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GLOBALIZATION AND BANGLADESH'S SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICIES

Abstract

In the era of globalization, Bangladesh, like other developing countries, is confronted with threats emanating from both external and internal sources: terrorism, drug trafficking, circulation of light weapons, poverty, political instability environmental degradation. The main purpose of Bangladesh's foreign policy in the present era should be minimizing the degree of vulnerabilities and reducing threats to its security, as well as possessing the ability to shape its security environment through an effective and realistic assessment of its national interests, and the promotion thereof through pragmatic and active diplomacy.

Introduction

Globalization has at present become a pervasive phenomenon of international relations, and in the process, is compelling developing countries like Bangladesh to assess its impact on its security and foreign policy. The traditional way of dealing with the question of security (which is basically state-centric and emphasizes military security), appears to have become inadequate for the task of formulating a policy

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that would be capable of effectively tackling the challenges of the dynamic and technology-dominated milieu. To merely state that, however, is analytically of not much use. The question is how much of traditional security concerns remain relevant to policy-making, how and what to discard from the past to enable foreign policy successfully meet the opportunities and challenges of globalization.

Security itself is now regarded to have become comprehensive as far as its meaning and definition are concerned, as a result of which there is a tendency to over-expand and widen the security agenda. In general, Bangladesh could expect to face problems in the following areas: military, political, economic, environmental and societal. In traditional terms, security is about threats to the very existence of the nation-state and the adoption of emergency or extraordinary measures to deal with them. But the non-traditional approach to security tends to make it all inclusive and comprehensive, thereby, making it analytically unwieldy. Whether a particular issue is a security concern or not itself is a matter of debate. Theoretically, a public issue is deemed to have been securitized when it is "presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure."¹ Mohammed Ayoob persuasively defines security in relation to vulnerabilities that threaten, or have the potential, to bring down or significantly weaken state structures, both territorial and institutional, as well as the regimes that preside over these structures and profess to represent them internationally.²

1. Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, (Boulder, London:Lynne Rienner, 1998), pp. 23-24.

2. Mohammed Ayoob, "The Security Problematic of The Third World," *World Politics*, 43 (January 1991), 259

Transnational economic and financial forces are at work which possess the capacity to wreak havoc with national economies – something that cannot be tackled by military means, but only with appropriate policies adopted primarily at the national level, but would also include international and regional cooperation. In the era of globalization, economic performance has become an important ingredient of national security. But it is not to suggest that military power has lost its utility. Only the non-military sectors seem have attained a greater salience.

While globalization has, to some extent, eroded the power of the nation-state, the latter has not been rendered absolutely impotent. Bangladesh's security concerns will need to be addressed through correct policies, taking into account the fact that it is multifaceted and comprehensive. Before embarking on the actual analysis of Bangladesh's security and foreign policy, a brief review of the concept and process of globalization will be provided. Its impact on Bangladesh will be studied, focusing on both positive and negative aspects. Finally implications for policy will be discussed.

The most pressing need for Bangladesh is to take cognizance of the magnitude and complexity of the changes now sweeping the world:

New technologies are making the world much more interdependent. These technologies are accelerating the movements of goods, services, ideas, and capital across national boundaries. They are displacing traditional security threats with nontraditional worries like international terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking, and environmental degradation while strengthening the capacities of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to influence policy...³

3. W. Bowman Cutter *et al.*, "The New World Deal: A Democratic Approach to Globalization," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2000, pp. 80-81

Thus, globalization tends to strengthen nation-states in some respects and weaken in others.

Globalization

The term globalization has become a buzzword in the present-day world. It is this one word which seems to encapsulate the most interesting and exciting events that are occurring today. Although the term has attained extraordinary popularity in recent years, it was in evidence even a hundred years ago. In the early 20th century there was the great optimism about the human ability to solve problems through global cooperation, a hope that was dashed by the outbreak of the World War I. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, international cooperation in the fields of trade and commerce reached a low-water mark. It was only after the end of the World War II in 1945 that the idea of international economic cooperation was renewed, and it soon gained momentum. In the last 25 years or so, the concept of "global" has transformed itself from a mere reference to mean "total" to an emphasis on the "globe as a unit of analysis in its own right." Without claiming the world to have become a single society or that it is bound to become one, globalization refers to a process or trend.⁴

It was actually in the 1980s and 1990s that the world witnessed the revolutionary impact of the process of globalization, something, which appears to be irresistible. It was primarily due to unprecedented technological innovation in the fields of communication and transportation that international relations became radically transformed,

4. Richard Kilminster, "Globalization as an Emergent Concept," in Alan Scott (ed.), *The Limits of Globalization: Cases and Arguments*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p.257

especially in the realm of trade and investment, and diffusion of information.

