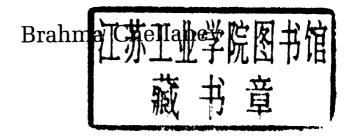
securing india's future in the new millennium

edited by brahma chellaney

Securing India's Future in the New Millennium



UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE CENTRE FOR POLICY RESEARCH, NEW DELHI



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Published by Orient Longman Limited 1/24 Asaf Ali Road New Delhi 110 002 Dedicated to independent India's brave military soldiers and officers who laid down their lives on the battlefield so that the rest of us could live in peace

This book is intended to fill an important void in strategic studies literature by being the first to comprehensively analyse India's long-term national security from different facets. It bears an authoritative seal stamped by the country's leading strategic analysts, each of whom has contributed a paper in his or her specific area of expertise. No other book on Indian security has brought together such a collection of leading strategic experts.

As a large, multi-ethnic, and diverse country which shares borders with China, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, the Maldives and Pakistan, India faces important national-security challenges. There are few countries in the world that are placed in a security environment as unfavourable as the one in which India is located. India's security problems have been compounded by the porous, artificial borders that were drawn in 1947 when the subcontinent was partitioned. Such frontiers have contributed to military and non-military threats to Indian security, including border problems, refugee influx, infiltration of armed militants, drug trafficking and smuggling along the frontiers.

The geostrategic realities India confronts are difficult and demand a co-ordinated, long-term approach to national-security planning. The rise of a powerful and assertive China and the close Sino-Pakistan strategic collaboration pose major challenges for Indian defence and diplomacy. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, China is seen as a major power with the political will and economic and

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military resources to play a global role. China's close trade and commercial relationship with the United States, its military modernisation, its strategic penetration of Myanmar, the expansion of its influence to Central Asia, its continuing nuclear and missile assistance to Pakistan, and its arms exports to most of India's neighbours give it a strategic reach that impinges on Indian interests. Pakistan, for its part, remains wedded to a deeply rooted anti-India posture despite its greater self-confidence in the period since it conducted nuclear tests.

India has a vast potential of its own, and India's economic, political and military interests cover areas far beyond Southern Asia. India's extended neighbourhood includes Southwest and West Asia, Central Asia, Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean region. To achieve peace and stability, India will have to forge close, mutually co-operative relationships with the important countries in its extended neighbourhood as well as with those powers, such as the United States, Japan and Russia, that play a role in this wider region. With its scientific and material resources, its size and its strategic location, India is already an important member of the international community. If it grows economically at a faster rate, India will increase its weight in international and regional affairs and be better placed to cope with its security challenges. The strengthening of the trade-related aspects of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) will serve Indian interests. Greater regional trade and economic cooperation will contribute to peace and stability. It is also in India's interest to work for multipolarity in international relations.

Achieving strategic autonomy and security is the central focus of this book. The book examines both the defence and non-defence aspects of India's national security. The whole gamut of defence-related issues have been covered. The non-defence issues examined include energy security, the role of science and technology, instruments of diplomacy, intelligence assets, relationships with major countries or regions, and geopolitical and geoeconomic developments. The

authors of the various chapters guide us through the key issues and make policy-relevant recommendations. An attempt has been to present a volume that can be of help both to those in the government who make policy as well as to outside scholars, journalists and other analysts.

The idea of doing this book originated from a project funded by the Rockefeller Foundation at the Centre for Policy Research that led to the holding of a conference at the new International Centre, Goa in early 1997. Subsequently, many of the participants in the conference prepared an individual chapter on an assigned subject for this book. A few other strategic experts who were not involved in the Goa conference, including a couple of scholars living overseas and several eminent analysts in India, were also gradually brought into the book project by the Editor of the volume to fill the gaps. That helped to cover all the important areas relating to India's long-term national security.

During the course of this book project, India's strategic posture changed fundamentally as it carried out a series of nuclear tests in May 1998 and declared itself a nuclear-weapons state. This event was of far-reaching importance and is examined in detail by several of the contributors. This volume's analyses of the nuclear subject are based on careful research and scholarship. In going openly nuclear, India has sought to get over its long history of being a victim of repeated invasions. India's increasingly nuclearised neighbourhood and the growing reliance placed on nuclear weapons by the major powers left New Delhi with little choice.

The Kargil conflict in the summer of 1999 took India by considerable surprise indicating the untrustworthiness of Pakistan and problems of lowering defence preparedness which marked the decade. By July 1999, the Kargil conflict was over and India successfully thwarted Pakistan's designs. But the bigger question of what after Kargil, remains on the security agenda of India.

