

## INDIA'S LOOK EAST POLICY AND COUNTER MEASURES

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### INTRODUCTION

The paper reviews key aspects about India's 'Look East Policy', its strategic implications in terms of enhancing military and naval capacities and India's presence in the South China Sea. The paper in the tabular form explains India's military progress in terms of development of nuclear and missile capabilities that intend to a greater strategic, political and economic influence in the Asian region. Later, the paper relates the dynamics of 'Look East Policy' in the context of Pakistan, especially its implications in economic and strategic means. Finally, some conclusions and recommendations are made to identify key policy alternatives as counter measures.

### INDIA'S LOOK EAST POLICY- HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review suggests that India lost the mainstay of its military support, the Soviet Union as soon as the Cold War ended. Consequently, India started shifting its attention to revitalize her relations with the remaining sole super power, the US, and other powers namely: Western Europe, Japan, and Russia. India also started to shift its attention on Asian economic and strategic powers such as: Japan, South Korea and, the Association of South Asian Nations (ASEAN). By then, the Vietnamese troops had been withdrawn from Cambodia, which had been a major stumbling block for improving India's relations with ASEAN<sup>1</sup> countries, since India had supported the presence of Vietnamese troops in Cambodia.

The basic underlying objective of India's new eastwards policy (i.e., known as the Look East Policy) was to cash in on the newly emergent opportunities for optimizing its interest through and maneuvers. The policy was put in practice through expanding its economic and strategic engagement in the region. India introduced economic reforms to achieve higher economic growth rates and to create same degree of compatibility with the existent liberal economic practices. It was generally believed that if India continues to remain trapped in a moderate growth syndrome, China would emerge with a double-digit economic growth rate, as Asia's undisputed leader. Thus, there was a need to step up economic growth through extensive diplomatic and political engagements in terms of trade and foreign investments, with the faster growing economies in the world, particularly in Asia.

Fazal-ur-Rehman, (2001) narrated that on the security side, the end of the Cold War created an opportunity in the form of a super power vacuum in the region. As both the US and the Soviet Union closed down their military bases, in the Philippines and Vietnam, respectively, India became active and sought to expand its influence in the region through bilateral relations as well as through multilateral frameworks such as ASEAN.

In 1992, India became a 'Sectoral Dialogue Partner' of ASEAN. During the years 1992—1995, Indian Prime Minister visited Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore and Vietnam. The high level exchanges helped India to secure a 'Full Dialogue Partner' status in 1996 that also allowed India's entry into the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), where security related matters of the member countries are discussed.

In the first half of the 1990s, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore took initiatives to establish security relationships with India on a reciprocal basis. Defense officials from these countries

undertook visits to New Delhi for discussions on security matters. The then Malaysian Defense Minister, visited India and reached an agreement under which India was to assist Malaysia in strengthening its defense forces and in maintaining the aircrafts of the Royal Malaysian Air Force (HMAF), and the sale of fast patrol boats for the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN). It was further reported that Indian experts would train Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) pilots on MiG-29 aircraft. Also, an understanding was reached on using Indian expertise in marine commando training, coastal surveillance, anti-piracy operations, weather forecasting, and coastal search and rescue operations, defense of ports and harbours and shallow water mining capabilities etc.

Another high-level delegation led by Indonesia's Chief of Naval Staff, Mohammad Arif visited New Delhi to explore more effective ways for strengthening maritime cooperation between the two countries.

Over the last ten years, India has been able to cultivate security related relationships with all the major countries of the ASEAN region such as, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam, Singapore and Myanmar. These relations cover a wide range of activities, starting from military sales, training, and maintenance of military equipment to satellite launches and cooperation in nuclear fields. Overall, India seeks to expand its influence and play a larger role in the security mailers of Asia, which it intends to extend to the Pacific region as well. For such a role, the consent of main players in Asian security like the, US, Japan, Russia has already been accorded to India. Presently, the Indians claim that, 'our area of interest extends from the North of the Arabian Sea to the South China Sea'.



## INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT IN NUCLEAR & MISSILE TECHNOLOGY

India's race to become atomic power was come to surface only after 1948, when it established Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) for exploration of Uranium Ore (See Table I). Since then India has not only exploded twice the nuclear devices, it has also been working on missile development and has run series of experiments in the missile technology with short, medium and long ranges. By 2002 its advanced version of Agni-2 missile has reached to a range of more than 2200 km and is propelled by solid fuel, which is harder to manufacture than liquid fuel, but can be used instantaneously. The Agni-2 has clearly been developed in response to what India perceives as the Chinese threat. In its present form the missile cannot reach the heart of China, but India scientists are working on an international missile with a 5,000km range.

