

## ***Military Diplomacy and Regional Policies of Maritime country of India***

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Received: 14 July 2023    Accepted: 12 September 2023    Published: 26 December 2023

### **Abstract**

Military diplomacy, as the art of diplomatic interactions and military cooperation, has now become one of the main options of foreign policy in advancing India's macro strategies, especially in the regional arena. Maritime country of India is the fourth military power in the world and has one of the most powerful naval forces, which provides numerous capacities for exporting products, providing services and military technical support for this country. The use of military diplomacy is primarily due to the legacy of this country's old doctrines of non-violence, which seems to have been strengthened by the post-colonial atmosphere experienced in the 20th century and the support of third world countries. The next reason is China's active diplomacy as a serious and strategic competitor in South Asian countries, which has also led to the growth of the neighborhood policy in India. On the other hand, the countries surrounding India - with the exception of Pakistan - are often small powers that can be influenced by this country's influence due to some cultural commonalities and the need for India to provide security, defense, technical things, etc. The main question of the research is that, according to India's peaceful approach in the international arena, "What effect has the use of military diplomacy by India had on the regional policies of this country?" The main hypothesis of the research, which is based on the study of library and electronic documents such as articles, books, defense reports, statistical databases and descriptive-analytical methods, indicates that The use of military diplomacy has led to the increase of soft power, reduction of tension and crisis, profitability, credibility and increase of its regional presence.

**Keywords:** Military diplomacy, India, Neighborhood Policies, Regional Influence, De-escalation

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## **Introduction**

Diplomacy, as the art of achieving foreign policy goals and objectives, is a way other than violence and conflict, which has gone beyond the political mode and only limited to the field of foreign affairs, which was customary in the past and in the course of history, it has included various fields such as economy, sports, culture, science and military affairs. Military diplomacy consists of peaceful cooperation and diplomatic interactions between military units, which, as one of the important tools of foreign policy, helps to countries active in this field in advancing their interests. Meanwhile, in recent years, India has gained a place worthy of attention as an emerging power with a growing economy and is trying to be one of the main players in the new international order in the multipolar world. At the same time, this country has a special look at its peripheral regions, neighboring regions in Southeast Asia, West Asia and East Africa, and strengthening its influence and presence in these regions. Therefore, India tries to facilitate the conditions for deepening influence and extending its presence through active interactions, such as concluding and following up agreements and treaties and initiatives in the form of establishing regional institutions and organizations.

India is facing several challenges to realize this vision. The first problem is the competition with China and its seemingly unstoppable speed in the comprehensive development of technological, infrastructural, economic, and military fields. China is active in almost all areas where India has interests, from interaction with South Asian countries to presence in Central Asia, Indian Ocean, West Asia and Africa. However, the history of this country, at least since the post-colonial period, indicates that this country rarely uses force and threats to deal with the challenges and solve the problems ahead. Based on historical studies and geopolitical realities, India believes in non-violence rooted in its ancient culture. This country prefers the peaceful settlement of disputes and does not show much desire to use force. Instead, it tries to increase its influence and reduce the influence of its competitors by increasing cooperation, including military-security relations with neighbors and regional actors.

Considering India's macro approach in facing events peacefully and moving in the direction of regional cooperation, the main question of the research is "what effect has the use of military diplomacy by India had on the country's regional policies?" The main hypothesis of the research is that the increase in military interactions and cooperation with other countries causes benefits



through the protection of the economy and defense exports, increasing the power of the military, reducing tension and crisis management through clarifying intentions and building trust, turning its name into a reliable brand in providing various military services and creating various regional initiatives, including the Indian Ocean Symposium, as well as increasing regional influence and presence.

### **1. Conceptual Framework: Military Diplomacy**

The pace in the evolution of the content and function of the official world armed forces since the Cold War has been accompanied by the expansion of the role and definition of the various tasks of these forces. The most important reason for this issue is understanding the inadequacy of the army's field of action and merely directing military facilities during wartime and ignoring many other fields during peacetime where these huge capacities and resources can be used. In addition, limiting military power to achieve goals and objectives determined through war, conflict, or the like, draws an unpleasant image in the public mind.

Providing new tasks for the armed forces is theorized in the form of military diplomacy. Conceptually, military diplomacy is the peaceful use of a country's military resources to advance its foreign policy goals and uses (military) cooperation to change attitudes and build strategic relationships with foreign countries. (Jayant Singh, 2014: 2).

However, there is no consensus on military diplomacy. A group considers it synonymous with defense diplomacy. Because the armed forces operate under the Ministry of Defense of each country. But some consider defense diplomacy to be a broader concept than military diplomacy. The argument of this group of theorists is probably related to the fact that the concept of defense and the areas that must be protected are wider than they can be tracked and managed only by military forces. Therefore, military diplomacy is one of the branches of defense diplomacy. On the other hand, another group believes that due to the fact that the army, especially after the world wars, has entered a new and diverse phase of non-aggressive operations, which includes a wide range of educational, humanitarian, economic, civil, medical activities, using the concept of defense diplomacy is a limited and incomplete platform for this category of the armed forces actions, therefore, military diplomacy seems to be a more inclusive and appropriate concept.

In general, military diplomacy is a set of broad actions in peacetime. These activities include the Exchange of Military Attaché, Strategic Security Talks,

Visits by Military Delegations, Bilateral and Multilateral Exercises, Military Professional Exchanges, United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, Humanitarian Assistance/ Disaster Rescue Operations, Educating of Foreign military Officer, Export and Import of Weapons, Military Aid to friendly countries, Participation in International Arms Control and Disarmament programs, Anti-terrorism and Anti-piracy Operations, Sending Military Advisors, Non-aggressive Evacuation Operations and more.

## **2. India Military Diplomacy**

The use of military diplomacy by India in recent years has increased significantly along with the growth of this country's level of insight towards the undeniable impact of peaceful military activities in advancing political and economic goals, and looking at the significant progress of strategic competitors such as China in this field. However, a look at history reveals that India's military diplomatic activities have a long history. In fact, almost since independence (1947), India has employed military diplomacy in its foreign relations due to its inheritance of a large and professional military force from the British Raj, and its image as a post-colonial world leader (Jaishankar, 2016: 18). Even earlier, around 1890, roughly 40 percent of the political service was in the armed forces. These officers relatively skillfully managed the complex relationship between the fledgling British Raj and the more than 500 rajas and maharajas who ruled their often warring kingdoms in the subcontinent (Pattanaik, 2016: 72). In the First World War, nearly 1.2 million Indian soldiers served in the British Indian Army and after its end, about 9.5 thousand Indian soldiers served abroad, and 62,000 to 65,000 Indian soldiers were killed in that war. In World War II, the British Indian Army was involved in a wider geographical area. This operation was going on in fronts from Italy and North Africa to East Africa, West Asia and East Asia (Thomas, 2021: 48). Also, this country is one of the long-standing and committed participants in UN peacekeeping operations. So that since the 1950s it has become one of the biggest contributors to keeping international peace (Mohan, 2012: 4).