We hope that this book will energise public debate on the country's national-security challenges and serve as a resource

book for policy-makers and outside analysts. We also hope that the book will make a contribution, however small, in helping India develop a strategic culture and an institutionalised approach to national-security planning.

Centre for Policy Research New Delhi August 1999 V.A. PAI PANANDIKER President

Preface

A study of the different aspects of Indian security is a daunting task. India faces not only major external and internal challenges, it has shied away from the lessons of its history. India indeed has an unusual history, having recurrently fallen prey to invaders of various sorts yet having refrained from raiding or conquering another civilization. That defensive, reactive character—reinforced by the inherited social values of a Hindu society that gives credence to preordained destiny has defined independent India's national-security approach. It remains the single biggest obstacle to an institutionalized, integrated, provident approach to national-security planning. As a consequence, India continues to be taken by surprise again and again. Kargil-the fifth overt war India has faced since independence—was only the latest in a string of nasty surprises, which have included Pakistan's sponsorship of terrorism in India since the 1980s, Sumduruong Chu. Operation Gibraltar, Rann of Kutch, China's 1962 invasion, Chinese territorial encroachments in the 1950s. Tibet's annexation, and Pakistan's tribal invasion of Jammu and Kashmir after signing a Standstill Agreement with the Kashmir Maharaja in August 1947.

Unlearned history lessons usually prove very costly. Unless the relevant history lesson has been grasped, as L.P. Singh points out in the introductory chapter, previous experiences are likely to haunt the state again when they repeat themselves in a different form and setting. Betrayals by friends are not uncommon in history, but India has the embarrassing yet portentous distinction of being betrayed by adversaries. And

while there are international chronicles of guileless leaders being taken for a ride by a rival state, there is no recorded account in history of a head of a government being taken for a ride by an adversary to whom he went riding a bus with great fanfare. In the 1950s, what the Chinese sought to convey as Hindi-Chini bye bye was lapped up by India as Hindi-Chini bhai bhai. Had those making Indian policy over the years read ancient Chinese strategist Sun Tzu's The Art of War, they would not have been repeatedly disappointed and deceived in India's still unrequited, half-century-old desire to build friendship with China. The Chinese strategy towards India, including the accent on indirect or surrogate threats, is very much in the Sun Tzu way.

Like a real elephant that has teeth for show but separate teeth for biting, 'elephant' India needs to understand that a state should put its desire for friendship with neighbours and major powers on public display while continuing to sharpen its capacity to deter aggression. India's main failing has been that it has always wanted to be a state that is liked, not a state that is respected. Respect can come only if a state knows the ways and means to secure well-defined interests and acts determinedly. This is the point that many contributors make in this volume. India has been so comfortable in the role of a victim before international audiences that it has overlooked some basic principles of international relations, including that national strength brings international respect and that without realistic, goal-oriented statecraft no nation can pursue effective diplomacy. Every nation has to directly and assertively advance its own interests. While India's poverty of statecraft skills is an outcome of its extraordinary history, particularly foreign subjugation for nearly one millennium, post-independence handling of overt and covert wars started by adversaries has underlined the need for it to overcome its chronic victim syndrome.

India should have learnt by now that turning diplomacy into an instrument for evoking international sympathy does not serve its national interests. That was the lesson of 1948 when Jawaharlal Nehru rushed to the United Nations to

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present India as a victim, of 1962 when the world was told by Nehru how China had "returned evil for good", and of the period since the 1980s when India tirelessly complained of being the victim of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. That India is content to play the victim while hoping for reward also motivated Atal Behari Vajpayee to assert almost from the start of the Kargil conflict that India did not intend to do what Pakistan had done-cross the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir. While a decision to cross the line of control could have been taken only if a careful political-military assessment suggested a decisive victory was possible, there was no apparent need to gratuitously assure the enemy and the international community that India had no intention of paying Pakistan back in the same coin. Even if an internal assessment of India's capabilities and options did not promise a convincing military triumph through a retaliatory LoC crossing, New Delhi should have kept alive the element of suspense which is essential in military strategy diplomacy. A credible threat to use force can achieve the same results as actually using force provided the nation is prepared to carry through on its threat. While Pakistan did retreat from the Kargil battlefield, it did so as a wounded rather than vanquished party.

