboration of this policy said "*India's Look East policy is not merely an external economic policy; it is also a strategic*

shift in India's vision of the world and India's place in the evolving global economy. Most of all it is about reaching out to our civilizational neighbours in South East Asia and East Asia"⁸. The Look East policy was initially directed towards the South East Asian nations, very significantly, India has since included China, Japan and South Korea into the geographic ambit of the policy and more importantly is that what began as an economic initiative has gained both political and security significance. The crux of the policy is to seek strategic leverage in the shifting balance of global politico-economic equilibrium of the region. It envisages the ASEAN States and Japan as key partners in Asia. Ties with South Korea would also be targeted for strengthening. India's best efforts to improve relations with China and to put in place cooperative security schemes have received a lukewarm reception. The one player whose potential we have not thought it appropriate to engage is Taiwan. My own interactions with the government of the day in Taiwan suggested that if at all one were to get inside the mind of the Chinese leadership, the route lay through Taipei, not through Beijing.

Given the fact that close to 33 per cent of all India's trade comes from this region, our strategic posture in these waters would therefore be powered by not just a show of intent but also the will to realize and pry open the opportunities that the changing long term scenario indicates.

Section III

A Hundred Battles: Chinese Security Perceptions⁹

China published its sixth Defense White Paper in January 2008. Its contours were that of a self-confident China recognizing its own growing economic and military prowess. Unwritten was Beijing's intention to improve her image the first step of which was to provide some clarity by the issuance of the White Paper. At the same time, the paramountcy of containment of the various social fissures that their development has precipitated was top of their agenda. Their appreciation of the security situation underscored the belief that the risk of world wide all-out war was relatively low in the foreseeable future, yet, the absence of such risk did not automatically imply a conviction that stability and peace pervades international relations. The paper critically points out that struggles for cornering strategic resources, dominating geographically vital areas and tenantry strategic locations have, in fact, intensified. Power as a natural currency for politics remains the preferred instrument. Under these circumstances the portents for friction are ever present and would therefore demand preparedness, modernization and orientation of a nature that would serve to neutralize the fall out of such friction.¹⁰

One of the clauses that is central to the White Paper is that "the influence of military-security factors on international relations is mounting." From the Chinese point of view (which we may study with an element of skepticism) is their abhorrence of hegemonistic tendency notwithstanding the levels of development that they may achieve. Examining the nature of the geopolitical scenario, the paper reiterates the defensive posture of China's national defense policy. But typical of their nuanced approach to such issues, they in the same breath, highlight the fact that they are in the process of implementing a military strategy of 'active defense', in which, material as well as doctrinal tenets would combine offensive operations with defensive maneuvers. This would demand that the PLA develop advanced assault capabilities. Of significance is the enhancement of mobility and strike capabilities in all three dimensions. Doctrines to back such capabilities involving sea-air-land integrated operations would be central to military

strategy. Long range assault, regional reach and the development of ‘Access Denial’ and control strategies are central to military operations.¹¹

During President Hu Jintao’s review of the South China Fleet in Shanya in April 2008, he declared that the central problem arising from China’s security goals was how to maintain the robust level of resource access and to put in place control features needed to sustain and nurture national development. To this end, the importance of protecting and securing maritime interests present a major challenge. He specifically focused on the PLA’s rapid reaction capability in its territorial seas, sea control capabilities in blue waters and power projection in the East China and South China Seas. In relation to extra regional naval forces, the PLA’s strategy would center on an effective denial capability. To achieve these objectives, the development and implementation of Access Denial strategy and the ‘Assassin’s Mace’¹² were key. The rapid expansion of the nuclear submarine fleet is all a part of this venture.

Economic Development of China and India and Portents for Discord

Among the multifarious factors that characterize and influence the development of nations an ever increasing role is being played by its maritime power. The realization of such power is at the heart of making effective use of the world’s oceans. Higher the level of development of the economy greater will be the consequences assumed by the world oceans as an inexhaustible source of energy, raw materials, food and most critically as a medium for the movement of trade, materials, petroleum products and indeed of personnel. Close to 90 per cent of global trade is borne by hulls out at sea. It is no secret that historically, and to this very day, maritime power is a key catalyst of economic growth. It will be noted from Table 1 that it was during periods of increased maritime activity that both China and India realized periods of significant growth. Therefore between the 7th and 14th centuries for India, when the Srivijaya Kingdom was at its zenith and for China, during the period of the Zheng He voyages (15th century), growth, commercial activity and seaborne inroads all saw a spike which is yet to be replicated. While it may be argued that societies of that day, being largely agrarian and critically influenced by demography and weather, made GDPs directly proportional to

population; however it cannot be denied that it took maritime activity to convert surpluses of time and agricultural produce into imperial activity. It would be of significant interest that the two countries between the 9th and the 18th century, contributed to as much as 40 to 50 per cent of global GDP. Table 1 maps historically China and India' share of global GDP its fall and its current upward trend.

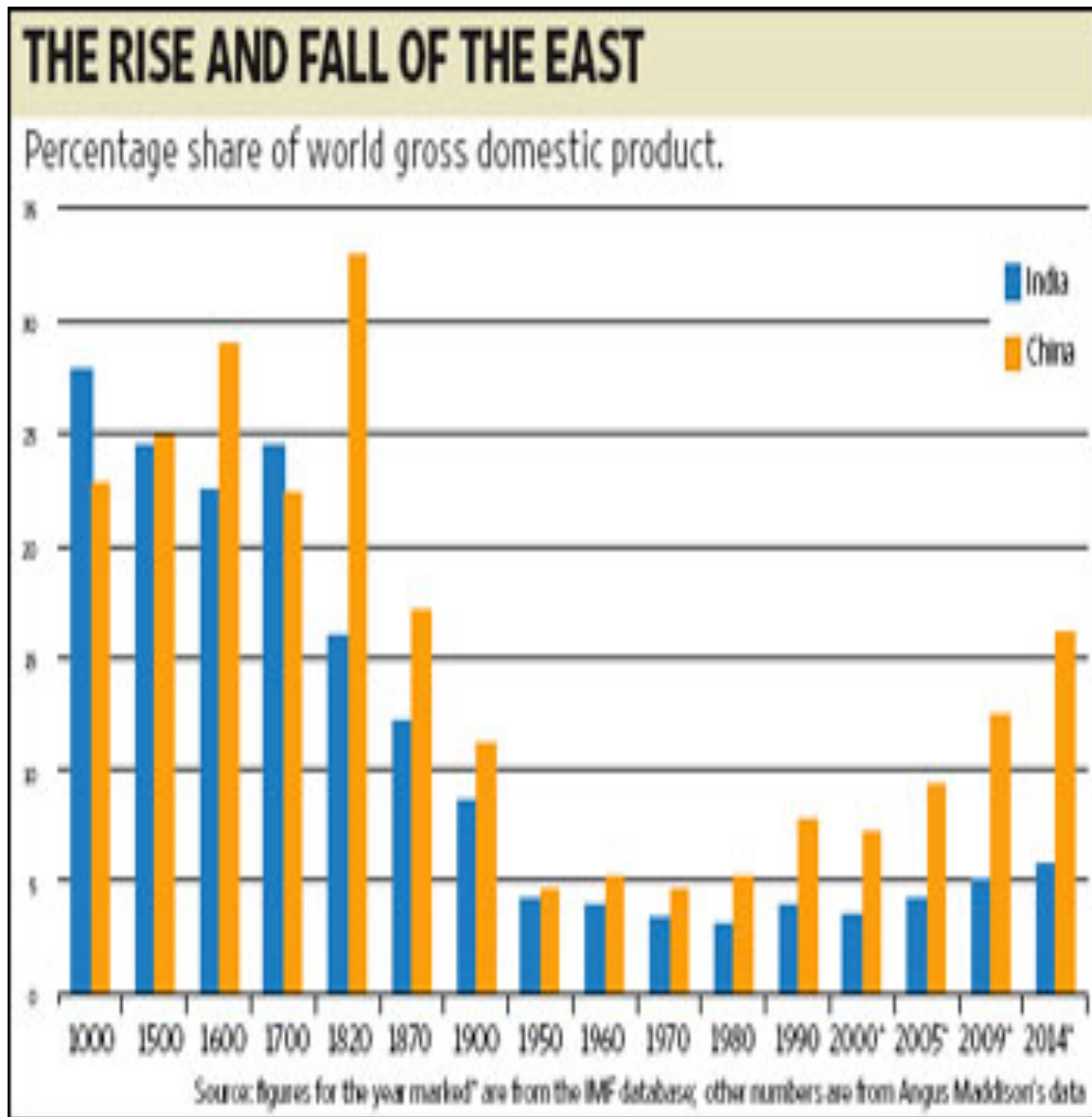


Table 1: Global Share of GDP, India and China, 1000-2014

Source: Figures collected from the IMF database

The relative size of the two economies over the last century is indicated in Table 2 and 3. What would be apparent is the stagnation for the first fifty years (in India's case two decades more) caused first by the imperial nature of the economies and later by the skewed character of rigid centralized policies. The surge that lifted growth to its current levels is more on account of three factors: end of the cold war, globalization and economic reforms.

GDP levels in billion 1990 PPP dollars					GDP, percent of world			
	1913	1950	1998	2010*	1913	1950	1998	2010*
India	204	222	1,703	4,046	7.5	4.2	5.0	5.4
China	241	240	3,873	9,872	8.9	4.5	11.5	13.2
World	2,704	5,336	33,726	74,430	100	100	100	100

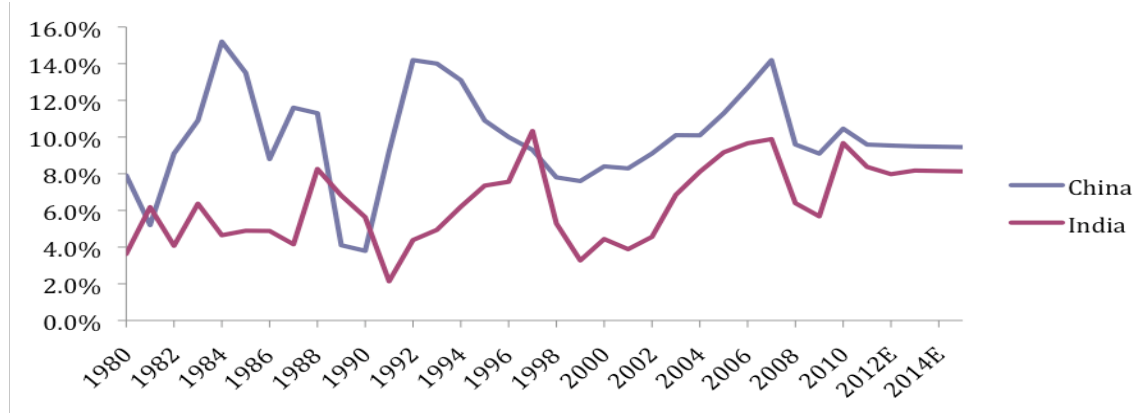
* in current U.S dollars

Table 2: Economic size India, China. Source: Maddison, A., D.S. Prasada Rao and William F. Shepherd, (eds) (2002), The Asian Economies in the Twentieth Century, Edward Elgar, UK and U.S.A. and CIA Fact book, 2011.

	1913	1950	1998	2010
India	673	619	1,760	3827
China	522	439	3,117	7,400
World	1,510	2,114	5,709	10252

Table 3: India and China Per Capita GDP in 1990 \$US PP. Source: Maddison, A., D.S. Prasada Rao and William F. Shepherd, (eds) (2002), The Asian Economies in the Twentieth Century, Edward Elgar, UK and U.S.A. CIA Fact book, 2011

The graph and Table 4 is a comparative GDP statement of the two nations over the last 3 decades.



