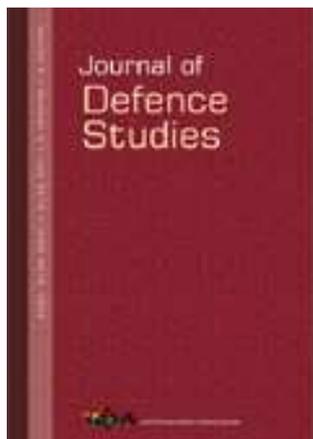


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Influence and Leverage of Indian Sea Power From Kargil to Future Readiness

*Sudarshan Shrikhande**

Using the Kargil conflict as a backdrop, the article explains why the leverage and influence of sea power matters. During Kargil, situated in a small area of Jammu and Kashmir, and far away from the sea, the robust deployment of the Indian Navy created politico-diplomatic pressure that contributed indirectly to the outcome. Two decades hence, the navy's multiple strategies as doctrinally enunciated, when complemented by the broader initiatives of SAGAR and SAGARMALA, assist in India becoming a pivot for economic progress and for mutual security in the Indian Ocean Region. Going forward, the Indian Ocean will become the arena for competitive economic and security agendas of regional and extra-regional powers. This requires thinking of sea control and sea denial using available instruments imaginatively and adaptively; investing in places and bases; and create the conditions for future-readiness of a self-reliant navy that harnesses jointness effectively.

[It] is nonetheless true that the da Gama epoch presents a singular unity in its fundamental aspects. These may be briefly stated as the dominance of maritime power over the land masses of Asia; the imposition of a commercial economy over communities whose economic life in the past had been based not on international trade, but mainly on agricultural production and internal trade; and thirdly the domination of the peoples of Europe, who held the

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mastery of the seas, over the affairs of Asia. It was an age of maritime power, of authority based on the control of the seas.

—K.M. Panikkar¹

Navies fight at sea only for the strategic effect they can secure ashore, where people live. Sea battles, naval tactics, and ship design are means, and only means, to the gaining of strategic leverage in conflict as a whole.

—Colin S. Gray²

INTRODUCTION

When published in 1953, Panikkar's longish book, *Asia and Western Dominance: A Survey of the Vasco da Gama Epoch of Asian History, 1498–1945*, was a sweeping survey of nearly 500 years of European influence in Asia.³ His earlier, slimmer and better-known work, *India and the Indian Ocean: An Essay on the Influence of Sea Power on Indian History*, covers much water—and it can be said, ground as well—because it analyses the interplay and interdependence between continental and maritime strategies, as well as recognising the significant impact of airpower on sea power itself.⁴ Specifically for India, the Vasco da Gama epoch drew to a very conclusive end in 1961 with the liberation of Goa from Portuguese rule. Of course, Portuguese colonial rule continued elsewhere in the Indo-Pacific (East Timor until 1975 and Macau until 1987). For independent India, the liberation of Goa through the use of armed forces was the first instance of the influence and leverage of sea power.⁵ Rear Admiral Satyindra Singh's book covers the Goa operation in detail.⁶ It also speaks of the disappointment at the limited use of the Indian Navy (IN) for influence and leverage in the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War. Yet, as James Goldrick points out: 'The occupation of Goa in 1961, in which the Indian Navy took a leading role, provided a boost to India's confidence but revealed considerable problems in the navy's own planning and in joint service operations which were not properly addressed.'⁷

Had the IN been used more aggressively as an instrument of the state during the war with Pakistan in 1965, more evidence would have been seen of the influence and leverage that sea power could have provided. It is difficult to conclusively determine from the official history of the IN pertaining to that period,⁸ and several other sources, about why the Cabinet fettered the navy and why the latter's leadership failed to better educate and prevail upon the former on the instrumentality of

the navy for achieving a fuller political victory. A few years after the unimaginative, even lackadaisical and very limited use of the navy, the IN was deployed and leveraged with great effectiveness in the 1971 India-Pakistan War leading to the creation of the new nation of Bangladesh. From 1971 until Kargil, the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard played important roles not only in constabulary functions but in more complex operations as well. These included Operation Cactus in November 1988 that led to the restoration of the regime of President Gayoom in Male as well as the contribution made to Op Pawan in Sri Lanka,⁹ According to some analysts, IN was poised to intervene with troops embarked in an expeditionary operation named 'Lal Dora' in early 1983 to assist the Jugnauth regime in Mauritius in staving off an internal coup.¹⁰

Colin Gray opines: 'Sea power offers the inherent advantages of adaptability, flexibility, and mobility on, under, and over the environment that covers most of the surface of the earth'.¹¹ In a manner of speaking, during Kargil, the IN perhaps impacted at the politico-strategic level of war from the 'depths of the oceans to the mountains', to paraphrase what is often said about the China-Pakistan axis of friendship.¹² While Kargil was a relatively small-scale conflict in terms of space as well as the forces ultimately deployed, how the navy's indirect leverage and influence via extensive deployment impacted on the Pakistani leadership is perhaps not very clear in the public imagination. This article, therefore, begins with examining how the navy's leverage helped during the Kargil conflict, even when the action was limited to a small area in the mountains of the Kargil-Drass sector and, as such, actively involved only the army and air force. Thereafter, it discusses the fundamental roles of a 'fleet' and relates them to the strategies officially enunciated by the IN which provide the nation the sinews of sea power. The contribution of relatively recent initiatives like 'Maritime India,' 'SAGAR' and 'Sagarmala', in making India a pivotal maritime enabler in the region, are also addressed. The article then focuses on China's growing interests and initiatives in the IOR, which are a matter of concern and an important factor in the overall strategic environment. What then are the options in a rapidly evolving strategic environment? This is the focus of the next section that examines the changing character of maritime warfare.