Despite fact that there is a growing concern about dealing with the complexities and changes generated by the phenomenon of globalization, the term itself is still imprecise, and means different things to different people. To simplify matters, globalization essentially refers to the process of worldwide spread of six kinds of objects and activities: i) goods and services; ii) people; iii) ideas and information; iv) money; v) normative orientation; and vi) behavioral patterns and practices.⁵ Of these, the flow of goods and services has had the most tangible impact: it has been instrumental in raising the level of material prosperity unprecedented in human history. Besides, the free flow of information and ideas is making it possible for the full flowering of human potentials. Proponents of globalization are optimistic that increase in global prosperity would usher in a stable and peaceful world.

Critics of globalization however, are not so convinced that it is an unmixed blessing. They dispute the argument that as a result of the process of globalization, the nation-state is losing its significance due to the erosion of its functions which are increasingly being performed by non-state actors like multinational corporations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). They reject the notion that the nation-state has become irrelevant in the present-day world.

The focus of their criticism is that the process of globalization seeks to promote the economic at the cost of the social and political. They are concerned about the deleterious

5. James N. Rosenau, *Along the Domestic-Foreign Frontier: Exploring Governance in a Turbulent World*, (Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.87

effect of unbridled market operations, which could destroy communal and social unity. In brief, they are seeking "a politics that can resist the subordination of the political and social to the economic."⁶ The question they ask is, whether it is correct to assume that globalization is inevitable and irreversible. Their answer is, "no": it can be effectively resisted through enhanced regulatory functions of the nation-state, which continues to remain viable. Although globalization is very much a fact of life, it cannot be denied that the territorially organized nation-state continues to remain significant and capable of providing the necessary (perhaps not all) services to its citizens. The bottom line is that the globalization project is far from complete and is an unrealizable one.

The claim that were market logic allowed to become totally dominant over the non-rational logic of social relations it would corrode the very social and political conditions of its own possibility has specific implications for our understanding of the future direction in which globalization processes are likely head. Rather than continuing to develop in its current direction and at its current speed in destroying social networks, economic globalization is always meeting resistance and approaching its limits."⁷

The resistance may assume the form of ultra-nationalism and racism. It is asserted that ethnic nationalism is much more deep-rooted and less time-bound (than modernists prefer to believe), therefore, better equipped to overcome the challenge of both globalization as well as regionalization.⁸ Post-

6. Alan Scott, "Globalization: social process or political rhetoric?" in Scott (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.2

7. *Ibid.*, p.14

8. Mike Bowker, "Nationalism and the Fall of the USSR," in Scott (ed.), *op. cit.*, p.240

modernists talk of alternatives, of cultural pluralism. Critics however, point out that, globalization contains the threat of a new form of hegemony, which "would thus create social conditions conducive to new doctrines of civilizational superiority."⁹

Foreign Policy of Bangladesh

The basic objectives of Bangladesh's foreign policy are to promote its security, protect its territorial integrity, achieve socio-economic development, uphold its ideology and maintain its cultural identity and national dignity – goals that are challenged in various forms by the process of globalization. Moreover, Article 25 of the Bangladesh Constitution upholds the "right of every people freely to determine and build up its own social, economic and political system by ways and means of its [*sic*] *own free choice*[emphasis added]." Under the prevailing circumstances that would indeed be difficult to do, to say the least. The main constraints of Bangladesh's foreign policy are its geographical location, underdevelopment and overpopulation.

The security interests of Bangladesh are said to lie in the consolidation of its hard-earned independence by accelerating the process of economic development and modernization. It is argued that the basic goal of its foreign policy should be the ensuring of diplomatic and economic cooperation and assistance from external sources. Bangladesh's foreign policy has been deeply informed by the dire need to achieve socio-economic progress through the optimum use of its abundant human and other resources, which, in turn, could be

9. Kllminster, *op.cit.*, p.278

instrumental in maintaining national cohesion, as well as international prestige and influence.¹⁰

In the era of globalization, Bangladesh, like other developing countries, is confronted with threats emanating from both external and internal sources: terrorism, drug trafficking, circulation of light weapons, poverty, political instability environmental degradation, etc. However, it is one thing to point out these concerns, and another thing to predict when and how these could turn into threats.

The Security Agenda of Bangladesh.

