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Article - 1: Iran's long Game

Iran's Long Game

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Iran's Long Game

Decades of Preparation Are Paying Off

NARGES BAJOGHLI

March 26, 2026

NARGES BAJOGHLI is an anthropologist and Associate Professor of Middle East Studies at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies.

More by Narges Bajoghli →

At an anti-U.S. and anti-Israeli rally in Tehran, Iran, March 2026
MAJID ASGARIPOUR / WEST ASIA NEWS AGENCY / REUTERS

Context

Iran is strategically outlasting U.S. & Israeli attacks in the ongoing war through asymmetric tactics & economic disruption, rather than conventional victories.

Facts

- Iran's strategy relies on decentralized IRGC command, non-state actors (Hezbollah) & improvised tactics.

- It is targeting economic chokepoints like Strait of Hormuz, affecting global oil supply.

- Iran is attempting to drive a wedge between the U.S. & Gulf allies, weakening regional alliances.

- Regional confidence has cracked after U.S. failed to prevent a 2025 Israeli strike on negotiators in Doha, Qatar.

Analytical Crux

The central thesis is that Iran employs a "survive & exhaust" doctrine designed to outlast, rather than outgun, conventionally superior foes. By making the war militarily and economically unsustainable for Washington and its Gulf partners, Tehran aims to drive a permanent wedge between them. Paradoxically, the U.S. "decapitation" strategy (killing senior leaders) may backfire; the new generation of Iranian commanders is younger, more aggressive and combat-hardened from theaters like Syria and Iraq, making them less likely to be deterred than their predecessors.

Verbatim Quotes

" Iran, locked out of the petrodollar system itself, is now holding that system hostage."

" Iran's strategic doctrine has a phrase at its center: survive and exhaust."

" The United States and Israel may be winning the battles but Iran may be winning the war."

Article - 2 : West Asia war is a warning

West Asia war is a warning. It's also a window to securing our energy

AMITABH KANT

India's existing target of 500 GW of RE by 2030 was bold when announced. Today, it's no longer sufficient. A revised target of 1,500 GW by 2030 is both necessary and achievable

The author is chairman, Fairfax Centre for Free Enterprise. He is former CEO, NITI Aayog. Views expressed are personal

Context

This article outlines a strategic roadmap for India to achieve "energy sovereignty" by transforming its systemic energy insecurity into a national advantage.

Facts

■ **Import Dependency :** India currently imports more than 85% of its crude oil, making it vulnerable to global supply chain disruptions.

■ **Infra bottlenecks:** Over 50GW of energy capacity remained 'stranded' last year due to inadequate evacuation & grid infrastructure.

■ **Manufacturing Gap:** In 2025, China added 1600GW of clean energy, while India added 49GW.

■ **Electrification:** of new two-and 3 wheelers by 2030 & all cars & trucks by 2035.

Analytical Crux

The article argues that India's energy problem is not temporary but structural, rooted in heavy import dependence. Instead of treating crises as disruptions, India should use them as an opportunity to redesign its entire energy system. This means rapidly expanding renewables, improving grid and storage systems, electrifying transport and house-holds, boosting nuclear energy, securing critical minerals and becoming a global manufacturing hub for clean energy technologies. The core idea is that energy security, economic growth and climate goals must be pursued together, with strong policy coordination and financing support.

Verbatim Quotes

"Energy insecurity is not episodic; it is systemic."

"Geopolitical volatility is not an external risk."

"The choices made today will determine whether India remains vulnerable or becomes a nation that shapes its energy destiny."

Article - 3 : The key to India's multi-domain deterrence

The key to India's multi-domain deterrence, capabilities

Harinder Singh
A retired Lieutenant General and a former corps commander

China's military poses a serious challenge to India. New Delhi has no choice but to pursue a robust industrial strategy to offset China's military advantage. Otherwise, it risks the widening of the capability gap. But bridging this gap requires political expediency to make urgent, hard policy choices – what to buy, what to build, and even more difficult to operationalise. This would entail costs and benefits. The challenge is that technology is evolving faster than doctrine, making precise choices even more difficult. The question is how India should reconceptualise its doctrinal and technological choices and adopt a credible defence-industrial strategy to deter the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

Hard choices, systemic vulnerabilities
There could be three contrasting ways to approach the issue. First, India could adopt a bold approach. It would imply betting on the right technological trends and investing in a completely new bundle of war-fighting technologies. The risk is if implementation fails, it can create acute capability vulnerabilities and further weaken the margin of deterrence with India's adversaries. Besides, India lacks the industrial belt to produce technologies at scale and speed to neutralise China's advantage. But, if successful, it could help reduce the capability gap.

Second, India could consider a more conservative strategy. This would entail integrating a wide range of emerging technologies with those in-service to make the existing force more effective. It would also entail enhancing India's cyber, space and electronic warfare capabilities to digitise the battlespace, to streamline and condense the kill chains. This is entirely doable, but it would not alter the balance of power. Perhaps, this strategy is more suited to fight a short war with Pakistan, not a protracted conflict.

