

# Indian Navy's missile threat

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India's navy and its unprecedented expansion during the past few years, has been a cause of grave concern among neighbouring countries, especially Pakistan. Commenting on its vast expansion, S. Nooruddin Safiee of Malaysia's Institute of Strategic and International Studies, remarks that India's naval capability, especially in missile development field, has "expanded beyond which is considered adequate to maintain a local or regional presence." There is no gainsaying the fact that it is in naval power that India has made the most significant advances, developing a blue-water fleet that is capable of considerable offensive and defensive operations throughout the Indian Ocean.

According to India's Defence Year Book 2003, the blue water Indian Navy has embarked on an ambitious submarine production plan. Besides this it is giving priority to procurement of aircraft carriers. It has acquired five new ships which include two frigates from Russia, one missile corvette each from Goa and Mumbai's shipyard, while the fifth missile boat has been manufactured at Garden Reach Workshop at Kolkata. It is a matter of serious concern for Pakistan that the task

of nuclear weaponisation of the Indian Navy can be accomplished at short notice by Klub missiles which are nuclear capable and have already been inducted into the Indian Navy. India had purchased the 300 Km range missiles from Russia in 2001 and these missiles have the provision for carrying nuclear warheads.

Further, we learn from "India's Defence Year Book, 2003, that on 12 June 2001, and in April 2002, the India-Russia joint venture - Brah-Mos (stands for Brahmanputra - Mosk Va), Co. had successfully test fired a supersonic ASM code named PJ-10. This device can strike warships 300 Km away in 300 seconds with a 200 Kg warhead. Further, we learn from the same source, that Indian Navy is now formulating plans to introduce the Brah-Mos into service by 2004. The ramjet powered Brah-Mos draws extensively on technology from the 3 M55 Oniks-Yakhont ASM. Serial production will be split 50:50 between the Russian and Indian industries. Total production capability will be upto 200 missiles.

According to a report in Navy International (11 April 2001), DRDO is developing a 300-Km submarine-launched ballistic missile, Sagarika, based on the Prithvi. The programme is reported to have started in 1992 and was reported to involve adopting a ramjet engine to the missile to reduce the need for heavy oxidizers. Again, India is developing the Dhanush submarine launched ballistic missile. It is a medium-range indigenously ship-launched missile exclusively developed for the Indian Navy. The Dhanush project is sometimes considered the Naval version of Prithvi.

The Indian Navy is also seeking another variant of the Dhanush surface-to-surface ballistic missile that is

capable of striking land targets with a range of 500 Km. The longer range missile will have propulsion fuel similar to its short range version. In his well-researched paper published in IPRI, Islamabad, Dr. Abdul Majid endorses the generally held view that the Indian missile developments are the most advanced in South Asia. So far, it has produced two short and medium range ballistic missiles.

The short-range Prithvi that comes in 150 Km and 250 Km models and the medium range Agni, a two stage solid and liquid fuelled missile with a range of 2500 Km; Prithvi has undergone at least a dozen flight tests in a highly successful development programme.

Incidentally, it is being deployed by the Indian Army against Pakistan. So far as Agni's capability is concerned, it is believed that it can cover all Pakistan and reach deep into China, with twice the throw weight needed to carry a nuclear weapon. India is also developing a series of space launch vehicles that can easily be converted into inter-continental ballistic missiles. India sees nuclear weapons a source of power and has made a decision to maintain nuclear weapons and to develop ballistic missiles of various ranges to deliver them.



It is India's long-cherished wish to assert as a dominating power in the region - hence development and testing of its nuclear device in '74. Since then, it has been consistently pursuing a plan to develop an indigenous capability to produce nuclear weapons systems complete with de-

livery system based on ballistic missiles deployed from land, air and sea.

India's missile development programme is well-supported and augmented by its space programme, which has already demonstrated its satellite launch capabilities into polar orbits. (PSLV) and for geo-synchronous orbit (GSLV). These launch vehicles could be easily converted to deliver nuclear warheads to about 14000 Km. These systems play a very important role in the command and control of nuclear ballistic missile system.

Here, E.A.S. Bokhari, correctly points out the successfully launching of Brah Mos is a matter of serious concern for Pakistan, as Pakistan does not seem to have a missile of comparable accuracy and potential. Pakistan can perhaps muster some old French Exocets and Harpoons (and possibly an unnamed Chinese missile) for anti-ship engagement. However, there lies a very great asymmetry. In the missile race, India is surely more active than Pakistan. India clearly wants to be recognized as a great power and strategic competitor with China. India's craze to assert itself as a dominant power in the region, has put Pakistan in a very difficult position with regard to its security. So, Pakistan on its part, must highlight extravagant designs of India and call upon all peace-loving nations to exercise their influence on India and stop it from following this reckless race of adventurism.