National security depends as much on the work of diplomats as on the battlefield achievements of soldiers. But without clear objectives and political will, no diplomatic or military strategy can significantly advance national interests. India has been losing at the negotiating table what it has been gaining on the ground. It needs to urgently develop an institutionalized, integrated and long-term approach to national-security planning. And it has to realise that unless it consciously builds leverage in different spheres, its diplomacy cannot go very far. While employing leverage-underpinned diplomacy to play a bigger role regionally and globally, it has to be continually attentive to the needs of its security and to the designs and capabilities of its adversaries. India tends to forget the lessons of its bitter experiences even before it has fully absorbed them in policy terms. According to Vajpayee,

"We have learned a lesson to remain vigilant and ensure that Kargil does not happen again". But perpetual vigilance was also the lesson of other past experiences, including 1962, Operation Gibraltar, Sumduruong Chu and Pakistan's proxy terrorist acts. Whenever India has been caught napping, internal investigations have not spawned the kind of remedial action necessary to prevent further surprises. The Indian Army's Henderson Brooks report on the 1962 debacle has yet to be made public.

At the dawn of the new millennium, India faces major challenges that can be effectively met only if it overhauls its approach to national security, focuses clearly on identifying and advancing its vital interests, displays the political determination to punish those seeking to undermine its security, and behaves as a responsible, reliable and confident state. It has to employ all four approaches—multilateralism, regionalism, bilateralism and unilateralism—in pursuit of its national interests. The rise of transnational security threats associated with terrorism, large refugee flows, environmental degradation and resource depletion, narcotics trafficking and international crime demand both appropriate national strategies as well as international cooperation. The increasing stake of various states in a more stable and organized world is helping to transform some aspects of international relations in a positive way by creating a better awareness and new opportunities for global cooperation on transnational problems.

As the contents show, this book has defined national security in a comprehensive, multidisciplinary manner. Without a strong productive and technological base, India cannot secure its future. Nor can it safeguard its decision-making autonomy unless it builds energy security. In addition to modernizing the classical military instruments—land, air and maritime forces—India has to develop emerging military instruments such as information dominance on the battlefield and creation of operational synergies by blending various capabilities into one warfare system. The rising unconventional threats to Indian security cannot be thwarted

with just conventional military instruments. India has to develop unconventional military instruments—such as psychological operations, special operations forces that can work behind enemy lines, and non-lethal weapons—to combat terrorism and narcotics trafficking.

Intelligence is another area that demands special Indian attention. Kargil, which raised troubling questions about the failure of Indian intelligence to anticipate the ingeniouslyexecuted Pakistani capture of some 700 square kilometres of territory in Ladakh, has underscored the need to strengthen various intelligence assets. Accurate and timely intelligence has to be an important component of national security, providing Indian decision-makers early warning of an adversary's plans of aggression, information and other support for military and unorthodox counteraction, assessments of emerging situations, forecasts of new problems, and foreign commercial and technological data of relevance. In addition, the task of intelligence to prevent subversion, assassinations, terrorism and hiring of moles by foreign powers and hostile interests. While quality analysis of intelligence data has traditionally been an Indian weaknesswith the now-disbanded Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) having been gradually sidelined after its 1965 recast-Kargil also bared the failure to emplace and cultivate the right kind of sources in the field. The demands of strategic intelligence applicable to policy and strategy get swamped in a flood of trivial intelligence information flowing daily to Indian Kargil, however, decision-makers. was more than intelligence failure. It was fundamentally a common-sense failing that missed the obvious—that having tried almost every trick in its bag, Pakistan would seize any new element it could find. With its unguarded heights, Kargil was an encroachment waiting to happen.

In the 21st century, India will have to build a more diverse set of tools to meet its national-security requirements in the face of the ongoing geostrategic revolution and information revolution. This book can only be a modest effort to examine the security challenges India faces and help initiate a wider

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public debate on the national tasks. I am deeply grateful to the many contributors for the insights they have provided in this book. In view of the rapid pace of developments, some of the contributors kindly agreed to update their chapter more than once. In a large book project like this, each author has to be responsible for the arguments in his or her chapter and for any errors or flaws it may contain. I am particularly indebted to Hemlata K. Shankar, Senior Editor of Orient Longman, for handling this entire book project in a highly professional and competent manner. She diligently edited the various chapters. Without her cooperation and exemplary patience, this book would not have come out. I also wish to thank the publisher, Orient Longman, with whom' I have enjoyed a long and mutually productive relationship.

August 1999

BRAHMA CHELLANEY

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