**Table 1: Chronological Order of Events under Nuclear Development**

YEAR	EVENTS – INDIA	YEAR	EVENTS – PAKISTAN
1948	India establishes an Atomic Energy Commission for exploration for uranium ore		
1953	President Eisenhower launches "Atoms for Peace" program, offering access to exchange atomic technology for pledges to use it for civilian use, not weapons.		
1954	Head of India's Atomic Energy Commission (A.E.C), rejects safeguards, oversight by new International Atomic Energy Agency.		

1956	India completes negotiations to build 40 megawatt "Canadian-Indian Reactor, U.S." research reactor. United States supplies heavy water, used to control nuclear fission.		
1958	India begins designing and acquiring equipment for its own Trom bay plutonium reprocessing facility, giving the nation a dual-use capability that could lead to atomic weapons.		
1959	U.S. trains Indian scientists in reprocessing, handling plutonium.		
1963	Two 210-megawatt boiling-water reactors were ordered for the Tarapur Atomic Power Station from General Electric. United States and India agreed that plutonium from India's reactors will not be used for research for atomic weapons or for military purposes.		
1964	First plutonium reprocessing plant operates at Trombay.		
1965	Chairman of India's AEC proposes subterranean nuclear explosion project. China, one of five declared nuclear states, detonates first atomic explosive device.		

	U.S. withdraws military aid from India after the India-Pakistan War.		
1966	India declares it can produce nuclear weapons within 18 months.		
1968	Non-Proliferation Treaty completed. India refuses to sign.		
1969	France agrees to help India develop breeder reactors.	1972	Following its third war with India, Pakistan secretly decides to start nuclear weapons program to match India's developing capability. Canada supplies reactor for the Karachi Nuclear Power Plant, heavy water and heavy-water production facility.
1974	India tests a device of up to 15 kilotons and calls the test a 'peaceful nuclear explosion.' Canada suspends nuclear cooperation. The United States allows continued supply of nuclear fuel, but later cuts it off.	1974	Western suppliers embargo nuclear exports to Pakistan after India's first test of a nuclear device.
		1975	Purchasing of components and technology for Kahuta uranium-enrichment centrifuge facility begins after return of Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan,

			German-trained metallurgist who takes over nuclear program.
1976	Soviet Union assumes role of India's main supplier of heavy water. Canada formally halts nuclear cooperation.	1976	Canada stops supplying nuclear fuel for Karachi.
		1977	German seller provides vacuum pumps, equipment for uranium enrichment. Britain sells Pakistan 30 high-frequency inverters for controlling centrifuge speeds. United States halts economic and military aid over Pakistan's nuclear-weapons program.
		1978	France cancels deal to supply plutonium reprocessing plant at Chasma.
		1979	United States imposes economic sanctions after Pakistan is caught importing equipment for uranium enrichment plant at Kahuta.
1980s	India acquires and develops centrifuge technology, builds uranium enrichment plants at Trombay and Mysore.		



		1981	Smuggler arrested at U.S. airport while attempting to ship two tons of zirconium to Pakistan. Nevertheless, Reagan administration lifts sanctions and begins generous military and financial aid because of Pakistani help to Afghan rebels battling Soviets.
		1983	China reportedly supplies Pakistan with bomb design. U.S. intelligence believes Pakistani centrifuge program intended to produce material for nuclear weapons.
		1985	Congress passes Pressler amendment, requiring economic sanctions unless White House certifies that Pakistan is not embarked on nuclear weapons program. Islamabad is certified every year until 1990.
		1986:	Pakistan, China sign pact on peaceful use of nuclear energy, including design, construction, operation of reactors.



		1987	Pakistan acquires tritium purification and production facility from West Germany.
		1989	A 27-kilowatt research reactor is built with Chinese help and comes under international monitoring.
		1990	Fearing new war with India, Pakistan makes cores for several nuclear weapons. Bush administration, under Pressler amendment, imposes economic, military sanctions against Pakistan.
1991	India enters agreement with Pakistan prohibiting attacks on each other's nuclear installations, a measure to ease tensions.	1991	Pakistan puts ceiling on size of its weapons-grade uranium stockpile. It enters into agreement with India, prohibiting the two states from attacking each other's nuclear installations.
1992	Rare Metals Plant at Mysore begins producing enriched uranium. Nuclear Suppliers Group, organization of nations with nuclear materials, stops supplying India.		

