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Indian Army Modernization Efforts: Progress and Problems

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An Intelligence Assessment

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NESA 85-10201
October 1985

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Indian Army Modernization Efforts: Progress and Problems

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by
Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis. It
was coordinated with the Directorate of
Operations.

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Comments and queries are welcome and may be
directed to the Chief, South Asia Division, NESA

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Indian Army Modernization Efforts: Progress and Problems

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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 25 September 1985
was used in this report.*

The Indian Army has made slow but steady progress in the last 10 years toward its goal of becoming a modern mechanized force. Six new divisions—including India's first mechanized infantry division—have been created during that time, and India has begun to receive advanced Soviet arms such as the T-72M tank, which it also plans to assemble along with the BMP-2 infantry combat vehicle.

The Indian Army is fully capable of performing its two essential missions: defending the country against external aggression and helping local police and paramilitary forces maintain internal order. It probably could defeat attempts by Pakistani or Chinese forces stationed on the border to seize a significant amount of Indian-held territory. The Army has a less-than-even chance of successfully launching mechanized thrusts that would defeat Pakistan in less than two weeks—the time we believe Islamabad would need to muster international support for a cease-fire. India's advantage over Pakistan's ground forces is likely to increase in the next few years, and New Delhi could easily match any quantitative increase in Pakistani ground forces. The Army is also capable of occupying either Bangladesh or Sri Lanka if its forces are not tied down elsewhere.

Army modernization efforts will continue at the same pace over the next five years. Islamabad's nuclear weapons program, however, could slow them. If New Delhi activates its own nuclear weapons program, the Indian Army will suffer from budgetary cutbacks and some loss of influence. Internal security problems are more likely to drain off personnel and funds in the near term. The recent agreement with Sikh moderates leading to state elections in Punjab will not reduce the Army's liabilities there any time soon.

The Army has become increasingly dependent on the Soviet Union for the majority of its advanced weaponry, but New Delhi has made selected purchases of Western ground forces equipment. It is negotiating with several West European suppliers and the United States for light armored vehicles and self-propelled artillery. Indian purchases of US defense

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material will not be significant in dollar or military terms, but they could improve Indian capabilities in selected areas such as artillery and communications.

The Army's most serious problem is a shortage of personnel. The Army has had difficulty attracting an adequate number of technically trained individuals and has had to reduce the number of officers and men in active units. The crisis with India's Sikh community over the last three years has also deprived the Army of an important source of its finest officers and enlisted men.

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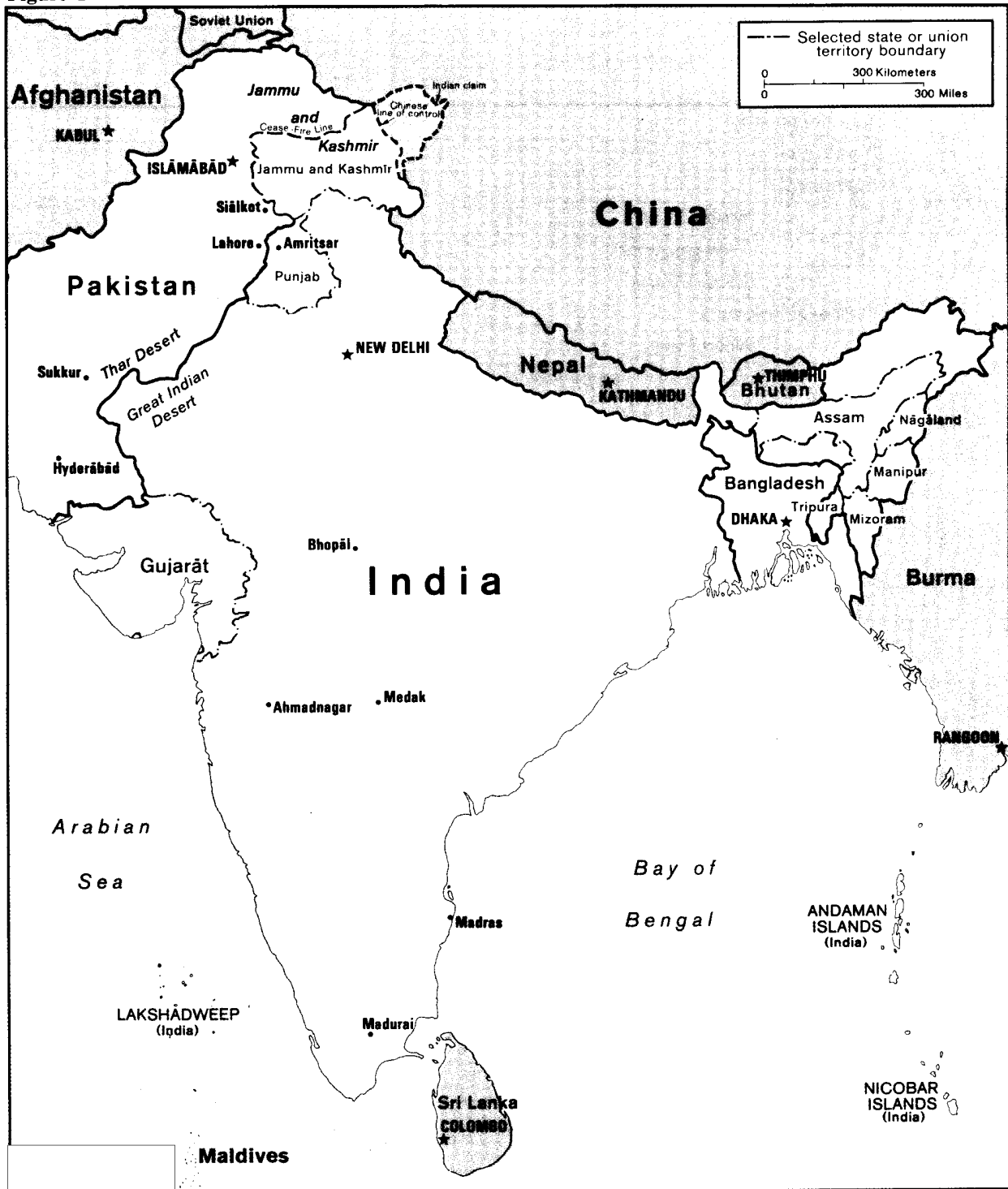
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Figure 1



