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## **INTERFACING TRADITIONAL AND NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY IN SOUTH ASIA**

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### **Abstract**

The end of Cold War has witnessed rather a step back to history. While the traditional security issues are very much on the agenda, non-traditional and newer sources of insecurity have emerged and they seemed to be intimately linked to the traditional issues. In many ways, the linkages are provided by the continued validity of the dictums of *realpolitik*. The objective of the paper is to develop an interface between traditional and non-traditional security concerns in the context of South Asia. While the domain of traditional security concerns is well-defined and zealously guarded, no consensus is found as to what non-traditional security is, what includes and what it excludes and where to draw the line. An attempt is made to conceptualize non-traditional security. Finally, some policy propositions with regard to enhancing national and regional capacity to deal with both traditional and non-traditional security concerns in South Asia will be made. It is hoped that the agenda will have wider relevance to other developing regions.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Non-traditional security issues are a nascent topic of scholarly attention in recent times. Practically not much has been built in terms of conceptual and theoretical tools. However, thanks to attempts from organizations like the Ford Foundation, an attempt is going on to build empirical knowledge base<sup>1</sup> perhaps more at a descriptive level. Once sufficient descriptive knowledge is available at cross-country and cross-regional levels, this would pave the way to developing theoretically relevant and testable prepositions in international studies. The objective of the paper is to develop an interface between traditional and non-traditional security concerns in the context of South Asia. Interfacing is particularly relevant because while the old security agenda very much persist, newer issues cropped up, mingle and coexist with the traditional concerns. By interfacing we mean an intellectual understanding of this 'mingling and coexistence'. First of all, an attempt is made to conceptualize non-traditional security. While the domain of traditional security concerns is well-defined and zealously guarded, no consensus is found as to what non-traditional security is, what includes and what it excludes and where to draw the line. Secondly, by way of providing a brief profile of the seven South Asian countries, an attempt is made to provide an understanding of the nature of traditional and non-traditional security issues confronting these countries. The burden of the paper is on bringing out linkages

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1 Ford Foundation has sponsored a project called **Non Traditional Security Issues in South Asia** for the period October 1, 1999 to September 30, 2001. It is part of an Asia-wide project implemented by three institutions, Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo, for South Asia, UN University, Tokyo, for North eastern Asia, and the Institute for Defence and Strategic Studies, Singapore, for South east Asia. The project structured more or less similarly for the three regions, had three components : Globalization, Governance and Environment. The present author coordinated the Globalization component for South Asia.



between traditional and non-traditional security. Finally, some policy propositions with regard to enhancing national and regional capacity to deal with both traditional and non-traditional security concerns in South Asia will be made. It is hoped that the agenda will have wider relevance to other developing regions.

## II CONCEPTUALIZING NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY

Over the past decades, there has been a constant search for re-defining security because of fast changing national, regional and global milieu. In the process, it is being realized that the traditional state-centric, militaristic security paradigm can hardly address the security threats currently being faced by states, societies and individuals. Threats to survival and well-being of states, societies and individuals come - often in contradictory fashion - from non-state sources, mostly from within states, but also from extra-territorial sources. Certainly traditional security concerns like border and territoriality, power rivalry and arms race are not extinct. They are very much present in the developing world. Indeed, challenges to territorial sovereignty, sovereignty over resources, challenges to state autonomy in decision making in affairs of the state come from more variegated sources than traditional security experts can imagine. The problem is compounded by the almost incomprehensible speed at which changes are taking place in the domain of information flow and information technology. That means, traditional tools for dealing with even those areas which are considered traditional security concerns will have to be continually re-evaluated and re-designed. Thus, the need for a non-traditional approach to traditional militaristic security makes the task of interfacing between the two domains very pertinent.

An example will make things clear. Ethnicity and ethno-nationalistic insurgencies are traditional challenges to state authority and territoriality that cropped up mainly in the post-War decolonization period. What is new and non-traditional is the scale and frequency with which they are occurring in different parts of the globe. Although external linkages and assistance to insurgencies are also traditional problems, what is non-traditional is the degree of autonomy and scale at which insurgencies today have access to resources, technology including sophisticated conventional weaponry. What is non-traditional is that not only states are failing in dealing with the insurgencies, the very state structures are collapsing, a phenomenon we are calling failed state. There is an increasing realization that traditional counter-insurgency measures will not do. Whether the United Nations Peace Keeping Operations are only a transient phase giving way to peace building and social reconstruction efforts, only time will say.

There is also another non-traditional element in insurgencies. Earlier but not always, there were clear cut lines between insurgencies and ethnic conflicts, on the one hand, and various terrorist activities and trafficking in small arms, gems, valuable resources, even human beings, on the other. The borderline has become too thin to deal with traditional instruments. So much for traditional security issues.

In the domain of non-traditional security concerns, as they have already because known so, the catalogue is almost endless. States, societies, groups and individuals are frequently afflicted with ethnic, racial, religious/sectarian and group conflicts and violence. Environmental issues at global, inter-state and domestic levels are not only affecting the life support system in a slow but certain manner, but many of them are giving rise to violent conflicts. In a sense, what happened to Somalia and Rwanda may be traced to environmental issues – degradation of life supporting soil and water



system. Along with these, there are questions of food and energy security, large-scale movement of population across the borders giving rise to environmental refugees. Malnutrition, hunger, epidemics are killing millions of people.

At another level, there is the problem of direct threats to human security and human rights violation. Civilians including women and children are the victims of wars, ethnic insurgencies, counter-insurgencies and gang fighting in increasing numbers. State is supposed to ensure security and well-being of the citizens but in the name of internal order and stability, state apparatus itself resorts to violence and repression. Very often connivance and coalition of interests develop between the law enforcing agencies, on the one hand, and gangs and criminals, on the other, because of rent seeking and extortionist interests. Consequently, common people are subjected to torture, repression and physical threats.