Along with enhanced maritime domain awareness and overall technological advancement, India would require multi-domain maritime impact and the ability to exploit comparative advantages rather than trying to match numbers. Therefore, renewed thinking into methods

and instruments of sea control and sea denial as well as power projection becomes critical. The penultimate section thus looks at the importance of 'places and bases,' self-reliance and the criticality of jointness. The article concludes with the transitions required when India is poised at a 20 year span from Kargil.

THE NAVY AND THE MOUNTAINS OF KARGIL

Precisely 20 years ago, IN had deployed in considerable strength in support of the war in the mountains of Kargil during the summer of 1999. While it was a localised conflict, involving a very small proportion of the army and air force's total numbers, the possibility of escalation was quite real. Larger wars often have small beginnings! I was part of the IN's Western Fleet as the Executive Officer of *INS Delhi*, then the navy's newest and most powerful destroyer, and can recall the combat-readiness levels and frequent sorties during those weeks to create pressure on Pakistan and dominate escalation dynamics. The navy was fully prepared to 'sail in harm's way'.¹³ In the official history of this period, authored by Vice Admiral G.M. Hiranandani, the motives of General Pervez Musharraf, the sequence and the main phases are explained in some detail.¹⁴ From Pakistan's viewpoint, the strategic idea had great potential, but at the military-strategic and military-operational levels, it was poorly planned and executed. Kargil, it could be said, was yet another instance of poor generalship.

What leverage did the IN position itself for?¹⁵ Before answering this question, a few caveats are in order. First, there is a wide gap between deploying a navy aggressively in conditions of 'peace' (that is, the absence of a 'shooting' war) and in actual conflict.¹⁶ Second, from 'presence' as a peacetime mission that potentially has deterrent influences on an adversary, the required conditions of 'sea control' or 'sea denial' are in conditions of hostilities. Third, short of war, deploying widely enables potential interdiction of an adversary's trade in areas of choice, or some aspects of a blockade even; in effect, however, if the enemy chooses to keep his ships moving to and fro, there is actually not much that can be done until the 'shooting' starts.

When seen in an aggregated sense, bold deployment and demonstrated readiness with adequate signalling of resolve had considerable effect on the Kargil conflict. The deployment of submarines was especially useful since their precise location was difficult to determine and the task of trying to ascertain the location uses considerable resources of the forces

and time, thereby creating a new, silent and unseen ‘front’ of concern for the enemy.¹⁷

THE ROLES OF A ‘FLEET’

If we generically call instruments of warfare at sea, or from the sea, as the ‘fleet’, we could find it a bit easier to consider the past as well as the future of maritime warfare. First, we could enumerate the essence of a navy’s roles in the words of Julian Corbett, the famous lawyer-turned-historian, naval professor and maritime strategist. Writing in 1909, Corbett stated that the ‘fleet’ had three main roles:

1. The prevention or securing of alliances (i.e. deterring or persuading neutrals as to participating in the war);
2. The protection or destruction of commerce;
3. The furtherance or hindrance of military operations ashore.¹⁸

Second, we can see here that Corbett’s triptych very economically describes much of what navies have had to do and would need to do in decades ahead. Specific instruments that accomplish these roles evolve from time to time with changes in weapons, platforms and even the medium itself. These roles have been transformed into various strategies in the IN’s current, open-domain strategy document—*Indian Maritime Security Strategy* (IMSS) dated 2015.¹⁹ Strategies therein span conflict prevention through deterrence, through warfare, and for various other tasks that are required to be undertaken in peace or in ‘no-peace, no-conflict’ environments as the case may be. In IMSS 2015, the strategies elaborated are:

1. strategy for deterrence;
2. strategy for conflict;
3. strategy for shaping a favourable maritime environment;
4. strategy for coastal and offshore security; and
5. strategy for maritime force and capability development.

Third, in the language that seamen understand perfectly, these five strategic ‘strands are twisted together to form the rope’ of seapower.²⁰ Taking the analogy further, within the five strands are the yarns and fibres that constitute other facets of statecraft, such as ‘diplomatic’, ‘informational’ and ‘economic’ strategies. When combined with the ‘military’, we have the well-known mnemonic ‘DIME’. While this formulation may seem contemporary, the ‘whole-of-nation’ approach to

sea power has for centuries been a practical requirement; and nations that understood this prospered more than those that did not. Alfred Thayer Mahan, in fact, began his first famous treatise with this admission:

The history of Sea Power is largely, though by no means solely, a narrative of contests between nations, of mutual rivalries, of violence frequently culminating in war. The profound influence of sea commerce was clearly seen long before the true principles which governed its growth and prosperity were detected.²¹

The six elements of sea power that Mahan explained in the first chapter of his seminal book, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*, remain essentially valid; and while there are some departures that could be made, the exceptions probably still uphold the rule. However, that discussion is beyond the present scope of this article.

