

CHAPTER II

OVERVIEW OF MILITARY STRENGTH AND DEFENSE BETWEEN CHINA, INDIA, AND BHUTAN

The international security constellation was inseparable from the conflict, both inter-state conflict and domestic conflict, which became known as civil war. Conflict will become more complicated when the countries involved put forward physical and functional actions using heavy defense equipment, both land, sea, and air fleets.

China and India are two big countries that have enormous military power; even this country is also capable of self-sufficiency in the development of missiles and defense equipment independently. Then Bhutan is a country located in the border region of China and India which has quite limited military resources, but due to the neutral and impartial foreign policy attitude, Bhutan has become a reasonably safe country. In chapter II, we will elaborate further information on the strength of the military and the defense of the three countries along with their comparison.

A. Overview of China's Military and Defense Strengths

The Chinese military and defense have been established since August 1, 1927. The basis of this establishment is as a defensive effort in maintaining the integrity of the sovereignty of China's territory from Japanese annexes in the Sino-Japan War.

Along with the development of time, the Chinese military was able to develop as one of the largest in the world. This achievement went hand in hand with the continuous progress of the country's economy after the economic reform policy launched by Deng Xiaoping, namely open door politics (Kaifeng Xenxi).

1. History and Doctrine

In the era of globalization, China's economy has been classified as equivalent to developed countries, which are supported by the latest industry-leading industrial sectors. Various state-of-the-art products, ranging from combat aircraft, semiconductors, motorized vehicles and other products successfully produced by this country, at the same

time become an essential attribute for China to abandon its status as a developing country towards developed countries.¹

One fact that distinguishes "arms build-up" from the development of an "ordinary" defense system is that there is a condition that is too forced. For example, modernization carried out in the United States is certainly no longer something interesting because this country has a high level of economic maturity when viewed from GDP (Gross Domestic Product) or GNP (Gross National Product), but the conditions in China are very different, when China is still managing its economic system, it turns out that this country continues to develop its defense system, which at the same time indicates a strong tendency for the realization of this policy.²

Of the total defense budget, most of the total amount of China's defense budget is allocated to 3 fields, which can be seen in scheme 2.1. The following.

¹ Gerald Segal and Richard H. Yang, *Chinese Economic Reform: The Impact of Security*, Routledge Publishing, London and New York, 1996, p., 38-40.

² "China Military Build Up Reignites Worried in Asia," at <http://www.npr.org/blogs/parallels/2013/12/05/248756651/chinas-military-buildup-reignites-worries-in-asia-beyond>, accessed on February 6, 2019.

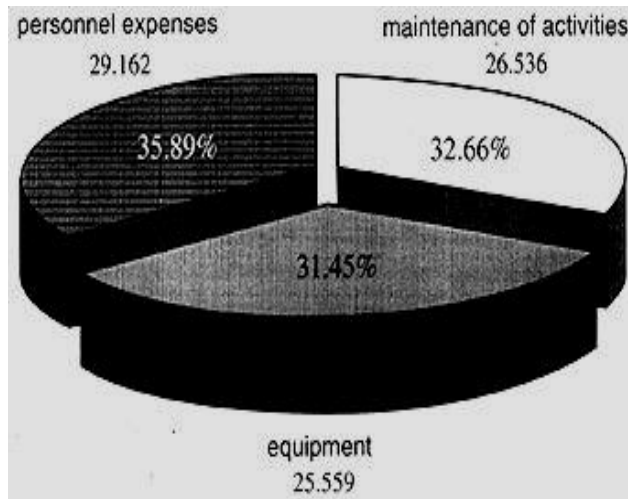


Figure 2. 1 The proportion of the Division of Chinese Defense Budgets Period of 2011-2014

Source: Prepared from "China's Military Spending Increase by 11.2%", <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/mar/04/china-increases-defense-spending-11-2>, accessed on the 7th February 2019.

From the percentage, it is then divided proportionally to certain sectors of the Chinese defense system for the three dimensions, whether land, air or sea, namely:³

- a. Personnel expenses include payment of salaries of armed forces personnel and other personnel, training costs, welfare guarantees, and others.
- b. Maintenance of activities includes maintenance of combat fleets, research support, research and development, and defense training programs, either domestically or joint exercises involving other countries.

³ "China's Military Spending Increase by 11.2%", <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/mar/04/china-increases-defense-spending-11-2>, accessed on February 7, 2019.

- c. Equipment includes the creation of a defense system fleet, purchasing, procurement in the domestic context and other matters relating to physical equipment systems.

