Military modernization and India's security challenges post 2020

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ABSTRACT:

The dynamic geopolitical landscape of the 21st century presents nations with a myriad of security challenges, necessitating constant adaptation and innovation in defense strategies. India, with its rich history and diverse security concerns, faces an imperative for military modernization in the post-2020 era. By examining historical context, existing literature, and theoretical frameworks, the research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the strategic imperatives driving India's defense agenda. The study aims to elucidate the diverse array of security challenges facing India, including traditional border disputes, emerging cyber threats, and asymmetric warfare tactics. Furthermore, it seeks to explore India's military modernization initiatives and their alignment with broader security imperatives, evaluating the efficacy of defense acquisition programs, technological advancements, and doctrinal shifts.

This research aims to contribute significantly to the scholarly discourse surrounding India's defense and security policies, offering critical insights into the nexus between military modernization and security challenges, thereby informing policymakers, analysts, and scholars. The methodology involves analyzing current national security challenges, specific security problems, national security policy, military requirements, armaments requirements, national defense industrial base, and military modernization efforts, including defense budget allocations and technological advancements aand implications for India's national security landscape, regional stability in South Asia, and global strategic dynamics.

Keywords: India, military modernization, security challenges, defense policy, defense budget, national security.

INTRODUCTION:

In the dynamic geopolitical landscape of the 21st century, nations across the globe are confronted with a plethora of security challenges that demand constant adaptation and innovation in defense strategies. For India, a nation with a rich history and a diverse array of security concerns, the imperative for military modernization in the post-2020 era looms large. As the world witnesses' rapid technological advancements, evolving geopolitical dynamics, and the emergence of new security threats, India finds itself at a critical juncture, necessitating a strategic overhaul of its

defense capabilities to safeguard its national interests effectively.

Against this backdrop, this study seeks to delve into the complex interplay between India's military modernization efforts and the multifaceted security challenges it faces in the contemporary era. By examining the historical context of India's defense policies, existing literature on the subject, and the theoretical frameworks guiding military modernization, this research endeavors to provide a comprehensive understanding of the strategic imperatives driving India's defense agenda.

One of the central objectives of this study is to elucidate the diverse array of security challenges confronting India in the post-2020 period. From traditional border disputes with neighboring nations to emerging threats in cyberspace and asymmetric warfare tactics employed by non-state actors, India's security landscape is characterized by a myriad of complexities. By analyzing these challenges in depth, this research aims to shed light on the evolving nature of threats faced by India and the implications for its defense preparedness.

Moreover, this study endeavors to explore the strategic objectives underpinning India's military modernization initiatives and their alignment with the nation's broader security imperatives. With a focus on defense acquisition programs, technological advancements, and doctrinal shifts, this research seeks to evaluate the efficacy of India's efforts to enhance its defense capabilities and address contemporary security challenges effectively.

This study seeks to contribute significantly to the scholarly discourse surrounding India's defense and security policies in the post-2020 era. By offering critical insights into the nexus between military modernization and India's security challenges, this research aims to inform policymakers, analysts, and scholars about the evolving dynamics of India's national security landscape and the strategic imperatives driving its defense modernization agenda.

Current national security challenges:

India, with over one billion people, has experienced economic growth since 1947. To achieve socio-economic development, it has shifted its focus from defensive defense to war prevention amid military developments and escalating tensions with Pakistan. India's growing involvement in Asia and global affairs exposes it to the complexities of the evolving international security order, including nuclear proliferation, economic power, geopolitical dynamics, terrorism, and strained relations with neighboring countries.

Security Challenges and National Security Policy:

India is undergoing a strategic transformation, transitioning from a Third World non-aligned state to an international one. The country faces national security threats from China and Pakistan, political instability in Central Asia, and concerns about regional Islamization. India anticipates the presence of Chinese nuclear-armed submarines and Pakistani nuclear submarines with nuclear-tipped cruise missiles. Internally, India faces unrest among its Muslim population and enduring ethnic and

racial tensions. External powers, such as Pakistan and China, support several insurgencies within India. The vast terrain of the subcontinent poses significant challenges to the Indian Armed Forces, necessitating specialized troops for different combat zones. India's national security policy objectives in 1995 aimed to defend national territory, ensure internal security, foster regional relationships, and contribute to international stability.