Fourth, throughout not only Mahan's or Corbett's works (and both were prolific) but of several others, sea power is, first, a collective attribute of an individual nation's sinews. Geoffrey Till diagrammatically links the various facets while showing sea power to be an interdependent mix of military and civil maritime capabilities leading to military and commercial operations.²² Till also suggests that the 'common practice of using the labels "maritime power" and "sea power" interchangeably' is quite sensible.²³

'MARITIME INDIA', 'SAGAR' AND 'SAGARMALA' AS CONSTITUENTS OF FUTURE INDIAN SEA POWER

Though it has long been recognised that India is veritably a 'maritime' nation, not much was done about it until recent times. Like in Japan during the decades of the Meiji era, when the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) was pushing for a cross-sectoral maritime outlook, investments and impetus, in India it was mainly the IN which carried the torch for a 'maritime India' in a manner of speaking.²⁴ The successes were not many, but the seeds did take roots eventually. Early in its first tenure, the Modi government put in place three initiatives:

1. 'Maritime India' Summit which sought to enhance cross-sectoral coordination and initiatives.²⁵ This was first held in April 2016 and was inaugurated by Prime Minister Modi. In 1885, the IJN had triggered 'Kaikoku Nippon' (literally, Maritime Japan) that was then taken forward by the government that made Japan a maritime nation and a sea power in due course.²⁶

2. The second is SAGAR, an acronym for 'Security and Growth for All in the Region'. This initiative of March 2016 preceded the Maritime India Summit by a month. In essence, SAGAR looked at a focused approach towards integrating security with progress for nations in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The essence of SAGAR was captured in the Prime Minister's remarks at the commissioning of an Indian-built warship into the Mauritius Coast Guard.²⁷ Also, as pointed out by G. Padmaja of the National Maritime Foundation (NMF), 'India would do everything to safeguard its mainland and islands and defend its interests. Further, India will also work to ensure a safe, secure and stable IOR.'²⁸
3. The third initiative is 'Sagarmala' (which, in Hindi, means 'a garland of/for the seas'). This project was put in place after a study by McKinsey; and as explained in the preamble:

The Sagarmala initiative was conceived by the Government of India to address the challenges and capture the opportunity of port-led development comprehensively and holistically. Sagarmala is a national programme aimed at accelerating economic development in the country by harnessing the potential of India's coastline and river network.²⁹

Leveraging Deeper Friendships while Stitching Deeper Pockets?

Together, the above-mentioned initiatives have set in place the non-military strands of India's sea power. In executing them, several ministries and departments, public and private sectors corporations in shipping, infrastructure, ports, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and agencies such as the NMF that are focused on India's maritime future would need to come together. These initiatives must not be allowed to peter out through benign neglect, cross-sectoral turf battles, inadequate financing, and so on. On a regional basis, there could be setbacks from time to time in some country when political dispensations change and anxieties are trumped up as a result of machinations and counter-influences from elsewhere. Yet, setbacks would often be tactical; from time to time, regimes may have different priorities or may revise attitudes due to internal political pressures or external influences. Therefore, if India maintains strategic coherence, dynamism and adaptability, then such tactical setbacks can be absorbed. In comparison to China, within the IOR and gradually even beyond, India's democracy, greater transparency

and larger circle of friends are—and remain—enduring advantages. Without over-emphasising its leverage or influence, can it be said that India should better use its deeper relationships around the globe even when it may not have the deep pockets that China has? Given the stated aim of the government to focus on economic growth going forward, it is likely that in the future India's pockets would be deeper. Therefore, its capacity to assist in, and influence regional and global development for mutual benefit will improve with time.

China's *Sthalmala* and Sagarmala

China's growth as a maritime power has taken decades of doggedness and a whole-of-government approach. Beijing has its own version of 'Maritime China', and a much more comprehensive and obvious success with an internal Sagarmala. Now, consider this in the backdrop of China's internal prowess, demonstrated economic 'hard power' and global financial and diplomatic influence in its external manifestations. The One Belt, One Road (OBOR) project is a Chinese *Sthalmala* (a coinage perhaps for the terrestrial connectivity of roads, rails and pipelines); combined with a global Sagarmala it comprises ports, ships, shipping finance and insurance, to name a few vital components. The leverage and influence that these bring to China should not be underestimated. Of course, there have been several small and some potentially large setbacks for Beijing in the way the OBOR is unfolding. Chinese economic difficulties could increase and political challenges in a few countries seem to be brewing. One should prudently assume that Chinese statecraft is tuned to coping with setbacks and working around them. Indeed, recent developments in Malaysia and even Sri Lanka seem to suggest so.

FUTURE READINESS OF INDIAN SEAPOWER

An Overview of the Likely Maritime Strategic Environment

The likely maritime strategic contours within which Indian sea power may need to evolve are briefly examined below.

1. China's influence and weight in the Indo-Pacific is likely to grow. This growth could take place together with corresponding gains by India as well as of other nations in the Indo-Pacific.
2. Chinese sea power in its composite as well as military sense is certain to grow even as Indian sea power also gathers strength in the coming decades. This is not unusual and there have been

instances when two or more nations have become stronger sea powers simultaneously or with a short lag. For instance, Germany and UK in the so-called naval race in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; Japan and Russia also expanded their sea power significantly around the same time. From the 1960s until the fall of the Soviet Union, Kremlin ramped up its naval power to try and catch-up with American sea power. The example of naval expansion in the United States (US), Europe and Japan took place steadily in the decades before and after World War I. It took a war to demonstrate the varying effectiveness of the navies and the achievements and limitations of the fleets they had built for themselves.

3. Importantly, friends and allies have always mattered. Neither India, nor the US, nor other members of the current 'quad'—comprising Australia, Japan, India and the US—nor Indonesia or other Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) members should overplay self-assurances that China has but two friends, North Korea and Pakistan. That list could grow in the years to come. In any case, China's leverage and influence is growing steadily, as mentioned earlier, and there is not much reason to believe that it will not be put to use to prevent conflict or shape it to Beijing's advantage.³⁰
4. We need to rethink the comforting narrative in policy circles of China not having come to the aid of Pakistan in 1965, 1971 or 1999.³¹ This inference is not really accurate and China offered support to Pakistan diplomatically in ways that mattered to India in 1965 as well as in 1971.³² A broader effect of China's friendship with Pakistan in 1965 as well as in 1971 was that, even when there was some assurance that China would not militarily assist by opening a new front, its possibility could not be ruled out entirely. Thus, India's readiness along the Sino-Indian border could not be significantly lowered to take on Pakistan. Nonetheless, the Sino-Pak relationship today is very different than it was in 1999.³³ The degrees of missile and nuclear cooperation; high-end military hardware for all arms and services; enhanced training and exercises, combined with diplomatic and economic support are magnitudes different than in 1999, not to mention at the times of earlier Indo-Pak wars. Therefore, little can be gained by imagining that the future would continue to

be a reflection of the past. Andrew Small's observations in his book, *The China-Pakistan Axis*, are worth thinking about: 'In reality, China's greatest contribution to Pakistan's security has never really been the prospect of an intervention on its behalf. Beijing gave Pakistan something far more important than that: the ultimate means of self-defence.'³⁴