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Indian Army Modernization Efforts: Progress and Problems

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The Indian Army, at an authorized strength of 1,092,000, is the fourth largest in the world. Over the last decade, Indian political and military leaders have been attempting to transform their "foot soldier" Army into a modern mechanized force. Army spokesmen have publicly identified the specific goals of the modernization effort as:

- Increasing the firepower and mobility of infantry, armor, and artillery units.
- Enhancing capabilities for fighting at night.
- Establishing a larger air assault capability through the creation of an Army aviation corps.
- Increasing the "teeth-to-tail" ratio of combat to support units.
- Improving command-control-communications and intelligence assets.
- Fielding larger numbers of indigenously produced weapons.

In pursuing these goals, the Army has received twice as large a share of the defense budget as the Air Force and Navy combined over the last 10 years.¹ It has purchased a large quantity of new materiel and has added over 200,000 men to its ranks—a 25-percent increase.

We believe New Delhi embarked on this modernization program because it wants the Army to have the capability to defeat Pakistan quickly in a short war. We believe Indian military planners calculate that any major Indo-Pakistani war would be brought to a halt by international diplomacy within a few weeks, and they want to avoid another inconclusive engagement like the 1965 war and the 1971 war on their western front. The superpower confrontation in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, in our judgment, reinforced Indian attitudes because it demonstrated that a

Table 1
Indian Army Growth, 1975 and 1984

	1975	1984	Change
Divisions			
Infantry	14	19	5
Mountain	10	10	0
Armored	2	2	0
Mechanized	0	1	1
Total	26	32	6
Brigades			
Infantry	52	69	17
Mountain	32	33	1
Mechanized	2	3	1
Armored	7	12	5
Artillery	36	47	11
Air Defense	4	6	2
Engineer	3	4	1
Parachute	2	1	-1
Total	138	175	37

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war between US and Soviet clients lasting more than two weeks invited outside intervention.

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New Units

The Army has been partly successful in meeting its goals of raising new combat units. Six new divisions have been raised in the last decade—three short of the goal set in 1976. Although five of these new divisions have been infantry, India's first mechanized infantry division has been formed. Moreover, the creation of

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Internal Security Operations

The Indian Army has been heavily preoccupied with internal security operations in the last 12 months. Elements from 11 divisions and several independent brigades were used in Punjab State in June 1984 in the opening phase of Operation Bluestar. These forces, estimated at over 50,000 men, were charged with sealing the border with Pakistan and suppressing the Sikh rebellion. Army forces permanently stationed in Punjab State were left free from internal security operations to deter any attempt by Pakistan to intervene. [redacted]

headquarters along the southern flank of the Indo-Pakistani border has been delayed. The new command has not been publicly announced, ostensibly to prevent Punjabi insurgents from taking advantage of the internal two-front situation. The government is also raising 10 more battalions of Assam Rifles, a paramilitary force under Army command, to strengthen forces in the region. [redacted]

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Almost a year later, elements from three Indian divisions continue to operate as internal security forces in Punjab State. Numerous press reports and government announcements have signaled their withdrawal. [redacted] indicate that these units are still in Punjab State. The government, however, has begun to form new paramilitary units assigned to the national police to replace the Army. [redacted]