A look at India's military diplomatic activities shows that this country can pursue several goals through this way:

- By sending military attachés to other countries, India will be able to receive various information about the readiness level of combat forces and the latest achievements of their defense industry;





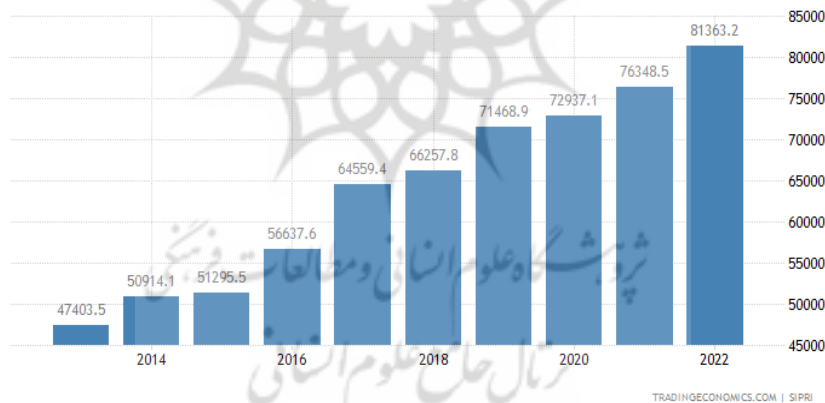
- By sending maritime patrols to the open waters, India ensure the security of the passage of its commercial ships and respond positively to the request for help from non-Indian ships that are in danger;
- India can provide economic growth and development through increasing the export of military products and earning money;
- Also, by importing advanced military equipment, India can modernize and improve the military capability of the country;
- India can create a positive image of itself as a reliable and responsible country in the minds of nations and governments by actively participating in humanitarian measures such as providing aid to countries affected by natural disasters and participating in UN peacekeeping operations; Also, one of the reasons for India's active participation in UN peacekeeping operations is its permanent membership in the Security Council, which has been pursuing this goal for a long time.
- And finally, by carrying out various missions such as sending military attaché, multilateral exercises, international humanitarian operations, Anti-piracy patrols in open waters, etc., India can expand domain of its activities outside the borders and the geography of its operations.

#### *4.1 Indian military structure*

The military policies of each country are based on the set of existing facilities and capabilities, the assessment of internal and external threats, and the military budget. Also, the political culture governing the society plays a significant role in the orientations towards the use of military power in a coercive or peaceful way. After enduring a century and a half of colonialism, India finally achieved independence through nonviolent struggle, and has philosophically committed to the nonviolence rooted in its heritage. Accordingly, India's foreign policy has basically been based on its unwillingness to show power and support military interventions. India prefers the peaceful resolution of disputes, it opposes the use of force as a tool of international relations, and actively supports international disarmament. India's normative political perspective has been to avoid joining military alliances, refuse of establishing military bases on its territory,

or send troops and military assets for participating in coalition operations overseas (Thomas, 2021: 54).

**Military budget.** India is the most populous country in the world and the sixth largest economy in the world. In addition to possessing nuclear weapons, India has one of the largest conventional [military] forces in the world, with a current defense budget of \$72 billion (Prakash, jstribune, March 2023). However, this figure is slightly different in some databases and is estimated up to 73.8 billion dollars, which makes it the third largest defense budget after the United States and China (Dewey & et.al, IISS, April 2023). A look at the statistics of the past years clearly indicates the annual growth of the country's military budget (except for 2023, when this figure was a decrease). In 2022, India's military expenditure was 81.4 billion dollars, which shows an increase of 6% compared to 2021 (SIPRI, April 2023) and has been taken the highest record figure of the last 66 years since 1956. Chart 1 shows the growing trend of India's military budget from 2013 to 2022 (Trending Economics, last updated on August 2023).



Also, according to the Globalfire Power website, which annually provides information on the top military powers at the global and regional level along with statistics such as the number of troops, the type and number of equipment, and the military budget, India ranks fourth among the top military powers in the world after the United States of America, Russia and China, (Globalfire Power, August 2023).

**National security strategy.** The national security strategy as the main road map of every country contains the identification of goals, interests, threats and strategies for all elements of governance and direction to general policies,



especially in the field of foreign and defense policies. As usual, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defense adjust their plans and strategic documents based on this upstream document. The important point in drawing the horizons of development and progress is to consider the geographical and cultural characteristics of each country, which makes that document different from other countries. In the case of India, the geographic location of the subcontinent and its location between the two Indian and Pacific oceans is one of the outstanding and influential features in the country's general policies. Also, the monitoring the areas of influence in the neighbourhood of the countries that were considered part of its territorial territory long ago, and finally the prospect of protection programs for the macro-economic and commercial plans and related infrastructures are among the things that should be considered in the security strategy of this country.

However, India as an emerging power, which strives to be an important and influential actor regionally and internationally, lacks a macro security strategy (see Mint, 2021; Menon, 2021, The Wire). In the past, actions were taken to write a national security strategy document, but it never led to success. For example, in 2007, the draft National Security Strategy document prepared by the Ministry of Defense was never formalized and approved (Pandit, 2018, The Times of India). However, in 2019, there was an attempt by the National Congress Party (one of India's largest political parties) to release a National Security Strategy document, also known as the Hooda Report, due to the drafting group led by General DS Hooda. (Joshi, 2019, the Quint). This report, along with some documents and articles that have been published about the vision of India's national security strategy, have well outlined India's security environment and the challenges and opportunities it faces.

A review of the joint doctrine of the Indian Armed Forces (2017) shows that the national security strategy of this country is defined around protection against any kind of internal and external threats/aggression and includes maintaining and strengthening India's democratic policy, development process, internal stability and unity in its the unique multiculturalism environment (Joint Doctorine Indian Armed Forces, 2017: 3-4). These general and fundamental principles are repeated again in the Hooda report (2019). His report states that to ensure a safe, stable and prosperous India, the national security goals can be defined as "Protecting India's national sovereignty, Securing the territorial integrity of India, Promoting India's rise

to its rightful place in international affairs, Ensuring a peaceful internal environment within India, Creating a climate for our citizens that is just, equitable, prosperous, and shields them from risks to life and livelihood." (Hooda, 2019: 1-2). Not only Hooda and his colleagues are not satisfied with the outline of general and comprehensive principles that are usually shared with the general strategy of other countries in drawing the general domestic and international security environment, but also present more details about the threat and conflict areas that have surrounded north to south and east to west of this country. It is important to raise these issues because the foreign policy of the India is under the shadow of these security challenges and has a direct impact on the establishment of regional and international relations with other political units, especially the countries that are located within these regions.