		1993	Report by the Stockholm International Peace and Research Institute says about 14,000 uranium-enrichment centrifuges installed in Pakistan. German customs officials seize about 1,000 gas centrifuges bound for Pakistan.
		1996	Pakistan buys 5,000 ring magnets from China to be used in gas centrifuges for uranium enrichment. China tells U.S. government it will stop helping Pakistan's unsafeguarded nuclear facilities. Islamabad completes 40-megawatt heavy-water reactor that, once operational, could provide the first source of plutonium-bearing spent fuel free from international inspections.
1997	India announces development of supercomputer technology that can be used to test nuclear-weapon designs. Fuel reprocessing plant at Kalpakkam, a large-scale plutonium separation		

	facility, completes "cold commissioning" in last phase of pre-operating trials.		
1998	India announces plans to sign deal with Russia for two 1,000 megawatt nuclear reactors. It also conducts five underground nuclear tests, declares itself a nuclear state.	1998	Reacting to fresh nuclear testing by India, Pakistan conducts its own atomic explosions.

Source: Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, Calif.; Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; Non-Proliferation Policy Education Center

## INDIA'S DREAM OF REGIONAL POWER

It seems that the U.S. strategic pressure on China is getting intensified and India has emerged as one of the key players in south Asia through which China's role for economic and strategic development could be reduced. Review suggests that there are certain people in the U.S. who propagate that the American objective in Asia includes preventing the rise of a regional hegemony, maintaining stability and controlling restructuring process in Asia, which is claimed to be an important component of preserving its global superiority. Therefore, the U.S. should deepen and expand the bilateral security alliances, push through a strategy of big power equity and multilateral security dialogue in the Asia-Pacific region.

After the event of September 11, the U.S. through the military operations in Afghanistan has reinforced its strategic influence on Central Asia and South Asia, thus, resulting in a geopolitical reorganization beneficial to the U.S. During the war on terrorism, the U.S. tried to build a closer relationship with Far East

Asian countries by providing a large amount of aid to Indonesia and the Philippines.

Besides, the U.S. is searching for a possibility of setting up new military bases in the region so as to reinforce its military impact. The U.S. continues to strengthen its military alliance network, for instance encouraging Japan to play a military role in its war on terrorism and requesting that the facilities in the friendly countries such as Australia, Japan and the Philippines be used in its process of reaching security objectives. The U.S. further consolidates its presence in Asia. In addition, USA intends not to engage in anti-terrorist operation with China at the expense of its interests in Taiwan.

Besides, the South China Sea disputes are other obstacles for China to bind its sound strategic and economic relationship with some ASEAN countries. In recent years due to joint efforts from both China and the relevant ASEAN countries, the situation in this region has gradually become stable. However, since the disputes involve multi-sides and have its complexity, the settlement will be a difficult process.

In order to achieve its strategic objectives, the USA-India, relations has substantial importance. Especially, that India already is anxious to squeeze into the rank of Asia-Pacific big-powers. In recent years, the comprehensive national strength of India has grown rapidly and now ranks fourth in the world. India has strengthened its relations with Japan and the U.S. and carried out military exercises USA, Japan, and some ASEAN countries in South China Sea in an attempt to extend its military influences to East Asia.



## SITUATION ANALYSIS

It is argued that the political, economic and strategic relationship between India and Pakistan has its roots in the long-running failure to resolve the dispute over Kashmir. The two countries have never managed to build a functional relationship since partition in 1947. They have fought at least three wars, two directly attributable to Kashmir. India harbor ugly prejudices that have been habitually exploited by Hindu chauvinists. Besides, there are ideological and economic tension and disputes over natural resources. During the cold war India and Pakistan stood on opposing sides of the ideological divide, although in theory both were non-aligned. India rejects outside mediation and mounts periodic attempts, as now, at “free and fair elections”. In its pan of Kashmir that, in theory will settle the matter. Pakistan, appeals constantly for international arbitration while. Political summits, in Agra, were periodically held. Predictably, India failed to meet expectations and the cycle swung back towards hatred. Major questions still surround India’s nuclear doctrine – or apparent lack of one. Officially, India espouses “minimum deterrence” and “no first use.” But independent view against this, they suggest that India desires to achieve a full triad of sea-land-and air-delivered launch platforms. In this scenario, when it comes to deterrence, many independent advocates of a Pakistani-nuclear test view the Cold War as a model. Faced with a hostile neighbor with five times the territory, eight times the population, more than twice as many soldiers and perhaps a small nuclear arsenal, many influential Pakistanis long for a nuclear standoff with India that will be tense but peaceful.

In summery, it is mentioned that the Indian interventionist national objectives are a matter of grave concern for especially smaller nations in India’s neighborhood, India is hell-bent on even redefining its neighborhood through coining new terms such as ‘Southern Asia’ which, in turn, enlarges the physical and

geographical security parameters of what has so far been understood as the seven member region of South Asia and security parameters of South Asia. India increasingly cooperates with the major powers in Asia, and USA in such strategic alliances, which can facilitate Indian hegemonic aspirations. In turn, India will demonstrably present itself as a counter-weight to China.