Year	Country	GDP constant prices (percent change)
1980	China	7.9%
	India	3.6%
1982	China	9.1%
	India	4.1%
1984	China	15.2%
	India	4.6%
1986	China	8.8%
	India	4.9%
1988	China	11.3%
	India	8.3%
1990	China	3.8%
	India	5.6%
1992	China	14.2%
	India	4.4%
1994	China	13.1%
	India	6.2%
1996	China	10.0%
	India	7.6%
1998	China	7.8%
	India	5.3%
2000	China	8.4%
	India	4.4%
2002	China	9.1%
	India	4.6%
2004	China	10.1%
	India	8.1%
2006	China	12.7%
	India	9.7%
2008	China	9.6%
	India	6.4%
2010	China	10.5%
	India	9.7%
2012 E	China	9.5%
	India	8.0%
2014 E	China	9.5%
	India	8.1%

Table 4: GDP India and China 1980 – 2014 Source: IMF, *World Economic Outlook Database*, Oct 2010

An examination of the tables above and the symbiotic relationship between periods of maritime activity and the impact on growth will make apparent this intricate linkage between sea power of the State and its development, though subjective, the hypothesis is a robust one. The importance of information technology, human development and soft power in the 21st century is a factor that cannot be lost sight of in making estimates of comprehensive national power of states.

The change in China from a closed centrally planned system to a more market oriented one from the late 1970s to 2010 must be seen as having been enabled, in good measure, by vigorous promotion of maritime power. So much so that by 2010 it is the world's largest exporter and its economy at \$9.8 trillion is only second to the USA and with an oil consumption of 8.2 million bbl/day she is the 3rd largest consumer in the world (2009 estimates). When we look at the growth pattern of India since liberalization, (which can be pegged to have started on 24th July 1991 with the Narsimha Rao government's package of industrial reforms along with a new open door policy on inward investment); we note a similar trend with respect to consumption patterns, energy demands, exports and trade. Indeed with one third of this growth being powered by trade to the East, the requirement to secure these interests become all the more vital. Already the 2010 figures make China our largest trading partner. Indeed security of this trend will be a key to development of India. At the same instant, in the race to garner limited resources for the development of two very large economies the scope for friction looms large.

The analogy of the rise of Japan and the concern that it caused to orthodox western strategists in the 1970s and 80s makes for an interesting study; not so much for the security chinks that it exposed but more for the cultural and civilizational anxieties that it evoked which overshadowed the fact that they were competitors in the global economy, not partners. The fear was not that Japan's growing clout served to undermine the west's dominance in the economic sphere and was challenging the status quo in terms of the ideals of free markets, control of technology and free enterprise at a time when the cold war was at its most frigid, but more that the fundamental source of conflict would neither be ideological nor economic, but rather, cultural. The rise of Japan seemed improbable and yet ominous. That an alien culture was producing superior results to

those of the West-was the rub. The whole construct was ridden with racial overtones with one saving feature, and that was, there were no security complications. Today we know, not only was the rise of Japan benign it benefited processes and gave fillip to applied technologies.

The reasons many countries view China with trepidation today are similar on the surface to their reaction to the rise of Japan and yet rooted in very different impulses. China, too, uses a competing economic model, albeit with a difference (the very phrase used is an oxymoron) – “state capitalism” – that challenges the economic ideology of the West. In many ways, China also behaves in a mercantilist fashion. It keeps its currency controlled so its exports can out-compete those from other countries, and it corners natural resources for its insatiable growth by methods that are reminiscent of colonial dealings, not that the west did not indulge in more vicious practices. Worst of all, the political ideology behind China's economic ascent completely counters western ideals about democracy and human rights. China is not just competing with the U.S. in world markets, but offering an entirely different economic and political system, one that at times seems better at creating growth and jobs, even as it restricts ‘much’ cherished civil liberties. China is succeeding based on ideas that are anathema to those of the likes of the father of modern economics, Adam Smith, and his theories of the ‘invisible hand’ and the self regulating nature of the ideal economy.¹³

The concerns with China go well beyond the cultural and economics for it openly seeks to influence and eventually dominate international political and security institutions to the exclusion of other nations. Thus far this had been the select domain of the USA, France and Britain; not so, any more. Progressively, China is using its economic clout to offer an alternative to the U.S. led political and economic system. In other words, China appears to be challenging not just today's economic orthodoxy and order, but the world's political and security framework as well.

From the Indian point of view the potential source of friction is neither cultural nor is it economic. Civilizational, encounters between the two giants of the Asian continent have, through history, given space to accommodate each others aspirations. First it was the outstanding formative influence of Hinduism, Mahayana Buddhism and Confucianism; their assimilation defined the distinctive character of the South East Asian

civilization¹⁴ which brought to flourish the Sri Vijaya commercial Empire from 7th to the 13th century. Subsequent colonization of the region by China and India in no way impeded the expansion and amalgamation of religious, cultural and political institutions. The Empire also served as the trading bridge between India and China.¹⁵

India's preoccupation with China is therefore neither one that is fermented by an impending clash of beliefs, values or any portents of a collision due to social action, nor one that may be caused by a compression of economic space; it is more by the latter's manifest urge to use her Comprehensive National Power to challenge and change the existing global political, economic and security structures without bringing about a change within her own 'biological morphology'.



Map 1: China's claims of Territorial Sea along with the UNCLOS approved EEZs of the Littoral States. Shaded circles indicate the disputed Islands. Source: www.bbc.co.uk/news

It is not as if these structures are not due for an overhaul but it is the knuckle duster methods that she has chosen to employ and the reluctance to participate in cooperative security arrangements that provide the potential cause for discord. The case of her claims on the South China Sea as a territorial sea (see Map 1); her proliferatory carousing with rogue states such as North Korea and Pakistan are cases, amongst others,

that do not inspire confidence in change occurring without turbulence. We also note with some foreboding, the emergence of China from out of its, largely, defensive maritime perimeters as defined by the first and second island chain strategies into the Indian Ocean region as a major stakeholder.



Map 2: The Coming Third Island Chain. Source: Author

To this end, it has through diplomacy and economic inducements established bases in Sittwe, Hambantota, Gwadar and Marao in the Maldives. The geographic and strategic significance of these posts were apparent in the past and are equally vital today, whether for purposes of control, regulating, providing havens or assuring security to their energy lines. Sittwe and Gwadar also provide the front end for piping energy into China. These long term strategic investments by China maybe seen as the coming of the ‘Third Island Chain’ (see Map 2).

In a recent article by Richard Behar, he draws our attention to the “parasitic relationship” between China and the sub Saharan nations. He says “The region is now the scene of one of the most sweeping, bare knuckled and ingenious resource grabs the world has ever seen¹⁶.” These are strategic moves which are more than likely to cause friction between powers and demand an approach that embraces cooperation to which, to this day, China has been extremely coy about whether it is operations in Myanmar, Africa or indeed the South China Sea.

China in a departure from the Western model of first identifying ends then conceptualizing methods and finally generating means to achieve ends; follows the comprehensive national power route where it sees the effect of an event on its own endowment and its ability to control the event as primary. Therefore in articulating its strategic objectives in order of precedence it has unambiguously identified three canons, the first of which is internal and external stability to its own gauge; the second is to sustain the current levels of its economic growth and lastly to achieve regional preeminence. A conflict of interest in the implementation of these three would propel the superior dynamic to prevail.

Gone is the ‘power bashfulness’ that marked the Deng era, in its place is a cockiness that is discernible by the contemporary conviction that “the world needs China more than China the world”. Lt Gen Qi Jiangua, the Asst Chief of General Staff’s comments on the building of an aircraft carrier (refurbishment of the derelict Varyag) is revealing, he stated “It would have been better for us if we had acted sooner in understanding the ocean and mapping out our blue water capability earlier. We are now facing heavy pressure in the oceans whether the South China Sea, the East China Sea or the Taiwan Straits.”¹⁷

To China, two events of the 1990s have had a seminal impact on the shaping of their military strategy. The first of these is the Gulf War of 1991. China took home not lessons or answers but, a reason for strategic preemption. In the words of General Liu Jingsong “allowing a modern military opponent unfettered access to land, sea and air territories in which to build up and employ forces, as well as regional bases and logistic hubs to sustain them, was a recipe for defeat. He pointed out that the very assembly and

positioning of coalition forces constitute “first firing” and justified action to postpone or even deter actual war.¹⁸

The second event was during the Taiwan Strait crisis of 1995-1996, which to the Chinese was a humiliating experience of their sovereignty being violated when the US deployed two carrier groups in the Straits with impunity. These two events were the primary causes for them to formulate and enable their ‘Access Denial’ strategy. China has never publicly acknowledged this stratagem; however force planning and structuring that we are currently witness to, whether it is the ASAT programme, the missile modernization, the nuclear submarine build and replacement agenda or the thrust on ‘informatisation’ and cyber warfare; should leave none in doubt of the course which their force planners have charted. At the heart of the matter lie three vulnerabilities:¹⁹

- Vulnerability of the economic powerhouses located along the east coast and the communication lines by land, air and sea that bring in resources to fuel the economy and transport finished products.
- Vulnerability of Taiwan, in their perspective, and therefore the need for its denial as a base for foreign powers. This accent highlights China’s continued sensitivity to sovereignty issues.
- Vulnerability of the sea spaces, so dramatically demonstrated by the crisis of 1995-1996 and consequently the need to deny the theatre to any interventionary power.

Seen in this frame of reference General Liu Jinsong’s words carry new meaning, for if the first salvo is the build up; then it is not from the precincts of pre-emption that a strike emerges but as a reactive and a defensive strategy. This rationale gives form to the access denial strategy. When projected in consonance with the Third Island Chain, one cannot but note that access denial would apply not just to the region of purpose, but also to the points of origin and to the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) along which energy, trade and resources are moved. The waters and littorals of the Indian Ocean and specifically the Eastern Ocean will now become the region where this strategy will be played out.

The development of access denial capabilities has shown impressive growth over the last decade and a half, not just in terms of material progress but also in terms of doctrinal foundations and operational precepts. China's three modernizations, as mentioned earlier, along with their investments in cyber warfare, anti air, anti ship weaponry and anti carrier hardware in addition to the thrust on nuclear submarine, both strategic and nuclear powered attack submarines, a carrier group centered on the Shi Lang (ex Varyag) aircraft carrier with its suite of SU30s all make for a force that is increasingly lethal in effectiveness and enhanced in reach. Operating from infrastructure that they have cultivated from Sittwe and Aan in Myanmar to Hambantotta in Sri Lanka, Maroa in the Maldives and Gwadar in Pakistan (collectively the so called string of pearls) would give teeth to the long range access denial within the coming Third Island Chain.

Specific operational deployments may include one carrier group operating in the Eastern Ocean; a Jin class SSBN on deterrent patrol; two SSNs on SLOC patrol with cooperating surface group and maritime patrol aircrafts; long range maritime strike aircrafts operating from Aan or Gwadar; one amphibious brigade standby with transports on hand at one of the 'string of pearls.' Also one regiment of ASAT missiles along with cyber warfare teams to manipulate, black out, control and wage information warfare that will seek to paralyze operations in the Eastern Ocean.

In the absence of a security oriented cooperative impulse, the problem with such sweeping strategies, specifically the coming 'Third Island Chain' superimposed on a long range Access Denial Strategy is its blindness to recognize that, as historically never before, we are in fact dealing with a sea space that in Mahan's words is the busiest of all the "vast commons." The reluctance for collaboration makes the potential for friction high.