One of the obvious threats to India's interests, which is mentioned in the Hooda report and some other documents (Shankarnarayan, 2023, Raksha-anirveda & Campose, 2016: 22), is the country of China. China and India are currently recognized as the two emerging powers that have the highest population rates and high economic and trade growth. This issue, along with geographical proximity, border disputes and some political tensions, has created an atmosphere of serious competition between the two countries. In almost all areas where India has defined interests for itself, a strong footprint of China's presence can be seen. China is currently a strategic partner of Pakistan, which is considered a traditional enemy of India. This country is also the largest trading partner of Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar in South Asia, which is considered as India's backyard (Hooda, 2019: 10). On the other hand, India is trying to increase cooperation with the countries of this region, especially the members of the ASEAN, by using the existing tensions between China and Southeast Asian countries on maritime disputes and their fear of increasing the economic and military influence of China. See Hooda, 2019: 10-11). Also, India in recent years uses the tense relations between the United States and China to its advantage. In addition to the tariff war on the country's exports, the United States is trying to tighten the security rings around China in order to restrain China's economic growth. The "Indo-Pacific" strategy is one of America's actions with accompaniment India that aim to contain China in East and Southeast Asia (Hooda, 2019: 3).

Another threat in India's national security documents and research is Pakistan. Relations between India and Pakistan are at a low level, and since





the country's independence in 1947, there have been numerous cases of conflict between the two countries, which the main focus has been on the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir (see to Campose, 2016 : 22). In addition to traditional tensions, geopolitically, Pakistan blocks India's westward path, and India must find an alternative to bypass this restriction. In the meantime, Iran will play a key role due to its strategic location, which provides warm water ports for Central Asian countries, access to the West for Indian trade and entry into Afghanistan through Chabahar port (Hooda, 2019: 9).

India also pursues diverse interests in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. Sustainable supply of energy and trade can be one of the most important reasons for India's focus on this region, especially the relationship with regional great powers such as Iran, Saudi Arabia and the UAE (Hooda, 2019: 8). India also has a special eye on the operationalization of the North-South route initiative. This strategic route, the main part of which passes through Iran, is a shorter alternative to the Suez Canal to connect South Asia to the European continent. Another important issue is India's resources and institutions, along with the presence of Indian immigrants living in the Middle East and North Africa, which forms the axis of India's foreign security paradigm (Joint Doctrine Indian Armed Forces, 2017: 9). Therefore, the Indian Ocean has a special place in the India maritime strategy as the gateway to the Persian Gulf and West Asia. On the one hand, India considers itself responsible for providing maritime security to smaller countries in the Indian Ocean, And on the other hand, it has taken measures to strengthen cooperation and maritime security among the neighboring countries of the Indian Ocean and other stakeholders in the form of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), and the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) (Hooda, 2019: 14).

A summary of the above can be found in Hu and Wang's (2022) approach to India's national security strategy. According to them, "Based on the specific practices of successive governments since India became a republic, the national security strategy of India has, to a certain degree, demonstrated a general pattern. In other words, the Indian national security strategy has been unfolded and laid out in circles called "mandala." The pursuit and practice of each circle in terms of security strategy are distinctly emphasized and adapted to the conditions of the times.

The inner circle is India, and its security strategy focuses on enhancing

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strategic autonomy and maintaining the balance of power among major powers, which makes it "count for a great deal," according to founding Prime Minister Nehru, or the "world-leading force," which was pursued during the Modi era. The second circle mainly covers the South Asian subcontinent, especially India's South Asian neighbors. In this circle, India's security strategy focuses on building a monopolistic regional security order, wherein India holds the capacity to maintain and the power to veto the intervention of extraterritorial powers<sup>3</sup>, thereby eliminating or restraining any internal and external conspiracies to create a balance of power in South Asia. The third circle mainly refers to the Indian Ocean Rim region, which is called the "Extended Neighborhood."<sup>4</sup> Over the last 10 years, especially through the implementation of the Indo-Pacific strategy, India has extended this circle to the Western Pacific region. In this circle, New Delhi's security strategy focuses on building India's "net security provision capability"<sup>1</sup> to make it a key and even leading builder of regional security order. The fourth circle refers to the rest of the world. In this circle, India focuses on actively participating in international security cooperation and strives to play a role in terms of agenda setting and leading in the field of global security governance." (Hu and Wang, 2022: 119-120).

Beside drawing the security environment, it is very important to introduce the resources and strategies that will enable India to overcome the existing challenges and achieve the designed goals. In the meantime, the military force has been discussed as one of the main means of achieving goals and protecting achievements in the documents and researches of India's national security. For example, in the joint doctrine of the Indian Armed Forces, military tools are introduced as one of the foundations of national power, deterrence and conflict resolution in support of national security goals. Also, the use of both hard and soft aspects of the nature of military power has been considered. In a part of this document, it is stated that "Military instrument of National Power is employed by us, both as a means of deterrence and conflict resolution, in support of National Security goals... The ultimate purpose of our Military Instrument is to deter aggression and, when required, to fight and win our Nation's wars...however, our military has various capabilities and can be gainfully employed during non-conflict situations and natural disasters too." (Joint Doctrine Indian Armed Forces, 2017: 6). Also, in Hooda's report, military capability is mentioned as a vital component of national power in facing external threats and internal security challenges. "Military capability is a critical component of national power. While India



wants peace with her neighbours, we also cannot be oblivious to a revisionist and hostile Pakistan, the rising military power of China, and our own internal security challenges. We will only be assured of peace if we can visibly demonstrate our capability to defend our national interests through the use of force." (Hooda, 2019: 33).

**Structure of Indian Army.** The armed forces consist of three branches: Indian Army (IA), Indian Navy (IN) and Indian Air Force (IAF) (Joint Doctrine Indian Armed Forces, 2017: 18). The Indian Army became operational after the country's independence from British colonialism and is divided into six operational commands (field armies) and one training command (Indian Armed Forces, Knowindia.india.gov). Currently, India has one of the largest standing armies in the world, the fifth largest air force and the most powerful navy in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) (Thomas, 2021: 54-55). It is also considered one of the most powerful naval forces in the world. The Indian Navy has more than 120 ships, including submarines, destroyers, coastal ships and stealth frigates. It has also played an important role in the growth and development of the free and open Indo-Pacific region. In 2015, during his speech, Prime Minister Modi unveiled a doctrine aimed at strengthening India's commitment and presence in the Indian Ocean. And there was a belief that the navy would play an important role in providing security and protection (Tomar, Modern Diplomacy, January 2023).