2. Human Resources

The three forces, whether land, sea or air, are members of the People's Liberation Army. The total number of personnel from the PLA in 2015-2017 amounted to around 2,035,000 personnel which were a combination of all forces, both land (PLA ground force), air (PLA air force), sea (PLA naval force), rocket division (PLA rocket force) and several other units. With the total amount, China is the country with the most significant number of military personnel in the world.⁴

The characteristics of Chinese military personnel are 20 to 52 years old in functional personnel, as well as 36 to 58 years in certain positions. Also, Chinese military personnel is also supported by reserve personnel who come from mandatory military programs totaling around 510,000 spread across various regions of China.⁵

Chinese military personnel from year to year are increasingly experiencing increased skills and abilities in adapting to information technology to the internet. Military personnel have become an essential focus for China's defense policy-making and are the object of a total budget of around 40 percent of the defense budget allocated by the Chinese government.⁶

3. Power of Defense System

China is the country with the largest and most modern defense equipment in the world, both in the fields of land,

⁴ "China and Global Security," at <https://www.sipri.org/research/conflict-and-peace/asia/china-and-global-security>, accessed on February 4th, 2019.

⁵ Ibid

⁶ "Global Military Spending Remains High at! 7 Trillion \$", at <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2018/global-military-spending-remains-high-17-trillion>, accessed on February 4, 2019.

sea, and air. In the field of land defense equipment, China has a variety of defense equipment variants which from year to year continue to undergo evaluation and reduction. This effort was taken because entering the decade of 2010; China considered that the potential for land threats was diminishing and then changing towards blue water, namely efforts to develop marine and air power. Even so, land defense equipment is still the spearhead for building conventional border security systems, city wars, and others. The description of the rigidity of China's land defense equipment in the period 2015-2017 is as follows:⁷

- a. Main Tank (main battle tanks) which number 7,950 units.
- b. Light battle tanks totaling 1,200 units.
- c. IVF (Infantry Fighting Vehicle) which amounts to 1,490 units.
- d. APC (Armoured Personnel Carrier) totaling 3,290 units
- e. Artillery Towed totaling 6,240 units

Then China also has a reasonably sophisticated air defense equipment, which is incorporated in the PLA Air Force which has been established since September 11, 1949, including:⁸

- a. Combat Air to Air and Air to Ground fighter planes include Xian A 7 and JH 7, Sukhoi, Shenyang and Chengdu which total around 688 units.
- b. Unmanned Aircraft (AWACS) including Ilyushin and Shanxi which numbered around 32 units.
- c. Reconnaissance type Challenger aircraft made in Canada, amounting to 6 units.
- d. Russian-made Ilyushin tanker aircraft to fuel three units of air to air.

⁷ "People Liberation Army: Ground Force," on <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/china/pla-ground-intro.htm>, accessed on February 4, 2019.

⁸ "China Military: Air Force," in <http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/armed-forces/air-force.htm>, accessed on February 4, 2019.

- e. Transport vehicles of Xian type, Shanxi, Tupolev, and Ilyushin have reached 38 units.
- f. Fixed propellers of type MI-8, Harbin and Changhe which number around 82 units and several other variants.

Then China also has a relatively sophisticated marine defense equipment, which is incorporated in the PLA Naval Force which has been established since September 1950 includes:

- a. Aircraft carriers are carrying aircraft numbering 1 unit.
- b. Amphibious vessels are totaling 6 units.
- c. Thirty-two units of heavy transport tank carriers.
- d. Destroyers and frigates are totaling 83 units.
- e. Kilo class submarines are totaling 94 units.
- f. The main class submarines are 75 units.

B. Overview of Indian Military and Defense Strengths

India is one of the largest countries in the world located in the South Asian region. Since the 1990s, India has been quite progressive in developing defense and military systems that are forced to maintain defense and security stability, safeguard regional sovereignty, and anticipate the aggressive attitude of other countries. Taking into account the 2000s, India still faces various security issues, including disputes between India and Pakistan related to Kashmir status, sporadic attacks and others.

1. History and Doctrine

The Indian armed forces have developed as a defense/military institution that has gone through a long history that began in the days of British India in the late 1890s. Then it developed after India's independence on January 26, 1950. The Indian armed forces are one of the best in the world and have been involved in several international operations, including⁹

- a. World War II in 1939-1945.
- b. The first Kashmir war in 1947.