Section IV

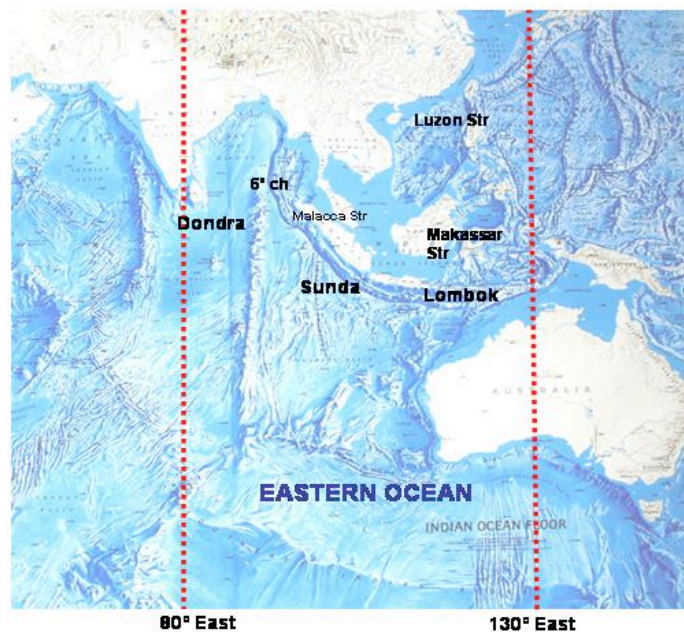
The Eastern Ocean

It is now necessary to understand that with this shift in global economic and geo political power, the first imperative is to bring about coherence between security dynamics, strategic space and growth. It begins by defining the geographical contours within which the 'Look East' policy will operate and the requirements to provide the necessary security structures so as to enable and bring to fruition the policy. The broad parameters in this definition must factor in the areas from where the mechanics of trade originate, the energy lines run, the sea lines of communication pass, the narrows contained therein and the geographic location of potential allies. In this context the sea space between the 80 degree East Meridian and the 130 degree East Meridian extending to the Antarctic continent provides the theatre within which the 'Look East' policy will function. This sea space will hereafter be referred to as the Eastern Ocean.

The Eastern Ocean, bound by landmasses on all sides except the 130 East Meridian has some unique features. Its weather is dominated by the monsoons and tropical systems, the hydrology of the Eastern Ocean make it difficult for underwater surveillance operations between the 30 degrees north south parallels. Widespread clouding impairs domain transparency. Small ship operations, other than in the littoral seas, are particularly inhibited during the 6 month monsoon period. Density of traffic through the narrow passages and straits makes surveillance without identification incoherent. The Eastern Ocean is dominated by seven important choke points. From west to east these may be identified as follows:

- Dondra Head: Provides the passage which connects the sea lines of communication (SLOC) from the 9 degree channel to East Asia provides a deep water route for a third of global traffic while it provides considerable sea space to the south it remains a critical passage for commerce particularly so for very large container carriers discharging at Colombo for onward carry to the sub continent.

- **6 Degree Channel:** The 6 degree channel is the primary route that feeds into the Strait of Malacca. It stretches for 90 miles south of the Great Nicobar Island and its deepest channel runs within 60 nautical miles from Indira Point. Between 200 and 220 ships transit this Channel everyday of which more than 15 % are oil tankers bound for East Asia, 10 % of which is to China.
- **The Malacca Straits:** At the heart of the Eastern Ocean lie the Malacca Straits which links the Indian Ocean with the Pacific Ocean. Being the most commercially viable sea route with considerable depths, it offers the most cost efficient SLOC, connecting the energy and mineral rich African continent and the oil rich regions of the Persian Gulf and the Middle East with the Eastern Ocean. At its narrowest it is 1.5 nautical miles in width.



Map 3: *The Eastern Ocean.* Source: *Author*

- **The Sunda Strait:** The Sunda Strait has north east – south west orientation with a maximum width of 15 nautical miles. It is very deep at its western end and narrows to the east as soundings decrease to 20 metres. While it can accommodate very large crude carriers and very large container carriers it is not easy to navigate

due to strong tidal flow and the presence of both natural and man made obstacles. Ships whose draught inhibits movement in the Malacca Straits generally choose the Sunda Strait. It is admirably suitable for fast passages underwater or on the surface.

- Lombok Straits: The Lombok Straits is an alternate passage to the Malacca and Sunda Straits. While it provides stealth, the strong cross currents inhibit passage of commercial traffic; it also involves a diversion of close to 1500 nautical miles. Its virtue lies in its discretion it provides for the transit of nuclear powered submarines.
- Makassar Straits: The Makassar Straits is a natural route for ships transiting the Sunda or the Lombok to and from ports in the Celebes Sea, Sulu Sea and the South China Sea.
- The Luzon Strait provides the Pacific passage into the South China Sea.

In essence the Eastern Ocean with its seven choke points/passages provides the strategic context to global trade passing through this ocean.

Contemporary Challenges

An analysis of the current state of international relations and the developments in the region will demand continuity in growth, development and modernization in the militaries of the region. National power as a function of economic development and strategic postures will remain an abiding factor in any calculus of a nation's standing. This continuity in military strategy will most affect China, India and Japan. While the littorals of the South China Sea may well develop denial capabilities with their focus on Chinese intent in these waters, their effectiveness can only be assured through co operative engagements with like minded nations whose presence in the region would serve their interest. Within such a co operative group it is reasonable to assume that individual friction would be subsumed to the larger denial objectives, the expansion of the ASEAN and the creation of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) are suggestive of the littoral's aspirations to counter balance the looming presence of China in their grouping. USA's

presence will dominate activities in the region in the immediate and mid term future. Flash points such as territorial claims both in the maritime and continental domain will remain a source of friction that would necessarily demand military capabilities and a strategic orientation that serves to assure restraint. Where American interests differ with the three major players the latter will demand a role in order to assure its own interests. The eventuality of a US drawback from the region, while of a low probability, remains a contingency that will leave a vacuum which has the potential for friction between China, India and Japan.

Since the declaration of India's Look East Policy, the ASEAN-India relationship has grown in leaps and bounds from the limited sectoral partnership in 1992 to a full dialogue venture in 1995 and subsequently to a summit level collaboration in the first ASEAN-India summit held in 2002. This reflects a new found mutuality between the two entities. The 10 original ASEAN countries include Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The current membership of the original ASEAN grouping plus 6 is symptomatic of the shifting center of gravity of geopolitics to the East, and from a security angle, the inclusion of India, USA, Russia, Japan and South Korea in addition to China (which was the avatar of ASEAN plus 1) provides the context for security checks and balances in the Eastern Ocean. The world has recognized that East Asia, is the home of 'disruptive innovation,' a term coined by Clayton Christensen from the Harvard Business School, to describe the radical change in the manner in which new products are conceived, produced and delivered, and also about frugality and the thriftiness that makes business enterprises profitable. This has been the prime mover for the shift in the economic center of gravity. India and China along with ASEAN are set to become the world's largest economic bloc. The grouping is expected to account for about 27 per cent of Global GDP and will very quickly overtake the EU and USA economies. Table 1 in this new perspective would clearly suggest an encore of the Sino-Indian role in global economics.

Cooperation covers the entire gamut of international activities from economic through political to security considerations. The ASEAN Regional Forum provides a critical stage for promoting stable relationships between major powers and is a useful complement to bilateral activity which is accepted to be at the heart of the security

construct in the 'Eastern Ocean.' The buoyancy of the Indo-ASEAN relationship is backed by surging trade figures which in 2007 was USD 15.06 Billion, and is slated to hit USD 60 Billion in the current year. With such burgeoning stakes in the region, the reason to establish strong and stable security ties now becomes a core issue. A tacit understanding in this is the measures put in place to counterpoise a situation when the activities of the grouping could be engulfed by the Chinese viewpoint. It also gives impetus to the idea that China's aspirations in the region must not in any way come in conflict with those of the littorals and even if it does, to be able to search for and find balance in relations.

Notwithstanding the above, contemporary challenges in the Eastern Ocean in context of the Look East policy are dominated by three currents. While there are several regional and sub regional issues whose influence on the region cannot be denied it is these three that will have the greatest impact on the success or otherwise of our policy.

- **The Challenge of a Rising China:** Towards the end of 2003 and early 2004 senior leaders of the Communist Party of China studied the rise of great powers in history noting the destructive inventory of conflicts that proved to be the engines of supremacy from the 15th century onwards. This brought them to the central theme of their examination: could China dominate without recourse to arms? Unfortunately, in its relationship with India it has shown no propensity to establish co operative stabilizing arrangements nor has it taken any measures to resolve long standing boundary disputes (it must be said that nor have they put in place measures that aggressively vitiate the situation). Its collusion with reprobate states further pushes relationships downhill, the nuclear tie up both in the weapon and civilian field with Pakistan along with possible doctrinal links and in March 2010, the failure to issue a condemnation when North Korea sank a South Korean warship does not suggest a pacific approach to relations. Its disputes with Japan and its forceful reassertion of claims to the Spratly and Paracel islands and to sovereignty over virtually the entire South China Sea are very serious ulcers in current relationships in the Eastern Ocean. This conundrum continues to push affected parties and like minded states into countervailing

arrangements. As, no doubt, the history lesson would have told Chinese leadership that the relationship that determines regional conflict or otherwise is the stability of relationship between powers that have the greatest impact (in every sense of the word) on the region. Strategic pundits have condemned the Sino Indian relationship to be one of rivalry as both powers grow and develop at a rate close to 10%. It will take all, statesmen like virtues to ensure that the emergence remains marked by understanding rather than friction. Powers can coexist peacefully only when their rise is seen as one that does not hinder the other. There are many ways of building trust in Asia but we have one advantage. We have both been a part of the 20th century's disasters in power play, the lessons of which should serve us well in arriving at solutions bereft of idealism at the center of which is mutuality. Unfortunately, the reluctance to put in place measures that recognize the imperatives for collaborative institutional security does not augur well for the prospects of stability.

- **The Hyper Power:** The overwhelming ascendancy of the single hyper power and its penchant to resort to military force seen against the backdrop of the intricate economic relations that the US and China currently enjoy poses an ironic dilemma. Is the American posture in the South China Sea intrinsically antagonistic and would it break out into a hot conflict given the strategic links that USA enjoys with Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and the other littorals of this region? The noises that currently emanate would seem to suggest that the war of words is just a few turns away from a conflictual situation. The impact of instability in this region will be to adversely affect India's economic and developmental aspirations in addition to the hazards of being drawn into an unintended clash.
- **The Mixed Blessings of Globalization, Rise of Nationalism and Non-State Actors:** Impact of globalization and the inability of the State to reconcile with the stresses that it places on the very concept of sovereignty, which in turn makes historical sores take centre stage, when their resolution

ought to be the focus. Nationalism which was the underlying force that sparked off the wars of the 20th century has today, become the source of China's confidence to an extent when the words of Chairman Deng who started the reforms in the early 80's "Coolly observe, calmly deal with things, hold your position, hide your capabilities, bide your time, never try to take the lead, accomplish things where possible"²⁰ which became the essence of Deng Xiaoping's 24 character strategy, now has a hollow ring about it, particularly so, since there is a growing perception within that the arrival of the 'Middle Kingdom'²¹ is nigh (!). According to Yuan Peng of the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations "many Chinese scholars suggest that the Government give up the illusion of US partnership and face squarely the profound and inevitable strategic competition."²² It is also apparent that the surge of nationalism that sweeps China has led it to formulate an affordable military strategy of asymmetric weapons (the 'Assassin's Mace' is part of such a concept). This unorthodox strategy has set into motion three areas of rapid modernization in the military establishment; firstly the most active land based ballistic and cruise missile program in the world, secondly an enlarged nuclear attack and nuclear ballistic missile submarine fleet, and lastly concentration on what China calls "informatisation," an active and passive method of waging information warfare. All this has brought it to what the historian Herbert Butterfield termed "the absolute predicament and irreducible dilemma" that is, if you do not arm you leave yourself open to attack, if you do, you threaten the other country.²³ Technology, in the meantime and the very trends that have brought about the breaking down of age old barriers have placed disproportionate destructive power in the hands of groups that may choose to work outside the international system. Again, China's intriguing involvement with maverick nations such as Pakistan and North Korea does not in anyway enthrall confidence for the prospects of a stable future. Of particular interest is Pakistan's quest for power and parity with India as a part of the larger protracted clash that has been integral to relations since independence in 1947. Armed conflicts that have occurred over Kashmir, the erstwhile East Pakistan, Kargil, the failed insurgency in Punjab and the

ongoing insurgency in Kashmir are more symptomatic of this search for a strategy that would bring about parity. In an earlier section, the relationship between purpose and means was discussed at some length. Clearly in the mould of Fredrick II's (1712-1786) most cherished desire, that he wanted Prussia to become not a country with an army but an army with a country, is equally applicable to Pakistan. There can be no more a perversion of means replacing purpose than in the case of Pakistan. Therefore parity, from the Pakistan perspective, remains only the striving to achieve a military advantage. As events have shown in the recent past this quest has led it through the most tumultuous period of its existence. Today, bordering on being a failed state, it continues to nurture some of the most virulent terrorist groups that have plagued the region and uses them as a part of state policy. The country today represents a very dangerous condition on account of the precarious cocktail that the establishment has brewed in nurturing terrorism as a deliberate instrument of their mishappen strategies in Afghanistan and Kashmir. This strategy has blown back to an extent that the very existence of the state is in question.