#### *4.2. Components of Indian Military Diplomacy*

Creating a stable security environment first of all requires establishing good and peaceful relations with other countries of the world, especially the neighbors. This can be achieved through various means, including the military. In 2013, a meeting was held with presence a group of senior officials of the Indian Army and the National Security Council, whose agenda was how to advance India's interests in the neighborhood with an urgent and strategic view of the issue, through the effective use of the Indian Army. Officials decided to use military leverage to advance national interests; contribute to the national security environment by creating common trust among the armed forces; strengthen defense relations to enhance India's influence in the region; Create a presence that fits the strategic interests of India and the comfort level of the host country; Assist friendly countries in developing defense capabilities in line with India's security needs; and take advantage of India's presence in UN missions to promote national interests (Gokhale, The Diplomat, 2014). The operationalization of the proposed

decisions can be followed in the framework of the military diplomacy concept and its application by the Indian military.

The field of military diplomacy in India includes service chiefs' visits, service staff level conferences, joint training and exercises, participation in UN peacekeeping operations, port calls, training in service academies and training institutions, mapping by naval hydrographic ships, etc. (Singh, 2021: 109). Other actions can be added to these cases such as arms export and import, anti-piracy patrols, non-aggressive evacuation operations, disaster relief, and sending military personnel.

**Export and import of weapons.** According to the statistics of the Stockholm International Peace Research Center (SIPRI), India has been among the top ten importers of military weapons in the world in the last 5 years. This statistic also shows that during these years, India has been in the first or second place of imports after Saudi Arabia. In the latest published edition of the Sipri Year book (2023), the 5 major arms importers in the world between 2018 and 2022 are India with 11%, Saudi Arabia with 9.6%, Qatar with 6.4%, Australia with 4.7% and China with 4.6% are in the first to fifth categories. Table No. 1 shows this ranking well (SIPRI, 2023: 11).

Major arms exporters and importers 2018-2022			
Exporter	Global share (%)	Importer	Global share (%)
1 USA	40	1 India	11
2 Russia	16	2 Saudi Arabia	9.6
3 France	11	3 Qatar	6.4
4 China	5.2	4 Australia	4.7
5 Germany	4.2	5 China	4.6
6 Italy	3.8	6 Egypt	4.5
7 UK	3.2	7 South Korea	3.7
8 Spain	2.6	8 Pakistan	3.7
9 South Korea	2.4	9 Japan	3.5
10 Israel	2.3	10 USA	2.7

Table No. 1. Major arms importers from 2018 to 2022

The weapons import policies of modernization of the Indian military forces. Since Narendra Modi has taken over the government in 2014, the Indian Army has undergone major changes, and military modernization has seen a sharp increase since this year (Barrech and Siddiq, 2022: 1). The modernization process is followed by two paths: foreign purchases and localization of the country's defense industry. In the first way, India expands its defense relations with other countries and buys their products. In this regard, Prime Minister Modi and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj have emphasized bilateral relations with a number





of countries including America, Russia, Japan, China and Australia with the prospect of defense purchases and security cooperation (Ganguly, 2015: 199). The second path is relying on domestic capability and localization of defense industries, which India pays special attention to it. One of the problems that the previous governments have noticed is the fact that for the last 40 years, India has been the largest arms importer in the world. Hence, Modi considers it important to strengthen the domestic defense industry. This approach, which is under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat (self-sufficient India) initiative, has caused the government to focus on defense exports. Statistics show that between 2016 and 2019, the export of defense products has grown by 700 percent (Barrech and Siddiq, 2022: 2).

In terms of defense exports, India has come a long way since 1991. According to the Sipri Arms Trade Database, India was ranked as low as 41st in 1991 and has continued until recently to maintain this position in the global defense export hierarchy. Only recently has India's position changed dramatically, reaching 19th place in 2018-19. This obvious shift has become possible by the government's ongoing efforts to strengthen [military] diplomacy, frame export-friendly policies, digitize permits, send orders to carry out Indian missions abroad to market their products by advertising them in global defense exhibitions for supporting export initiatives and private industries (Thomas, 2021: 122).

**Military Attaché.** Military Attachés are one of the main axes of relationship development. Attachés are actually military diplomats sent to the host country to facilitate bilateral military exchanges. Attachés can help convey their country's perspective to the host country; strengthen the bond between the two countries; and increase interactions between Indian think tanks and similar institutions in other countries (Singh, 2021: 116). Another task that can be delegated to military Attachés is marketing for the export of military products. The Ministry of Defense of India has presented a plan with the aim of providing financial support to military Attachés in order to improve the level of defense exports in the host countries. This plan has been presented in line with the goal of exporting 35 thousand crores by 2025 (Ministry of Defence, 2019: 1) and it is believed that Attachés all over the world play a major role in showing India's capabilities in the production of defense products and expanding its exports (Ministry of Defense, 2019: 3). Also, Attachés play an important role in collecting information from their observations in the host country and sending the report to their respective



countries. "The Defense Attache is expected to maintain a complete and detailed knowledge and awareness of the host country's defense activities and requirements. This includes knowledge of the country's military capabilities, operations, training and readiness, and equipments." (Ministry of Defense, 2019: 3). According to the 2019-2020 report, 72 military attachés were attend abroad, and also in the foreign embassy in New Delhi, 63 countries had resident military attachés and 5 countries had accredited military attachés (Annual Report, 2019-20: 99).

**Participation in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO):** A formal commitment to the United Nations and other organizations or regional coalitions to provide troops and equipment for UN peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance, and joint operations is a base of military diplomacy. The United Nations Peacekeeping Center (Training) (CUNPK) in New Delhi is a small step in this direction (Singh, 2021: 116). India has been one of the largest contributors to UN peacekeeping operations. Since India's first mission in Korea in 1950, Indian forces have overseen complex and difficult operations (Yeshvant Gidh, 2022: 294). So far, more than 253,000 Indians have served in 49 of the 71 UN peacekeeping missions that have been established around the world since 1948 (Bardalai & Goswami, 2021: viii). Indian peacekeeping forces have a good reputation, and the United Nations, along with their exemplary neutrality and high level of professionalism, are looking to use these forces due to their compliance with behavioral standards and friendly approach towards local people in war-torn areas. The Indian Army has greatly contributed to UN peacekeeping capacity building by training military peacekeeping forces of other countries and providing trainers when needed (Campose, 2016: 30).