The Army has been increasingly involved in quelling urban communal violence. Troops were called out after the assassination of Indira Gandhi in late 1984 to restore order in at least 15 major Indian cities. Eight infantry brigades, a mechanized regiment, and other forces were deployed in New Delhi alone. Army units were mobilized after the toxic gas release in Bhopal in November and during communal rioting in Gujarat State last spring. The concentration of paramilitary forces in Punjab State and the unwillingness of local police to expose themselves and their families to popular retribution are said by Indian commentators to be the chief reasons. [redacted]

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Increasing insurgent activity has forced the Army to devote additional resources to the northeast. A joint paramilitary-Army study last fall recommended the creation of a new corps to coordinate counterinsurgency operations in Assam, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, and Tripura. The new 3rd Corps, which began operations in August, will control two mountain divisions already deployed in the area. It has such a high priority that completion of the 6th Corps

The Army appears to develop a "we-they" syndrome quickly in situations where it is used to combat civil disturbances. [redacted] trickle of reports on atrocities committed by Army troops performing internal security duties. These reports suggest that discipline is breaking down and that some atrocities are sanctioned by Army commissioned and noncommissioned officers. [redacted]

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22 new armored, air defense, engineer, and mechanized infantry brigades since 1975 has greatly enhanced the Army's offensive capability. [redacted]

divisions, including one or two armored and mechanized divisions and a mountain infantry division. [redacted]

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We believe that several additional armored and mechanized divisions will be formed in the next five years. [redacted]

The Army also appears on the brink of creating an aviation corps, a move that reflects Indian observations of Iraqi doctrine in the Iran-Iraq war, as well as [redacted] porting. [redacted] recently reported that the Army has received permission to [redacted]

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[redacted] indicate that the Indians are assembling three divisions, possibly including a second mechanized division. [redacted] says that the Army's Seventh Five-Year Plan (1986-90) calls for the creation of three to five more

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Table 2
Indian Army Arms Purchases, 1980-85

	Supplier	Value (million US \$)	Number	Equipment
Total		2,276		
1980	USSR	160	200	D-30 howitzers
		279	300	T-72 tanks
		41	140	BMP-1 armored personnel carriers
		99	65	BM-21 multiple rocket launchers
		20	NA	130-mm guns
		104	1	SA-6 Air Defense Group
1981	France	38	300	Milan antitank guided-missile launchers, 1,800 missiles, and licensed production
1982	USSR	420	450	T-72 tanks
		86	300	BMP-1 armored personnel carriers
1983	USSR	99	60	ZSU-23/4 air defense guns
1984	USSR	218	24	SA-8 vehicles, launchers, and missiles
1985	USSR	625	NA	T-72 and BMP coproduction agreement
	Various	87		Other purchases

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take control in July 1986 of all Air Force assets that support Army operations and logistics. As a result, the Army hopes to gain control of:

- Air operations aircraft flown by Army pilots, principally seven helicopter squadrons. This amounts to some 70 aircraft divided into 23 units known as Aerial Observation Posts.
- Rotary-wing aircraft used for troop lift and resupply—including India's only MI-25 Hind attack helicopter squadron.
- Fixed-wing transport aircraft that support Army resupply, possibly including air transports used for paratroop operations. [redacted]

[redacted] say that the government has approved the Army's plans, in part to reward the Army for its repeated use in internal security operations. There has been no formal announcement, however, leaving the door open to continued interservice debate. [redacted]

Equipment

Significant quantities of new arms have enhanced the Army's firepower and mobility. Most of this equipment has been purchased from the USSR, but New Delhi is keeping its options open by making selected purchases of Western systems and pursuing indigenous research and development efforts. [redacted]

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Soviet Arms

The Army has become increasingly dependent on the Soviet Union for most of its advanced weaponry. India signed large arms agreements with the USSR in 1980 and 1982, laying the basis for Army modernization and expansion efforts. New Delhi has purchased over 800 T-72 tanks, 400 BMP-1 armored personnel carriers, 200 howitzers, 65 BM-21 multiple rocket launchers, and 60 ZSU-23/4 air defense guns mostly

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on concessionary terms with low interest rates and long repayment periods. [redacted]

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

- A letter of intent to purchase at least 160 Swedish IKV-91 light tanks.

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to begin licensed production of the T-72-series tanks and BMP-series armored personnel carriers in the next two years. [redacted]

[redacted]

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The Army is satisfied with its Soviet equipment,

[redacted]

ship with the USSR has not been without problems.