Then there are extra-regional sources, some more crude and brutal, linked with poaching, piracy, trans-national crimes like smuggling, arms, drug and human trafficking. Others are subtle but sure sources like money laundering, marginalization and pauperization resulting from forces of globalization, WTO and aid conditionalities of the multilateral donor agencies.<sup>2</sup>

All these are usually considered as non-traditional security issues. Question is: how to grapple with them analytically? Greg Mills, a South African scholar, takes a comprehensive approach when he identifies four types of threats usually confronted by the developing countries. These are : *territorial threats* (some in

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2 An excellent discussion on the inclusive nature of the concept of security in the post-Cold War era may be found in C. Uday Bhaskar, "Post-Cold war Security", *Strategic Analysis, Monthly Journal of the IDSA* [New Delhi], Vol. XXI, No. 8 (November), 1997: 1136.

traditional sense but mostly in the sense of sovereign incursions by population groups, resource extractions, fishing, diversion of waters), *economic threats* (economic globalization and the sheer weight of international financial transactions provide opportunities to financial criminals to play fouls that affect developments and macro-economic stability, marginalization of the geographically disadvantaged countries, intellectual property rights, demographic issues, pandemic threats of AIDS, malaria and water borne diseases), *political threats* (corruption, piracy, illegal narcotics and small arms, extra-parliamentary agitation and street violence, money laundering), and *environmental threats* (transboundary pollution, global warming and nuclear waste, depleted natural resources including water, prospecting of transboundary mineral and marine resources).<sup>3</sup>

But a functional approach such as this misses the very perspective: whose security are we talking about? Unless we define that, contradictory conclusions and policy prepositions will follow. A hierarchical approach has been made by Bhaskar when he identifies three tiers of security : macro, meaning security in the context of power relations among the major powers – USA, EU, China, Japan and; traditional and non-traditional.<sup>4</sup> The last category encompasses ‘issues and factors that impinge on the security/stability of the state or individual and has become more noticeable after the demise of the Cold War.’<sup>5</sup> The hierarchical approach such as this cannot address the question of co-existence of traditional and non-traditional issues at the same level of analysis. The two sets of security issues may indeed coexist at the same level of analysis. For

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3 See, Greg Mills, “A 21st Century Security Agenda : The End of ‘Defence’ as We Know It?”, *Strategic Balance*, Vol. XX, No. 2, May 1977, p. 181.

4 See, Bhaskar, *op. cit.*, p. 1143.

5 *Ibid*, p. 1143.



example, at the bilateral plane, conflict over Kashmir between India and Pakistan entails the non-traditional security issues of insurgency, involvement of foreign *Mujahideens*, and flow of small arms, at one end of the spectrum, and traditional security issues like the possibility of conventional confrontation and use of nuclear weapons, at the other.

A very pioneering and useful concept has been propounded by the UNDP in 1994: Human Development which for the first time and in a systematic manner, brings the people, the citizens, the individuals under focus. By focusing on human development, UNDP made a comprehensive approach to cover food security, energy security, environmental security, sustainable development and human rights.

In the context of security discourse, a slightly modified concept is human security. One operational value of the concept is that it readily brings out the tensions and contradictions between state security and human or societal security into sharp focus. The argument is: any attempt at enhancing state security, which at times, means nothing more than regime security and empowering the state apparatus, at the cost of well-being of the people, cannot be considered to be bolstering even national security. This is because the regime loses its legitimacy, the citizens are deprived and underdeveloped. Having said that, it should also be recognized that the state is likely to remain as an organizing socio-political unit in the developing societies in the foreseeable future because of their remarkable degree of adaptability. Therefore, minimum defence requirement will remain, and along with it, will remain the classical debate in civil-military relations: how minimum is optimum? Not only that, the debate cannot be confined to this point only, because these are assumed or in-built character of the state apparatus to

because self-perpetuating and self-empowering, and to that extent repressive and violator of human rights. So the tensions between state security and human security become a legitimate agenda of security discourse.

The question is : What to include and what not to include in security discourse. If we bring in every single problem that affects human welfare under its rubric, then the concept itself will be unmanageable, and therefore, devoid of any useful meaning. Such an all-inclusive agenda will obstruct the development of a coherent conceptual and analytical framework and hence no useful policy proposition will logically follow.

One may, of course, argue, that if an issue or a phenomenon affects human welfare, it should be on the priority list and by incorporating such an issue or the phenomenon in security discourse, a sense of priority or heightened stake is attached to it. Thus, securitization of an otherwise important issue helps attracting policy attention, one may argue. But the counter-argument is no less weighty. Attaching high priority to such disparate issues as food, environment and human rights, for example, is one thing, and bringing them within a coherent paradigm is another thing. On the contrary, such issues as sustainable development, food security, energy security, global environmental issues, have their own disciplines, concepts, analytical tools and policy frames. The problems are best approached within their existing paradigmatic framework rather than reinventing one. The reason these problems often persist despite intellectual advancement on them have to be traced to problems of governance – lack of an accountable and democratic governance. Not only securitization will not solve the problem, securitization will have its own baggage, and therefore, securitization involves stretching issues. Secondly, securitization in



the absence of an established methodology may lead to militarization. For securitized issues, state perspectives take precedence over other individual and citizen perspectives providing a perfect pretext for state repression and human rights violation. And one ends up with traditional security concerns of the state.

The point we are making is that in order to have a meaningful concept, we need a dividing line so that the concept of security is not rendered bereft of its essence: core value or interests threatened arousing heightened degree of fear with less reaction time. So, security is freedom from fear, violence and torture. So, one demarcating line that is proposed here is the use of force, violence involving a heightened degree of fear and less reaction time.

What is proposed here is basically a scaled down version of the concept of traditional security. By doing that we are deviating from the UNDP concept of freedom from want. This is justified because the actors – both state and non-state – so easily and so extensively use the instrument of violence that possibly the main reason people cannot get rid of poverty today is the fear of violence. Demand for just wages, food, habitat and rightful share of resources is met with force and violence. It is true that there are more deaths from hunger, malnutrition and diseases, but fear and violence are more overcoming, conspicuous and debilitating.