**Education and training of military force:** Maintaining an effective armed force is a requirement for all countries. This can only be achieved if its personnel are properly trained by the best institutions. However, due to lack of resources and budget constraints, smaller countries are unable to establish and maintain such institutions. They consider it more cost-effective and strategically relevant to train their military personnel in prestigious foreign military institutions. In this regard, India has become one of the most popular training destinations for South Asian armed forces. As one of the largest forces, the Indian Armed Forces manage some of the largest and best military training institutions in the world (Thomas, 2021: 76-77). In the following, a part of India's extensive activities in the field of foreign military training is mentioned.



- Training of over 15,000 foreign students from 41 countries by the Indian Navy
- Sending mobile training teams to Sri Lanka, Oman, Myanmar, Kenya, Vietnam, Mauritius, Bangladesh and Nigeria by the Indian Navy (Thomas, 2021: 78-79)
- Training of foreign mid-level officers since 1950 at an approximate annual rate of 30 international officers per course at the Defense Services Staff College (DSSC) in Wellington (Nilgiris).
- Training of 826 senior officers from 69 countries at the prestigious National Defense College in New Delhi since its inception (Thomas, 2021: 81)
- launching naval/military academies in Ethiopia, Nigeria, Botswana and Uganda (Prakash, jstribune, 2023)
- etc.

**Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.** Rescue and relief operations is one of the obvious use of the military capabilities in line with peaceful purposes, which clearly leads to the public good and creating a positive image in the minds of nations. Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief have emerged as important missions for major militaries around the world since the Cold War. The missions that were once largely left to organizations such as the International Red Cross have now become an important part of the security agenda of countries with significant military capabilities (Mohan, 2014: 1). Playing a role in the Indian Ocean tsunami (in 2004), include to Indonesia and Sri Lanka, aid to Myanmar after Cyclone Nargis (2008) and Cyclone Sidar in Bangladesh (2007), as well as its efforts in Nepal after the devastating earthquake (2015) (Jaishankar, 2016: 20) and the Madagascar flood (2020), has been part of the humanitarian actions of the Indian Army to other countries. According the standards of regional militaries, the Indian armed forces have a significant number of transport aircraft, helicopters and support ships, enabling them to quickly produce food, water and medical supplies (Jaishankar, 2016: 20). India considers humanitarian aid as an "extension of sympathy" with disaster victims or as a "gesture of goodwill". "Because of India's deep cultural tradition of giving, people generally support of government relief efforts." The tradition of giving has been revived to some extent by the dramatic expansion of the Indian economy, the availability of greater financial resources and a sense of regional growth; And the international responsibilities of these sensitivities led India to respond to humanitarian crises around the world, including Hurricane Katrina in the

United States (2005) and the Fukushima disaster in Japan (2011) (Mohan, 2014: 5).

In addition to natural hazards, the possibility of human threats provides special situations for providing assistance to compatriots and nationals of other countries. Civilian evacuation operations, anti-piracy operations and maritime patrols are among these situations. The increase in India's economic participation and political influence has led to the growth of the presence of Indian citizens abroad. Therefore, it is important for India to protect this population during conflict and war or natural hazards. Until 2016, India has carried out 30 evacuation operations from across Africa, Asia and Europe, the largest of which was the transportation of 110,000 civilians from the Persian Gulf in 1990 (Xavier, 2016: 1). Some of the other operations include Lebanon's Operation Sukoon, Libya's Operation Safe Homecoming, and Yemen's Operation Raahat (Jaishankar, 2016: 20), which some of these operations have led to the rescue of nationals of other countries. For example, in Operation Sukoon in Lebanon (2006), which was carried out to evacuate Indian citizens caught in the [Israel-Lebanon War], the naval squadron evacuated in Cyprus a total of 2,280 personnel, including 1,764 Indians, 112 Sri Lankans, 64 Nepalese and seven Lebanese with Indian spouses and from there they were transferred to the subcontinent (Mohan, 2014: 7).

Piracy on the coast of Somalia, especially in the Gulf of Aden, began with small groups of armed Somali fishermen. Apparently, their goal was to retaliate against international vessels dumping illegal waste in their waters because they believed the vessels' actions were adversely affecting their fish catches. Due to extreme poverty in Somalia, illegal fishing in Somali waters, and a lack of credible law enforcement both on land and at sea, piracy has become a lucrative business fuelled by the huge profits made in hijacking merchant ships. As far as India is concerned, a large percentage of India's trade, including oil and fertilizers, passes through the Gulf of Aden. The Ministry of Shipping has estimated that India's imports through the Gulf of Aden route are about \$50 billion and its exports are \$60 billion. The safety and unhindered continuity of maritime trade, through ships using this route, is a major national concern because it directly affects the Indian economy (Thomas, 2021: 107). The Indian Navy began anti-piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden in October 2008, from where an Indian Navy ship has been stationed continuously for the past 12 years. In addition to escorting Indian-flagged ships, other countries ships are also escorted by Indian Navy ships. No ship under Indian escort has ever been hijacked by pirates (Thomas, 2021: 108).



**Multilateral and bilateral exercises.** Military exercise is the technique of using military resources during training or doing exercises related to military operations, testing the speed and momentary capabilities in battle and adopting strategies without doing actual combat. The exercises aim to train soldiers in how to act, think and work together during conflict, show power to other countries, establish military coordination and cooperation between friendly countries, test equipment, and train for dealing with natural disasters and humanitarian aid. Military exercises are divided into three categories: internal exercises, bilateral exercises and multilateral exercises (Byjus, 2019: 2). In the following, there will be discussed a part of the bilateral and multilateral exercises that India has done with a number of countries in recent years:

- Holding the Milan Multilateral Naval Exercise (2022), which for the first time involved more than 40 navies from around the world, including the US Navy. This exercise has been held since 1995. In the 2022 exercise, most of the countries of Southeast Asia participated including Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei, Singapore, Cambodia, Thailand and Myanmar. (Patil, Observer Research Foundation, 2022)
- In line with the quadrilateral security dialogue known as Quad (QUAD) which began in 2007 between Japan, Australia, India and the US, some exercises have taken place such as the Malabar 2022 naval exercise hosted by Japan and attended by Australia, India and the United States and the exercise Pitch Black 2022 participated by the Air Force of India and Australia (Dikshit, Financial Express, 2023).
- Holding the 7th joint bilateral exercise between India and China called Hand in Hand exercise in October 2018 (Byjus, 2019: 3)
- Holding a multilateral anti-terrorism exercise in Russia within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, in which the main rivals India and Pakistan participated for the first time (Byjus, 2019: 7).
- etc.