5. India's own preparedness to consider stronger friendships, strategic interdependency, and perhaps even alliances of sorts with partners involved in the Indo-Pacific is growing. Maritime influence, especially the leverage of navies, has been generally dependent on a system of alliances and partnerships with others, where interests coincided at least in terms of lesser objectives. This is a lesson that is apparent in the works of Kautilya; in Thucydides' account of the Peloponnesian War; in the British Empire in the heyday of Pax Britannica; and in the global power and naval leverage of the US since World War II.³⁵
6. Pakistan, as such, is also going to remain a problem for India in a maritime framework. It will continue to build a navy that may stay much smaller than the IN, but effective enough to pose significant threats. Destroying a major portion of the Pakistan Navy (PN) is very much within the current and future capabilities of the IN, but will still require and engage a lot of resources with attendant possibilities of attrition as well. While Islamabad's influence in West Asia has been dented by the transformative foreign policy steps by Delhi, there could still be considerable leverage that Pakistan might have with some regimes in the region.
7. The US would continue to be a strong political, economic and military player not only in the Pacific but also in the IOR in the foreseeable future. The Indo-US partnership would need to evolve from its current predominant focus on India buying military hardware to increased political congruence. It is important that the perception in India that the defence relationship may be 'greed based' rather than mutual 'needs driven' should fade. One hopes that the underpinnings of the security relationship would range beyond a primarily buyer-seller focus.
8. Overall, in terms of partnerships with several players, including Russia, the Indian Armed Forces, and especially the IN, have put in years of efforts to develop operational compatibility, mutual

confidence and even trust. However, for better results, defence cooperation needs to be backed politically by alliances and treaties. So, strategic autonomy itself requires reinterpretation. Harsh Pant's views on this are spot on:

The Modi government is redefining strategic autonomy as an objective that is attainable through strengthened partnerships rather than the avoidance of partnerships. By doing so, it seems to be underlining that in today's complicated global scene, strategic autonomy and non-alignment are not necessarily a package deal.³⁶

Thinking of Major Changes in Maritime Warfare

'Necessarily, sea power stems ultimately from and is directed against land power', wrote Colin Gray.³⁷ As a strategist who has written extensively about every instrument of power (land, air, sea, nuclear, cyber, space), Gray is not blindly in love with sea power. In this, he is also a realist, recognising like Mahan that sea power is *influence* and *leverage*, and never really a unitary instrument that stands alone and supreme. In fact, he establishes with great force of argument something similar for airpower.³⁸ Nations and navies do need to keep thinking about the not insignificant changes that sea power brings to warfare and warfare brings to sea power. Until the advent of airpower, the battle between the 'elephant and the whale'³⁹ resulted in two major interactions. The first was the limited ability of forts to use artillery to attack ships and similar limitations on ships to attack forts and coasts with their guns. The second was the leverage that sea power provided by being able to disrupt an adversary's or coalitions ability to trade using ships and to protect one's own. This was done in two ways, often complementary. One was through interdiction at sea where enemy's vessels could be captured or destroyed; and the second was through blockades of his harbours and coasts. The third use of sea power was for expeditionary warfare, that is, landing troops on an enemy, one's own or neutral shore to take the battle to land. The fourth was what airpower enabled sea power to do, or to be impacted by shore-based air power.

The foregoing is what essentially Corbett had to say about the roles of a 'fleet'. Nonetheless, some things are changing. Discussed next are a few salient features of these changes that neither nations nor their armed forces should ignore:

1. Maritime domain awareness (MDA) has always been important for navies. What is changing in terms of building maritime operational pictures is the impact of space and cyber domains. Domain awareness over the oceans has to be built for one's own purposes and efforts have to be made to increase the challenges to the enemy building his picture on us. China's capacity to have persistent intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) over desired parts of the Earth's surface, and thereafter globally, will soon match that of the US. In about two decades, it could exceed American capabilities.⁴⁰ Several challenges for Indian MDA, when compared with Chinese progress in space-based would need to be addressed.⁴¹ Bommakanti observes that India's space programme needs to be more militarised; the IN itself should look into leveraging benefits from being a player in the SCS for which greater reliance on space-based MDA is inescapable. In fact, as an overall part of MDA, the IN would need to give much attention to what is called underwater domain awareness, or UDA.⁴²
2. In a more fundamental way, instruments that are based and controlled from land shall play pivotal roles in striking targets at sea, whether on the surface or in the air. The advent of airpower impacted on both aspects of maritime warfare. It enabled aircraft carriers to play key roles in power projection as well as in causing attrition to enemy's ships, submarines and aircraft. Correspondingly, land-based airpower provided one's own navy effective tools in fighting the other side's sea power. This has remained a factor, but shifts are afoot.
3. With better, accurate and persistent MDA, armed forces—and not merely navies—of the US and China, and to a great extent Russia, would be able to target surface threats from longer ranges, at greater speeds and with increasing accuracy. The range of weapons that, at the tactical level, fulfil the task of 'putting ordnance on target' would include ballistic and long-range medium-mach and subsonic cruise missiles as well as hypersonic glide weapons. Thus, whether navies feel comfortable with these dynamics or not, it is likely that the sea and ocean swathes over which land-based ordnance will pose credible threats to surface ships will only grow larger.