The state retains huge coercive power, at the same time, other non-state actors - individuals, groups and gangs in both organized and unorganized sectors - have increased access to instruments of violence, so that the combined effect enormous and individuals groups and different societal segments are subjected to violence and fear almost on a day-to-day basis. Violence and fear originating from it are so salient in their lives that unless this core human security concern is addressed, issues of sustainable developments and

empowerment will carry less meaning to the insecure populace. This is perhaps true more for South Asia, a peculiar region where nuclearization, conventional arms build up go hand in hand with flow of small arms, drugs, insurgencies, sectarian and communal violence, extra-parliamentary political violence and instability. In the context of India-Pakistan relations, one would find that insurgency and very high stake inter-state confrontation, small arms and sophisticated nuclear weaponry, form a continuum so that traditional and non-traditional security issues become enmeshed. Even freedom from want and freedom from fear, the two variants of human security discourse, are enmeshed when one observes that poverty and deprivation, environmental degradation are mixed with unorganized but endemic class, caste and group violence; political process is linked with black money, extortion and rent seeking. This is a region where protracted conflicts like Kashmir and Sri Lankan ethnic conflict continue and, at the same time, newer types of conflicts have emerged. Even moves for regional and sub-regional cooperation are subjects of controversy and deadlocks originating from security paranoid. It is against this backdrop that an attempt has been made in this paper to understand the linkages between traditional and non-traditional security issues in the context of South Asia.

### III. SOCIO-POLITICAL SCENARIO IN SOUTH ASIA

South Asia is home of more than one billion population over only two percent of the landmass of the globe. It is also the largest concentration of poverty, a number of protracted conflicts apart from a number of insurgencies. It is a region of wide diversity in terms of size, economic structure, power capability and military balance, ethnic composition (Table 1). The seven countries may be classified into the following categories: India is at the apex, Bangladesh and



Pakistan medium sized; Sri Lanka and Nepal, small sized, while Bhutan and Maldives, micro-states. Before profiles of the individual countries are presented, a number of features may be mentioned. Firstly, the region is Indo-centric in the sense that India occupies a central location and its physical size and population is simply overwhelming. Another dimension of Indo-centricity is that all the six South Asian countries have land or maritime borders with India but none have borders with each other, excepting Sri Lanka and Maldives, two neighbouring island states. A second feature is that problems of insecurity in both traditional and non-traditional terms emanates from within the region, not from outside. More specifically, the neighbours traditionally perceive India as a source of threats to their own security. Excepting in the case of India-Pakistan relations, perhaps, such perceptions have changed, yet lingering uneasiness in bilateral relations in which new and old irritants very often surface remain.

### **3.1 Socio-political Structure**

Although the Subcontinent, especially Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, had the same colonial experience, they tended to follow divergent socio-political paths in the wake of independence. In the post-Cold War era, there has been some tendency toward democratization, but then there have been reversals also. As they stand now, four of the countries, namely, India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, are democracies, Maldives may be considered semi-democracy, Bhutan is ruled by monarchy while Pakistan is ruled by military dictatorship. Only India and Sri Lanka may claim to have somewhat uninterrupted democracies, with the exception of short interregnum of 1975-1977 in the case of India when emergency was imposed.

Nepal, which historically experimented with parliamentary democracy in the 1950s, had been ruled by absolute monarch like Bhutan until 1991 when the role of monarchy was reduced to a constitutional head and parliamentary democracy was introduced.<sup>6</sup> Pakistan started its independent existence with democratic governance but in a decade's time it was caught in military rules which continued throughout the 1960s. Democracy was restored in the 1970s after the traumatic experience of its break up and emergence of Bangladesh. But again it relapsed into martial law for more than a decade. After about a decade of unstable democracy, again military has taken over and seems to be destined to be ruled by the military for at least half a decade from now. The structural problem with Pakistan is that the society is feudal in character which is reinforced by praetorian political culture. Military has situated itself in an entrenched position and in any crisis, common as well as educated section of the society look up to it as a saviour.

Bangladesh more or less inherited similar praetorian political culture but in the 1990s it seems to have been inexorably set for democratic governance, although democracy here again in very fragile and marked by violence and a paralyzed parliament. But the social and political culture of the country is characterized by an agitative egalitarianism so that the polity has historically become a difficult terrain for authoritarianism. A second positive development is the reversal in role perception of the military which is now inclined toward professionalism. Its new found role in UN peace keeping serves as a deterrent to any adventurism. Besides there seems to be a consensus between the two major political parties to

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6 Nepal's latest spell of democratic experiences have been rather traumatic in view of the fact that none of the political parties got absolute majority and as such frequent defection of coalition partners as well as members of the ruling party itself lead to fall of government.



redress professional grievances of the military and keep it happy in terms of allocation of budgetary resources.

Sri Lanka had a well-functioning parliamentary system of democracy but two fatal blows, one by a Trotskyite leftist insurrection in 1971 which almost toppled the government<sup>7</sup> and then a prolonged spell of Tamil insurgency, which continues to date, have paved the way to presidential system of government. Maldives, a British protectorate with British airbase at the Gaan island, became independent in 1965 and has had been ruled by *sultanate* followed by Presidential system. But the political disposition is not democratic. The legislature, known as *Majlis* consists of nominated or selected members.

On the basis of the above review of socio-political structure, a number of observations may be made. First, democratic process in South Asia is incipient and struggling. But there is a craving for democracy. With market opening and emerging civil societies in all the countries, democracy is taking roots. But in the short term, the transitional societies in South Asia are experiencing instabilities and violence of different sorts. Personality cult, bureaucratic dominance and rent seeking character of social forces feature the functioning of the political process. Good governance remains the avowed goal yet undemocratic governance, state repression and lack of accountability are rule of the day. Secondly, a discernible pattern of rise into salience of religious and sectarian forces in political process in the South Asian countries. That means South Asian countries have to go

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7 The movement led by Janata Vimukti Peramuna (JVP- People's Liberation Front) mainly concentrated in the south of the island state recurred again in the late 1980s when it coincided with the height of Tamil insurgency in the north. However, when the government could kill the main leaders of the movement and capture and jail others, the movement subsided.

social classes, ethnic and religious groups and regions, a sense of deprivation and dissent is formed fast creating the basis of conflicts and insecurity.<sup>16</sup>

#### IV. SECURITY SCENARIO IN SOUTH ASIA

##### 4.1 Traditional Security Issues

Peace and stability in South Asia has been hostage to a number of major wars and conflicts in the region, the main one being Kashmir over which India and Pakistan fought twice, 1947-48 and 1965. Besides there have been other conflicts between the two combatants, as well as between other neighbours.<sup>17</sup>