**Military talks and visits:** One of the obvious examples of military diplomacy is the talks, meetings and visits that take place at different levels, including the employees of land, air and sea units, the heads of these units and the ministers of defense with the aim of promoting military cooperation as much as possible. Participating in military parades, port visits by the guest navies and reciprocal visits to the naval fleets of other countries by the host country, attending military exhibitions, and sending military diplomatic



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delegations are among these actions. In the following, some of these interactions carried out by the Indian Armed Forces are mentioned:

- Participation of an army expeditionary group in the Victory Day parade in Moscow in May 2015, which was an attempt to show solidarity with the host country and public display of India's military capabilities.
- In 2015, an Indian naval fleet visited Oman, UAE and Qatar. In the same year, Indian ships also docked at ports across Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific, including in the Philippines, Singapore, and Australia, leading to favorable media broadcasting and goodwill recognition among host countries (Jaishankar, 2016: 20).
- Military meetings and talks are held regularly throughout the year at various levels and military departments of India and other countries. According to the latest annual report published by the Indian Ministry of Defense (2019-2020), this country has had numerous visits and understandings with other countries in 2019 alone, some of which are mentioned below:
  - Signing of defense cooperation memorandum with Argentina in New Delhi to establish formal institutional arrangements between the two countries
  - The visit of an Australian delegation to India, as well as the visit of an Indian delegation to Australia;
  - Making visits to Bangladesh, Brazil, China, and Egypt by India.
  - Conducting separate talks between Navy personnel, Army personnel and Air Force personnel of India and Indonesia;
  - Conducting separate talks between Navy personnel, and Air Force personnel of India and Japan; (Annual Report, 2019-20: 43 to 46) and...

### 5. The role of military diplomacy in India's regional policies

Military diplomacy is rapidly becoming a vital aspect of foreign policy, as it is being developed in powerful countries such as America, China, India, Russia and some others. Depending on the government's plans, countries use military diplomacy to dominate their neighbors and it plays an important role in the structure and implementation of the countries' security policy (Muniruzzaman, 2020: 73). Military diplomacy is a specialized tool of foreign policy, along with other diverse tools available to countries, including economic and cultural tools, which in the case of India is in line with regionalism policies, especially in relation to neighbors.

Regarding the influence of various factors on the foreign policy of each country, there are several indicators to measure the quality of influence. The impact index means the results or achievements that are obtained through the





applying of each of the variables or a set of them in foreign policy. The variable impact of military interactions and cooperation on foreign policy can be evaluated in at least 5 very important indicators. A successful foreign policy using the resources and tools at its disposal should be primarily "beneficial". In the sense that it will increase the income, wealth and development of the country. In the second step, it should be able to lead to "increasing influence" by strengthening trust in partners and creating fear in competitors and enemies. Therefore, the next indicator is the ability to "reduce hostilities, tensions and manage crises" with other actors. The fourth indicator is its own "integration and branding". One of the important indicators of success in foreign policy is that a country is able to integrate others into its economy, culture and politics. That is, creating a mutual dependence in terms of trade exchanges, diplomatic cooperation and security-military interactions, which, in relation to smaller and weaker countries, usually puts the weight of the relationship towards the bigger power. Also, planning and implementing regional initiatives centered on oneself, or participating in important international alliances and agreements as an influential actor, can be considered as an effort towards credibility and branding. And finally, as the fifth indicator, a successful foreign policy should be able to produce power. Power is a very general concept that includes a wide range of types of power according to its classification. However, power in this study refers to the power of iron will and the power of attraction and persuasion, considering the essence and nature of power, which leads to creating violence and pressure, or strengthening cooperation and even following one country from another.

The use of military diplomacy can be traced in the regional and international arena, considering the results it has achieved so far for the foreign policy of the Indian government. Studying the performance and actions of the Indian government since the past years shows that this country is seriously pursuing regional policies and interaction with neighboring countries. As discussed in the research related to India's national security strategy, this country has focused on several geographical points. South Asia and its neighbors, East Asia and the Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean and its coastal countries in West Asia and East Africa are among the most important and strategic points for the implementation of determined policies.

India's macro policies indicate that this country has paid great attention to establishing good and stable relations with its border neighbors in recent

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decades. This need was felt in the 1990s. India, which had always seen itself as the preeminent power in South Asia, found that its relations has been dead end with its smaller neighbors. Aware of the need to change policies in South Asia, India launched a series of policy initiatives (Mohan, 2006: 7). India's interest in these countries is primarily due to historical, cultural and territorial ties. Some of these countries, including Pakistan and Bangladesh, were considered a part of the vast land of India almost a century ago, and some others have ritual and religious ties. Another motivating factor is China's active diplomacy in the subcontinent and economic and military cooperation with India's neighbors, especially Pakistan.

At the next level, India attaches great importance to communication with other neighboring regions. The eagerness of Southeast Asian nations (ASEAN) to interact and cooperate with India, due to the fear of China's influence and creating a balance against it, has given India a great opportunity to address a common challenge (China), and Also benefit from the great benefits of trade with the countries of this region. Along with the development of regional interactions and considering the location of India between the two Indian and Pacific oceans, there is an undeniable necessity the creation of regional and international associations and alliances with the presence of coastal and beneficiary countries. In addition to the active presence of China's naval fleet in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, the need for stable supply of energy and trade with West Asian countries, as well as the expansion of this country's sphere of influence based on the definition of India's security policy from the Suez Canal to the South China Sea, are among the main reasons of India for holding regional forums such as the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS). Also, considering the policy of containment of China by the US, India's presence in the quadrilateral summit known QUAD alongside the US, Japan and Australia is considered as an important weight in pursuing the goal of balancing with China. Therefore, the growth and development of security and military interactions with other neighboring countries is one of the important strategies of Indian politicians to implement regional policies and achieve desired results. In the following, the impact of India's peaceful security and military activities and interactions on its foreign policy is discussed. The emphasis of the research is on the active diplomacy of India in the mentioned areas based on the impact indicators.

**Profitability.** Any country that has an active military diplomacy in the supply of foreign policy can benefit in many ways. Here, benefit means



generating income and protecting economic interests. However, presenting a positive, responsible and reliable image of a country, which usually appears in the form of cooperation and military assistance, especially during crises and natural and human disasters, is one of the benefits and success indicators of foreign policy.

The important part of pursuing revenue-generating policies in military interactions, in the first step, goes back to having a local defense industry and infrastructure for the production of weapons and equipment in high circulation, and the next step is to search for the target market in other countries and export products to them. India definitely has this infrastructure and has defined one of the tasks of its military attaches to try to introduce products and get orders from the host countries. India exports its defense equipment to more than 85 countries, and in the fiscal year 2022-23, the value of the country's arms exports has reached 160 billion Indian rupees (about 2 billion dollars) (Ningthoujam, The Diplomat, 2023). With a target of \$5 billion in defense exports by 2024, India has stepped up its efforts to sell arms to Southeast Asia and Africa, where Chinese defense firms dominate. The result of such efforts has been an increase in exports from INR 1,940.64 crore in 2014-2015 to INR 10,745 crore 2018-2019 (Patil, Observer Research Foundation, 2022). For several decades, the continuity and strength of relations between India and West Asia have been examined mainly in terms of energy trade, remittances, and the size of the Indian diaspora community in the wider region. Today, both sides are strengthening their cooperation by increasing interactions in the defense sector, including joint military exercises, counter-terrorism, and cyber security cooperation. This transformation has come at a time when India is trying to increase its military diplomacy in the region (and elsewhere), particularly by promoting its defense exports and strengthening military-security cooperation with the aim of safeguarding its strategic interests (Ningthoujam, The Diplomat, 2023).

