Short Note on Offensive Doctrine

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DESCRIPTION

Ground forces controls Indian military strategy. Since its independence, India has fought five wars along its unsettled the northern land borders and its most difficult security threats today as demonstrated by the ongoing Chinese incursions in the northern region of Ladakh still appear across those same borders. The Indian Army commands the clear and growing majority of military budget allocations and an even larger share of the military personnel.

Indian defense policy more generally is ruled by an orthodox offensive doctrine. This is an approach to the use of the force that centers on the large army formations, operating the relatively autonomously from political direction, seeking to impose a punitive cost on the enemy. The punitive cost often takes the form of capturing the enemy territory as a bargaining chip, even though India usually pursues strategically defensive war aims to maintain the territorial status quo.

This paper progresses four analytic propositions before concluding with the recommendations for the Indian Army. First, the orthodox offensive doctrine has remained at the center of the Indian military's wartime experience, organization, and doctrine. It well-defines India's strategy during the wars against Pakistan in 1965, 1971, and 1999, and has shaped Indian crisis behavior since. Doctrinal innovations beside the way, such as the Cold Start doctrine, have sought to optimize rather than rethink the orthodox offensive doctrine.

Second, India's strategic environment has vitally changed since it fought its last war in 1999. Nuclear deterrence between India and its opponents, Pakistan and China, has reduced the likelihood of major war but simultaneously increased the prominence of military coercion below the threshold of war. The extraordinary transformation of the China's military threatens India, not only on their land border, but also in new locales like the Indian Ocean and new domains like space and cyberspace. Advanced military technologies are altering the character of contemporary conflict and levying new demands on the military's organization, training, and doctrine. Third, the Indian military has failed to keep the pace with these strategic changes. Even though it carries powerful incentives for the reform, its mechanisms to drive and to implement the changes are problematic. India wants a periodic strategic review process, the military services are resistant to the change, and the civilian leadership has rarely exercised the will to implement the reforms. The new chief of defense Staff location has already begun to reshape civil-military relations and should propel other organizational reforms but there is no evidence so far of the Indian Army rethinking its orthodox offensive doctrine.

Fourth, the stubborn authority of this doctrine renders the Indian military a less worth tool of national policy. The orthodox offensive doctrine is problematic because, as it gives powerful adversaries, the Indian Army probably cannot take hold of significant tracts of land or inflict a decisive defeat on enemy forces. This means the India's cost-imposition strategies are unlikely to deter its rivals from the continued sub conventional provocations. At the same period, India's punitive strategies have had the accidental effect of motivating its rivals to pursue more disrupting and provocative strategies of their own, including Pakistan's tactical nuclear weapons and China's fait accompli land grabs, the doctrine takes an opportunity cost, reducing India's force projection and deterrence capabilities in the Indian Ocean region. The Indian military will continue to lack the resources required for the long-overdue modernization as long as the army continues to emphasize its orthodox offensive doctrine.

The governance of the orthodox offensive doctrine has distorted Indian military strategy, skewing it to fight the large conventional wars and leaving it ill equipped to manage the likely scenarios short of war. In several crises in the recent decades. To relocate the Indian military strategy, with more practical military options, this paper offers three recommendations for the Indian Army, which are mostly designed to require the relatively modest additional resources and to generate the minimal resistance among other services.