Among the conflicts that shape the security relations in South Asia, the nuclear issue figures prominently. The shared perceptions between India and Pakistan has been that nuclear weapons would provide guarantee national security and provide an element of stability in bilateral relations.<sup>18</sup> Of course, the *raison d'etre* of respective nuclear programme by India and Pakistan has been different, India pointing fingers to China, while Pakistan to India itself. India is believed to have started its nuclear programme sometime in the 1960s leading to its test explosion in 1974. The then

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16 Linkage between wars and economic deprivations (poverty, indebtedness, resource depletion) has been established in a recent study that found that : there were wars in 65 of the 125 developing countries listed in the 1993 Human Development Report. Of them there were wars in 50% of the developing countries. Of them again, 10 were among the top third of the developing countries measured by HDI; 24 were in the middle third and 31 were in the poorest third. It was also observed that most violent conflicts associated with the poorest. See, *ibid*.

17 For an exhaustive compendium of conflicts in the region, see, Abdur Rob Khan, "Contemporary International Conflicts in South Asia: A Compendium", *BISS Journal* (Dhaka), Vol. 14, No. 4, October 1993: 525-552.

18 See, Ambalavnar Sivarajah, "Intra-regional Relations in South Asia in the 1990s" in George A. Cooray (ed.), *New Dimensions in Regional Security After the Cold War: The Case of South Asia*, Colombo : Institute for International Studies(IIS), Sri Lanka, 1997:37.



through the painful process of democratization and at the same time, deal with non-traditional sources insecurity. Some of them also emanate from the developmental process itself.

### 3.2 Development Scenario

As may be seen in Table 1, the countries of South Asia belong to categories of less developed countries with per capita GNP varying between US \$220(Nepal) and US\$ 1167(Maldives). With the exception of Pakistan and Nepal, the South Asian countries are performing well in terms of annual growth rate of GDP which averaged between 4-6%, thanks to gradual opening of the economies. A gradual structural transformation is also taking place with shrinking role of agriculture and expanding role of service sector. What, however, is disquietening is the rather very small role of the manufacturing sector.

Another way is to look at the human development index. The UNDP in its *Human Development Report* for 2001 brings out the ranking of 162 countries. From the report, a picture of the South Asian countries may be obtained(Table 2). All South Asian countries excepting Sri Lanka and Maldives fall in the category of low human development.<sup>8</sup> Among the lot, Bangladesh changes position with Bhutan and becomes the lowest with rank at 132, Bhutan followed closely by Nepal, scoring 130 and 129, respectively. It is interesting to note that Maldives and Sri Lanka rank higher in terms of HDI than their corresponding ranks in real per capita GDP in terms of purchasing power parity(PPP).<sup>9</sup> That means social development

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8 See, United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2001: Making New Technologies Work for Human Development*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001: 142-43.

9 *Ibid*, p. 76.

indicators in these countries are higher than their income levels would have suggested. Levels of social development in other countries excepting India are lower than their income levels. This is most starkly evident in the case of Pakistan.

The region is the home of more than 560 million poor, which is more than half of the world's poor. Individual country picture varies somewhat. For example, in Bangladesh, available studies suggest that poverty has declined somewhat and the decline is more pronounced in the urban area than in the rural area.<sup>10</sup> However, the decline has not been sustained and there are reasons to believe that poverty might have increased since mid-1980s. Although Bhutan ranks rather low in HDI, it is understood that there is no serious shortage of food and the average calorie intake is not that low either. Sustained poverty decline, however, has taken place in India where poverty ratio was 48.3 % in 1977-78 and it came down to 18.3% in 1992.<sup>11</sup>

**Table 2 : HDI Ranking of the South Asian Countries.**

Countries	HDI Value 1999	Real GDP Per Capita(PPP \$)	HDI Rank 1999	Real GDP Per Capita Rank – HDI Rank
Bangladesh	0.470	1483	132	-4
Bhutan	0.477	1341	130	5
India	0.571	2248	115	0
Maldives	0.739	4423	77	7

10 See, Abdur Rob Khan, "Poverty Alleviation in Donor Development Policy Towards Bangladesh : A Perspective" in AKM Abdus Sabur (ed.), *Development Cooperation at the Dawn of Twenty First Century : Bangladesh-German Partnership in Perspective*, Dhaka : Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, 2000.

11 See, Indra Nath Mukherji, "Underdevelopment, Poverty and Imbalance in Development in South Asia" in Nancy Jetly(ed.) *Regional Security in South Asia: The Ethno-Sectarian Dimension*, Dhaka: The University Press Limited, 2000: 77.



Nepal	0.480	1237	129	7
Pakistan	0.498	1834	127	-5
Sri Lanka	0.735	3279	81	19

Source : UNDP, *Human Development Report 2001: Making New Technologies Work for Human Development*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001: 142-43.

At the macro level, performance of the Maldivian economy has been fairly robust and incidence of poverty is quite low. Calorie intake is high as well. However, Maldives faces the problem of pockets of poverty because of the uneconomic overhead costs of infrastructure building and transportation resulting from high dispersal of population into hundreds of islands.<sup>12</sup>

In the context of Nepal, there has been varying estimates but the trend is not a declining one.<sup>13</sup> In Pakistan, various studies carried out in the 1980s suggest an incidence of poverty ranging from 16-21% and a declining trend is observed. In Sri Lanka, number of households in absolute poverty is estimated at 19% of the population in 1978-79 which increased to 27% in 1986-87.<sup>14</sup>

Overall, the sheer magnitude of poverty poses a major threat to "fabric of South Asian societies" as aptly observed by the Independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation.<sup>15</sup> When the rise in the absolute number of poor people is accompanied by a skewed distribution of income, wealth and opportunities across

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12 Only three of the 200 inhabited islands have a population more than 4000, 162 islands have less than 1000, and there are 90 islands with fewer than 500 inhabitants. See, Ahmed Shahid *et al*, "Regional Economic Trends and Security : Implications for the Maldives", paper presented at an international conference on *Regional Economic Trends and Security in South Asia*, organized by Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo, held on October 17-20, 1995 at Bandos Island Resort, Maldives.