External

The geographical location of Bangladesh makes it obvious that India and Myanmar are the two immediate neighbours who are the potential threats to its territorial security. However, chances are that India (aware of the political costs involved in such a move) would prefer not to threaten Bangladesh militarily, if its major strategic and economic interests are served without such efforts. It is argued by some scholars that "this source of threat is more perceived than real."¹¹ Even in a hypothetical scenario, if India did militarily attack Bangladesh, the latter would be overwhelmingly disadvantaged given its economic, technological and military weakness. But it may also be borne in mind that international news media like CNN globally transmitting pictures of Indian military moves across its border, would indeed have a grossly negative impact on its image.

10. Mohammed Shamsul Huq, *Bangladesh in International Politics: Dilemmas of the Weak States* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1993), p.74

11. See, Ishtiaq Hossain, "Management of National Security Problem of Bangladesh," *Strategic Analysis*, November 1990, p.959

Myanmar, too could pose such a threat to Bangladesh, but so far it has been limited to the influx of Rohingya refugees in the 1990s in the south-eastern part of Bangladesh that caused considerable security problem and socio-economic burden for the country.

Although these two neighbours are potential threats to the territorial security of Bangladesh, the problematic question is how it could minimize its vulnerabilities in this regard. Suggestions are made by some analysts,¹² that Bangladesh does indeed possess strategic value which it can and should exploit, but reality does not seem to support such an assessment. In this era of globalization, it appears unlikely that either or both China and the United States would seriously court Bangladesh as ally against India, since both are now more interested in improving relations with India rather than antagonizing it. Bangladesh does have a big concern as far as the external sources of threats to its security are concerned, but they can be best dealt with and neutralized through astute diplomacy rather than the use of force, for which it is ill-equipped. Bangladesh may resent the predominance of India, but there seems to be very limited options available to it to deal with it in a truly effective manner. No matter how disadvantaged Bangladesh may be vis-à-vis its immediate neighbours, it must nonetheless be in a position to oppose policies on their part that could increase tension, create instability, or otherwise run against broad interests of Bangladesh.

Prospects for the proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in South Asia is another security concern

12. See, Md. Abdul Halim, "Strategy, Geopolitics and Bangladesh Foreign Policy," in Abul Kalam (ed.), *Bangladesh: Internal Dynamics and External Linkages*, (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1996), pp.195-210

of Bangladesh. With the testing of nuclear devices by India and Pakistan in 1998, possibilities of nuclear war occurring in the region has become a possibility. Even though Bangladesh has purely defensive capability, its security has been adversely affected by the development of nuclear devices and their delivery systems in South Asia. Bangladesh should, therefore, strive to play an active role in regional forums since the development of WMD transcends the barrier of distance and could affect Bangladesh too.

Internal

(a) Military:

Military force, although being marginalized in the era of economic globalization, has not been rendered obsolete, nor has economic power replaced military power as the hard currency of world politics. Military forces continue to retain their coercive and deterrent power, functions that economic instruments are still unable to perform with as much effectiveness.¹³ Military power, it must be borne in mind, is fungible, that is, can be used for purposes other than dealing with only internal and external military threats. The military security agenda may also involve the application of military power by states or governments to combat nonmilitary threats to their power, such as, migrants or competing belief systems.¹⁴

Conventionally, military security seems to be only about protecting the territorial integrity of the country which is not

13. Joseph S. Nye, "U.S. Security for the 21st Century," *U.S. Foreign Policy Agenda*, (USIA Electronic Journals), Vol.3, No.3, July 1998, p.19

14. Buzan *et al.*, *op.cit.*, p.50

always securitized. Governments may use military means to combat domestic challenges to their legitimacy, which may come from several sources like armed secessionists, radical, terrorist, or criminal organizations or elements, although unarmed challengers to the governmental authority or jurisdiction could be securitized to justify the use of force against them.¹⁵ In the Bangladesh context, military force continues to retain its relevance and utility in combating the above-mentioned security threats. Apart from deterring external military aggression and tackling internal political threats, Bangladesh armed forces are of considerable help for reconstruction and rehabilitation in the aftermath of natural disasters.

(b) Economic:

Economy security is a term that is fraught with controversy, since in an interdependent global economic system it is difficult to achieve absolute security. As a least developed country (LDC) Bangladesh has certain in-built problems, (the most glaring being wide-spread poverty), that severely constrain the effective and independent conduct of its foreign policy. At present, the country is further disadvantaged by the stiff competition that it has to face in the outside world. As has just been discussed, the globalization process offers both opportunities and poses challenges for the world, particularly for the developing countries. Bangladesh, although poor in most respects, is not entirely without resources: it has manpower (cheap labour), water resources, and mineral resources (coal, oil and gas). If mobilized effectively, its vast but homogeneous and resilient population

15. *Ibid.*, pp.50-51

could take advantage of the information technology (“knowledge applied to work to create value”)¹⁶ that is now available, and in the process create a pool of better skilled labour force. (Part of the reason for the low income per capita in Bangladesh is that workers do not have adequate training, capital and technology.) The liberal international trade has led to an increase in the level of employment. According to one estimate, about 1.5 million jobs have created by the export sector, without which the number would have been reduced to 0.5 million. Therefore, there is an urgent need for Bangladesh to conduct its economic diplomacy (the essence of its foreign policy), with vigour and vision.