Military requirement:

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Armaments requirement:

India faces a challenge in replacing its major weapons systems, which will need replacement over the next 10-15 years. The Air Force needs 400 fighters, 100 transport aircraft, 140 helicopters, and surface-to-air missiles, while the Navy needs 55 ships and the Army needs 1500 main battle tanks, 500 infantry combat vehicles, and 500 self-propelled artillery pieces. Modernization programs aim to accelerate the acquisition of high-tech weapons systems and lift the defence budget ceiling. Special priority is given to naval developments, with a focus on establishing a three-aircraft carrier force and constructing a large indigenous aircraft carrier.

The National Defense Industrial Base (NDIB):

India's defence industrial base is primarily government-owned, with Ordnance Factories (OFs) producing low to medium technology armaments and Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) focusing on aircraft and helicopter manufacturing. Efforts to increase civil sector involvement in armament production are underway. The Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) coordinates research and development efforts, employing around 30,000 individuals. The Department of Defence Production and Supplies in the Ministry of Defence is responsible for armament development and production. Despite recent attempts to involve civilians, a formal government policy establishing alliances and strategic partnerships between armed forces and private industry is lacking.

Indian Global Top 100 Defense Industries:

In 1991, India had no companies listed among the Top 100 Global Défense Industries. By 1999, it had three such companies, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Bharat Electronics, and Mazagaon Dock Ltd, with combined revenue of $1.3 billion. The largest Indian defence company in 1999 had annual defence revenues of $625 million, ranking 48th globally.

Military modernization:

Defense Budget Allocations (2020 – 25)

2024 – 2025

The Defense sector recently unveiled a new initiative aimed at bolstering deep-tech capabilities for defense purposes, emphasizing self-reliance or 'atmanirbharta.' The largest capital outlay for the Indian Air Force was allocated to the Air Force, amounting to Rs 57,137,09 crore. The Air Force received a budget of Rs 15, 721,09 crore for aircraft and Aero engines, while various equipment was allotted a budget of Rs 36,223,13 crore. In comparison, the Air Force received a Budget of Rs 40,777,09 crore under the overall Defence Services capital outlay.

2020 - 2023

In the fiscal year 2023-2024, the Defense sector received a substantial allocation of Rs 5.93 lakh crore, constituting over 13% of the total central expenditure, marking the highest allocation among all ministries. The previous year, in 2022-2023, the Defense Ministry secured the largest share, amounting to Rs 5.25 lakh crore, inclusive of Rs 1.19 lakh crore for Defense Pensions. In 2021-2022, the government allocated Rs 4.78 lakh crore to the Defence Ministry, representing the highest allocation at 14% among various ministries. The fiscal year 2020-2021 saw the ministry receiving Rs 4.71 lakh crore, comprising 15.5% of the Centre's Budget and 2.1% of India's estimated GDP for that year.

Technological Advancements:

The Modi administration's military modernization efforts have raised concerns about regional strategic stability, particularly in South Asia. India's robust economy and investments in its military underscore its aspirations for global power. However, these developments have profound implications for neighboring Pakistan, which faces escalating conventional disparities and perceives a heightened need to rely on nuclear deterrence to counter potential Indian aggression. India's military modernization has largely focused on recapitalization and replacing outdated platforms, but recent advancements in sophisticated technological capabilities have intensified pressure on Pakistan. Economic constraints limit Pakistan's ability to match India's pace in military modernization, making it increasingly vulnerable to potential threats from its eastern neighbor. China, with its economic and political prowess, stands in a more resilient position to counter Indian aggression. However, the steep increase in India's military expenditure and ongoing territorial

disputes with both China and Pakistan reshape the geopolitical landscape of South Asia, presenting significant challenges for regional stability. India's strategic pursuit of encrypted defense technologies from the US and other defense partners further amplifies its military capabilities and deterrence posture. The signing of BECA between the US and India further complicates regional strategic dynamics by modernizing India's military infrastructure and intelligence capabilities. This containment strategy risks exacerbating tensions with Pakistan, a steadfast ally of China.

The Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA):

The Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), signed between India and the US in 2016, has significantly strengthened bilateral military cooperation. The agreement consists of three treaties: the LSA, CISMOA, and BREECA, aiming to enhance infrastructure, interoperability, and facilitate the sale and transfer of advanced technologies. It grants access to each other's military facilities, enabling joint exercises, training, replenishment, and recruitment. LEMOA aligns with India's aspirations for regional power status and serves both countries' interests in countering growing Chinese influence in Asia and addressing counter-terrorism concerns. It also facilitates access to US facilities globally, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region.

Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA):

In 2018, the US and India signed the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), a ten-year agreement that grants India access to advanced military technology. The agreement grants Indian military aircraft secure and encrypted communication equipment and establishes a legal framework for the transfer of such equipment. Despite initial delays, the Modi government prioritized strengthening military capabilities and concluded the agreement. The US has seen a shift towards China since the Obama administration, with increased engagement with India. India's elevation to STA-1 status in 2016 and pursuit of Nuclear Suppliers Group membership, which China opposes, highlight its strategic significance in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

The Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA):

The agreement between India and the US, finalized in 2020, aims to strengthen military cooperation between the two nations. The agreement provides India with access to American geospatial intelligence, enhancing navigation and target detection. It also enhances bilateral Air Force cooperation, enabling fighter aircraft to reach targets more efficiently. BECA also provides high-quality GPS for missile guidance, enhancing real-time intelligence for precise targeting. It supports disaster monitoring and response efforts and facilitates the exchange of liaison officers between India and the US.

The Indian Cold Start military doctrine:

Developed in response to the 2001 terrorist attack on the Indian parliament, was adopted by India under the Modi administration to anticipate escalating tensions towards a full-scale war. The

doctrine involves the rapid mobilization of a unified battle group within 48 hours to conduct offensive operations against Pakistan. However, the effectiveness of this doctrine was questioned during Operation Parakram, leading to Pakistan's concerns and the development of low-yield tactical nuclear weapons. The doctrine entails limited warfare tactics within Pakistan's territory, but risks escalating to a nuclear conflict.

The Indian military is enhancing its capabilities with the addition of the Russian S-400 missile defense system:

India's strategic approach to defense procurement is balanced, with acquisitions from both the US and Russia. Prime Minister Modi's "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" philosophy led to the purchase of Russian S-400 missiles in 2018, bypassing US legislation like the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA). India perceives CAATSA as a US law, confident that Washington values its partnership enough to avoid sanctions. The US prefers to maintain India as a key ally in the Indo-Pacific region and tap into India's lucrative defense market. The deployment of S-400 missiles strengthens India's air defense capabilities, but analysts warn of military miscalculations with neighboring countries.

Advancements in Hypersonic Missile Technology by India:

India, under the Modi government, has been making significant strides in the development of hypersonic missiles. India is among several countries with advanced hypersonic weapons. Technology, alongside major players like the US, China, and Russia. India has been collaborating with Russia on hypersonic cruise missiles, including the Mach 7 and BrahMos II missiles. The successful testing of the Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle in 2019 and the operation of nearly 12 hypersonic wind tunnels have led to India surpassing the US in hypersonic technology. India's Defense Minister, Rajnath Singh, attributes this achievement to Prime Minister Modi's vision of self-sufficiency in defense. The country views China's rapid advancements in hypersonic missile technology as a threat to regional power balance and emphasizes developing its own hypersonic capabilities to maintain credible deterrence. The successful testing of the Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle demonstrates India's commitment to enhancing its defense capabilities.

INDIAS SECURITY CHALLENGES POAST 2020 DISPUTED TERRITORIES OF INDIA:

The land border of India spans 15,106.7 kilometers, while its coastline, including island territories, extends for 7,516.6 kilometers.