The direction in which the Sino Pak alliance is headed is a vexed question. If it is the image of China that is going to predominate, then collusion with Pakistan on military and nuclear matters must witness a dilution and yet if the intention is to keep the Indian establishment on the boil, then for China to set aside an enthusiastic collusive partner would be tantamount to Janus shutting down his second face. After all in the nuclear arena, for China to maintain a no first use policy while at the same time nurturing a first use capability in the form of Pakistan targeting only India, provides them with the proverbial ace in a strategic hole. Doctrinal links enable the acquisitory process to equip the alliance partner with weapons and capabilities that China maybe loathe to possess. The transfer of the NASR, Babur and RAAD missiles and the coming on line of Pakistan's Plutonium facilities in double quick time are symptomatic of the impact of China's collusive strategy.

In this calculus what would be a dampener for Sino Pak complicity, is the worsening political situation in Pakistan, which presents some nightmare possibilities for all parties involved including China. The possibility of terrorists obtaining nuclear weapons is more today than just a probability. There is a growing global realization of the dangers of a state teetering on failure holding on to a vast expanding arsenal, both conventional and nuclear. In the worst case the world looks at a dysfunctional military theocracy sitting on a stockpile of deadly conventional and nuclear weapons with an avowed policy of vengeance against all things great, small, unislamic and Indian. This scenario, while in the extreme, does point to an urgent need to remove the malaise that is the cause of the situation and to ensure that the arsenal both conventional and nuclear is not placed in a position of compromise. The state of Pakistan polity and the involvement of the establishment in sponsoring terrorist groups and activities are now well established.²⁴ Pakistan's future is today poised on a razor's edge. Stability of the nation and particularly of their nuclear arsenal is held to ransom by the internal politics of the nation. Such a situation has dangerous ramifications that affect global security and therefore the future is more than likely to be marked by steps initiated to control and reign in the state of affairs. Whether this means to stabilize internal politics through division of the state or by neutralizing the terrorist elements and giving the nation back to its people is a moot question.

Traditionally Pakistan has employed wars and crises as a means to divert popular opinion from the issues at hand. Current conditions are so fraught with complexities which threaten the very existence of the country that a crisis may provide the necessary unifying call, which may in the short term, provide leadership with respite. This may hold portents of an upheaval that spills across borders. The effect of technology on both the conventional as well as the nuclear capabilities remains a factor that should cause planners considerable unease. Precision, time compression and hair trigger preparedness are three features that technology has given, through the Chinese acquisitory route to the Pakistan military. Viewed against a backdrop of political uncertainty, demographic turbulences and military disillusionment and discontent the dangers of an

unintended conflagration are all the more manifest. This entire situation is vitiated by the fact of the growing solid fuel, nuclear and conventional missile arsenal, the induction of the submarine and air launched land attack missiles, potentially capable of carrying nuclear warheads and the coming on line of the Khushab II and III nuclear reactors with its promise of weapon grade plutonium.

The need to evolve policies and attain postures that would neutralize negative aspects would occupy the creativity of decision makers. Four generations of warfare has marked military power over the years. While the first generation denoted the assumption of monopoly over warfare by the state, the second focused on centralized command, valued obedience over initiative and was characterized by firepower attrition and a linear form of battle. The third generation placed initiative over obedience and used speed, concentration and firepower to surprise and dislocate. The fourth generation warfare however turned the clock back and poses to end the state's monopoly over the declaration, planning and waging of war.

Globalization, the internet, information technology and the commercially available knowledge as well as the ingredients that make munitions are the instruments of the fourth generation warrior while his sustenance come from states whose borders do not necessarily confine his activities. In short the battlefield is the world, the frontiers are non existent while the instruments are the very engines that have powered globalization. We today, face the challenge of having to confront and counter the hazards posed by this new and devastating form of warfare. In this battle as the US forces in Afghanistan have learnt, conventional forces do not provide any ready solutions. The answer perhaps lies in superior intelligence, control regulation and surveillance over the sinews of globalization and deep co operation between nations spearheaded by precision strike teams. This would call for a total transformation of the forces that we develop to counter the fourth generation threat.

Of these three dominant currents what direction China's rise will take and whether it wears a largely benign or malignant mantle is a matter of conjecture that will

be influenced by both internal as well as external factors (as deliberated earlier). With the coming of the Third Island Chain; the maturing of the long range access strategy and the cultivation of the string of pearls, what is of significant relevance is that the potential for a collision is a reality and the only consideration that could deter it, is the ability of India to attain a strategic posture in the Eastern Ocean that serves to stabilize. On the ‘globalization-nationalism’ non state actor conundrum, clearly plural societies with decentralized control are more likely to transform, adjust, adapt and tweak their systems, than monolithic centrally controlled States such as China which are intrinsically brittle in form; as cracks begin to show, the fallout on the region can only be traumatic.

It is only India’s relationship with the USA that is, to some extent, within the hands of our policy makers and therefore it would be in order to examine this in some detail. Since Independence, Indo American relations have seen dizzy highs and plummeting lows. It began with the Roosevelt, Truman and Eisenhower administrations (1940s and 50s) pumping in massive funds to build infrastructure without giving too much thought to building a strategic relationship other than to woo India from ‘falling’ into the Soviet camp. Very substantial foreign aid programmes (amongst the largest during that period) were launched in support of democratic institutions,²⁵ this included the period post Sino Indian hostilities of 1962 when a vast amount of grant military aid was also forthcoming. Briefly during the Kennedy administration, a vision emerged of an India allied with the US against ‘the Communist threat’²⁶ which was not to be. By the 1971 war relations had touched rock bottom and remained there through Pokhran 1, the break up of the Soviet Union and into the 90s. The period was marked by a state of knee jerk ‘drift and sanction’ and in the absence of a strategic locus left the relationship rudderless. There were neither points of convergence that were sought to be enlarged nor was there a will to make an assessment on both sides as to how the global scenario actually stacked up, given the events of the 1980s and the 90s and how an engagement fitted in. The awkward irony was that these were the two largest democracies and yet remained on different pages at a time when the world was undergoing strategic compression.

It was only after the 1998 nuclear tests that the two countries awoke to the realities that an engagement suggested. The consequences was the inking of the 'Next Step in Strategic Partnership' an agreement that identified and formalised areas of bilateral cooperation in January 2004 which included civil nuclear enterprises, civil space programmes, missile defense and high technology deals. Of critical importance was the opening of technology doors which culminated in the watershed Indo-US nuclear agreement of 18 July 2005. The larger significance of this deal was the arrival of India on the global stage as an equal and an acceptance of its potential to play an influencing role in the rarified environ of the club of nations that sought to control and oversee world order (the impending G8 +5).

Thus far a nuclear pariah that had endured the ignominy of sanctions, which in 1991 been forced to transfer gold to London to the Bank of England to prop up a wobbly credit rating and to generate funds to tide over her balance of payments problems²⁷ and for many years had suffered the embarrassment of carrying the sobriquet of a 'basket case'²⁸, it was, at the end of it all a realization of that long standing prophecy of the 'natural alliance of the worlds two largest democracies' albeit after tortuous and bizarre labour pangs. India today stands as a strong society that provides an oasis of stability amidst a clutch of disintegrating and failing states in a rough neighborhood that hosts two inimical nuclear armed nations with very close military and doctrinal links. Robust Indo-US relations that include economic, technological, military and security dimensions provide the means to bringing about balance and stability in the region. While it remains premature to translate these ties to intrusive presence and involvement, it is the maritime dimension, on account of its very nature, that opens up the maximum possibilities.

India has shown itself; through restraint, pluralistic and popular form of governance to be a responsible state that upholds the status quo yet invites change through democratic forces, and its rise, in the main, is not only welcomed in South East Asia but is seen as a harmonizing happening that could counterpoise China, afflicted by radical and, at times, abrasive policies and an unpredictable and some times paranoid leadership.

The next step would logically be to establish an Indo-US strategic framework in the maritime domain, if we are to resourcefully contend with the challenges that the Eastern Ocean presents.

Section V

Vision, Force Planning, Mission and Values

In evolving a vision for maritime military forces, their planning, build up along with infrastructure and their actual use; of essence, is the understanding of the three dominant currents that influence and transform the Eastern Ocean within which the 'Look East' policy would have to operate. These have been discussed earlier. The point being made is that, whatever force structures are developed these would cater for the dominant three challenges with the assumption that a lesser-than-challenge would automatically be taken care of. In the broadest of terms our vision would be "to create and deploy such forces which would establish and contribute to stability within the Eastern Ocean". While our focus would be to concentrate on maritime forces, it would also be necessary to recognize that other elements of national power would be required to realize such a vision and contend with the shape that challenges may take in the long term within the Eastern Ocean. This long term maybe identified as a period of half a century. When dealing with the problem of means, a balance is necessary between objectives that are identified with available resources; national the vanity, as we have seen, which often is the natural accomplice of nationalism, must be eschewed.

"The maritime strategy of a country can be defined as the overall approach of the nation to the oceans around it in order to maximize national gains. India's maritime military strategy as defined identifies the country's role in its maritime areas of interest, and outlines the national maritime objectives for clarity in execution of this role. Since most maritime activities take place outside the country's sovereign jurisdiction they often need to be supported militarily, either directly or indirectly. The military dimension of India's maritime strategy is termed as the maritime military strategy. India's maritime military strategy outlines the guiding principles to provide the protective framework for the use of the oceans in all aspects for our national benefit"²⁹. This definition is extracted from the document entitled "Freedom to us the Seas" issued by the Integrated Defense Headquarters, MOD India (Navy). The problem with such a strategy is that it does not make any effort either to prognosticate the challenges that are likely to emerge or for that

matter does not make assumptions of the resources that would be made available for contending with such challenges. While in a different section of the document the maritime military strategy recognizes that the major task of the Indian Navy during the 21st century would be to use warships to support national foreign policy,³⁰ it does not define even in the broadest of terms what this foreign policy is, nor does it make an assumption of what the salients of the policy could be. In the absence of these critical issues that have been identified above the document remains flawed and fails to distinguish and fill the strategic gap between “maintenance of forces” and “its use”. In yet another section it highlights that the ends of the strategy is deterrence without defining what is to be deterred; and then very quickly degenerates to the operational level stating that the document “provides a foundation for the planning and conduct of operations”.³¹

Force planning must be driven by three overarching considerations. In the first part clear understanding of what the articulated national policy is; in our study this is the Look East policy, in the second part what challenges (has been dealt with earlier in section IV above) may arise in the short and long term to this policy and the nature of conflicts which clashing interests may degenerate into. The last part must include an estimate of potential loss/harm that may occur to our national interests if forces were not developed to address the first two parts (this would have to be gamed in order to arrive at any conclusions with some objectivity).