Among the challenges being faced by Bangladesh are how to promote its economic prosperity in the dynamic, complex and highly competitive world, and domestically to provide the foundation for the satisfactory performance of its economy. While the challenges are myriad, only the most important ones will be addressed here.

As has just been stated above, Bangladesh’s foreign policy is based on economic diplomacy, which is not surprising, given the fact that security and dignity are very closely linked with economic prosperity. There is an urgent need to broaden the scope for prosperity through the creation of a modern and efficient economy. There is a linkage between prosperity, choice and freedom, which however, creates more tensions and challenges. The challenge before the country is how to attain this goal in an environment where major economic decisions affecting national life are often determined by the

16. Walter B. Wriston, “Bits, Bytes, and Diplomacy,” *Foreign Affairs*, September/ October 1997, p.176

international market. For instance, interest rates are determined more by global trends than by national ones.

If this is not challenging enough, then consider direct foreign investment. Bangladesh has been trying to attract foreign investments in the country, but so far no significant level of investments has been forthcoming (excepting in the case of the gas sector) due to a number of reasons, political instability being the main. But one wonders, even if such sought-after investments are made, what measures the government would adopt to ensure that these would not be withdrawn at an inopportune moment.

A salient feature of the globalization phenomenon involves migration, or the movement of people from one country to another. While there is an emphasis on the free flow of goods and capital, there is considerable opposition to the idea of free flow of labour (one of the factors of production), especially coming from the developed West because of the fear of being swamped. It is argued that, "Globalization both fosters forms of cosmopolitan consciousness *and* simultaneous feelings and expressions of ethnicity...[T]he dominant contemporary sociological conception of globalization is a Janus-faced process of global incorporation and local resistance."¹⁷

However, it becomes imperative that Bangladesh make diplomatic efforts to make it possible for the Bangladeshi people to work in other countries where there are better opportunities. In this era of competition, Bangladesh will not

17. Kilminster, *op.cit.*, p. 280. See, also Thomas F. Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict," *International Security*, Vol.19, No.3, Summer 1994; Myron Weiner, "Security, Stability and International Migration," *International Security*, Vol.17, No.3, Winter 1992/93

necessarily get what it thinks it deserves, but only what it can negotiate. If the issue is not negotiated through legal means, it is not impossible that labour would flow out of the country illegally – first to the closest countries.

Bangladesh needs to take advantage of the opportunities that globalization offers through the free flow of information and the use of English as an international language. This would help produce a better trained workforce capable of competing at the international level. And as is well known, productivity is linked to skills and knowledge. A caveat has to be inserted at this point, that, not all information or knowledge is beneficial. The question here is, “Will open societies succeed in creating and applying new knowledge only to find that they undermined their own internal stability, or will the fruits of change be able to buy off stress that it causes?”¹⁸

It also has to negotiate preferential access to the markets of the Western developed countries, as well as those of India and China. In the case of India, asymmetry in the bilateral trade relations has to be redressed. It would, to some extent, depend on the negotiating skills of Bangladesh officials, as, to what extent they can ensure market access. Contrary to expectations, Bangladesh along with other LDCs did not achieve any tangible benefits from the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of talks on trade liberalization. The LDCs have been compelled to open up their markets to the products of developed countries like services and high technology goods, but reciprocal agreements from the latter have not been forthcoming. It is apprehended that the WTO trade regime “may well favour the richer and more powerful trading

18. Barry Buzan and Gerald Segal, *Anticipating the Future*, (London : Simon and Schuster, 1998), p.142

partners to the detriment of the relatively weaker developing and [LDCs] like Bangladesh.”¹⁹

Economic threats are real, but they are rather ambiguous and imprecise, and how they could become existential threats is difficult to ascertain.²⁰

(c) Environmental:

In the environmental sector Bangladesh faces a number of challenges concerning the control of the flow of the Ganges waters by India, desertification, deforestation (which is believed to be one of the causes of excessive flooding in the country in the recent years), global warming, etc. Most of these problems originate or are caused by factors that are external to Bangladesh. Global warming, for instance, is a truly globalized phenomenon. It is estimated that a sea-level rise of 1 metre could lead to the submergence of as much as one-third of the coastal areas of Bangladesh, and in the process, may give rise to what is called the problem of environmental refugees, and threaten the territorial integrity of Bangladesh.