[redacted]

Western firms are also heavily involved in programs to improve the Army's existing tank force and to develop a new indigenous main battle tank by the end of the decade. US, British, and West German firms are competing to refit India's almost 2,000 Vijayanta tanks with more capable engines and sensors, [redacted]

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[redacted] Indian Army officers also were unhappy with the first T-72 tanks they received because they were reconditioned and lacked advanced fire-control systems, [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

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say that a plan to refit India's 500 T-55 tanks with Western engines has also been resurrected. The West German manufacturer of the Leopard series of tanks, Krauss Maffei, is the principal engineering consultant for the nominally Indian-designed Arjun main battle tank, which has a West German diesel engine and a British 120-mm gun. Plans call for building 40 pre-production models next year. [redacted]

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Western Arms

In our judgment, Moscow will remain the principal supplier of Indian Army equipment, but we believe New Delhi will continue to make selected purchases from the West to obtain systems unavailable from the USSR, to improve its bargaining position with Moscow, and to demonstrate its nonaligned status. India began turning to the West for major arms purchases in 1980 and so far has signed contracts worth \$2.5 billion, as opposed to \$7.5 billion for Soviet arms for all of its armed services over the same period. According to [redacted] [redacted] the most notable Indian Army purchases and negotiations with Western suppliers have been:

- Purchase from France in 1981 of 300 Milan anti-tank guided-missile launchers and 1,800 missiles, plus licensed production rights for 15 years.
- Procurement of up to 20,000 man-portable radios produced under US license.

Local Efforts

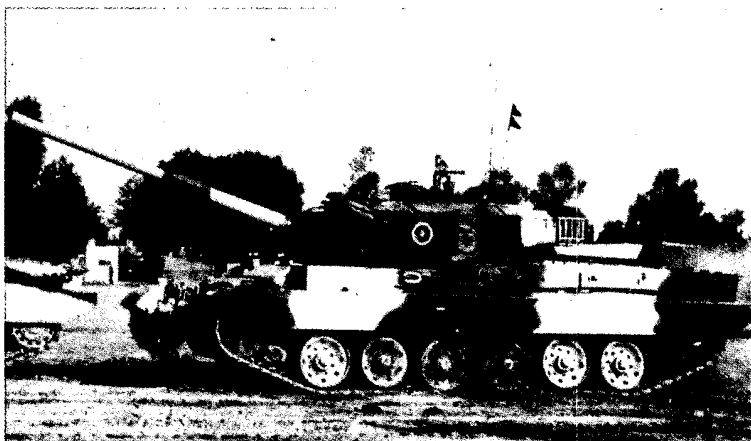
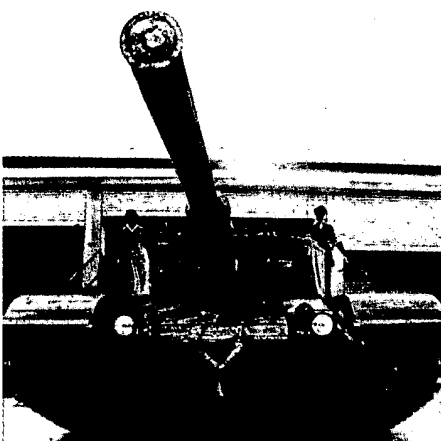
In our judgment, Indian defense industries have been notably inefficient in the design of major weapon systems for the Indian Army, although they have successfully produced tanks, trucks, small arms, and munitions under license. The only indigenously designed major weapon to have been deployed in quantity with the Army is the 105-mm towed howitzer. Programs to build indigenously designed armored personnel carriers, infantry combat vehicles, and anti-tank guided missiles have all been abandoned in favor of foreign imports. Plans to field a locally designed and produced 130-mm self-propelled gun, called the Catapult, have apparently run into trouble. [redacted]

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[redacted]

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(Clockwise) Indian T-72s, Arjun main battle tank prototype, and Vijayanta tank

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Existing divisions have been temporarily reduced to 85 to 95 percent of full strength to help man newly raised formations. Press reports suggest that the Army is several tens of thousands of men below its authorized strength of 1,092,000 men, largely because of recruiting problems.

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Personnel Problems

Manpower problems have hindered the Army's rapid expansion program.

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the Army has attempted to fill new combat units by eliminating and consolidating Army farms, as well as veterinary, supply, and other support elements.

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Indian Army Recruitment

India's all-volunteer Army is maintained through a recruiting system that assigns quotas to Indian states. If one state does not meet its annual quota, another may fill in the vacancies. National shortages are reflected in larger quotas for the next year. Successful applicants sign up for at least a 10-year tour of duty. A new recruit usually is not considered a useful member of his regiment until he has been in service for three years.

Recruiting

The Army has had trouble meeting its annual recruitment goals for the last few years. Applicants outnumber vacancies by 30 to 1, but most are rejected on medical and educational grounds. In 1984 the Army could find only 85 percent of the 120,000 recruits it needed. In addition, the widespread payment of bribes to recruiting officers allowed many unqualified individuals to filter in before the Army instituted reforms in 1984.