13 See, Mukherji, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

14 *Ibid.*

15 See, Ahmed Shahid, *op. cit.*

Pakistani Prime Minister responded saying that Pakistan must develop its nuclear weapons even if it had to do so by "eating grass". In the 1980s and 1990s it was believed that both India and Pakistan have attained nuclear capability, although both preferred to keep nuclear ambiguity. However, in May 1998, India came open by making five nuclear blasts and Pakistan followed suits.

A number of impact areas of nuclearization in South Asia may be identified. The most important impact has been felt in the area of regional peace and stability. Initially, it seemed that the Pakistani objective of deterrence was achieved and the deterrence was being reciprocated by India. The nuclear explosions were followed in quick succession by 10<sup>th</sup> SAARC summit in Colombo, bus diplomacy and the Lahore Declaration. However, the rapprochement was soon shattered by Kargil and military takeover in Pakistan by General Pervez Musharraf. So, the deterrence proved to be extremely short lived. Apart from a number of consequences, Kargil proved that limited conventional war was possible in Indo-Pakistan dyadic relationship. Among the consequences, one was the rise of defence spending not only in India and Pakistan, but also among the other neighbours like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal. The argument that nuclearization will eschew conventional arms build up has been proved wrong. Rather conventional arms build up has been geared up both in India and Pakistan. Another casualty has been the regional cooperation process. The SAARC summit which was to be held in November 1999 in Kathmandu was postponed and remains so ever since.

#### **4.2 Non-traditional Security Issues**

This section gives a run down of non-traditional security issues confronting the South Asian countries.



*Non-traditional Security Issues Confronting Bangladesh*

- a. Inflow of Small Arms and Drug : Small arms and drugs are ubiquitous and profusely used in Bangladesh as in other South Asian countries. However, what is worrying is the inflow of these menaces from external or trans-national sources. Estimates differ and quantities of small arms inflow in Bangladesh perhaps will be less than what is happening in the context of India or Pakistan. But it is causing security threats to the state and the society, for at least two reasons: first, the rate is increasing at an alarming pace<sup>19</sup>; second, Bangladesh is a soft state and a soft society, the impact of small arms proliferation and drug is easily felt. Use of small arms and drugs are gaining autonomous proportion in the sense that the administration and law enforcing agencies have practically little control over the trafficking and use. In fact, proliferation of small arms has gained a territorial dimension in south-west Bangladesh, despite the apparent success of the combing operation. There is a third reason, which is less realized at policy level related to the mechanism for the inflow. Evidence is galore that valuable domestic products like urea fertilizer, imported products like electronic equipments, domestic resources like *Hilsa* fish, even gold smuggled in from other sources like Singapore and Dubai are smuggled out of the country across the borders and payment from the other side is made in terms of arms and drugs.
- b. Transit of Arms, Drugs across Bangladeshi Lands : Coastal areas, Cox's Bazar in particular, are used in arms transit; ports reportedly used as transit routes for drugs from the so-called

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19 Neila Husain, "Problems of Proliferation of Small Arms in Bangladesh", in Dipankar Banerjee (ed.), *South Asia at Gun Point: Small Arms & Light Weapons Proliferation*, Colombo, 2000.

golden triangle. The case of arms transit to NE India is a constant sore point in Bangladesh-India relations.

- c. Use of Bangladesh Territories by Insurgents and Outlaws : This includes the NE insurgents, outlaws like Rohingya refugees who reportedly take arms training in the jungles of Cox's Bazar, Ramu, Ukhiya. The borders are very porous and resource crunch does not allow Bangladesh to patrol the borders rigorously. A bewildering array of coalitions and conflicts take place in the north east sub-region and Bangladesh's security will be jeopardised if it is sucked into the vortex of north east insurgency. CHT straddles the Mongoloid ethnic belt ranging from China, through NE India, Myanmar upto SE Asia. Bangladesh will automatically be drawn into the conflicts if a pan-Mongoloid movement takes place in an age of globalization and IT. Presently Bangladesh figures quite frequently and prominently in any Indian official or academic discourse on insurgency in the NE. It is also on this count that Bangladesh has become the cross-roads of foreign intelligence agencies. Mention may be made of the reported use of Bangladesh lands by Pakistani ISI agents and possible links with extreme rightists elements inside the country. A couple of news items may be mentioned : plane hijacking at Kathmandu airport done by ISI agents was planned in Dhaka; Indian security forces enter Bangladesh territories and recovers explosives from mosque in northern Bangladesh.
- d. Poaching, Piracy and Dumping in the Bay of Bengal – this is likely to increase in the coming years. Indicator: dwindling sweet water fishery and Bayladelis increased dependence on marine fisheries. Indian, Korean, Thai and Mynmarese fishing trawlers regularly encroach Bayladelis territorial waters. Piracy and



- deviant shipping in the ports have increased, dumping of hazardous waste take place.
- e. Border Skirmishes – intrusions, abductions, forcible harvesting, shooting and killing along the Bangladesh-India borders have increased alarmingly.
  - f. Extra-parliamentary Violence and Killings in Politics : With the people's spontaneous uprising in 1990 leading to restoration of parliamentary democracy in the country, it must be said and emphasized that one very major source of internal insecurity, namely, military interventions in politics and civil-military feuds has been removed. Unfortunately that seems to have been replaced by another perennial source of instability – extra-parliamentary street violence and now that has been joined by rampant political killings in the country. That there is a basic divide in the country along ideological line, that politics in Bangladesh combines black money, political corruption and muscle power is well-known. This has been a source of instability in the country. What is significant is that because of political feuds, not only people's economic well-being suffers, even their physical well-being do not figure in politics. Human security is totally ignored by politicians.
  - g. Residual Insurgency Problems in the Chittagong Hill Tracts: The strategic aspects of the problem of a low level but prolonged insurgency in the CHT has been removed by the 1997 Peace Accord. These were : return of refugees from Tripura, surrender of arms by the insurgents and virtual acceptance by the tribal leadership of the Bengali settlers by the Hill leadership. But problem of implementation, particularly, rehabilitation, land dispute settlement and functioning of the political process in terms of the Regional Council remain. Then there is an armed

dissent group who are finding shelters across the borders. Sporadic violence between tribal people and the Bengali settlers continues.

