

terms of population, resources, and nuclear potential -- is regarded as a South Asian actor and is widely equated with Pakistan. This question of prestige is crucial to the entire debate on the growth in Indian naval capability and will be returned to later in this study.

Undoubtedly, China has structured its relations with the region to keep India off balance. Beijing has given military and economic assistance to India's neighbours, and is particularly close to Pakistan. In fact, the threat China poses to India is really more in the area of regional influence than in a truly military sense. India is so dominant in its immediate environment that the regional balance of power could not change other than by a major, and increasingly unlikely, confrontation between India and China. Nonetheless, India has made rapid advances in missile technology largely in response to the threat posed by Chinese military modernization.

In reality, Pakistan is India's only military rival in South Asia, and remains so simply because of the security assistance that it receives from the United States. In the 1980s, the growth in Pakistani military capability arising out of US assistance against the Soviet threat from Afghanistan has continued New Delhi's emphasis on the development of its land and air power. India has pursued its regional objectives by maintaining an ambiguous arms-length security relationship with the Soviet Union, by restructuring its forces to meet contingencies on the mountain frontier with China, and by offsetting US assistance to Pakistan by building-up its land and air forces. India's traditional security concerns will remain focused on its land borders with Pakistan and China. It has, thus far, failed to limit the presence of foreign naval powers in its surrounding waters.

### *The Origin of India's Naval Expansion*

Indian apprehension over foreign naval powers operating in the Indian Ocean is well established and has its origins in the so-called Enterprise incident, when the United States sent a carrier-task force into the Bay of Bengal during the Bangladesh war. The inability of the Indian fleet, engaged in bombarding Pakistani coastal installations, to prevent the US task force from moving at will through its operational area had an impact on Indian naval planning that