The Army has also had problems attracting an adequate number of officers. As of March 1985, the Army was short almost 9,000 officers. According to this shortage has forced the Army to reduce from 21 to 14 the number of officers assigned to infantry battalions. The two schools that supply two-thirds of the Army's officer corps have both had relatively small enrollments in recent years. One, the Indian Military Academy, has had an annual shortfall of 18 percent in the last decade, with a 75-percent shortage of applicants in technical fields, such as electronics and communications. The other, the Officer Training School in Madras, has had even less success, suffering a 35-percent shortage of students in the last 10 years.

Fewer officer candidates in either school are choosing combat arms as their field of preference, according to Infantry and artillery branches met only half of their requirements last year.

On the other hand, twice as many officer candidates as needed applied for positions in the Army Service Corps and Ordnance Corps, where they can gain civilian-related experience in managing truck fleets, machine workshops, and supply depots.

suggest that more attractive jobs in the civilian economy are the principal reason why qualified individuals are not joining the Army in adequate numbers. Traditionally, joining the Army was seen as a lifelong career, but new recruits increasingly look to the Army for training in marketable skills that can promise them upward mobility in the civilian work force. According to Army statistics, 95 percent of all enlisted men retire before they reach 35 with an average of about 15 years of service.

There is also a small, but growing tendency for officers to spend less time in the service, according to Early retirements are up from 85 in 1975 to 295 in 1983, although the officer corps grew only slightly over the period. Unlike their predecessors, newer officers entering the service are unwilling to wait for enough promotions to afford expensive consumer goods and are, instead, increasingly leaving for careers in the private sector.

Army Recommendations. The Army has gone public in lobbying for additional incentives that it believes it must offer potential recruits. A well-publicized Army memorandum in January recommended:

- Divorcing the military pay structure from that of the civil service and increasing it to compensate for the negative features of military life.
- Instituting a special financial bonus for Army service.
- Granting tax exemptions to military personnel.
- Establishing preferences for military personnel in the allotment of new cars and residences.
- Giving military officers a higher protocol ranking.
- Upgrading Army commands and certain senior staff positions to increase their status.
- Creating a separate committee to review military pay biennially.

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The Army has tried similar solutions in the past, and we doubt that the proposed incentives will allay key personnel shortages. The 1984 government personnel review increased pay and privileges and in addition reduced promotion times; allowed earlier retirements for enlisted men; increased by 25 percent the number of billets for majors, colonels, and lieutenant generals; and enhanced travel and ration allowances for some officers. Despite these efforts, civilian competition for individuals with technical skills has increased. We believe additional attempts by the Army to attract and retain valuable personnel will increase costs, possibly at the expense of weapons procurement. The Army has used a significant portion of the average 7-percent annual defense budget increases over the last five years to cover rising personnel costs. Pay and allowances that took up about a quarter of the Army's budget 10 years ago now account for over a third, according to Indian Government estimates.

Ethnic Problems

The three-year-old Sikh conflict has complicated the Army's manpower shortages. [redacted] that after the Army stormed the Sikhs' Golden Temple in June 1984 there was a significant drop in enlistments by Sikhs, who make up 24 percent of the officer corps and 14 percent of the enlisted ranks. Obviously worried about the loss of an important source of manpower, the Army conducted a three-week recruiting drive in Punjab State last March, but it met with poor results. Concerns about the recruitment and retention of Sikhs have probably contributed to the Army's decision last spring to give lenient sentences to the 2,000 Sikhs who mutinied over the Golden Temple incident.

In our judgment, the Army's higher priority of enforcing military justice and avoiding such incidents in the future will perpetuate recruiting and morale problems with the Sikhs. The recent agreement with Sikh moderates did not address the demand that Sikh mutineers be pardoned, and the government explicitly stated that the Army would continue to decide the disposition of these cases. The decision to disband one Sikh battalion and redistribute the troops of three others involved in the mutinies will be seen as an unnecessary insult to Sikh soldiers.

[redacted] Widespread knowledge that the

Army is considering breaking up all exclusively Sikh battalions by mixing Sikh companies with other ethnic or integrated units will add to Sikh doubts about their place in the Army.² Defense Minister Rao announced in April that new regiments would be raised on an all-caste basis without regard to state, region, or religion, although Gurkha units will probably be exempted.

[redacted] the Army has increased its recruiting efforts among Gurkhas in Nepal, which Sikhs will probably interpret as showing lack of trust in them.

Capabilities

The Indian Army is capable of performing its two essential missions: defending the country against external aggression and helping local and paramilitary forces maintain internal order. The Indian Army could probably defeat any attempt by Islamabad to seize a significant portion of Indian territory and is capable of conducting offensive operations against Pakistan.

[redacted]

The Army also probably could successfully defend against a conventional attack by Chinese forces now along the border. Despite frequent troop rotations, inadequate helicopter assets, and antiquated contingency plans, the Indian Army has some of the finest mountain infantry forces in the world and has made substantial improvements since the 1962 war, including stockpiling adequate supplies and munitions. Moreover, we doubt that Beijing would fully engage Indian forces in the event of an Indo-Pakistani war, confining itself instead to initiating small border skirmishes to demonstrate its concern.