- h. Human Security issues : Repression by state apparatus, death in custody; law and order problem and rise of social violence – rising extortions and rent seeking activities at all levels and layers - social, political and administrative; gender violence, women and child trafficking; land related violence; disaster, drought and river erosion resulting in destitution and rural-urban migration; Plight of the border and enclave population, plight of the minorities and settlers in CHT, and aboriginal population

#### *Bhutan and Maldives:*

Profile of Bhutan and Maldives are two tiny states with less than a million population, and they present a contrasting picture because one is land locked and the other is an island state.

An internal problem having inter-state ramifications for Bhutan-Nepal relations is the refugee problem. Bhutan and Nepal have been caught in a non-traditional conflict in the sense as 90,000 Bhutanese of Nepalese origins have taken refuge in Nepal following alleged persecution by the Bhutanese government. Moreover, there is an alleged incipient insurgency activity among the Bhutanese refugee raising law and order concerns in Nepal which is otherwise caught in a Maoist guerrilla uprising. Bhutan, on the other hand, is also caught in the cross-fire of another insurgency in Northeast India, in particular, in Assam.<sup>20</sup> Bhutan frequently experiences incursions from Indian security forces in hot pursuit of the guerrillas.<sup>21</sup> Bhutan has on its soil, the presence of large number of Indian army which

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20 The insurgency is waged by United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA).

21 See, *Asia 2000 Yearbook*, Far Eastern Economic Review, Hong Kong, 2000, 83-84.



makes China wary because it has boundary dispute with China over about 269 sq km in northern Bhutan.<sup>22</sup> In 1999, Bhutan encountered some difficulties with a distant foreign power, namely, USA, which delayed a request by Bhutan to open a consulate in New York because of Bhutan's alleged human rights abuse and its treatment of the refugees in Nepal.

One non-traditional security concern that brings the two countries on more or less similar ground is global warming. A major non-traditional threat to survival of Maldives emanates from the reported rise in the sea level from global warming which might lead to submergence of the whole of the archipelagic country. Interestingly, Bhutan is also affected by global warming following massive melting of the snows leading to flooding and submergence.

Maldives has no standing army excepting some paramilitia, known as *laskareen*, but need for regular defence force has been increasingly felt following attempted coup in 1988 by soldiers of fortune. The event also indicated that many of its unmanned islands could be used for transnational criminal activities like arms training, smuggling and piracy. Its vast sea resources are often threatened by encroachment into its territorial waters.

## V. INTERFACING TRADITIONAL AND NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY IN SOUTH ASIA

Security issues and sources of conflicts in most of the developing regions with colonial backgrounds may be said to have three broad roots : legacies of the colonial era, issues related to nation building process, especially identity assertion and strengthening national security, and thirdly, lack of adequate

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22 *Ibid.*, p. 84.

conflict resolution mechanism.<sup>23</sup> What, however, is less recognized is the complex nature of interaction between what are known as traditional and non-traditional sources of insecurity which often lead to transmutation of the conflicts.<sup>24</sup>

A tentative attempt will be made to identify the linkage variables in the interface. The examples given here help us identify a set of variables. The example of the Afghan crisis in the wake of the former Soviet invasion of Afghanistan illustrates that choice for a low cost instrument and preference for avoiding direct confrontation were the guiding forces for US arming of the Afghan *Mujaheedins* through Pakistan. But the *Mujaheedins* carried with them two baggages – Islamic ideology and unfortunately, drug culture. Soon, another dimension was added – foreign nationals from some of the Islamic countries, not to speak of Pakistanis. So, a number of elements from the domain of non-traditional security, namely, the so-called fundamentalist flavour to a guerrilla warfare, small arms, drugs and foreign nationals, were added to what was a super power rivalry and proxy regional warfare.

In the context of Kashmir conflict, similar interesting combinations of traditional and non-traditional elements may be observed. Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan began as a traditional security issue but interestingly the trigger was provided

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23 A somewhat dated but interesting analysis may be found in Bhabani Sengupta and Amit Gupta, "Changing Patterns of Regional Conflicts in South Asia" in Bhabani Sen Gupta (ed.) *Regional Cooperation and Development in South Asia*, Vol. I : *Perceptual, Military and Nuclear Arms Race Problems*, New Delhi : South Asian Publishers, 1986: 247.

24 Scholars, of course, talk of intermeshing nature of domestic and external conflicts. See, *ibid.*, p. 262-63. However, what we are talking about here is transformation of issues so that the dividing line between traditional or state-centric issues into non-traditional ones.



by a non-traditional element, penetration of tribal forces into Kashmir by Pakistan in October 1947. Since then, however, the issue remained a high stake inter-state conflict until late 1980s when the Kashmiri militants started an uprising in the Kashmir valley. India alleged of Pakistani involvement in training and arming the militants while Pakistan alleged Indian suppression and violation of human rights. Soon nuclear dimension was added to the Kashmiri uprising when both USA and former Soviet Union started crisis management diplomacy over the reported Pakistani and Indian deployment of nuclear warheads over the developments in Kashmir. The low level insurgency has been going on since then in Kashmir for more than a decade. Both India and Pakistan in the meantime, attained nuclear capability in 1998. The situation again developed into a major crisis verging on a near-conventional war when the Kashmiri militants aided directly by Pakistani regular forces occupied the heights of Kargil pass. Pakistan was forced to withdraw the forces under its control from Kargil to defuse the crisis.

In the context of Indo-Bangladesh relations, the interface is provided by linkage politics or bargaining chip.<sup>25</sup> The 27-year old Ganges water sharing dispute was resolved through a 30-year accord 1996 and it was followed by resolution of another vexed issue in Indo-Bangladesh relations, namely, insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts(CHT) and repatriation of the Chakma refugees from the bordering Indian state of Tripura. It is believed that understanding on a package deal of mutual give and take was made. In favour of

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25 This goes contrary to what was given to believe under the rubric of what has come to be known as Gujral doctrine after the then Indian Foreign Minister (later Prime Minister), I.K. Gujral. The essence of Gujral doctrine has been that except in the case of Pakistan, India can afford and should make concession to its smaller neighbours on non-reciprocal basis for the sake of peace and amity in the region.