Addressing the problem of ‘balancing fleets’ Admiral Sergei Gorshkov, in his seminal book “The Sea Power of the State” stated “while our fleet was being built close attention was and is being paid to efforts to ensure that all the elements making up its fighting power are constantly in the most advantageous combination or as is now commonly said are balanced. The balanced development of the fleet must be based on a doctrine which defines its role and place in the system of the armed forces of the state, its tasks in armed struggle and also the purpose of the branches of the forces forming it. Another aspect of the problem is the determination of the quantitative composition of a fleet, starting from the basic demand made of it – to be a composition of forces present in peacetime, capable of fulfilling the tasks assigned, having regard to geographical location and the possibility of undertaking a maneuver between theatres [...] The character of

balance of the fleet is not constant. In certain historical conditions it may change. The main factors determining such changes are the general political situation (new alignment of forces, presence of military blocks, change of regime in individual countries etc), the potential of the economy and the growth of the military economic potential of that country, the development of science and technology at home and abroad and change in the tasks assigned to the fleet³². Of all these factors the main ones are the tasks set before the fleet by the political leadership and the level of economy of the country.” It would be apparent from the preceding (despite the difficulty of the translation for comprehension) that the Soviet State not only understood the requirement for a strategic approach but emphasized the need for a theory to attain a strategic posture as indeed to distinguish between maintenance of forces and their use. Admiral Gorshkov, it may be recalled held stewardship of their navy during the critical periods from the 50’s to the early 80’s and was the chief architect of the transformation of that navy from a brown water force to a blue water instrument of their state policy.

Force planning to deploy in the Eastern Ocean as has been mentioned earlier must factor not just the expanse of this region but also the ability to reach and sustain operations between 2500 – 3000 nautical miles from Indian ports / bases that may be provided by allies. Ideally the development of infrastructure for such long range operations is in the Andaman and Nicobar islands which offers the necessary springboard into the Eastern Oceans and endows the Mahanian logic of being able to provide the very “unity of its objectives directed upon the sea”³³. This advantage, as the strategist pointed out, is one not enjoyed by those whose boundaries are continental. A major infrastructural center in the Andaman Sea must be accompanied by establishing base support facility arrangements in Indonesia (Djakarta), Vietnam and Japan in the Southern islands (Kyushu/Shikoku). Such infrastructural back up would serve the Look East policy admirably. At the same time it would call for diplomacy of a nature that we have not thus far seen practiced.

Given the state of flux that the Eastern Ocean is currently subject to and the impact of the three dominant currents that influence these waters, the types of military maritime missions that the Navy may be called upon to perform in this Ocean would encompass the following:

- War fighting which includes sea control, sea denial, anti access denial and littoral warfare.
- Strategic deterrence which would be a feature that would be persistent and consistent with our nuclear doctrine.
- Coercive maritime deployments: This may include deployments in Straits and along SLOCs .
- Co operative missions including intervention, peace enforcement and peace keeping.
- Diplomatic missions, policing and benign role.

Deployed forces should be of a nature that effectively counters China's long range access denial strategy. Its bases at Sittwe, Aan and Hambantotta must remain under persistent surveillance with sub surface blockading forces comprising of six conventional submarines held in readiness. The advantage that geography bestows us must fully be exploited such that Chinese operations from any of the 'string of pearls' bases are covered by our own long range strike aircrafts either from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands or from the mainland (high levels of jointmanship is assumed). Strait seeding with sea bed sensors and cooperative surveillance means must permit us to keep track and, should the need arise, to mark movements of China's nuclear attack submarines. Our ASAT programme along with information warfare teams must at all times be at a high state of readiness to disrupt and disable China's information and command and control networks that cover the Eastern Ocean.

To implement our planned concept and assume a strategic posture in order to assure stability in the Eastern Ocean , and if indeed, that stability were to be breached, in region deployed forces would have to blunt, reverse the situation and bring about equilibrium in tandem with cooperative forces. Forces would be required in four force packages. The four basic groups are Strategic forces, In region Forward Deployed Forces, Anti Submarine Warfare and Marking group, In Region Forward Presence Forces which includes amphibious forces and Contingency, Auxiliary and Replenishment Groups. These four Force packages must be available at all times to fulfill designated missions in region and would be constituted from units listed below based on the demands of the

operational situation. In addition contingency forces to respond to unpredictable and unanticipated crises forces must be mobile, flexible, rapid and lethal. They will comprise of quick reaction light army forces and a tailored mix of Navy, Air Force and Special Forces. They would be stationed in the A&N Islands:

- One Aircraft Carrier Group .
- Surface action group additional to the escorts integral to the Carrier Groups force structure along with a company of special forces.
- Suitable airborne ASW and surveillance assets attached to the Carrier Group.
- Anti Submarine Warfare (ASW) and Marking task group comprising four ASW frigate together with four ASW marking corvettes and airborne ASW elements available for ready deployment from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (A&N). Straits surveillance teams will operate in close coordination.
- One amphibious brigade group along with transports available in readiness at the A&N Islands.
- Replenishment Group together with auxiliaries required to sustain forces.
- Contingency Forces as mentioned earlier.
- Support capabilities will include ASAT regiment And Information Warfare teams.
- SSBN nuclear deterrent on patrol under NCA command.

Values that will underlie all military maritime deployments and action emerge from the translation of the vision into individual specific missions. Stability and deterrence lie at the core and it must run as a common thread across the spectrum of deployment from small ship involvement in benign roles to that of war fighting. Clearly planners must address this on the merits of each case. However these will necessarily include the following:

- The need and reality to ensure nuclear deterrent stability at all times.

- The effect of globalization and the part that technology plays continuously in providing disproportionate disruptive and destructive power.
- The understanding that conventional forces are instruments of engagement, regulation, stability and for contending with crisis and contingencies. Control of escalation and its tempering would be an abiding feature.
- The impact that non state actors play, their ability to transact and deal in activities which give them disproportionate power that could upset stability. The need to come to grips with such situations through all pervasive surveillance and the teeth and will to take pre-emptive and punitive action then becomes an imperative.

Section VI

Economics - Capital Investments

We have in Sections III noted the upward trend in India's economy; we also lamented the absence of a strategic approach which, if espoused, would not only give political purpose to 'force' but would also thwart the perpetual descent into the operational strait jacket. Unfortunately hesitation in the use of military power has been the principal mechanism that has, in crises, driven State policy (barring the 1971 war in the East which led to unconditional surrender and the creation of Bangladesh); whether it was the lack of response to the 26/11 Mumbai assault, the ponderous and eventually benign response to the attack on Parliament in 2001—Operation Parakram, Kargil Operations, the 1971 operations in the west where a more vigorous strategy could have been adopted or indeed the terms of the Simla Peace Agreement, the 1962 China debacle, the 1948 sluggish defence of Kashmir and so too the inexplicable 'strategic stutter' between 1974 nuclear explosion and the decision in 1998 to test and weaponise. In all cases it was a strategy of inaction, time-forced-decision making and curtailment of the military option that was brought to play. In the main it ruled out boldness, assertiveness and resolve to achieve strategic objectives through power play. While this strategy may have served India well at a time when resources, capabilities and political understanding of military means was poor, and the military itself was treated somewhat as a pariah in the overall nation building endeavor; the events of the past six decades ought to have cast aside this perception with some finality.

Today resources available are more than ever before, at the same time access to technology brought about by a combination of events beginning with the break up of the Soviet Union, the rise of China, the impending exhaustion of the sole hyper power and its consequence of a nascent multipolar world, globalization, the economic growth of India, all conspire for conditions that demand a greater role for the nation in global affairs both in the economic and security dimension. To deny this role is to stunt the aspirations of a billion strong and youthful citizenry; to accept is to embrace the 'Strategic Approach.' As interests, not just in the immediate region, but in the larger world arena grow (as they

must) and India's neighborhood becomes increasingly menacing, the need and responsibility to assure stability will fall squarely on military shoulders, setting into motion the imperative of enhanced military power. Whether this will be accompanied by institutional structures, mechanisms and organizational transformation (for joint planning and operations, for example) in order to realize a strategic posture is the moot question. It is on these building blocks that the ability of the nation to wield comprehensive national power will rest; giving it real independence of action.

At present India spends less than 2 % of her GDP (currently standing at \$1.5 to \$1.7 trillion based on a World Bank projection) on the military the (defense budget for 2010-2011 is \$36.5b) as opposed to 3% by most democracies. An examination of the budgetary allocation for defence and the likely forecast if it were to increase to 3% would suggest a defence budget that would by 2025 touch a figure of \$140-200 billion (at a forecasted growth rate of 8.5-9%.) The current allocation to maritime forces is about 16% of the defence budget and this is likely to increase to about 20% given the fact the development of maritime forces is capital intensive. Also a 50-50 division in the ratio between revenue and the capital budget, leaves a cognizable amount of monies for capital investment to the tune of \$20 billion. Its most effective use would be in the development of a capability that would promote the maritime strategic posture in the Eastern Oceans. Obviously as these forces are developed the strains on the revenue budget would reach the 50-50 ratio. This could perhaps be pegged at a 40% for capital and 60% for revenue by 2025.

Our ship building and submarine programmes, both conventional and strategic, are mature, and aircraft acquisition programs are well underway; both materially and financially putting together the escorts for a carrier group have already been catered for. Forces required in four force packages along with support and auxiliary structures have been identified in Section V. The one big ticket item which would have to be catered for in addition to the three aircraft carriers already in the pipeline is a fourth. The aircraft carrier with a price tag of \$6 billion (2010 costs) with another \$18 billion as through-life cost would demand from the naval budget \$1.5 billion per year for 7 yrs and thereafter \$0.5billion per year (allowing for a build period of 7 yrs and carrier life of 40 yrs). This is affordable and well within projections of the naval budget.

There is also an area where the strategic economics of some of our current projects do not coalesce with our aims in the area. Of particular significance is our 30 year submarine program³⁴ that was cleared by the Government of India in 2006 which, unfortunately, does not appear to be in sync with either the demands of our future aspirations in the Eastern Ocean or with the challenges that we are likely to face by the end of the third decade of the 21st century. A build programme that restricts itself to conventional submarines does not fit the operational bill. While the conventional boat is extremely efficient in 'close denial' operations, to expect them to operate at any distances as envisaged in the Eastern Ocean would put operations in considerable jeopardy. Their limitations of mobility and the virtues of nimbleness are unfortunately nonexistent. Under these circumstances to persist with designs that made their appearance in the late 20th century and for roles that are made for littoral denial would be suggestive of a lack of strategic savvy. It can be nobody's case to refute that the ideal underwater platform for large area operations and for marking purposes, is the nuclear powered attack submarine. It is necessary that the program receive a quick mid course review.

Investment in strategic forces and its infrastructure should precisely answer the question 'How Much is Enough?' At the same time the Planner must not shy away from the critical issue that nuclear weapons in our context reflects the dormant power to inflict unimaginable, indiscriminate and grave destruction. It is this factor of the power to hurt³⁵ that endows it with means to deter; not always easy to draw on but there to reckon with.