² The Army has integrated all but its artillery and infantry units. Officers commanding the latter types of units have argued that integration would undermine unit traditions and morale.

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Organization of Major Indian Army Formations/Units

The Indian Army is divided into five regional commands that control 10 corps. Each corps contains two or more of India's two armored, one mechanized, 19 infantry, and 10 mountain infantry divisions. Some divisions, brigades, and smaller units are controlled directly by regional commands. [redacted]

regiments drawn from particular localities. All other units have been integrated. There is, nevertheless, a high degree of ethnic diversity in the Army. Sikhs (11 percent), Jats (9 percent), Dogras (8 percent), Rajputs (7 percent), Gurkhas (6 percent), and Marathas (5 percent) make up the largest ethnic groups. Individuals from scheduled (untouchable) castes dispersed throughout the Army make up 16 percent. [redacted]

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The Indian Army is modeled on the British regimental system with infantry battalions and artillery

Formation/Unit	Authorized Personnel (approximate)	Remarks
Corps		Contains two or more divisions depending on mission.
Division		
Infantry	16,700	Includes one artillery brigade, two to five infantry brigades, and support units.
Armored	14,100	Includes one artillery brigade, two to three armored brigades, and support units.
Mountain	15,700	Elements of one artillery brigade are equipped with pack howitzers, vehicles are smaller, and 500 or more animals are assigned (horses, mules, yaks, and others).
Mechanized infantry	15,000	Includes one self-propelled artillery brigade, two mechanized brigades, armored brigade, and support units.
Brigade/independent brigade		
Infantry	2,500/4,500	Includes three battalions of four companies each.
Armored	2,000/5,500	Ratio of armored to mechanized battalions is usually 2 to 1.
Mechanized infantry	2,300	Includes two mechanized battalions and one to two armored regiments.
Artillery	3,000	Includes three artillery regiments and 84 guns.
Paratroops	4,600	Includes three paratroop battalions.
Battalions		
Infantry	840	Includes four infantry companies plus two support units.
Armored (regiment)	630	Called armored regiment, it holds 45 tanks.
Mechanized (regiment)	830	Includes three rifle companies and a few tanks, as needed.
Artillery (regiment)	550 to 650	Holds three firing batteries with six guns per battery; formation varies according to mission.
Paratroops	480	Includes four paratroop companies.
Company	140 to 180	Includes up to three infantry platoons.
Platoon	40 to 50	Includes three sections.
Section	8 to 11	Includes eight to 11 jawans (soldiers).
[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]

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The Army probably would have difficulty dealing with major conflicts on two or more of its borders at one time. [redacted] military planners worry that Bangladesh might take advantage of an Indo-Pakistani conflict to settle outstanding disputes by force. We believe the Army is fully capable of occupying either Bangladesh or Sri Lanka in a short period of time if its assets are not directed toward China or Pakistan. [redacted]

Strengths

Numerical Superiority. The Indian Army enjoys a quantitative advantage over Pakistan in troop strength, weapons, and equipment. Although deployments along the border are roughly equal, the Indian Army has many more combat units in reserve and still others that can be mobilized. We estimate that two-thirds of the Army's arsenal of tanks, armored personnel carriers, artillery, and other weapons are deployed in field units, which leaves a large stockpile for wartime replacements. [redacted]

The Indian Army also enjoys a margin of superiority along its border with China. India has six mountain divisions, two infantry divisions, and one reinforced mountain infantry brigade in the border region, compared with China's three infantry divisions, an artillery regiment, and scattered border forces. China could move another seven divisions to the border within a month, while India has five divisions earmarked as reserves. [redacted]

Superior Weapons. India's weapons are, for the most part, more modern than those of its neighbors. The T-72M1 tanks now entering service, for example, have better armor and firepower than Pakistan's US M-48A5s and less capable Chinese-built Type 59s. India's Soviet-supplied BMP-1 infantry combat vehicles also carry more firepower than Pakistan's M-113 armored personnel carriers. Pakistan has a slight edge in having a small number of self-propelled 155-mm howitzers, but this will disappear when similar artillery pieces enter the Indian inventory later in the decade. [redacted]

Strategic Depth. In a large-scale conflict with Pakistan, the Indian Army could afford to retreat temporarily without losing a substantial portion of the



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country's urban centers or industrial capability. Only in rugged Kashmir do the Army's lines of communication lie exposed along the cease-fire line. Pakistan, on the other hand, cannot afford to allow an Indian breakthrough anywhere along its border because of its lack of strategic depth. The Indian Army would quickly occupy important lines of communication and population and industrial centers if it achieved a breakthrough. [redacted]