NAMEOFTHECOUNTRIES	LEANGTHOFTHEBORDER (INKM)
CHINA	3,488
PAKISTAN	3,323
BHUTAN	699

MAYANMAR	1,643
BANGLADESH	4,096.7
AFGHANISTAN	106
NEPAL	1,751
TOTAL	**15,106.7**

CHINA:

Four states—Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh—along with the Union Territory of Ladakh (formerly part of Jammu C Kashmir) share a border with China.

The Sino-Indian border is typically categorized into three sectors: the Western sector, Middle sector, and Eastern sector.

Western Sector:

India shares a 2152 km border with China in west sector, disputed over Aksai Chin. The dispute stems from the British Empire's inability to establish a legal border. Two proposed linese merged: Johnson's Linein 1865 and McDonald Linein1893. Indiamaintains Johnson's Line as the correct national border, while China maintains McDonald Line. The Line of Actual Control aligns with China's claim.

Middle Sector:

India shares 625 kilometers of boundary with China in this sector, extending along the watershed from Ladakh to Nepal. Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand border Tibet (China) in this sector. Both countries generally have minimal disagreement over the border in this area.

Eastern Sector:

India shares a 1,140-kilometer boundary with China, extending from Bhutan's eastern limit to the Talu Passat the trijunction of Tibet, India, and Myanmar. This boundary is referred to as the Mc Mahon Line. China disputes the legality and validity of the Mc Mahon Line, asserting that Tibetan representatives who signed the 1914 Convention in Shimla, which delineated the McMahon Line, lacked the authority to do so.

PAKISTAN:

Pakistan illegally occupies over 78,000 square kilometers in Jammu and Kashmir and ceded 5,180 sq. km to China under the Sino-Pakistan Boundary Agreement of 1963. The Siachen Glacier, Saltoro Ridge, and Sir Creek are disputed areas between India and Pakistan. India claims the Saltoro Mountains, while Pakistan claims Gilgit-Baltistan. The International Boundary in Sir Creek and the International Maritime Boundary Line remain pending due to differing interpretations of the Bombay Government Resolution of 1914.

NEPAL:

India administers Kalapani Valley in Uttarakhand, despite Nepal's claims. The Kali River, flowing through the area, serves as the boundary between India and Nepal. The Treaty of Sugauli established the Kali River as Nepal's western border. However, disputes arose due to discrepancies in the river's source and conflicting maps. The Susta area is contested between India and Nepal.

SRI LANKA:

India and Sri Lanka share a maritime boundary, with the Palk Strait, a 30-kilometer-wide shallow sea, separating the two countries. While the Indo-Sri Lanka border issue has mostly seen peaceful resolution, tensions arose over the ownership of Kachchatheevu Island in the Palk Strait. India ceded the island to Sri Lanka in 1974, leading to disputes over its sovereignty.

BANGLADESH:

The Land Boundary Agreement, ratified by India and Bangladesh in 2015, resolved boundary disputes between the two countries, aiming to establish a common border through the 1974 agreement and its 2011 Protocol.

MAYANMAR:

India and Myanmar have no border disputes, but certain areas of the India-Myanmar boundary need to be re-defined. due to unresolved border disputes. China claims territories historically belonging to India, requiring a proactive diplomatic approach. India and Pakistan must engage in dialogue to address their issues, with Pakistan ceasing support for terrorism and proxy warfare. India should also adopt a constructive approach in interactions with smaller neighbours like Nepal to effectively address border concerns.

NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES:

India's lack of a comprehensive National Security Strategy (NSS) hinders its ability to effectively address internal and external threats and protect citizens' basic needs. A well- defined NSS should provide a clear vision for India's path towards achieving its national goals while adhering to the principles of the Constitution and democratic governance. It must acknowledge the multifaceted nature of modern security challenges, including economic, social, and environmental dimensions. Without a robust NSS, India risks overlooking critical vulnerabilities like cyber-attacks on infrastructure, ecological degradation, the spread of false information through social media. Therefore, a comprehensive NSS is crucial for analysing complex interrelationships between domestic and external factors and developing coordinated policy responses.