India's nuclear doctrine was made public on 04 Jan 2003. The doctrine presents two perspectives; the first part deals with 'Form' with war avoidance as the *leitmotif*. It reinforces our belief that nuclear weapons are not for use, so NFU was a natural choice, and yet the logic of self preservation and of power equations demanded that relations not be held to ransom on account of an inability to respond in a manner to deter convincingly. Sensitivity to the multilateral nature of the settings and yet not show a propensity to shy away from the existential nuclear challenges demanded credibility of the deterrent resting on the three pillars of surveillance, readiness and survivability. Given these factors the arsenal had to provide for alternatives and a guarantee that the

second strike would cause unacceptable damage. Also included are certain philosophical goals which underscore belief in the ultimate humanity of things.

The second part of the doctrine deals with 'Substance', with operationalizing the deterrent and Command and Control as the main themes. Development and deployment of the 'Triad' are so structured that the three pillars of credibility are neither compromised nor readiness undermined. Command and Control are arranged in a manner that there exists clear division between Control and Custodian with multiple redundancy and dual-rule release authorization at every level.

Of particular significance is the separation of Control from Custodian, which effectively rules out conventionalizing of the deterrent. Command of the arsenal under all circumstances remains a political prerogative with comprehensive 'hot stand-by' provided for in the Nuclear Command Authority.

To recapitulate, the salients of the Indian Nuclear Doctrine are listed below:

- Nuclear weapons are political tools.
- The nuclear policy would be steered by a 'Punishment Strategy,' its guiding principle would be No First Use.
- India would develop and operationalise a credible minimum deterrent with the necessary flexibility, mobility and mass.
- Retaliation to a first strike would be massive and would seek to cause unacceptable damage. Unacceptability of damage is directly linked to the credibility of deterrence. It would be of such magnitude that a-would-be 'first-striker' is dissuaded from contemplating the strike.
- The use of Chemical, Biological or any other WMD will invite the nuclear option.
- Nuclear weapons will not be used against non weapon states.
- India has declared a unilateral moratorium against nuclear testing. It has also assured the world of continued stringent controls over proliferation.
- The goal of global nuclear disarmament remains.

To the planners what would be of importance is the nature of our doctrine which has placed primacy to No First Use (NFU) at which time it would exact a high degree of

credibility along with invulnerability to a possible first disarming strike. Also at no time should the nuclear arsenal show bulges on account of speculation or a failure conundrum as this would result in setting into motion an increase in the arsenal which may not be warranted given the policy of minimality. In the maritime domain our own projection of requirement would suggest one SSBN on patrol at all times which would demand the availability of a total of four SSBNs.

Section VII

Scenario Building and Wargaming

The building of a scenario is the common starting point from where planners can make an objective assessment of the validity of assuming a strategic posture. A wargame pitched at the strategic level provides a realistic description of a probable context which includes a prognostication of the geopolitical situation and the proclivities, attitudes and intentions of the main protagonists involved while filling the details that provide the scope for friction and uncertainties. The primary decision makers must credibly represent the national leadership of protagonists if at all aims of such games, that is, to improve qualitatively perspectives of the players; test strategies for their validity and importantly give form to the imponderables, are to be achieved. High level games of this nature also explore capacity and will to sustain conflicts in addition to the extent to which strategic nuclear equilibrium can be pushed. The critical focus in such games is the run up to hostilities, the politics of the period along with estimates and assessments, human decision making, force deployments, unintended consequences, engagements, escalation and termination. A larger effect of this form of wargames is to catalyze the development of strategic thinking at the level where it matters.

A strategic posture in geopolitical lexicon is as much a declaration of will as it is a statement of conditional intent. The validity of a posture revolves around the interplay of human decisions and the events that they precipitate and therefore is admirably suited for wargaming. The power of a wargame is to underscore uncertainties, throw up alternatives, communicate and convince decision makers of its use as an exploratory device to confirm and validate or even refute a course of action. Policy whose implementation may result in unpredictable outcomes that could well be detrimental or unfavorable to the larger interest being pursued must be susceptible to forecast. Indeed in this there is the all pervasive possibility that intentional or even unintended advocacy may jaundice perceptions and result in self fulfilling prophecies. The second Gulf War is a significant example of just such an eventuality.

In building scenarios in the Eastern Ocean with the backdrop of the Look East Policy and the challenges that pervade the region, there are certain critical assumptions that would have to be made. These have in some cases been justified in the earlier portion of this study and are consistent with the arguments in the paper. These are:

- Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) have accepted the need for strategic force planning and have directed that our maritime military posture in the Eastern Oceans be so shaped as to promote and enable the Look East policy. Time frame for the phased realization of posture is maturity in 2030. Budgetary allocation for the defence would be pegged closer to 3 % of the GDP. The Chief of Defense Staff has been appointed as per the GOM report.
- Average economic growth rates for India and China between 2011 and 2020 is pegged at 8-8.5 %. The forecast for India will remain the same till 2030. China will show a downturn to 6.5-7% while the rest of the region would be between 3 and 4 % average.
- India and China's energy demands to fuel this growth has correspondingly increased and imports are between 70-80% of needs. 65 % of China's energy demands will continue to come by sea.
- China's political problem in the Taiwan Straits, North, East and South China Sea have intensified. North Korea has pushed ahead with its nuclear weapons program. The littorals of the South China Sea have formed a security alliance sponsored by the US. Indo-US strategic relations have further strengthened and they include a military and security dimension.
- The US ABM program has matured and batteries have been established in South Korea, Japan, Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam and their Pacific possessions.
- China's western provinces are restive.
- With the coming of age of the PLAs three pronged modernization, the first of its three carrier groups is expected to be deployed by 2016.
- China has announced the third island chain strategy to provide security to their energy and trade routes. The third island chain runs an arc from the

north of Japan, east of the Mariana Trench passing through the Makkasar and the Lombok Straits extending to the Chagos archipelago.

- The question will always remain: What nature of assumption can be made and how best can India fine tune its relations with the PRC in the absence of fundamental movement by China towards adopting policies that are friction resistant, cooperative and well-matched with our values? Which areas provide scope for compromise and which do not? In the absence of ready answers the only prudent assumption is the reality of potential for conflict.
- Notwithstanding the inroads that have been made into the ASEAN and the fact that the littorals actually view India as a tacit counter to the Chinese influence, it remains to be seen what assumption can be made with any precision as to the depth and extent of cooperation that they will extend in a potentially conflictual situation. Clearly unless individual interests are threatened the scope of cooperation will be restricted to non-military resources and facilities.

The fundamental principles of the sample wargames follow an orthodox four code system³⁶. The first is to develop a concept based on a forecast of geopolitical realities and an extrapolation thereof followed by an understanding of the policy that seeks to influence these actualities, from which specific objectives are derived. The second is to ensure that the players selected and the roles given them are consistent with the geographic and strategic scope and scale of the wargame and appropriate to the decisions required to be made. Third is to provide the necessary information and introduce friction which not only permits the players to make informed judgments of what may be the outcomes of the various decisions that they may choose to make but also imposes upon them the rigors of having to contend with a great element of subjectivity which inhibits set piece situations and invariably calls upon the player to address uncertainties and imponderables. Lastly tools are devised in order to translate decisions made by the players into wargame events. Models are often used to simulate all aspects of the realities that are involved. These models may take various forms which include mathematical computer based models particularly for physical environment, intelligence, weapons,

sensors and logistics but primary to a strategic wargame is experience based judgmental models.

Scenario I

The year is 2016. Situation in the South China Sea has reached a flashpoint. Over the last two years the littorals which include Japan, Taiwan, Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia have signed a maritime security pact (June 2014) to assure integrity of their respective EEZ's. The pact is underwritten by the USA. They have also taken the unprecedented step of introducing mutuality and have pledged to establish a cooperative maritime security arrangement. Since the Signing of the pact, They have not just stepped up vigorous patrolling in the waters around the disputed Islands and in their respective economic zones, but have taken firm action against provocative Chinese fishing and offshore activities that have intruded into their EEZ. There have been two incidents of Chinese hydrographic and research vessels operating in their EEZ being seized and in the other being chased away after warning salvos had been fired, this occurred in April 2016. The last incident that occurred was joint live fire manoeuvres all across the Paracel and Spratlys by the combined navies of the Littoral Maritime Security Pact (LMS) pact and the US Navy between 10 to 17 June 2016.

The US ABM program and installation of batteries in the littorals combined with the recently concluded "Littoral Maritime Security Pact (LMS Pact)" has provoked a belligerent reaction from China. Aggressive sweeps across the South China Sea by the PLAN 'Shi Lang (ex Varyag)' Carrier Battle Group has been the norm since March 2016; random seize and search operations of vessels bound for LMS pact ports have increased in frequency. Recent media leaks emanating from mainland China have suggested that both their "Anti Access" and "Assassin's Mace" strategies have been enabled and their Second Artillery Corps, their strategic missile forces have been placed at a higher state of alert. A type 094 Jin Class Ballistic Missile Submarine with its full load of 12 JL-2 SLBMs is known to have set sail from its Sanya Base on 15 May 2016 on a deterrent patrol. China's escort elements have been active in the Eastern Ocean since early June routing and shepherding their vital SLOCs.

The PRC, on 18 Jun 2016, have in a rapid sea-air-land assault occupied the disputed islands of Quemoy and Matsu in the Taiwan Straits before either Taiwan or the US are able to respond; this was preceded by a blank out of US space based surveillance assets whose footprint covered the South China Sea and a severe disruption of LMS pact information networks both for reasons then that were not entirely clear.

The history of these Strait Islands is a vexed one. It will be recalled that the first Taiwan Strait crisis of 1954 was set off when the Chiang-Kai-Shek government began to build up these islands. In 1958 the Taiwan Strait crisis once again erupted when the Peoples Republic of China shelled these Islands as a prelude to an assault and seizure action. The heavy exchange of fire resulted in over 2,500 Taiwanese and 200 PRC troop casualties. This was followed by US intervention on Taiwan's side, an obligation under the 1954 US-ROC defense treaty. An intense air battle ensued while the artillery duel continued for 44 days. As the conflict escalated it threatened to draw Moscow into the fracas. Kremlin threatened an all out war if the US did not withdraw its forces. In the event it was the fear, reportedly, that US forces were preparing to use nuclear weapons that the PLA declared a ceasefire and abandoned its plans to assault the Islands. Tensions over control of the Islands have relaxed over the years however the Islands continue to be governed by Taiwan. It had thus far remained a potential sore.³⁷

Indian carrier group is on deployment in the Java Sea exercising with Indonesian, Australian and Malaysian forces.

Objectives: The CCS have directed the Indian Chief of Defense Staff to institute measures to stabilize the situation in the Eastern Ocean ensuring security and unimpeded movement of Indian mercantile traffic and energy lines. India is engaged in Ministerial level strategic talks on the deteriorating situation in the South China Sea with the USA.

Scenario Update: The occupation of Quemoy and Matsu has led to a series of standoffs between the PLA Navy and the US 7th fleet. Sporadic exchange of fire at sea off

the Spratlys and Paracels and a Chinese Declaration of inland sea rights over the South China Sea.

Data base: Availability of forces for all concerned would be formulated by War Gaming Control. It would contain information players may use for decision making. Typically this information includes forces available, capabilities, environmental conditions etc.

Models and Rules: A set of models which include a combination of look up tables, a panel of experienced strategists to provide practical understanding based interpretations and mathematical expressions to translate game data and player's decisions into events. A set of rules or procedures that dictate when to apply models would have to be defined by game controllers ensuring that players receive appropriate quantity and quality of information during the game.

Players: Players would have to be nominated with appropriate decision making teams and operational responsibilities.

Analysis: Game Control would nominate teams for analysis and outcome to validate our strategic posture in terms of benefits and losses due to action taken and due inaction where appropriate.