4. In the same breath, one could also say that the ranges and accuracies of other types of ordnance, like air-to-ground, air-to-air as well as air-to-ground/surface missiles, would increase rather significantly. This would, *inter alia*, have primary impact on manned strike aircraft. The stealth, speed and manoeuvring characteristics of 4.5 and fifth-generation fighters shall matter less and sixth-generation fighters would profitably be unmanned, rather than manned.⁴³
5. The other change which will provide significant offensive and perhaps defensive capability against high-speed ordnance would be directed-energy weapons. These could operate in concert with sensors operating in space.
6. In a larger sense, the IN would need to look for areas where it could create comparative advantages for itself vis-à-vis China, while allowing for a strong possibility of two-front warfighting. Rather than matching platform for platform, it could think more about the sensor and weapon fusion transformation that may help it stay on top of the game. As said elsewhere, the IN should concentrate on future readiness, instead of endeavouring to be 'past-perfect' based on conformist thinking.⁴⁴ While doing this, it is necessary to use legacy hardware and weapons as effectively as possible; to look for areas where the term 'game changer' is actually applicable and does not effectively mean the ability to merely play the existing game a little better.⁴⁵ In so doing, it would be prudent to remember that sailors, aviators, platforms, sensors and weapons have always needed to fight in operational environments and tactical conditions of the war at hand and not those we may have hoped for. Navies would need to imagine change, cope with it, and try to change the game as much as they can.

Thinking of Sea Control, Sea Denial and Power Projection

The fundamental principles of naval wartime conditions of sea control and sea denial have not really changed. Sea control has always been required in time and space to enable further naval operations for fleets to influence and leverage other operations or for one's own commerce to ply through contested waters. Sea control is necessary, therefore, when that nation needs to use the sea for operations, commerce and even to maintain data connectivity through underwater cables, for instance (their

significance is better appreciated these days). Sea denial is a condition to be imposed in areas where the sea is not required in terms of time and space for a nation's use, but to deny the enemy from using it for his operations, trade, etc. Sea denial is inherent in sea control, but not the other way around.

While the conditions seem simple enough to differentiate, the picture is rather complex for India and China (and with Pakistan, to boot). Through much of the IOR and in the South and East China Seas, the *use of the sea* is important for both India and China, albeit to different degrees. The IN may not yet find it easy to operate in these waters close to China due to naval power differentials that could obtain there in combat. Yet, a sizeable proportion of our commerce flows through it. The IN needs sea control there, but may not be able to establish it. In future, we should try and do so with the fleet architecture and the support of places/bases and friends or allies.

Likewise, China needs to use the entire swathe of international shipping lanes from its own coast to West Asia, and beyond into the Mediterranean, and around Africa into the Atlantic, keeping its energy and commodities inflows going and its exports flowing out. In conflict with India or with some other major nation, it will want to exercise sea control. The IN and People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), along with their respective national resources that include other services (such as the air force in our context), would jostle for sea control. Along the Makran coast, where we may not need to use the sea necessarily, sea denial as a condition would have to be strived for. Likewise, along our coasts, PLAN, the PN, and perhaps some other allies of theirs in future would need to deny India the use of the seas. Given all this, India and her friends can be sure that China has 'Come to Stay, Play and Have a Say in the IOR'.⁴⁶ The complicated canvas of competing sea control and sea denial areas in time and space all along the Western Pacific and in the IOR in a China–India or China–Pakistan versus India conflict would be somewhat akin to the Mediterranean theatre in World War II.

Like in the Mediterranean, sea control would also be required in the case of power projection. It focuses on land and 'its goal is projection of naval force from the sea onto land. It is (also) a wartime mission. Execution of the power projection mission rests in strike warfare, amphibious warfare, and strategic nuclear strike.'⁴⁷ Strike warfare as envisaged by the US Navy is mainly attacks onto land by aircraft of the carrier vessel battle groups (CVBG), from ships and submarines firing

salvos of land attack missiles, and even shore-based airpower and missile power. Almost all of the US Navy's power projection after World War II has been in conditions wherein navy platforms operating off an adversary's coast were themselves under insignificant threat. With a near-peer/peer/peer-plus adversary, power projection becomes more challenging and requires us to think of more survivable and effective options.

(Re)Thinking on Instruments of Sea Control/Denial

On a wider canvas of naval operations in combat, sea control and sea denial feed into each other. It may perhaps be of benefit to consider naval missions as impacting on counter force (CF) and counter value (CV).⁴⁸ The former targets the enemy's forces, which may not necessarily be just naval forces but include land-based fighting capabilities. CF causes attrition of the enemy, often via superior manoeuvre, and the two should not be thought of as anything but interrelated. CV targets the enemy's trade and non-military targets of value (industrial production, some infrastructure, even cities). In a sense, early and effective CF successes will assist that side in higher effectiveness in CV missions because they would be less protected by the enemy; and because that side can then do more CV tasks and defend one's own trade and valuable places, among others.

What about instruments for sea control and sea denial? The IN would need to overcome its conformist thinking about the distinct instruments that are required for sea control and denial.⁴⁹ Depending on the need, a CVBG would be very useful for sea denial. Likewise, given that submarines are networked, able to obtain MDA inputs, have very long-range missiles against ships and land targets, longer-range torpedoes that benefit from external inputs, better endurance and submerged time (in the next generation conventional boats), they are certainly able to significantly help achieve sea control and to project power. Yes, nuclear submarines are better at it, but conventional boats used boldly and imaginatively are also good for multiple missions. While on the subject of submarines, I would like to say that for the protection of our sea-based nuclear deterrent, there is a need to monitor the submarines of other navies, which could be the platforms of offensive choice for some of them; and this will require multi-domain investments, resources and technological upgrades.