Strategic Partnerships:

Countries like US and the United Kingdom, Russia, China, and Pakistan have established National Security Strategies or Policies, reflecting their advanced military and security structures. India has made previous endeavors to shape a National Security Strategy (NSS). The Kargil Review

Committee's 2000 report, the 2012 Naresh Chandra Task Force on Security, and efforts by the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) with multiple draft documents presented to governments did not immediately result in a formal NSS. However, a notable development occurred in 2019 when Lt. Gen. (retd) D.S. Hooda's national security strategy document marked a significant step forward in India's NSS development.

The post-Cold War era has ushered in a globally intricate and uncertain landscape, marked by a proliferation of potential adversaries and expanded military missions. Non-state actors, including warlords, ethnic chieftains, multinational corporations, and international NGOs, now wield significant influence alongside regional groupings undertaking state functions. Key challenges encompass terrorism, ethnic diversity, small arms proliferation, narcotics trafficking, and religious extremism, demanding constant attention.

India faces crucial considerations regarding nuclear deterrence, particularly concerning the nuclear capabilities of neighboring China and Pakistan. Apprehensions extend to the presence of US nuclear weapons at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, necessitating India's nuclear deterrent to evolve in response to technological advancements and geopolitical shifts.

The Indo-Pacific region emerges as the new strategic center of gravity, reshaping the balance of power from North America and Europe. A developing security framework envisions "competitive cooperation" within a matrix of "cooperative security" in the Indo-Pacific, while challenges beyond conventional threats, such as left-wing extremism in tribal areas, pose risks to domestic stability.

National security is intricately tied to technological advancements, offering enhanced capabilities but also introducing vulnerabilities, especially in the realm of cybersecurity. The looming specter of ecological degradation and climate change further underscores the interconnectedness of environmental shifts with security implications, such as glacier melting and sea-level rise.

Efforts to fortify the national security architecture highlight underutilization of the National Security Council (NSC) in its advisory capacity. Urgent attention is required to empower the authority of the National Security Adviser (NSA) in navigating these multifaceted challenges.

Evolving Security Challenges:

India faces several security challenges, including cross-border terrorism, cybersecurity concerns, regional tensions, maritime security, border disputes, asymmetric warfare, nuclear deterrence, strategic alliances, internal security challenges, and humanitarian and environmental security. Cross-border terrorism involves threats from militant groups operating in neighboring regions, while cyber threats like hacking, espionage, and ransomware attacks require enhanced cybersecurity capabilities. Regional tensions in South Asia contribute to these issues, requiring diplomatic solutions and conflict management. Maritime security involves protecting India's

coastline and interests, while border disputes demand diplomatic solutions and effective border management strategies. Unconventional threats, such as hybrid warfare or proxy conflicts, require a multifaceted approach combining military preparedness, intelligence capabilities, and strategic partnerships. Nuclear deterrence is crucial for India as a nuclear-armed nation. Strengthening strategic alliances and engaging in diplomatic initiatives is crucial for India's geopolitical positioning. Internal security challenges include insurgency, communal tensions, and radicalization, while humanitarian and environmental security involves coordinated efforts to address climate change, natural disasters, and refugee crises.

Cyber Security Concerns:

India ranks 11th globally in local cyberattacks, with 2,399,692 incidents in Q1 2020. The country faces a variety of cyber threats, including ransomware, phishing, and malware attacks. Despite recognizing the hazards, cybersecurity remains challenging due to its complexity, unique regulations, and lack of mature laws, policies, and practices. Companies now require dedicated security analysts to safeguard their systems, protect sensitive data, and address various cybersecurity challenges. Ransomware attacks pose a significant threat to Indian businesses and government institutions, while critical infrastructure vulnerabilities make them vulnerable. Supply chain attacks could compromise product and service integrity, threatening national security. Insufficient awareness and implementation of cybersecurity practices create vulnerabilities for cybercriminals. Advanced persistent threats, orchestrated by well-funded groups, pose challenges in detecting and mitigating these long-term security risks.