Scenario II

The year is 2014. The McMahon Line boundary between India and China and its integrity lies at the heart of relations between the two countries. It is a matter of history that in 1913 representatives of Britain, Tibet and China negotiated the Simla convention. Sir Henry McMahon, the foreign secretary of British India drew up the border, named after him between India and Tibet. The demarcation followed the watershed principle and ran through previously unclaimed and undefined territory. The

Tibetan and British representatives agreed to the line but the Chinese did not accept it. The issue remained dormant till 1962 when the McMahon line was violated and China moved into NEFA and voluntarily withdrew back. The LAC remained without any major incident (barring an armed clash at Nathu La in eastern Sikkim in 1967) till 1986 when operation Falcon was launched in the Somdorong Chu valley to evict Chinese incursion there. It was a Brigade size operation and ended with Indian forces holding the heights commanding the valley. While the immediate consequence of the operation was large scale troop movement by both sides the more significant event was the establishment of the state of Arunachal Pradesh as the 25th State of the Indian Union³⁸. The border has not witnessed any further eruptions since. The two sides continue to have differences in perception of the Line of Actual Control and periodically the matter is rhetorically brought on to the front burner. The border between India and China is yet to be delineated and agreed to.

The situation along the disputed North Eastern borders of India has now taken a turn for the worse. In a rapid move China launched brigade size operations along the LAC in the Tawang sector persisting with their claims on the entire Arunachal Pradesh (3 times the size of Taiwan) and the Tawang region. The initial thrust was repulsed however troop movements and Intelligence suggests an escalation in land operations.

This hostile act coincided with two seemingly unrelated geo-political events. The first of which was the opening of a defense division at the Taipei centre at Vasant Vihar New Delhi. This was a break from the past in relations with Taiwan, which since 1995 remained purely through economic and cultural representative offices and dealt with commercial and cultural issues only, had in May 2014 opened a comprehensively staffed military division. The second was that the 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso had announced the anointment of Lobsang Sangay, a 46 year old Indian legal scholar, as the Prime Minister in exile and the 15th Dalai Lama on 20 May 2014. The last is a radical departure from tradition which demanded that the search for a reincarnation of the Dalai Lama be from among Tibetan boys whose birth coincides with the previous incumbent's death; a ritual that affirms the basic foundations of Tibetan Buddhism, reincarnation and the rule of a revered group of monks repeatedly reborn.³⁹ Tenzin Gyatso had always desired that the selection occur in this manner. Historically such a selection was made in 1995 when a

6 year old Gendun Nyimawas made the Panchen Lama. The boy and his family were spirited away, reportedly by the Chinese authorities, never to be heard of again. Beijing appointed its own candidate and in October 2007, prominently displayed him during the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. This incident appears to have set the Dalai Lama on finding a suitable successor himself.

The announcement of the 15th Dalai Lama was in direct defiance of China's claim to the right of approval of naming the high "reincarnations" in Tibet. In addition, at his first address to his government in exile he declared to the Tibetan Diaspora that no longer was the policy of seeking Tibetan autonomy within the Chinese state tenable. It was total independence from China which was now the objective. It will be recalled that the Chinese media had already labeled him a terrorist because he was a member of a pro-independence exile group in India in the early 1990s.

Objectives: To establish how our strategic posture in the Eastern Ocean could act as a counterpoise to a Chinese military adventure or any attempt at territorial realignment in the North East.

Scenario: War Gamers are to elaborate details of the ground situation along with the holding actions and counter thrusts that have already been put in place including air land operations. CCS has directed that the scope of conflict be enlarged into the maritime domain.

Data Base, Models and Rules: Are to be defined by Game Control, in addition to a capability that has recently been introduced into the Navy and that is of 'non lethal' weapons to disable merchant vessels.

Players and Analysis: To be nominated by Game Control. Analysis should validate the impact of operations launched in the Eastern Ocean in influencing the status quo in the North East.

Scenario III

The year is 2015. On 23 Jan 2015, A group of member nations of the WTO complained to the Dispute Settlement Board of the WTO that China was employing unfair, unethical and criminal methods for the exploitation of energy and mineral resources from countries of sub Saharan Africa. Equatorial Guinea , a country (population 550,000; per capita income \$50,000 while most of the citizens live less than \$1 per day.) that has often been uncharitably described as less a nation than a corrupt, extended family business⁴⁰ ruled by a 68 year old despot Obiang Mbasogo since 1979. A former impoverished Spanish colony in sub Saharan Africa that nobody cared for till vast oil deposits were discovered in the late 1990s. Today sitting in the heart of the Gulf of Guinea it has become the third largest sub Saharan oil exporter next to Nigeria and Angola. The race for oil has been conceded by the US to China who in 2008 surpassed the former as Guinea's biggest trading partner purchasing \$3.5 billion (estimate) of its oil a year (see Table V China's contribution to global demand of oil); bribing and favours are a common fare for contracts in addition investments in one project makes it the preferred contractor for the next. Also projects in exchange for land is passing ownership to China. The same model has been followed in Zambia and Congo for minerals, in Angola and Sudan for oil (in exchange for weapons). In short in the words of Behar China has been "long on cash and short on rules" (see Pie Graph at Table VI China's imports of oil region wise). This has set into motion a unique phenomenon of state sponsored black market mining (which accounts for 75% of minerals exported from Congo) with a rail and road network of 4,500 miles linking the processing and distribution centres (created by China) located at Sudan, Zambia, Congo and Angola. The concentrate is then smuggled into China on cargo ships via South African or Tanzanian ports.

WTO members allege that practices employed from bribery to smuggling, trafficking of labour, buying up commissions, lax contracts with policies that are driven by corruption and the financing of wars are all instruments of China's resource grab. The World Bank has corroborated these allegations. In an unprecedented move the WTO, in an effort to uphold rules for trade and commerce between nations and handling and

regulating trade barriers, has ordered a complex quota system to interested parties and that transparent contracts be brought into force along with the institution of a special regulatory body with powers of verification.

China has vigorously opposed the WTO stricture and has publicly announced measures to safeguard their investments. From the security perspective they have pronounced the enabling of the ‘Third Island Chain Strategy’ to provide sanctuary to their energy and trade SLOCs. They have also declared that they have commenced deploying forces to ensure protection and security of their interests.

Objectives: To validate naval forces ability, to track and mark if necessary Chinese units operating in the Eastern Ocean. To activate passive and active sensors in order to keep under surveillance movements through the straits. To enable information sharing mechanisms with like minded States.

Scenario update, Data Base, Models, Rules and Players: To be nominated by Game Control.

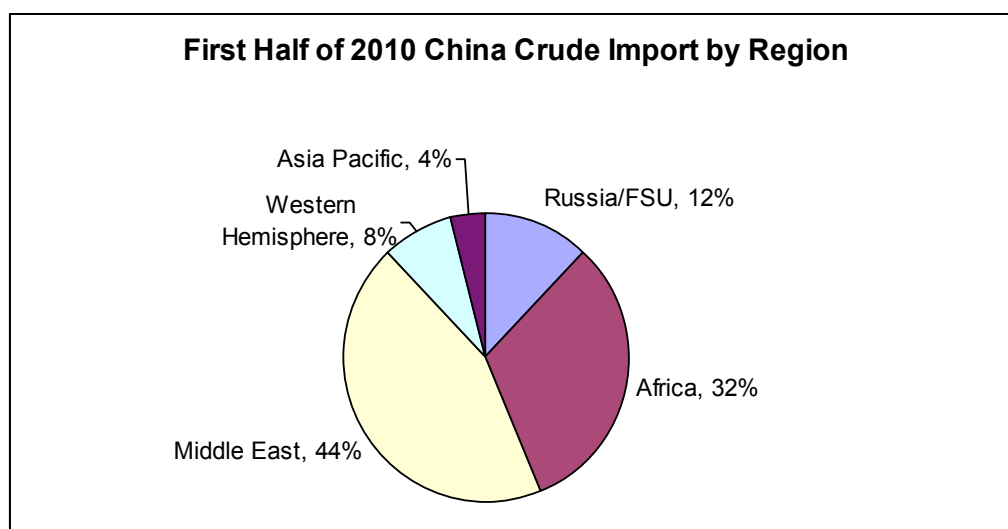
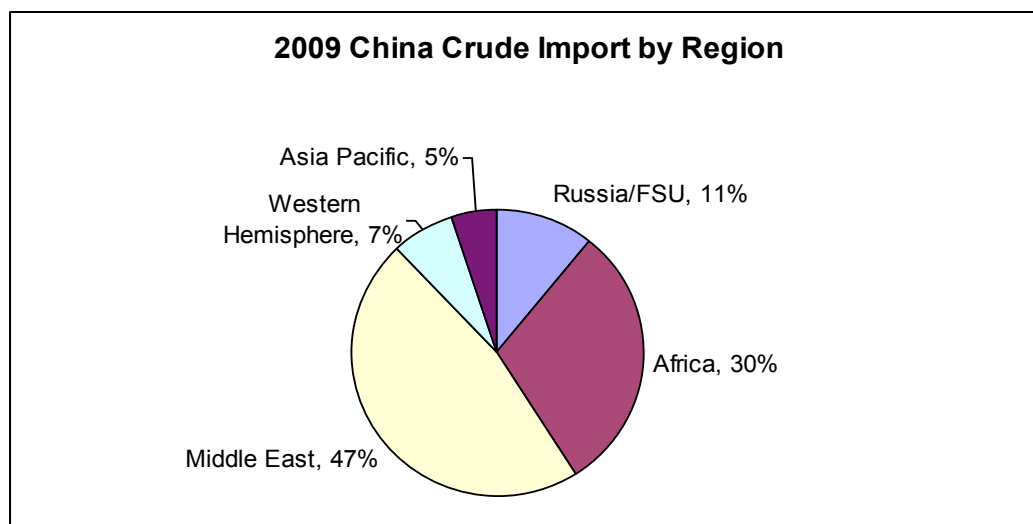
Tab V China's contribution to oil demand growth, 2010-15, kb/d



Source: IEA data and analysis.