Training. Indian Army training gives it a significant advantage over the Pakistani Army, which would have to respond to changes in Indian tactics and doctrine to defend Pakistani territory successfully. In our judgment, the Indian Army has increasingly oriented its training facilities and exercises toward offensive operations against Pakistan in the last few years. [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

the Army recently opened a new college of armored and mechanized warfare at Ahmadnagar to facilitate combined-arms training and has begun to introduce new tactics into its armored and mechanized forces. [redacted]

[redacted]

Indian preparations for contingencies elsewhere are far less extensive. [redacted]

[redacted] border restudy the 1962 Sino-Indian war and prepare for the same setpiece battles—which may not take place if the Chinese change their line of march. Press reports indicate that exercises also have been conducted by the Army's Eastern Command near the border with Bangladesh, but on a much smaller scale than those held on the western front. [redacted]

[redacted]

Weaknesses

Internal Security Problems. Internal security problems are taking a larger portion of the Army's attention and resources, in our judgment, to the detriment of its war-fighting capabilities. Indian officials say that the Army has been called out 95 times in the last 12 months to restore domestic order—an estimate that is probably low. This growing entanglement in internal security operations has disrupted training schedules and reduced combat readiness.

[redacted] the Army and the government have agreed to beef up paramilitary forces to replace the Army in these missions, but we doubt that these units will be capable of taking over any time in the near future. [redacted]

The potential for continuing internal security problems in Punjab State is particularly worrisome for the Army. In addition to being the key agricultural region of the country, Punjab State is strategically located for the defense of Jammu and Kashmir and the rest of India. The Army, in our judgment, does not believe that it can count on the loyalty and cooperation of the Sikh population in a war with Pakistan, as it did in 1971. It is likely to remain concerned that Sikh extremists would take advantage of a war to conduct guerrilla operations against Indian Army garrisons and lines of communication. [redacted]

Poor Leadership. Recent [redacted] questions about the competence and professionalism of Indian field officers. The average Indian Army

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officer is technically proficient but taught to solve problems by the book. He takes a very conservative approach, lacks imagination, and relies on his advantage in manpower to take objectives. [redacted]

[redacted] note that a high degree of sycophancy has crept into the officer corps, stifling initiative. Moreover, numerous reports of corruption and incompetence involving high-ranking officers have been noted. Two of the Army's 10 corps commanders retired this year rather than face courts-martial on charges of corruption and behavior unbecoming of high defense officials. In Punjab State, several high-ranking officers have been punished for allowing and participating in acts of brutality and looting during Operation Bluestar. [redacted]

Diversity of Equipment. Like other Indian military services, the Army is plagued by a diversity of equipment that complicates logistics and training. The Army operates three different types of tanks, four different armored personnel carriers, and eight kinds of artillery. The fact that this equipment is of Soviet, Western, and Indian manufacture is an added complication because of the differences in ammunition, lubricants, spare parts, maintenance procedures, training, and deployment. [redacted]

Communications. The procurement of better communications and intelligence-gathering equipment does not appear to have received a high priority, despite rhetoric to the contrary. Only recently has the Army begun to order and receive new equipment in this category. The Army has approved a major project to provide new radios down to the platoon level, but the Indian manufacturer has run into redtape, [redacted]

[redacted] and has not been able to deliver [redacted]. Army also is testing a number of West European and US frequency-hopping radios that would provide a quantum jump in the security of its communications.

[redacted]

Lack of Combat Experience. We believe the lack of combat experience has reduced the Army's general capabilities. The Army has not fought a conventional war in almost 15 years, and, although many Indian senior officers saw action in the 1971 war, most younger officers and enlisted men have never seen intense combat. Sporadic firefights along the Pakistani border and counter guerrilla operations in the northeast have not provided the Army with the kind of experience that would be useful in preparing for a general war with Pakistan or China. The Pakistani Army suffers equally from this deficiency, but it now has a simpler defensive strategy to execute in case of war.³ Chinese forces presumably have gained from the operational experience they have had against Vietnamese forces in the last several years. [redacted]

Interservice Cooperation. The Army's working relationship with the Air Force, on which it depends for close air support and air transport, is mixed. According to [redacted] appears to be well coordinated. Indian Army units work directly with the specific Air Force combat squadrons that will support them during combat. Pilots from these squadrons are assigned as forward air controllers and close air support advisers to brigade headquarters. [redacted]

Air transport, however, is a major problem. Army heliborne assault training has amounted to only a few intermittent exercises, and Air Force maintenance practices are so bad that most machines are not capable of normal peacetime operations. India's sole parachute brigade probably has never dropped more than 800 of its 4,600 men at any one time, although new Soviet-made IL-76 Candid and AN-32 Cline transports should remedy this situation. [redacted]

Strategic cooperation and planning between the Army and the Air Force is also a problem, in our judgment. Indian political leaders since independence have avoided creating a focal point for military authority or