Another function of military cooperation is to protect economic interests abroad. Structural changes in the Indian economy [...] show that India's security interests are no longer limited to the subcontinent. In fact, former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his predecessor Atal Behari Vajpayee have repeatedly stated that India's security range extends from Suez to the South China Sea (Mohan, 2014: 14). Commercial ships are exposed to risks caused by natural and human disasters. For example, the activity of Somali pirates in the Gulf of Aden has made beneficiary countries, including

India, think about the presence of a naval fleet to deal with these threats. In addition to protecting its interests, the Indian Navy has so far to help the ships of other threatened countries in several operations.

**Increasing influence and expanding regional presence.** One of the important functions of using military diplomacy is to increase influence in the countries that receive military services and consequently to expand the scope and depth of regional presence as a strategic partner or ally. Undoubtedly, a series of Indian military cooperation in the form of hosting officer students, participating in joint international exercises, sending military forces at the request of the host country in times of crisis caused by rebellion or coup, creating joint maritime patrols to protect the traffic routes of ships, sending Military attaches and other such things, along with the impact coefficient on the policies of other countries, provide the conditions for knowing the state of their forces, facilities and defense infrastructure.

A look at India's security and military policies in different periods confirms the truth of this claim. For example, India has a significant influence on the foreign policy of Maldives and ensures the security of this country. Especially after Operation Cactus in 1988, during which Tamil mercenaries attacked the Maldives, India kept the country away from danger (Anwer & et.al, 2017: 100). Relations between India and Sri Lanka have also undergone quantitative and qualitative changes in recent years. Not only has defense cooperation increased, but also both countries have close political ties in terms of trade, investment and infrastructural connections. India was the first country to respond to Sri Lanka's appeal for aid after the December 2004 tsunami. It also helped evacuate 430 Sri Lankan citizens from Lebanon during its crisis (Anwer & et.al, 2017: 110). India has helped Sri Lanka and other neighbors to build their naval capabilities and donated various equipment to some countries such as Seychelles and Mauritius (Tomar, Modern Diplomacy, 2023). As another neighbor, Bhutan has maintained cordial relations with India and is fully aligned with India in terms of security, political and economic issues. This country received large military aid from India in 1962-1963 in the context of the Sino-Indian war (Anwer & et.al, 2017: 111). Also, India controls Bhutan's foreign relations through the 1949 Treaty between India and Bhutan. Article 2 of this treaty demands that Bhutan be guided by the advice of India in conducting its foreign relations, and Article 6 of this treaty prohibits Bhutan from importing arms, ammunition, machines, warlike materials or stores without the assistance and approval of India (Anwer & et.al, 2017: 115). Among its neighbors, India





shares the longest border with Bangladesh and both have very fruitful relations with each other. Due to border security problems, arrangements and mechanisms have been established for border management for years, which include interaction between the border guard forces of the two countries (Thomas, 2021: 101-100).

India's military cooperation with the Persian Gulf countries largely includes naval cooperation, joint exercises, regular visits by Indian ships and extensive memorandums of understanding. In terms of military training, the personnel of the armed forces of the Persian Gulf have been trained in defense and military academies of India. Most importantly, all Persian Gulf countries are members of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, designed by the Indian Navy, which is a biennial forum for Indian Ocean Coastal Naval Commanders (Singh, 2021: 113). In August 2021, India conducted back-to-back joint naval exercises with the United Arab Emirates (Zayed Talwar exercise), Bahrain (Maritime Partnership exercise) and Saudi Arabia (Al-Mohed Al-Hindi exercise) (Patil, Observer Research Foundation, 2022). Oman has also served as an important anchor for India's military engagement in the region. In addition to regular military exchanges between the two militaries, Oman has granted the Indian Navy access to the Duqm port for logistics and support. This has facilitated a long-term naval presence in the western Indian Ocean, which has been a hotbed of piracy for years (Patil, Observer Research Foundation, 2022).

Also, the scope of enthusiasm for defense cooperation with India in Africa, the coast of the Indian Ocean, East Asia and the Pacific Ocean has widened. In recent decades, India has moved towards substantial defense cooperation and military exchanges with all major Southeast Asian countries, including Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and Vietnam (Mohan, 2012: 9).

**Reducing hostility and crisis management.** The implementation of economic and political development programs requires the support and acceptance of regional and international actors. This issue primarily depends on not receiving negative and warning signals from other countries, especially neighboring countries, regarding the increase in their military and economic capacities. After making sure that these actions are safe or low-risk, in the next stage, countries should come to the conclusion that following the current trend and positioning themselves as one of the puzzle pieces of the great powers' strategic plans will bring great benefits to them as well. In this regard, one of the important functions of military diplomacy is to increase



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cooperation in order to clarify actions, to share allies and partners in military missions, and as a result, to reduce the occurrence of tensions and conflicts that generally occur due to misunderstandings regarding the expansion of rivals' military activities.

Although in defense and security documents and articles, China and Pakistan are among the important concerns of India, but except for some confrontations such as the 1965 border war between China and India, as well as the conflicts over the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir between India and Pakistan, India generally has not been inclined to address its concerns through pressure and threats, due to its ancient philosophical teachings and following of peace-based beliefs, and peaceful and respectful relations from its late politicians such as Gandhi. Rather, it has tried to control its rivals through partnership and balancing through active diplomacy. Currently, India, along with China and Pakistan, is one of the main members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a security, economic and political complex, and along with China, it is considered one of the 5 emerging economic powers in the BRICS group. Also, in the framework of continuous cooperation and relations with neighbors, along with Pakistan, they are members of the South Asian Regional Cooperation (SAARC). In addition to the approach of partnership and cooperation, India simultaneously pursues a balancing policy with China and Pakistan through comprehensive or case-by-case cooperation with regional and trans-regional partners and competitors of the governments of these two countries. For example, along with cooperating with its neighbors and other neighboring regions, especially Southeast Asian countries, India also welcomes to participate in some meetings and interactions that focus on containing China, such as the quadrilateral security dialogue known as Quad (QUAD) alongside Japan, Australia, India and America.