Bangladesh, these included water sharing, return of refugees with a message to the insurgents from India that they must strike a deal with the Bangladesh government. For India, these included a commitment not to allow the use of Bangladesh's soil by North Eastern insurgents, and granting of transit facilities to India to facilitate overland transportation to Indian North eastern states.

The Maldivian case, which happened in the last days of the Cold War illustrates the opposite point. The case was one of a *coup de etat* with the help of mercenaries. But the coup makers at least initially were so overwhelming that the incumbent President perceived it to be a grave crisis so much so that he sent SOS to a number of friendly countries including India. Indian response emanated from a set of strategic and tactical dimensions. The strategic dimension emanated from the fact that India inherited the concept from the British that the Subcontinent and its peripheries belonged to the strategic orbit of mainland India. India expressed this a few years back in the context of the Tamil ethnic conflict in terms of what came out to be known as Indira doctrine after the slain Indian PM, Mrs. Indira Gandhi. When the Maldivian President sent SOS, India swung into action before any other power or country could come to Maldives's aid. The tactical aspect was reflected into the way India brought its airforce from the Southern Command, its navy and army into a well-coordinated exercise. The exercise was of great value to India at that time because it was already militarily involved in the Sri Lankan ethnic imbroglio through the July 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan Accord. In any case, the point that is made here is that it was the severity of crisis generated by the mercenary attack that pulled in the strategic and tactical dimensions of traditional security discourse. Perhaps, India's disposition, if not the



idiosyncratic dispositions of the then Indian PM, Rajiv Gandhi, to play such a regional role, may also be added as explanatory variable.

## VI. STATE OF SECURITY STUDIES IN SOUTH ASIA

Security studies in South Asia are in a very nascent stage. Excepting in India and to an extent in Sri Lanka, security studies in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal have been a taboo. Only with the ongoing democratization process, civilian scholars and academicians have been taking positive interests in security studies. But most of the studies are speculative, and have less operational value. Only a handful of scholars, say one among a dozen of political scientists and international relations experts write and research on security issues. Rather an interesting trend is that retired generals, diplomats and bureaucrats write on traditional security issues. At times, security studies and area studies get mixed up. The writings are existentialist, focusing on epochal issues like 1947-48 and 1965 Kashmir wars, 1971 India-Pakistan war, nuclearization, Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Indeed a sizable body of literature has developed on India-Pakistan rivalry epitomised in nuclearization in South Asia. But the writings are characterised by nationalistic colours so much so that even if there is dissent or non-conformism at the domestic level on such national issues like governance and social development issues, scholars, even civil society members become polarized along the nationalistic lines. In the wake of nuclear detonation in May 1998, the civil society protests have been rather weak. In its place, the nationalistic writings of even these who advocated rapprochement superseded writings on reconciliation. Only a handful, less than a dozen scholars and activists in the region, make a

passionate plea for taking a true South Asian perspective on critical issues.<sup>26</sup>

Gender security is becoming popular among women scholars in IR in the region. At least two initiatives may be mentioned : Women in International Security and Conflict Management Programme (WISCOMP) in New Delhi, and Forum for Women and Security and International Affairs(FOWSIA) based in Dhaka. While some international conferences have been organized, but both are only very recent initiatives and they are yet to produce any written output. But both these initiatives are atypical with respect to what is usually known as feminist movements do not encourage dialogue between male and female on gender issues.

While a good number of scholars with IR, political science and sociology background have taken up non-traditional security issue like gender, migration and cross-border population movement, ethnicity, there is no linkage between traditional security concerns and non-traditional ones so that it is not readily evident how these issues could be considered as security issues.

A growing number of scholars are coming up in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka taking up issues pertinent to respective countries. Thus, mention may be made of works on refugees, population movement and insurgency in India, water sharing, governance, trade and WTO in Bangladesh, ethnic

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26 Mention may be made of a regional forum, known as Fellowship in South Asian Alternatives(FISAA) under which scholars from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka undertake research projects like nuclear security, water, ethnicity, education and try to develop research papers for wider dissemination in different countries. The Group sponsored by the Ford Foundation and Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo, is also preparing the basis for a South Asian University to train faculty for engendering regional perspectives on critical regional issues.



separatism in Sri Lanka, cultural exclusivity in Bhutan, environmental concerns, especially impact of global warming in Maldives, fall out of Indian perceived domination in Nepal.

The upshot is security studies in non-traditional areas are carried out mostly within their respective domains and much remains to be desired in terms of developing a set of tools to examine them in non-traditional security perspectives.

## VII. SUGGESTED SECURITY AGENDA IN THE NON-TRADITIONAL FIELDS

On the basis of the discussion in the paper, a number of policy suggestions may be made here:

Firstly, security discourse should be humanised and de-statised. It has been shown that focus on state-centric military-based security may lead to double insecurity: more state insecurity and jeopardising human security.

Secondly, choice between coercion/counter-force, on the one hand, pacification and cooperation, on the other, depends not only situation but also on the nature of measures. Inadequately and hurriedly designed peace making may worsen the situation, as may be seen in the context of the Assam situation in North East India. A diversionary tactic of coaxing second tier or third tier or faction leadership keeping the mainstream leadership in tact may also not pay off, as has been evident in the case of LTTE-led insurgency in Sri Lanka.

Thirdly, an important consideration of dealing with incipient insurgency which eventually snowballs into full-fledged insurgency is the inter-temporal cost of mitigating the root causes of insurgency. It is possible to head off an incipient insurgency at a lower costs than

if allowed to linger and harden. Often it is characteristically convenient to pass an incipient insurgency as a law and order issue and in the process rub the wound in the wrong way.

Fourthly, borders in the post-Cold War era has become porous and with flow of information and easy access to technology, cross-border movements of insurgencies, arms and drugs, even trafficking of women and children makes a *prima facie* ground for cooperative security. The current trend in South Asia is quite the opposite. On the one hand, one is talking about cooperation and interaction. On the other hand, polities are turning out to be increasingly security states with heightened degree of security paranoid. Visa restrictions are stringently applied, costly physical barriers are placed to stop movement across borders. Construction of barbed wire fencing along the Bangladesh-India borders is a case in point. A frequent refrain in Indo-Pakistan relations and in the domestic politics of Bangladesh is the intrusion of Pakistani intelligence agency, known as ISI.<sup>27</sup> It is submitted that openness and free flow of information, rather than closing the doors is the best remedy for intrusion of unwanted elements.