⁹ Gurcharan Singh Sandhu, *A Military History of Medieval India*, Vision Publishing, New Delhi, 2003, p.24.

- c. Operation Congo in 1961.
- d. Indo-Chinese conflict in 1962.
- e. Kashmir War II in 1965.
- f. Bangladesh War of Independence in 1971.

In the period 2000 to 2007, the Indian president acting as supreme commander was Man Mohan Singh, while the Indian Defense Department who was instrumental in coordinating the three forces was headed by the defense minister, who was held by Manohar Pannikar since 2014 and then continued with Arun Jaitley in 2017.¹⁰

Defense doctrine in India is indeed quite useful, where the executive and legislature have formulated that police functions are under the authority of the Department in the Indian (Graham Murtalaya), while Indian armed forces are under the authority of the president of India. While its authority is operationalized under the Indian prime minister, who can mobilize the Indian army, sea and air forces at the legislative discretion (parliament).

2. Human Resources

Indian personnel / human resources in 2015 were ranked second in the world after China, which amounted to around 1.443 million people. This number is also supported by backup personnel from students and students, as well as productive age groups, which numbered 1,115 million people. This amount can also be reproduced through the deployment of Indian military veteran personnel.¹¹

India carries out a policy of equalization of personnel in various regions as an effort to deal with various issues that are feared to occur, including the Indian defense / military system divided into three divisions, namely Indian (Armed Force), sea and air. Then these three divisions are divided into sub-divisions totaling 11 sub-divisions, of which the

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ "India Army Personnel," in <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/indian-army-personnel/>, accessed on February 8, 2019.

sub-divisions are under the auspices of the Indian Defense Department or IDD (Indian Defense Department). These sub-divisions include¹²

- a. Railway Protection Force.
- b. Assam Rifle Division.
- c. National Security Guard.
- d. Indo-Tibetan Border Police.
- e. India Special Frontier Force.
- f. Central Reserve Police Force.
- g. Central Industrial Security Force.
- h. Indian Coast Guard.
- i. Various Security or Paramilitary Force.
- j. Border Security Force.

A large number of sub-divisions in the Indian defense system is a consequence of the size of the area to be secured, and the threats that can threaten India at any time. India itself is a federation country led by the president who acts as the commander in chief of the armed forces, while the existence of the prime minister has a role in running the government.

This Indian army is often referred to as "Bharatiya Thalasena." The Indian army consists of seven territorial command territories, namely the southern regional army command centered in Pune, the eastern regional army command centered in Kolkata, the central regional army command based in Lucknow, the western regional army command based in Chandimandir, The northern regional army command headed by Lieutenant General PK Bhardwaj based in Udhampur, the ATRAC regional army command based in Shimla, the south-western army command centered in Jaipur.¹³

The seven regional commands oversee the infantry, cavalry or artillery task force, to maintain the stability of the Indian defense. This regional division command is also able to function as cross-regional combat assistance, as well as to support the function of the police.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

3. Power of Defense System

The types mentioned above of Indian Army, Sea, and Air weapons systems include cannons, tanks, and armored vehicles, automatic assault weapons to rocket launchers, fighter planes, submarines and frigates, some of these weapons come from industrial purchases and development - Indian domestic defense industry. Some countries that are suppliers of Indian defense equipment are Russia, France, Israel, Britain, Italy, and several other countries.¹⁴

The Indian Armed Force has several modern armaments, including the Main Tank (main battle tank), the M-90, and the Russian MK 1, the Russian-made Rimngan BMT-2 Tank. Also, the Indian Army is also reinforced with US Howitzer cannons, Self-Propelled Artillery made in the United Kingdom and several other types of ground defense equipment.¹⁵

The air force is reinforced with sophisticated aircraft, including Jaguar IS, MIG 27, GS-H 630, Ilyushin II, MI-17, Rafale, SU-30 ICM and several other variants. Then the sea defense fleet of India consisted of modern warships. Among these ships there are nuclear-powered submarines, charlie classes or kilo classes, including INS Chakra, as well as destroyers equipped with Nirbay and Sagarika missiles, which are medium-range missiles. Besides that, the Indian navy has also developed nuclear technology called AGNI III which is classified as an ATV (Advanced Technology vessel).¹⁶

C. Overview of Bhutan's Military and Defense Strengths

Bhutan was a country in the independent Asian region on August 8, 1949, through the Indian-Bhutan agreement. Along with the development of time, Bhutan seeks to develop the

¹⁴ "2018 India Military Strength", at https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.asp?country_id=india, accessed on February 6, 2019.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

potential of its domestic strength, both in the economic, social, political, including military fields. During Namgyel Wangchuk's leadership, the Bhutan Government began to develop a defense and military system progressively by allocating a budget of around 1.85 to 2.0% of the country's total GDP (gross domestic product).

