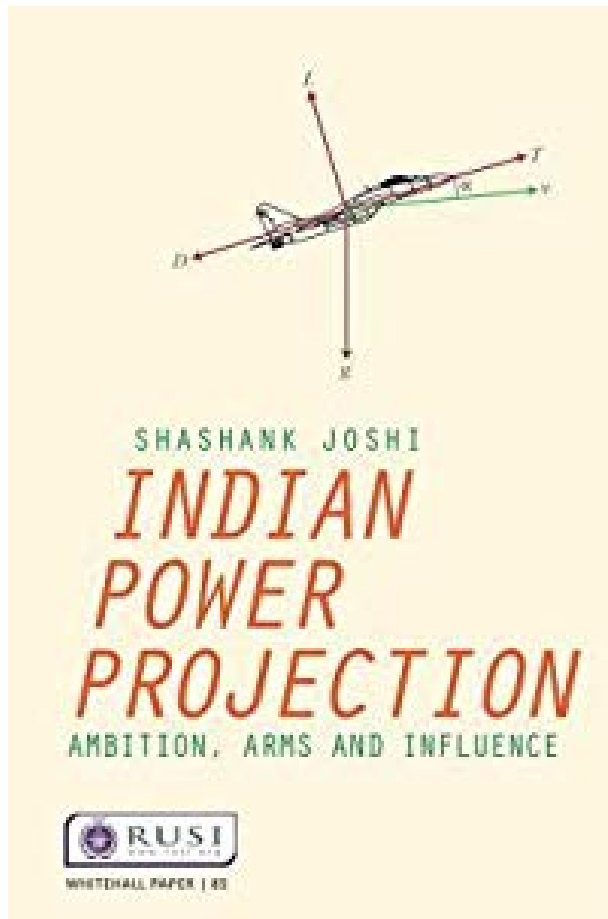


# Indian Power Projection: Ambition, Arms and Influence



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India is growing into one of Asia's most important military powers.

Its defence budget has more than doubled in the past decade, and it imports more arms than anyone else in the world. But India is still seen as a land power focused on long, disputed and militarised borders with Pakistan and China rather than the global military force it was in the first half of the twentieth century under British rule. Is this changing? India is acquiring increasing numbers of key platforms - aircraft carriers, amphibious ships, refuelling tankers and transport aircraft - that are extending its reach to the Indian Ocean littoral and beyond. But most accounts of this build-up have been impressionistic and partial. *Indian Power Projection* assesses the strength, reach and purposes of India's maturing capabilities. It offers a systematic assessment of India's ability to conduct long-range airstrikes from land and sea, transport and convey airborne and amphibious forces, and develop the institutional and material enablers that turn platforms into capabilities. It draws extensively on the ons of modern expeditionary operations, and considers how India's growing interests might shape where and how it uses these evolving capabilities in the future. This study finds that Indian power projection is in a nascent stage: limited in number, primarily of use against much-weaker adversaries, and deficient in some key supporting capabilities. India's defence posture will continue to be shaped by local

threats, rather than distant interests. Indian leaders remain uncomfortable with talk of military intervention and expeditionary warfare, associating these with colonial and superpower excess.

But as the country's power, interests and capabilities all grow, it is likely that India will once more find itself using military force beyond its land borders.