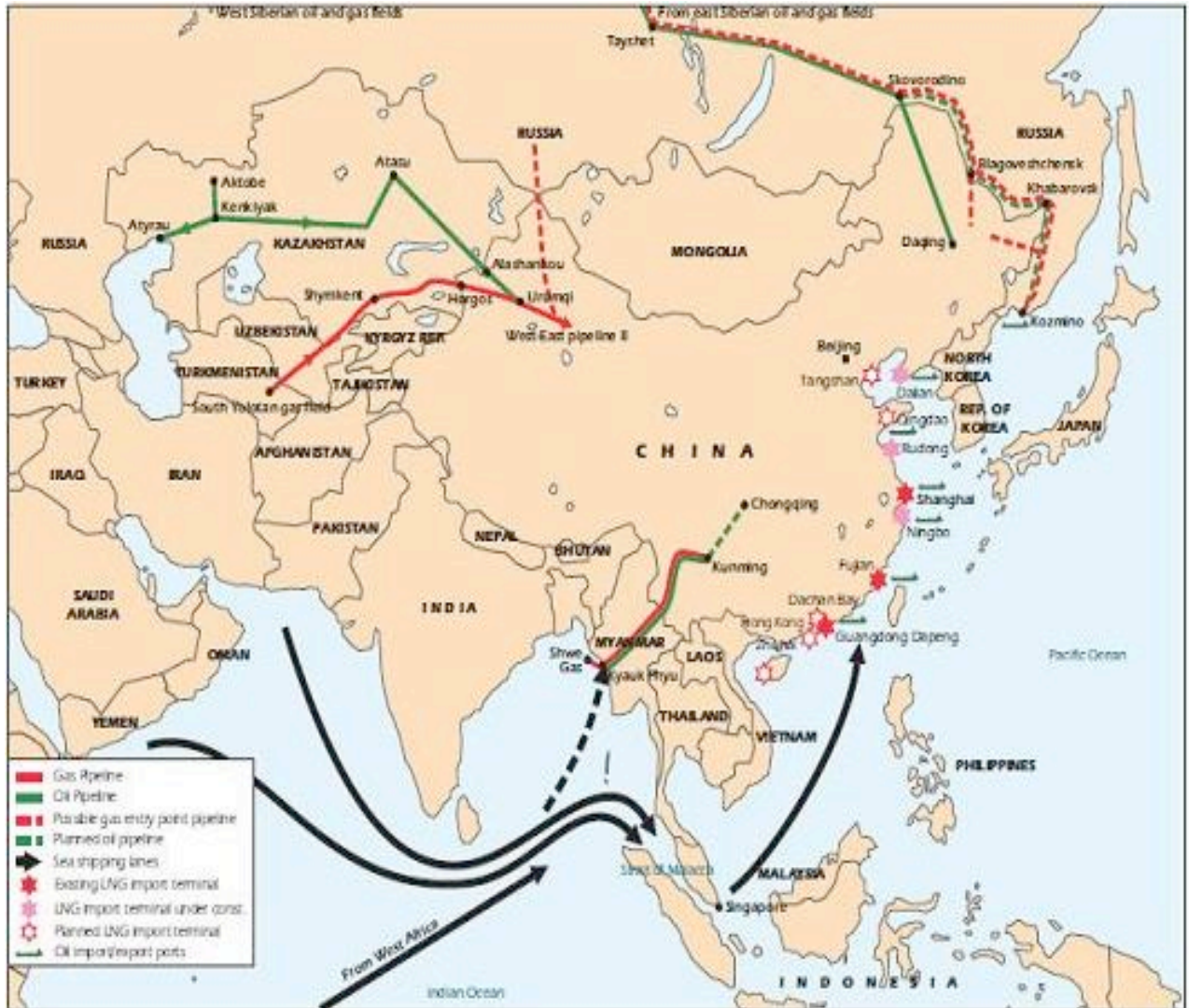
Table VI: China's crude import by region, 2009 and first half of 2010

Source: Xinhua News Agency 2010



Map 4: Current and future routes for China's oil and natural gas imports.

Source Xinhua 2010



Section VIII

Conclusion

We first noted an area of darkness that shrouded the relationship between national strategy and military resources that were needed to enable that strategy. In specifics, was the failure to distinguish between the maintenance of armed forces and their use, and that the former often develops a momentum that pushes a logic of growth without addressing purpose; the consequence of which is that the operational perspective prevails. The hazard of the operational canvas is that it is driven by the immediate intimidation which is the pretender that fills the strategic space rather than an endeavor to shape the future.

Unfortunately, India's armed forces have traditionally evolved within this paradigm, that is, to contend with operational scenarios. The problem is confounded by the fact that each of the three armed forces, the Indian Army, the Indian Navy and the Indian Air force have formulated separate declared strategies often in contradiction with each other; they are subject to Acts of Parliament that are different in form and content and have articulated doctrines for war fighting independent of each other. It would, to an observer, almost appear as if the three are preparing to fight three different wars. This malaise remains so to this day. There is an urgent need to remedy this fragmented and often dysfunctional scheme.

The strategic approach derives from two significant features of the international system, the first of these is instability and the second is the anachronistic concept of sovereignty. It enjoins on the major players to shape the scenario in order to provide the much needed stability for development. India's strategic objectives in the Eastern Ocean have been articulated in her 'Look East' policy. As with any such policy that would operate in areas beyond the sovereign control of the nation it is subject to the international system which as mentioned earlier suffers from instability and the problems associated with the inconsistencies of universal sovereignty; which also provides the basis for conflicts. The attainment of a strategic posture serves to balance out influences that provoke tension. The function of the Sovereign State as a guardian and as a unique entity with its own set of values all of which are absolute in nature would, in this day and

era, appear to be an anachronism particularly so with the globalizing trends that technology and the economics of development have wrought. Three very obvious inconsistencies in the concept of a State remain an enduring source of friction within the larger international system, the latter which at times holds in derision the individual nature of a State's interests. These contradictions may be summarized as below:

- The internal dimension of sovereignty promotes vigorously centralism at a point in history when the demand is for more plurality and democracy.
- Sovereignty makes inconceivable international laws, universal regulation or a supra-state that runs contrary to national interests.
- Supremacy of a state is a chimera given the emergence of a networked and globalized world which service nations with vast differentials in military and economic power.

The strategic approach determines to put in place the means of achieving one's national objectives given the contrary pulls and pressures of endemic instability and the sovereignty of states. We have perceived pitfalls that absence of theory precipitates in strategic thought. This in turn puts nations in a persistent tail-chase to understand and contend with contemporary challenges. This is particularly so in India's context where the strategic approach has, by design at times and by default at others, been given short shrift. There is an awkward laxity in all this for it abdicates the responsibility to fashion the future.

China takes the comprehensive national power approach where it sees the effect of an event on its own endowment and its ability to control the event as a primary virtue. In articulating its strategic objectives it has unambiguously identified three canons the first of which is internal and external stability; the second is to sustain the current levels of economic growth and lastly to achieve regional preeminence. Gone is the 'power bashfulness' that marked the Deng era, in its place is a cockiness that is discernible by the contemporary conviction that 'the world needs China more than China the world.' In the absence of a security oriented cooperative impulse, the problem with such sweeping strategies specifically the coming 'Third Island Chain' superimposed with a long range Access Denial Strategy is its blindness to recognize that, we are in fact dealing with a sea

space that is the busiest of all the “vast commons”. The reluctance for collaboration makes the potential for friction high.

Contemporary challenges in the Eastern Ocean in context of the Look East policy are dominated by three currents. What direction China’s rise will take is a matter of conjecture, of significance is that the potential for a collision is a reality and the only consideration that could deter it, is the ability of India to attain a strategic posture in the Eastern Ocean that serves to stabilize. On the ‘globalization-nationalism’ non state actor conundrum, clearly plural societies with decentralized control are more likely to transform, adjust, adapt and tweak their systems than monolithic centrally controlled States such as China which are intrinsically brittle in form, the fallout on the region caused by a transformation inconsistency can only be traumatic. The third current is India’s relationship with the USA; it is here that some control exists in the hands of our policy makers. India has shown itself, through restraint, pluralistic and popular form of governance to be a responsible State that upholds the status quo yet invites change through democratic forces and its rise, in the main, is not only welcomed in South East Asia but is seen as a harmonizing happening that could counterpoise China. The next step would logically be to establish an Indo-US strategic framework in the maritime domain, if we are to resourcefully contend with the challenges that the Eastern Ocean presents.

Force structures developed as mentioned in Section V would cater for the dominant three challenges with the assumption that a lesser-than-challenge would automatically be taken care of. In the broadest of terms our vision would be ‘to create and deploy such forces which would establish and contribute to stability within the Eastern Oceans’. While our focus would be to concentrate on maritime forces, it should also be recognized that the other elements of national power would be required to realize such a vision and contend with the shape that challenges may take in the long term within the Eastern Ocean. This long term may be identified as a period of half a century. When dealing with the problem of resources and means, a balance is necessary between objectives that are identified with available wherewithal, and vanity, as we have noted, the natural accomplice of nationalism, and must be eschewed.

Force planning must be driven by three overarching considerations. In the first part, clear understanding of what the articulated national policy is; in our study this is the Look East Policy, in the second part, what challenges (has been dealt with earlier) may arise in the short and long term to this policy and the nature of discord which conflicting interests may degenerate into. The last part must include an estimate of potential loss/harm that may occur to our national interests if forces were not developed to address the first two parts (this would have to be gamed).

The validity of a strategic posture revolves around declaration of purpose, development of force structures, interplay of human decisions and the events that they precipitate and therefore is admirably suited for wargaming. The power of a wargame is to underscore uncertainties, throw up alternatives, communicate and convince decision makers of its use as an exploratory device to confirm and authenticate or even refute a course of action. Policy whose implementation may result in unpredictable outcomes that could well be detrimental or unfavorable to the larger interest being pursued must be susceptible to forecast. Indeed in all this there is the all pervasive possibility that intentional or even unintended advocacy may jaundice perceptions and result in self fulfilling prophecies.

As long as our Ship of State pilots through the emerging strategic space, using directions that pay heed only to the immediate intimidation, then the coming into view of shoals and other lurking hazards may indeed appear somewhat incoherent.



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Vice Admiral Vijay Shankar retired on 30 September 2009, after nearly 45 years in uniform. He is today settled with his wife in the Nilgiris and passes down his operational and strategic experience through articles and participation in seminars that deal with his primary areas of expertise. He has contributed to various professional journals and continues to support his Alma Mater in Kochi through his writings. He lectures at the Staff College, Higher Command College, the United Services Institute and the National Maritime Foundation. He is a member of the adjunct faculty of the National Institute of Advanced Studies and he currently tenants the Admiral Katari Chair of Excellence at the United Services Institute. Internationally, his participation in the Track II Ottawa Dialogue, the Bellagio Carnegie Endowment discussions and the papers he has presented there seek to provide a new paradigm for nuclear security on the sub-continent.

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End Notes

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- ¹⁰ Ma Cheng-Kun, *PLA News Analysis*, "Significance of 2008 China's National Defense White Paper" no. 15, pp. 49-60
- ¹¹ Ibid
- ¹² Ma Cheng-Kun PLA news analysis "China's security strategy" number 8 April 2008, Pgs 146-150. The assassin's mace program is a part of China's asymmetric war fighting strategy to develop capabilities designed to give a technologically inferior military advantages to overwhelm a technologically superior adversary. Their ASAT program, strategic hacking teams and cyber warfare, submarine programs are all a sub-set of the assassin's mace
- ¹³ Smith Adam , *The Wealth of Nations*.
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- ¹⁷ BBC E-news 08 June 2011. Lt Gen Qi Jiangua speaking to the Hong Kong Commercial Daily.
- ¹⁸ Lewis John Wilson and Litai Xue, *The Quest for a Modern Air Force "Imagined Enemies China Prepares for Uncertain Wars*. Stanford University Press 2006, p237. General Liu Jingsong, a member of the 15th CPC Central Committee, he was also the PLA Commander of the Shenyang and Lanzhou military regions and to him amongst others is attributed the opening of Equatorial Guinea 1995.
- ¹⁹ Lampton, David M. *The Three Faces of Chinese Power. Might, Money and Minds*. Berkeley, University of California Press 2008, p16, 40-41 and 50.
- ²⁰ The 24 Character Strategy is attributed to Deng Xiaoping in the early 90's as quoted in the Pentagon's annual China report dated 17th August 2010
- ²¹ The phrase Middle Kingdom was first applied to the XII dynasty of ancient Egypt (1991BC – 1778BC). As the Chinese name for China it first appears in 1000 BC when it designated the Chou empire, who unaware of earlier civilizations to their west, believed their empire occupied the middle of the earth, surrounded by barbarians. Since 1949, the official name for China is 'The Middle Glorious People's Republican Country.'
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the RBI's decision on 10 June 2011 to buy 200 tonnes of gold from the IMF which is half the total quantity of 400t that the IMF has decided to sell to raise funds for lending to poorer countries.

²⁸ The Phrase 'basket case' originated towards the end of World War I to signify a soldier who had undergone quadruple amputation and had to be transported in a basket. This term was then applied to an emotionally or mentally unstable person and later to anything that failed to function particularly to economies. From the American heritage dictionary of idioms, Anmer Christine. Houghton Mifflin Company 4th edition April 1997.

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³² Gorshkov S G. The Sea power of the State, Pergamon Press 1980 pp. 253-254

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