Since 2010 Bhutan's defense budget has shown a progressive increase. Even though it does not have a potential threat, Bhutan's policy is used not only as a form of defending itself from the threat of a volatile political, international security constellation but also to support a peaceful mission, such as disaster evacuation, service to the community and government duties and others.¹⁷

Geographically Bhutan which does not have direct access to water areas causes Bhutan to have no navy. This country has only a few dimensions, namely the army (Royal Bhutan Army) which only has BTR-60 combat vehicles and Mi-8 and Dornier helicopters. Then the other dimensions are the royal guards (Royal Guardian) which consist of elected personnel from the police and Bhutanese army who control anti-terrorism. Also, there is also a Bhutan police force under the authority of the Ministry of Home Affairs which has a particular branch, the traffic division which is responsible for safeguarding the security and order of the road to the narcotics and drug division, to the protection of women and children.¹⁸

D. Comparison of Military Power Between China, India, and Bhutan

In the decade of the 2000s, a new military force emerged which colored the political constellation of global security. In other words, after the end of the Cold War, the United States and its allies no longer controlled the international security politics monopolar because several new superpowers emerged that had considerable defense capacity, viewed from personnel, budgets

¹⁷ "Bhutan Armed Forces," in <http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-1517.html>, accessed on February 7, 2019.

¹⁸ Ibid.

and defense equipment, including Iran, North Korea and of course, India and China. The success of China and India in increasing the capacity of the defense and military sector cannot be separated from several reasons, first, there are security issues where military power becomes vital to safeguard territorial sovereignty, and the achievement of economic progress which will indirectly progressively advance the military field , especially in the fields of budgeting, procurement and development.

From the description of the military and defense views of China, India, and Bhutan, there are advantages and disadvantages to the quality and quality of the Indian and Chinese military. Whereas Bhutan has a much smaller military field capacity. When viewed from the budget sector, China is more prominent than India or Bhutan. An overview of this sees table 2.1. As follows :

Table 2. 1 Comparison of Chinese, Indian and Bhutanese Military Strengths Reviewed From the Budget (Million US Dollars)

No	Country	2015	2016	2017
1.	India	63,500	63,700	63,900
2.	China	174,300	174.400	175.000
3.	Bhutan	9,200	9,300	9.300

Source: processed from "China Military Spending", in <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/china/budget.htm>, accessed on February 8, 2019, "India Military Budget and Modernization", HTTP: // www.indiandefensereview.com/spotlights/indias-defense-budget-and-military-modernisation/, accessed on February 8, 2019 and "2018 Bhutan Military Strenght", in https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.asp?country_id=bhutan accessed on February 8, 2019

From the table above, it can be understood that China in the 2015-2017 period became the country with the most massive budget compared to India or Bhutan. From these three years the development of this budget has not changed position, but from

the number, these three countries have developed a reasonably competent defense budget. Then in terms of the number of Chinese personnel ranked first followed by India and Bhutan in the 2015-2017 period the description of this see 2.2. As follows :

Table 2. 2 Comparison of Chinese, Indian and Bhutanese Military Strengths Reviewed From Personnel

No	Country	2015	2016	2017
1.	India	1,419,000	1,421,000	1,443,000
2.	China	2,010,000	2,010,000	2,035,000
3.	Bhutan	15.820	15.920	16.000

Source: processed from "China Military Spending", in <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/china/budget.htm>, accessed on February 8, 2019, "India Military Budget and Modernization", [http:// www.indiandefensereview.com/spotlights/indias-defense-budget-and-military-modernisation/](http://www.indiandefensereview.com/spotlights/indias-defense-budget-and-military-modernisation/), accessed on February 8, 2019 and "2018 Bhutan Military Strength", in https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.asp?country_id=bhutan, accessed on February 8, 2019

Through the description above, it can be understood that China and India are the two significant pioneers in the military field, including the quantity of personnel and defense equipment, whether land, sea or air whereas Bhutan has smaller quantity and quality compared to China and India. In 2017 between China and India faced conflict and then involved Bhutan because of the geo-strategic location that was indeed between these two major countries. In the next chapter (Chapter III), we will elaborate further on the dynamics of the border conflict between China and India.