Places and Bases

A continuing refrain from history seems to echo that navies have much to benefit at least from places, if not bases. Even places help navies wait to deploy, or to return to for necessary replenishment of fuel and stores and return to an area of operations. Bases would normally have more facilities for operational turn around, repairs and replacement ammunition, etc. China and its navy have clearly recognised this and their efforts in the IOR—Djibouti being a recent example—bear testimony to the need.⁵⁰ Great powers need their instruments of sea power to have access to places and/or bases. This requires all the DIME influence and leverage in peacetime to hopefully help in upholding deterrence, or give some operational and tactical advantages such as may be possible within the ambit of international law, the degree of friendship, and mutual interests.

Indigenisation

Great powers do not become great by remaining ‘most-valued customers’ of military hardware and technology. This point does not need much elaboration but just reiteration. Future sea power will increasingly be deployed using unmanned vehicles, space-based assets, artificial intelligence, harnessing of big data, quantum sciences, and so on. Continued transformation of Indian sea power and of armed forces ought to shift from the current acquisition programme or wish list from being talked about as a ‘game changer’. Instead, to use John Boyd’s sage words, what is needed is a relentless focus on ‘people, ideas, things, in that order’.⁵¹ In all three, indigenous efforts matter immensely.

More Jointness and Multi-domain Cohesion of Force

True jointness in force structuring and warfighting are unquestionably important. It seems increasingly evident that China’s potential for effectiveness of its sea power is determined by the jointness of its military instruments and the enhancement of capabilities in multiple domains. It may be true and understandable that they too have turf sensitivities and differences while trying to ensure outcomes. This, however, gives India little cause for comfort. India’s geography, continental/territorial issues with China and Pakistan, essence as a maritime nation, leverages of islands, well-disposed associates in the expanse of the Indo-Pacific and the strength of our democracy, all have to be leveraged in the maritime domain. Besides, there can be no maritime conflict as such; conflicts between nations are necessarily multi-domain even when one domain

may predominate in time and space. The maritime domain for India is vital—as it is for several others—because major powers need the sea to protect and further their ‘multi-domain’ interests. Building those leverages and expanding Indian influence can but benefit from joint sinews. Rear Admiral Raja Menon’s words in 1998, a year before Kargil, may be worth recounting: ‘War on land has its own dynamics and so does war at sea. If the progress of the war at sea is out-of-phase with the land war, the ability to influence that land war diminishes.’⁵²

CONCLUSION

The Kargil War that occurred two decades ago did demonstrate the leverage a navy can provide with well-planned and robust readiness and deployments. Yet, it must be kept in mind that the environment of naval ‘presence’ can be considerably different once there is a transition to conflict and the ‘shooting’ starts. In war, the naval conditions of sea control or sea denial depend on whether one side needs to use the sea for its own purposes or attempts to deny the enemy from using it for his in the given time and space. Thus, as has been explained earlier, sea control or sea denial are not really dependent on simplistic considerations of which type of instruments are for sea control and which for sea denial.

With improving and ever more pervasive as well as persistent maritime domain awareness of major nations, certain shifts are taking place. Among these are the influence and effectiveness of land-based instruments on warfare at sea. Likewise, the ability to project naval power on the hinterland at greater ranges and with increased accuracy and lethality will change. For India, these changes now are a clarion call for greater jointness in maritime warfare by bringing to bear multiple instruments of all the five important domains of warfare, namely, maritime, land, air, cyber, and space

In the last 20 years, the world has seen the unprecedented growth of China. This growth has made it a very significant, pro-active and powerful player in the Indo-Pacific and even beyond across the spectrum of ‘DIME’. It has created dividends for China, of course, but also gained it new influence in several capitals. Certainly, there is at the same time a sense of spreading unease globally about China. The OBOR grand-strategic initiative may need to be increasingly underwritten by Chinese military power. Among other things, the need for places and bases would only increase, and not diminish in the future.

For India, in addition to greater military jointness, the other three DIME instruments of national strategy—the very essence of statecraft—would need to secure friends and influence across the Indo-Pacific. As in China's case, this would include the ability to use places and bases for mutual security and for deterrence. Indian hard power, determined by this four-stranded DIME rope, will need to be central to India's own rise as a major power with global interests and aspirations with friends or allies around the world. To achieve this, Indian sea power that is dynamic, future-ready, joint and multi-domain would be vital to deterrence. It would need to be future-ready to fight until victory if deterrence fails, to catalyse collective security in the IOR, and participate further into the global commons of not only the oceans and seas, but space and cyber-space. Admiral Herbert Richmond's words sufficiently capture the essence of sea power's leverage and influence: 'Sea power did not win the war (World War II) itself; it enabled the war to be won.'⁵³

Finally, as India's 1.3 billion citizens aspire to peace and prosperity with a greater pride and place in this world, it is likely that they may quietly echo Captain Vikram Batra's immortal declaration, 'Yeh Dil Maangey More!' Having marked 20 years of this simple and yet somehow profound declaration, one thinks that Indian sea power would be a critical instrument to keep the peace and ensure prosperity.