Third, India could explore the middle path. While it continues to rely on legacy platforms, it invests in the creation and deployment of enabling layers, to enhance its ability to deter China. While, multi-domain operations (MDO) should be the obvious choice; India is not there yet for a mix of reasons. Besides, MDO as a concept is difficult to define, and even more difficult to operationalise. This would entail fielding a set of crucial enabling layers – of Command and Control (C2), Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR), deep-strike, close-battle, infrastructure and logistics, which are critical to war outcomes. As these layers evolve, India's military would shape

A robust defence-industrial base will shape India's multi-domain deterrence and resilience, especially against China

into a syncretic, multi-domain force. Historically, military transformations have adopted well-known paths. It entails aligning research, development and industrial capacity, doctrines and structures and technology and tactics across institutions, and over time, to deter threats. National security institutions, including the military, have to work together to develop a common picture of the deterrence that the state wishes to create. Since India's margin of deterrence against China is uncertain, India's endeavour should be to analyse the factors that explain the systemic challenges to building a robust posture. Two aspects stand out. First, India's industrial challenges are well known. Its ability to translate its military requirements into industrial targets is doubtful. The issue is not its technological incompetence but its defence-industrial base, which is not structured to deliver at speed and scale. Missiles, munitions and drones are urgent industrial investments of the day; so are the ISR and C2 networks and shortfalls in legacy platforms. India needs to expand its defence-industrial base in conjunction with private industry; otherwise, it may continue to face constraints.

While there is no one-off solution to coordinating industrial capacity, technology and doctrine, incremental steps can generate benefits in the long term. Removing red tape, ensuring budgetary stability, and providing long-term contracts especially for specialised platforms could prove helpful. A mindset change recognising that private players can build military systems more efficiently than the government sector, is needed. It is never too late to shore up the system, but the window for industrial reform is clearly shrinking.

Second, India's procurement system has to focus on evolving and not constraining the fighting force. The system has to adapt faster and be rooted in an efficient defence-industrial base that can produce what an evolving force needs. India needs to spend more, but spend smarter by making hard choices in prioritising key deterrent capabilities. This will require the broadest possible debate and consensus on what needs to be done, and why. It is also the military's job to explain its roles and tasks to the political leadership, the costs of inaction and possible trade-offs, and how they impact the deterrence that India wishes to achieve.

Fixing the enabling layers
Strengthening India's deterrence would mean altering China's military confidence, while preventing it from assuming that any single

capability could prove decisive. This is more so when India has no single capability which is exquisite enough to alter the military balance. By creating and operationalising the enabling layers – C2, ISR, deep-strike, close-battle and others – India can aspire to field a capable multi-domain force, to deter the Chinese.

India must have two top priorities. First, to identify those military vulnerabilities that present an advantage to China. Its fledgling C4ISR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) is one such concern. Dominating the C4ISR battle is key: the side that can see can continue to fight. India needs cheap ISR platforms, in numbers which it can afford to lose, yet maintain ISR capacity. It even needs superior cyber, space and electronic warfare capabilities to deceive and degrade the adversary's ISR platforms. A layered C4ISR – one that enhances one's ISR capacity, while limiting an adversary's ability – is vital.

There are other layers, as well. For instance, the integration of missiles, aircraft and drones as the strike layer to dislocate the enemy in depth. The coordinated employment of land-based platforms such as tanks, guns, and infantry vehicles as a layer to fight front-line battles is crucial. A robust logistic layer that integrates all rear-zone elements including logistic installations, supply chains, and infrastructure is essential for fighting a protracted war. Equally important, in India's case, will be its nuclear deterrent, and how much nuclear capability it needs to compensate for a lack of conventional deterrence to dissuade a nuclear adversary such as China.

Second, India needs to incentivise the right parts of the defence industrial base, by making one-off budgetary allocations in select capabilities. China has a sizeable missile inventory and has the industrial capacity to produce thousands more, during conflict. If a conflict erupts, it can use these against India, with devastating effect. Even if India were to withstand the initial PLA strikes, it would put severe pressure on India's surge capacity. This inventory gap is a risky bet. India has to incentivise defence production, in the absence of which, China might be tempted to drag India into a protracted fight.

India should, therefore, be spending less time admiring the service-specific acquisitions, and fix the critical enabling layers in the deterrence system. Besides, theatre-isation alone might not help create these layers, unless it is rooted in deep doctrinal convergence.

Context

India faces a widening military gap with China's PLA, requiring urgent doctrinal shifts and industrial reforms to build deterrence through multi-domain enabling layers like C4ISR and strike capabilities.

Facts

- India faces a capability gap in missiles, drones, ISR and C4ISR systems.

- India's defence-industrial base lacks scale, speed & private-sector integration.

- Three strategic options: bold tech leap, conservative integration or middle path enabling layers.

- China has large missile inventories & rapid production capacity, creating a surge disadvantage for India.

Analytical Crux

The article argues that India cannot match China through conventional force alone and must instead build smart deterrence by focusing on "enabling layers" like intelligence (ISR), command systems (C4ISR), logistics and strike capabilities. Rather than choosing between risky technological leaps or limited incremental improvements, India should adopt a balanced approach - modernising existing forces while investing in critical systems that improve coordination and effectiveness across domains. The real problem is not just technology, but India's weak defence industrial ecosystem and slow procurement system. Without urgent reforms and better integration of private industry, India risks falling further behind China in a long-term conflict scenario.

Verbatim Quotes

" Technology is evolving faster than doctrine."

" The side that can see, can continue to fight."

" The window for industrial reform is clearly shrinking."

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