**Integration and branding.** Through continuous relations and the implementation of political, economic and security agreements, India can in the long run provide a suitable ground for mutual dependence and integration of regional policies centered on itself. This issue is possible due to the culture, rituals and traditional beliefs common in South Asia. Neighbor countries' interest in bilateral interactions with India in various fields, as well as the difference in their power level compared to India, will help facilitate this process in the future. Pursuing the regional initiatives which is mainly organized in sensitive geopolitical points, is one of the important arms of this country's foreign policy in order to get closer to partners and neighbors. An



important point that should not be ignored in the long and tortuous path of regional integration is that the planning and implementation of these initiatives can be seen considered first of all as an effort to establish and brand one's name as an active and influential actor in creating events and international flows. For example, with the aim of making India a maritime information hub, the Indian Navy has set up the Information Fusion Center for Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) and has signed agreements with a number of countries to share white shipping information. Other Indian initiatives include the Milan exercise, the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), and the Goa Maritime Conference, which are used by the Indian Navy to interact with other foreign navies (Singh, 2021: 117). Due to its geographical centrality in the Indian Ocean, Delhi is determined to consolidate its strategic advantages on the coast. China's entry into the Indian Ocean has created another incentive for India to increase the speed and intensity of its defense diplomacy. In recent years, India has focused on deepening security cooperation with Mauritius, Seychelles, Mozambique and Madagascar on the West Coast, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates in the Arabian Sea and Myanmar in the Bay of Bengal (Mohan, 2012: 9-10). Also, most of the Indo-Pacific coastal countries are developing economies with limited access to modern technology and maritime infrastructure and have multiple capacity shortages. This significant capacity deficit, limited resources and capabilities in IOR littoral countries hinder their capacity to address threats and challenges that undermine their regional maritime security (Thomas, 2021: 69). Therefore, India should use the existing needs and related capacities to interact with the countries of the region and have a favorable effect. Following are some of the actions and initiatives that India has done with a number of countries in recent years:

- Setting up a chain of Coastal Surveillance Radar Systems (CSRS) across the Indian coast to overcome challenges posed by non-traditional threats such as terrorism, drug trafficking, illegal fishing, human trafficking, natural disasters and providing similar solutions to coastal partners such as Mauritius, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and Maldives (Thomas, 2021: 75).
- Establishing a coordinated patrolling system (CORPAT) with the navies of partner countries in the Bay of Bengal to deal with threats from human trafficking, drug trafficking, illegal fishing and climate change (Thomas, 2021: 104).
- Hydrographic cooperation now forms an important part of India's military

diplomacy. Applications of hydrography in coastal development for the purpose of environmental protection have grown worldwide and the Hydrographic Department of the Indian Navy provides assistance in areas such as hydrographic, oceanographic and coastal training, personnel exchange, production of electronic navigational charts, etc. Offers. The National Institute of Hydrography (NIH) in Goa is classified as a regional hydrographic training center for Africa, the Persian Gulf and the Southeast Asia region. Basic and advanced hydrography training to about 500 trainees from countries such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Seychelles, Thailand, Malaysia, Maldives, Kenya, Nigeria, Oman, Iran, Mauritius, Indonesia, Singapore, Tanzania, Sudan, Iraq, Iran, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Australia, Fiji, Mozambique and the Philippines have been taught (Thomas, 2021: 88-89).

- India's launch of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) in 2008 that is a unique maritime initiative in the 21st century. This initiative brings together a total of 32 coastal countries of the Indian Ocean region, of which 24 are member countries and 8 are observer countries. It is a cooperation mechanism that provides a forum for discussion, policy formulation, and also focus on multiple aspects of maritime operations (Thomas, 2021: 109). The symposium has three working groups meeting on maritime security, humanitarian aid and disaster relief, and information sharing and interoperability (Thomas, 2021: 110).

- Institutionalization of the Goa Maritime Conference (GMC) in 2017 by the Indian Navy to address maritime challenges in the region (Thomas, 2021: 113).

**Power generation.** In general, one of the main functions of the military force, its related resources and infrastructure is to produce power to strengthen foreign policy and it is a leverage to achieve national interests. Power here refers to the coercive or persuasive nature of it, both of which can be achieved through military means. The generation of power based on force or hard power by using weapons and military strategies in a full-out war, limited battles, and border conflicts or to show deterrence, has traditionally been the common way of using military force since long ago. But since the end of the Cold War, another aspect of the use of military capabilities was introduced with the aim of reducing conflict, transparency of intentions, building trust, presenting a positive and responsible image through increasing military interactions and diverse defense-security cooperation; and it rapidly grew among countries. The set of these actions is defined in the framework



of military diplomacy, which generates another type of power called soft power.

By taking advantage of the numerous capacities that it has developed in terms of hardware and software in recent years, the Indian Armed Forces has been able to achieve a worthy position among its neighbors and neighboring regions by demonstrating its capabilities in providing various types of military services. India is now recognized as an emerging power that aspires to be a key player in global affairs with its growing economic prowess. This requires strengthening the Comprehensive National Power (CNP), which includes its global diplomatic influence. It is therefore obvious that India's global defense diplomatic footprint must grow commensurately (Singh, 2021: 111).

## **6. Conclusion**

Thanks to a series of successful domestic and international policies after the Cold War, India is recognized as one of the few emerging powers in the world, but it does not seem to be enough with its achievements. This country, along with other rising powers such as China, Brazil, South Africa, and others such as Russia, Iran, and the Persian Gulf countries, not only closely monitor international developments, but also each of them in some way tries to gain a significant contribution in the future order. Meanwhile, India needs to adopt defense and security policies appropriate to the changing international environment in order to protect its current achievements in the field of economy, trade, technology, etc. India is located in the vicinity of an environment of tense and prone to the growth of terrorism due to the presence of extremist elements in countries such as Pakistan and Afghanistan and a little further in the strategic Gulf of Aden, where pirates operate. It is clear that the continuation of the current growing trend in India requires a stable security environment, and this can only be achieved by establishing good and peaceful relations with various countries, especially the neighbors.

In order for India to have a worthy place in the future perspective of the international order, it first needs to stabilize its power in the subcontinent and continuously interact with South Asian countries, where China, its traditional rival, has an active presence. Because this area is a suitable market for various military and security products and services. At the same time, in order to contain China and extend its regional influence to the east and west of the subcontinent, India is looking for diverse cooperation in the form of exports, holding military exercises, training, anti-terrorism missions and



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more with Southeast Asian countries, especially ASEAN, as well as The Persian Gulf countries in West Asia. Pursuing regional initiatives such as the holding of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, the Goa Maritime Conference and the coordinated maritime patrol is an attempt to bring together governments centered on India, the participation of countries in providing regional security and showing the country's active role in the international arena.

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