NOTES

1. K.M. Panikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance: A Survey of the Vasco da Gama Epoch of Asian History, 1498–1945*, Kuala Lumpur: Other Press, 1993, p.12. The book, originally published in 1953, is less well known than Panikkar's *India and the Indian Ocean: An Essay on the Influence of Sea Power on Indian History*, Allahabad: George Allen & Unwin, 1947.
2. Colin S. Gray, *The Leverage of Sea Power: The Strategic Advantage of Navies in War*, Toronto: Free Press, 1992, p. 1.
3. Panikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance*, n. 1.
4. Panikkar, *India and the Indian Ocean*, n. 1. The book examines, in Mahanian style, the importance and influence of sea power, while recognising that it is neither the sole nor necessarily always the most important arbiter of greatness. Statecraft and strategy have been too complex to justify over-interpretation of any single military instrument over another, except sometimes in an episodic context.
5. In the two-three day campaign to free Goa, India had created significant asymmetric advantages for itself in ways similar in principle to what was

ensured all around East Pakistan in December 1971. At sea, the Indian Navy had also deployed in strength since many minor incidents instigated by the Portuguese involving fishing vessels as well as preventing what we now call 'freedom of navigation' necessitated establishing 'influence'. During Operation VIJAY, the IN deployed the newly inducted *INS Vikrant* for distant support and to interdict any Portuguese naval ships either making a run from Goa or as reinforcements. Relatively small landing parties captured Anjadiv Island off the southern limits of Goa. (Today, the island is part of the large naval base at Karwar.)

6. Satyindra Singh, *Blueprint to Bluewater: Indian Navy 1951–1965*, New Delhi: Lancer Publishers, 1991.
7. James Goldrick, *No Easy Answers: The Development of the Navies of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka 1945–1996*, New Delhi, London and Hartford: Spantech and Lancer Publishers, 1997, p. 29.
8. Singh, *Blueprint to Bluewater*, n. 6.
9. G.M. Hiranandani, *The Indian Navy: Transition to Eminence 1976–1990*, New Delhi, Lancer International, 2005, p. 12. The book makes several references to these operations elsewhere in the book.
10. Ankit Panda, 'When India Almost intervened in Mauritius, *The Diplomat*', 22 April, 2015, available at <https://thediplomat.com/2015/08/when-india-almost-intervened-in-mauritius/> accessed on 17 July, 2019.
11. Gray, *The Leverage of Sea Power*, n. 2.
12. The phrase, "Higher than the mountains, deeper than the seas" has often been used by Pakistani and Chinese leaders to describe their friendship. The phrase was perhaps first used in 2010, but might have been used earlier.
13. Willis Abbot, *The Naval History of the United States*, New York: Collier, 1890, p. 82. In a letter to de Chaumont written in November 1778 during the American War of Independence, a famous United States (US) sailor, Captain John Paul Jones, wrote, 'I wish to have no connection with any ship that does not sail fast; for I intend to go in harm's way.'
14. G.M. Hiranandani, *Transition to Guardianship: Indian Navy 1991–1999*, New Delhi: Lancer, 2009. Chapter 9 of this book (pp. 63–71) covers the Kargil conflict.
15. Ashok Mehta, 'The Silent Sentinel', *Rediff.com*, 5 August 1999, available at <https://www.rediff.com/news/1999/aug/05ashok.htm>, accessed on 15 May 2019. This article explains the way in which the IN's fleets were deployed and how some aviation assets were imaginatively used for surveillance purposes along the land borders.
16. It is not surprising that the subtitle of Gray's book, *The Leverage of Sea Power: The Strategic Advantage of Navies in War*, n. 2, is easy to miss.

However, students and executors of statecraft and warfare must remain conscious of the big transitions from peace to outbreak of war as well as the deterrent value of navies on the minds of enemies.

17. There are several indicators about Pakistan's serious concerns about the impact that the IN could have had should the war have escalated. See 'On the Brink', *The Telegraph*, 24 April 2013, available at <https://www.telegraphindia.com/7-days/on-the-brink/cid/1535942>, accessed on 15 May 2019. Also, see Hiranandani, *Transition to Guardianship*, n. 9, p. 67.
18. Julian S. Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, London: Dodo Press, 2009, pp. 228–29. The three functions of the fleet are reproduced from the 'Green Pamphlet' that he wrote for the War Course in 1911 to accompany his book and is included as an appendix in this edition.
19. Integrated Headquarters, Ministry of Defence (Navy), *Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy*, IN's Naval Strategic Publication (NSP) 1.2, New Delhi: Directorate of Strategy, Concepts and Transformation, 2015.
20. The quoted words are from *The Admiralty Manual of Seamanship*, Vol. I, BR 67(1), Bristol: HMSO, 1979, p. 116.
21. A.T. Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History: 1660–1783*, New York: Dover, 1987, p. 1. Throughout Mahan's and Corbett's works on seapower, the implied DIME constituents, not surprisingly, appear and reappear, though the term was certainly not in vogue then.
22. Geoffrey Till, *Seapower: A Guide for the Twenty-first Century*, London: Frank Cass, 2004, p. 3, Figure 1.2.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
24. Sudarshan Shrikhande, 'Make in Japan to Made in Japan: Indigenisation Lessons from the Imperial Japanese Navy 1880–1941', Occasional Paper, New Delhi: Vivekananda International Foundation, August 2016, available at <https://www.vifindia.org/sites/default/files/make-in-japan-to-made-in-japan-indigenisation-lessons-from-the-imperial-japanese-navy-1880-1941.pdf>, accessed on 19 May 2019.
25. 'Maritime India Summit 2016—A Round Up', Press Release, Ministry of Shipping, Government of India, 15 April 2016, available at http://sagarmala.gov.in/sites/default/files/Maritime-India-Summit-2016%20%E2%80%93A%20Round_Up.pdf, accessed on 16 May 2019.
26. Shrikhande, 'Make in Japan to Made in Japan', n. 24, pp. 9–10.
27. Press release, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 12 March 2015, available at https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/24912/Prime_Ministers_Remarks_at_the_Commissioning_of_Offshore_Patrol_Vessel_OPV_Barracuda_in, accessed on 16 May 2019.