SECURITY STRATEGY:

Indian strategic culture, described as 'omniscient patrician' by Rodney Jones, is deeply rooted in philosophical and mythological factors, shaping its worldview and approach to security. Indian thought is often ahistorical, emphasizing agelessness and natural greatness. Traditional texts like the Mahabharata and the Bhagwat Gita underscore the balance between force and peace. Historically, Indian rulers maintained defensive and non- expansionist perspectives due to the subcontinent's natural geographical barriers.

Post-independence, India prioritized independence and peace, emphasizing self-reliance and conflict resolution. However, there has been a shift towards acknowledging the utility of force, exemplified by military actions like surgical strikes against terrorist camps. India's stance on revisionism has evolved, particularly in South Asia, where it seeks to maintain peace and order as a regional hegemon. Yet, India's nuclear capability and economic diplomacy have tempered its revisionist rhetoric.

India has moved away from traditional non-alignment, positioning itself as a global actor seeking strategic partnerships with countries like the US, France, Japan, and Australia. This shift

reflects a more realist worldview, recognizing the limitations of ideological stances. Overall, India's security strategy is characterized by a geopolitical focus on its strategic concerns, balancing traditional values with evolving realities.

Basic Principle:

India's domestic principles emphasize a pluralist, representative governance system, rooted in unity and diversity. It is committed to principled peace policy and maintains an independent stance on global affairs. India upholds national security and nuclear capability, advocating for global disarmament. It promotes peaceful nuclear technology use and advances in space and electronics for developmental purposes, acknowledging their dual-use nature.

Regional Level:

The effectiveness of nuclear deterrence between India and Pakistan is uncertain due to regional security dynamics. India could advocate for a 'no first use' agreement and refrain from targeting nuclear installations. Its primary security concerns lie with China, leading to a different interpretation of its nuclear preparedness. India's nuclear capability could serve as a tool to initiate dialogue with China on security matters. The resolution of the Doklam standoff in 2017 highlights India's military capability and provides a model for other nations facing similar challenges.

Global level:

India's global decision-making process is influenced by tacit bargaining, a method of influencing another state's policy decisions through threats, posturing, and alliance building. This approach is crucial for India's economic and technology transfer issues, which are central to its security concerns. The recognition of India's emerging status by nuclear powers may influence negotiations. India's reluctance to articulate a clear strategic doctrine provides flexibility and allows it to safeguard its national interests.

Conclusion:

India's defense strategy is intricately woven to tackle the multifaceted security landscape it faces, encompassing regional adversaries, unresolved border disputes, and evolving global dynamics. Despite prioritizing war prevention and socio-economic development since independence, India confronts substantial threats from China, Pakistan, and concerns about regional instability. Through a robust military modernization program, India aims to replace major weapons systems, elevate its defense capabilities, and prioritize naval developments. However, these endeavors have sparked concerns about regional strategic stability, particularly in South Asia. Strategic partnerships with key nations like the United States and advancements in hypersonic missile technology underscore India's commitment to maintaining credible deterrence. Nevertheless, unresolved border disputes and the emergence of non-state actors pose ongoing challenges. Moving forward, India must pursue a proactive diplomatic approach, strengthen strategic alliances, and develop a comprehensive National

Security Strategy to effectively address internal and external threats while upholding democratic principles and ensuring cybersecurity vigilance in an interconnected world.

India's pursuit of a proactive diplomatic approach and the strengthening of strategic alliances are imperative to navigate the complexities of its security environment. By fostering cooperative relationships with key allies and regional partners, India can enhance its defense capabilities, promote stability, and mitigate potential threats. Furthermore, the development of a comprehensive National Security Strategy will provide a framework for addressing both internal and external challenges while safeguarding democratic principles and pluralist governance. Additionally, as cybersecurity emerges as a critical concern in an increasingly interconnected world, India must prioritize continuous vigilance and investment in cybersecurity measures. By bolstering its cyber defense capabilities and collaborating with international partners, India can effectively protect its national interests and critical infrastructure from cyber threats.

India's defense strategy requires a holistic approach that integrates military modernization, diplomatic engagement, strategic alliances, and cybersecurity measures to address the diverse array of security challenges it faces. By doing so, India can bolster its position as a responsible global actor while safeguarding its sovereignty and national interests.

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