Fifthly, environmental security, especially issues like flooding, natural disaster, presents another logical basis for thinking in terms of cooperative security among the neighbours.

Sixthly, institutionalization of democracy, even if slow and painful, should continue to sort out many of the non-traditional security areas, and a policy suggestion will be to resist temptation of

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27 ISI stands for inter-service intelligence which became notorious during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan when ISI was used by the USA and the Pakistan government in aiding the Afghan *Mujahedins*. Later on, ISI has been accused of spreading fundamentalist ideology and activism in India through Bangladesh.



any short cut and allow the political process to continue even if the process turns out to be traumatic. If there is a choice between the so-called good governance and democratic governance, the choice should be for the latter because the former is state centric and does not allow popular participation. A vibrant local government system should be in place to allow democratic participation and in the process, dissent and grievances may be ventilated.

Seventhly, in order to check against violation of human rights, independence of judiciary, judicial activism and a strong civil society are needed.

### VIII. CONCLUSION

One may conclude that at least in South Asia, end of Cold War has not been accompanied by the end of history. Rather it was a step back to the history. Traditional security issues are very much on the agenda, non-traditional and newer sources of insecurity have emerged and they are very much linked to the traditional issues. And, more interestingly, the linkages are provided again by the dictums of *realpolitik*.

Non-traditional security is a very nascent and under-researched area. Further research is needed in a number of issue areas. One area could be impact of non-traditional security on the role and relevance of instruments and institutions of traditional security, like the state itself, armed forces, R & D, role of private institutions and civil society in managing the security apparatus. A second area of suggested research area will be sourcing and locating indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms available in South Asian societies and profiling them in a comparative framework. A third area will be to evolve early warning and capacity building to deal with the conflicts.

Table 1 : A Profile of the South Asian Countries

Country	Area(000 km <sup>2</sup> ), Borders with	Population (million)	Ethnic Composition	GDP (US\$) & Growth Rate	GNP per Capita (US\$)	Defence Forces (000)	Defence Expenditure (\$bn)	Traditional Security Issues	Non-traditional Security Issues
Bangladesh	144 India, Myanmar	130	99% mainland Bengali pops, less than 1% Mongoloid tribes, 88% Muslim, 11% Hindus, 1% Christian, Buddhists	41 bn 1998 4.6% 1996-97	360	121	\$0.60 bn 1998 1.7% of GDP	Land and Maritime Borders with India, water sharing dispute with India, perceived Indian domination	Extreme poverty, internally displaced population, Rohingya Refugees from Myanmar, law and order and widespread social violence, Extra-parliamentary political instability, Cross-border movement of insurgents
Bhutan	47 India, China	0.78	Lamaistic Buddhist 75% Hindu 25% 35% Nepalese origins	3 bn Growth rate 5.8% 1998	510	6	\$0.018 bn 4.5%	1949 Indo-Bhutanese Treaty guides its defence & foreign policies, border issues with China	Protective about external cultural influence; Assamese insurgents, Assam as ULFA, take refuge in Southern Bhutan; protective of its own culture & identity
India	3,287 Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan	975 m 1997	80% Hindu, 12% Muslims, 2% Christians % 2% Buddhists	381 bn Growth rate 4.3%	370	1.7 m(+528 reserve)	\$10.5 bn 2.4%	With China, border disputes & nuclear threats, with Pakistan, Kashmir conflict and nuclear rivalry, with Bangladesh, border, water sharing	Several insurgencies -Kashmir and North East being the main, illegal movement of population, terrorism and small arms flow
Maldives	0.3 Island state	277,579 (est. 1999)	100% Muslims	0.18 bn <sup>1</sup> 1994 Growth rate 6.8%	1,167	6 Paramilitia (Laakareen)	\$0.037 bn	Practically none <sup>2</sup>	Fear of being subverted in the sea from Greenhouse effect, piracy and poaching
Nepal	147.2 India, China	22 m 1998	90% Hindu, 5% Buddhists, 3% Muslims	4.9 bn Growth rate 1.7%	220	46	\$0.04 bn 1998 0.9%	Sandwiched between two traditional opponents - India and China, perceived Indian domination	90,000 Bhutanese refugees of Nepalese origins; political instability, Maoist insurgency
Pakistan	769.1 India, Afghanistan	138.1 m 1999	98% Muslims of which 77% Sunni & 20% Shiite 2% Christians & Hindus	61.7 bn Growth rate -2.4%	492	587(+513 reserve)	\$4 bn 6.1%	Kashmir and Siachen conflicts with India, nuclear rivalry with India, border disputes with Afghanistan	Military domination in politics; endemic Sindh-Muhajir conflict in Sindh, Baluch separatist aspirations, conflicts between two Muslim sects- Shiite and Sunni, fear of being dubbed as terrorist state because of fundamentalist Taliban influence.
Sri Lanka	18 Island, maritime borders with India	19 m 1997	74% Sinhalese(69% Buddhist) 18% Tamil(Hindu) 7% Muslims 8% Christian	15 bn Growth rate 5.9%	800	320(+500 reserve)	\$1.7 bn 7.0%	Provoked Tamil separatist insurgency assumed the shape of conventional warfare	Tamil separatist, leftist Trotskyite insurgency now dormant.

Source: *Asia 2000 Yearbook*, Far Eastern Economic Review, Hong Kong: 2000; Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, *Asian Strategic Review 1998-99*, New Delhi, November 1999, *World Almanac and Book of Facts, 1999*; *The Military Balance 1999-2000*; *Asiaweek*, November 10, 2000, p. 175.

- 1 As of 1994 at 1985 constant price. See, Ministry of Planning, *Statistical Yearbook of Maldives, 1995*, Male, p. XVII.
- 2 For some details, see, P. Sahadevan, "Challenges to Political Order in Maldives", *BISS Journal*[Dhaka], Vol. 19, No. 1, January 1999: 1-30.