However, the Kargil of disputed Kashmir showed the extent to which, for all its global ambitions, India remained bogged down by its feud with Pakistan in spite of superiority in force to that of Pakistan (see Tables II & III). On larger perspective the Kargil event revealed the embarrassingly wide gulf between India's aspirations to be counted as super power and its present capabilities. "There was a failure of intelligence, a deficient arsenal, inadequate air power, poor command and control.

**Table II: Comparing Indian Strength in Arms against Pakistan and Other Countries**

COUNTRY	TROOPS	NAVAL VESSELS	COMBAT AIRCRAFT
<i>Pakistan</i>	587,000	41	408
<i>India</i>	1.2 m	140	975
China	2.5 m	1,149	4,086
North Korea	1.1 m	378	593
South Korea	672,000	198	568
Vietnam	484,000	95	232
Taiwan	376,000	196	650
Japan	236,300	179	517

Source: International Institute for Strategic Studies, London; Asia week Research, 2001.

Table III: Comparison of Arms between Pakistan and India

PAKISTAN ARMED FORCES	INDIA ARMED FORCES
<b>ARMY</b> General Headquarters: Rawalpindi Strength..... 520,000	<b>ARMY</b> General Headquarters: New Delhi Strength..... 980,000
<b>AIR FORCE</b> Strength..... 45,000 Fighter / Attack Aircraft ..... 310	<b>AIR FORCE</b> Strength..... 110,000 Fighter / Attack Aircraft ..... 745
<b>NAVY</b> Strength..... 22,000 Submarine..... 6 Destroyers..... 3 Frigates ..... 8 Missile-armed Fast Craft ..... 9	<b>NAVY</b> Strength..... 45,000 Submarine..... 17 Aircraft carrier ..... 1 Destroyers..... 6 Frigates ..... 12 Corvettes..... 19 Missile-armed Fast Craft ..... 6

BALLISTIC MISSILE CAPABILITY			BALLISTIC MISSILE CAPABILITY		
Model	Range	Payload	Model	Range	Payload
Hatf – 1	80 km	500 kg	Prithvi SS-150	150 km	500 kg
Hatf – 2	300 km	500 kg	Prithvi SS-250	250 km	500-750 kg
Hatf – 3	600-800 km	500 kg	Prithvi SS-530	350 km	750-1000 kg
Ghauri	1500 km	500-750 kg	Agni	2,500 km	1000 kg
M-11 (Chinese)	280 km	800 kg			
1998-99 Defense Budget \$3.2 billion			1998-99 Defense Budget \$9.8 billion		



## CONCLUSION

The literature clearly demonstrates that India has been the arrogant and aggressor among the two neighbors (i.e. India and Pakistan). Indian Look East Policy is the proof. This policy on its face is an attempt as an expansionist & development measure in economic terms. However, in its real sense India intends to gain militarily superior position and pose threat to Pakistan by emerging a regional power in Asia. The policy is also geared to alter the balance in Asia. China will no longer be the only power in Asia. Besides, this policy also intends to alter relations with Japan which is already facing serious economic and demographic problems and its place in the balance of power in the Far East is no longer so secure.

## COUNTER MEASURES BY PAKISTAN

- Aim at becoming partner in ASEAN to counter Indian influence in the Far East Region. This could be achieved through using support from friendly ASEAN member countries;
- Divert and enhance cooperation in trade and commerce in ASEAN region especially with member countries that already enjoy sizable economic cooperation and trade with Pakistan. This could be achieved through easing down some of the trade restrictions, and introducing substantive trade policy aiming at only ASEAN region;
- Fight against terrorism after September, 11 has given a very positive dimension to Pakistan's future political and economic strategies. It has proved especially in the West that Pakistan is a responsible country and does not believe in



aggression. This policy on Kashmir as well has won sympathies from the west. As a result Kashmir has become an international issue. Consequently, India will have to come to the terms where through only dialogue and negotiations settlement could be reached amicably;

- Pakistan and China are tested friends especially on strategic fronts; both are clearly affected by the expansionist policy by India. In order to counter these policies, both have to jointly work together towards scaling down Indian influence. Besides, Pakistan has to move forward to develop trade relations with China; and
- On comparative terms Pakistan enjoys well equipped, well trained military force to that of many countries in the ASEAN region, like India, Pakistan should also seek to develop relationships with comparatively weaker (i.e. in military terms) countries to train their armies and assist them in conventional technology; This would strengthen Pakistan's ties with ASEAN region, in future this could also be used as counter measure to minimize Indian influence in the region;

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