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expertise, and India does not have unified regional commands or a joint command staff. The resulting lack of coordination at the top has reduced military effectiveness despite public criticism by Indian retired military officers. [redacted] ports, the Air Force is preoccupied with Pakistan's F-16s and assigns an even higher priority to counter-air operations. As a result, the Army would have more difficulty getting additional close air support in any future conflict. [redacted]

such as Pakistan's edge in attack helicopters and 155-mm howitzers while pursuing their own procurement programs for these weapons. [redacted]

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Prospects

We expect the Indian Army to continue to modernize over the next five years at about the same rate that it has since 1980. Expected deliveries of Soviet weapons, particularly tanks and armored personnel carriers, will permit the raising of additional armored and mechanized units. These developments, plus the refitting of equipment already in inventory and additional training exercises, will increase the Indian Army's edge over Pakistani ground forces. By the early 1990s the Indian Army will be able to execute large-scale strategic mechanized offensives into Pakistan. [redacted]

Prime Minister Gandhi also voiced a more restrained note toward the Indo-Pakistani military balance during his visit to the United States when he drew attention to the economic costs of the arms race rather than to the security threat posed by Pakistani arms purchases. Rising equipment and personnel costs may have played a part in this change in attitude. [redacted]

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A Nuclear Race

Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, in our judgment, could have a significant impact on the Indian Army's modernization plans. We believe that, if New Delhi responds by activating its own nuclear weapons program, the costs would absorb a significant portion of the defense budget and give more bureaucratic and political power to the Air Force. In all probability the Army would suffer from cutbacks and some loss of influence. [redacted]

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Future Pakistani Army Modernization Efforts

Future Pakistani Army modernization efforts will not be enough to counter this increased Indian capability. In the past, Islamabad has used most of its US military credits to buy new aircraft and missiles for the Air Force and has not given the Pakistani Army a substantial share of US military aid. For the military aid package now being negotiated, Islamabad has presented a list of equipment that includes some ground forces items such as Copperhead guided artillery shells, additional artillery guns and radars, Multiple Launch Rocket Systems, and Stinger Post surface-to-air missiles, but the Pakistanis have not yet identified which systems they wish to purchase with their limited credits. [redacted]

A nuclear arms race in South Asia would also force the Army to rethink many of its strategic and operational plans. The current goal of building large armored and mechanized formations would probably have to be substantially modified. [redacted]

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done little thinking along these lines. It also indicates that the Army does not have even the most rudimentary ability to fight in a nuclear environment. [redacted]

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Internal Security Duties

The Army's growing internal security duties will probably have a greater impact than Pakistani military developments on any advances the Army makes in its war-fighting capabilities. The recent agreement with Sikh moderates does not promise an immediate reduction in the Army's role in Punjab State. Continued threats from Sikh extremists, who reject the

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New Delhi could easily match any quantitative increase in the Pakistani inventory with equipment from the Soviet Union or other suppliers, but it may not respond immediately to every aspect of the Pakistani Army modernization program. Indian defense officials have chosen to adjust to marginal asymmetries

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agreement, will require an Army presence until adequate paramilitary forces can be trained. Insurgencies in the northeast and the periodic need to deploy Army forces to suppress communal violence in major urban areas—such as the civil strife in Gujarat this year—also guarantee that the Army will be involved heavily in maintaining civil order for the foreseeable future. As noted above, the Army is particularly concerned that its growing involvement in maintaining domestic order is undermining its ability to fulfill its larger military responsibilities. These operations are also drawing off funds and personnel. [redacted]

[redacted]

The recent creation of a new Army corps in the northeast to direct counterinsurgency operations had sufficient priority that it drew on command assets along the Pakistani border. [redacted]

Indian purchases of US defense material, however, will not be significant in dollar or military terms. At best, they would improve Indian capabilities in selected areas. We believe there is little chance that India will do the kind of about-face that Egypt did and turn to the United States for its security needs. New Delhi does not believe that it needs the kind of US diplomatic assistance Egypt got in negotiating with Israel in order to deal with Pakistan. In addition, the Army modernization program is too oriented to Soviet arms to permit any major change in direction. Even so, New Delhi can be expected to use its arms relationship with the United States to put pressure on the USSR for additional military aid. [redacted]

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Implications for the United States

The Indian Army's modernization plans could mean a modest increase in Indian requests for US defense material. Past Indian proposals to purchase small arms, howitzers, and antitank missiles have failed, reinforcing the Indian view of the United States as an unreliable supplier. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the United States on arms sales, following the MOU on technology transfer concluded this spring, could pave the way for Indian purchase of ground forces weapons and production technology. Indian officials have recently shown an interest in attack helicopters, turrets for self-propelled artillery, passive night vision devices, and production technology for artillery ammunition. [redacted]

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