28. G. Padmaja, 'Revisiting "SAGAR"—India's Template for Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region', NMF, New Delhi, 26 April 2018, available at <http://maritimeindia.org/View%20Profile/636602941847320911.pdf>, accessed on 17 May 2019.
29. 'Report on Government Imperatives Including Financing Plan', Ministry of Shipping, Government of India, June 2016, available at <http://www.sagarmala.gov.in/sites/default/files/7298227416DraftReportonImperativesSagarmala.pdf>, accessed on 17 May 2019.
30. This has also been highlighted by the author elsewhere. See Sudarshan Shrikhande, 'Making India's Sea Power Formidable and Future-Ready', ORF Occasional Paper No. 152, New Delhi, April 2017, pp. 20–21.
31. Gurmeet Kanwal, 'Fighting a Two-front War', *Deccan Herald*, 18 January 2018, available at <https://www.deccanherald.com/content/654645/fighting-two-front-war.html>, accessed on 20 May 2018. However, in another article with an essentially similar text, Kanwal does revise the extent of indirect help China extended Pakistan in previous Indo-Pak wars. See Gurmeet Kanwal, 'A Very Tight Spot: India Faces a Huge Security Challenge with the Possibility of a Two-front Conflict', *Daily O*, 25 May 2019, available at <https://www.dailyo.in/politics/india-s-security-threat-india-pakistan-india-china-china-pakistan-cpec-kashmir-masood-azhar-jihadis/story/1/30888.html>, accessed on 29 May 2019.
32. Andrew Small, *The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.
33. *Ibid.* The first chapter of the book titled 'A Friendship Forged by War', features a good discussion of Chinese hesitation, and unpreparedness, to help Pakistan in 1971, but sending mixed messages through Americans that they might. They did think of intervening but by that time the outcome for Dacca was already quite clear. In 1965, Beijing's diplomatic and moral support was considerable. Its support increased diplomatic pressure on India towards a ceasefire that was more acceptable to Pakistan. It created noise about Indian intrusions along the Chinese border, when, in fact, there were none. Small concludes that the biggest contribution made by China to Pakistan as the result of the 1965 and 1971 wars was the nuclear deterrent.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
35. This aspect of partnerships has been examined in Sudarshan Shrikhande, 'From Zheng He to "Gung ho": Implications and Responses to China's IOR Strategies', in P.K. Singh, B.K. Sharma and Roshan Khanijo (eds), *Strategic Year Book 2019*, New Delhi: Vij Books, 2019, pp. 85–86, 88.
36. Harsh Pant, 'A Quiet but Decisive Shift in India's Foreign Policy', *Livemint*, 28 January 2019, available at <https://www.livemint.com/>

- opinion/columns/opinion-a-quiet-but-decisive-shift-in-india-s-foreign-policy-1548695556487.html, accessed on 30 January 2019.
37. Gray, *The Leverage of Sea Power*, n. 2, p. 4.
 38. Colin S. Gray, 'Understanding Airpower: Bonfire of the Fallacies', *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Winter 2008, pp. 43–83.
 39. This analogy became popular in Napoleonic wars to distinguish between Britain's dominance at sea and France's land power.
 40. 'Challenges to Security in Space', *Defense Intelligence Agency Report*, January 2019, pp.18–21, available at http://www.andrewerickson.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/DIA_Space-Security-Challenges_201901.pdf, accessed on 22 May 2019.
 41. Kartik Bommakanti, 'India and China's Space and Naval Capabilities: A Comparative Analysis', ORF Occasional Paper No. 160, July 2018, available at https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ORF_OccasionalPaper_160_India-China-Naval.pdf, accessed on 22 May 2019.
 42. Sudarshan Shrikhande, 'A Framework for the Next Fifty Years of the Indian Navy's Submarine Arm', *Bharat Shakti*, 12 January 2018, available at <https://bharatshakti.in/a-framework-for-the-next-50-years-of-the-indian-navys-submarine-arm/>, accessed on 23 May 2019.
 43. Based on my own study as well as discussions with an experimental test pilot.
 44. Shrikhande, 'Making India's Sea Power Formidable and Future-Ready', n. 30.
 45. Sudarshan Shrikhande, 'Transformational Challenges Intrinsic to Armed Forces', *Transformation of Armed Forces: Strategic Contours to Shape the Emerging World Order*, 27-28 Nov 2018, Secunderabad: College of Defence Management, pp. 56–63.
 46. See Shrikhande, 'From Zheng He to "Gung ho"', n. 35, p. 84.
 47. John L. Byron, 'It's War with Anastasia', *USNI Proceedings*, February 1992, pp. 51–55.
 48. Shrikhande, 'Making India's Sea Power Formidable and Future-Ready', n. 30, pp. 15–17.
 49. Shaurya Gurung, 'Navy Looking at Inducting 56 Warships and Submarines', *The Economic Times*, 3 December 2018, available at <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/navy-looking-at-inducting-56-warships-and-submarines-admiral-lanba/articleshow/66917971.cms?from=mdr>, accessed on 24 May 2019.
 50. The Chinese have built a logistics base in Djibouti that includes warehousing for stores, spares and perhaps facilities for maintenance and

turn-around of assets. Gwadar, in Pakistan could be very likely to be used as a naval base in case the strategic environment for china and the operational flexibility to be derived from it is felt necessary by Beijing. In time, China could have more such bases/places.

51. Shrikhande, 'Transformational Challenges Intrinsic to Armed Forces', n. 45.
52. Raja Menon, *Maritime Strategy and Continental Wars*, London and Portland: Frank Cass, 1998, p. 65.
53. Herbert Richmond, *Statesmen and Sea Power* (1946), quoted in Gray, *The Leverage of Sea Power*, n. 2, p. 278.