Concern about causes of environmental degradation may only lead to politicization, since most of the threats are regarded to be too remote to lead to existential threats. It depends on the point of view of the policy-maker whether such issues are merely regarded as part of "normal politics" or perceived to require urgent measures, i.e., securitized. Although the above-mentioned problems do not appear to pose any immediate threat to security of Bangladesh, these

19. Bazlul Haque Khondker and Mohammed Abdur Razzaque, "The Era of Globalization and the Emerging Issues: Challenges and Policy Options for Bangladesh," *Social Science Review*, December 1998, Vol., xv, No.2, p.107

20. Barry Buzan, *State, People and Fear: National Security Problem in International Relations*, (New Delhi: Transasia Publications, 1983), pp.129-155

may do so in the long run. After all, it must be borne in mind that, "The environment, modified by human interference, sets the conditions for socio-political-economic life: when these conditions are poor, life is poor."²¹

(d) Socio-political:

A major focus of the new-thinking in security studies is the socio-political condition of the nation. Although for analytical purpose, society and state are often treated separately, in this paper, the two are being regarded as inter-related. Societal security is basically about identity of a group or community, and the political security is more about institutions and organizational security of the state.

There can be a number of ways in which societal security could be threatened, for example, through migration and horizontal competition²². In the case of Bangladesh, its cultural identity could be diluted through the powerful cultural influence from foreign sources, especially from Bangladesh's closest neighbour, India. Bangladesh faces a dilemma in this regard, since modernization involves adopting ideas and practices from more developed societies, while at the same time protecting its own cultural values and identity.

Political threats are said to be those factors that challenge the internal legitimacy of the state, related mainly to "ideologies and other constitutive ideas and issues defining the state."²³ Terrorism, which is becoming increasingly lethal, for instance, could pose a serious challenge to the viability of a nascent democracy like Bangladesh, which is already assailed

21. Buzan et al., *op. cit.*, p.84

22. *Ibid.*, p.121

23. *Ibid.*, p.144

by a host of other problems.²⁴ This is a particularly negative aspect of globalization that is having a damaging impact on the security of Bangladesh, which may be subjected to what is termed as "cultural militarization"-

that is, to the transformation of culture in ways that render violent responses to social problems normal and unexceptional. Cultural militarization marginalizes non-violent strategies for conflict resolution, ultimately leading to the brutalization of society and the weakening of human security institutions.²⁵

Very few people would dispute it, and argue that Bangladesh is not moving in that direction. Terrorism and the proliferation of light weapons are a dangerous combination, the incidence of which is increasing mainly due to the free flow of goods and porous borders. Socio-political security, it must be borne in mind, is promoted only if there are "sustainable institutions of public order, conflict mediation, good governance and national defense."

Poverty is a source of insecurity for Bangladesh. But whether globalization as such would alleviate poverty is debatable. In the final analysis, it depends on the capacity of the government to mobilize resources in an optimum way. That is something that can be achieved if there is political stability inside the country. A truly stable democratic system will only be possible when there are robust democratic institutions and a vibrant civil society. Inability to achieve

24. See, Yehezkel Dror, "Terrorism as a Challenge to the Democratic Capacity to Govern," in Martha Crenshaw (ed.), *Terrorism, Legitimacy and power: The Consequences of Political Violence*, (University Press of New England, 1983), pp.65-90

25. Andrew Latham, "Taking the Lead? Light Weapons and International Security," *International Journal*, Vol.52, No.2, Spring 1997, p.321

political stability would not only result in our failure to take advantage of the positive aspects of globalization, but our foreign and economic policy agendas would be set outside the country. As it is, Bangladesh is beholden to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, which critics say, function like “a Medieval Church.”

It can, therefore, be argued that despite globalization, the real sources of Bangladesh’s insecurity would continue to remain mainly domestic (which could be exacerbated and exploited by external sources), that demand attention from within the state. The basic challenge facing Bangladesh is to comprehend the nature of changes taking place in the international economy and to deal with them through creating conditions and institutions necessary for coping with a dynamic environment. Only the constructive efforts of a dynamic and modern state could achieve success in eliminating the main sources of insecurity. Otherwise, chances are that, widespread and endemic social and political conflict would reduce it to the status of a “failed state,” with people becoming more concerned with personal security than with national security.

Conclusion

It is amply clear that Bangladesh has vulnerabilities in practically all areas: territorial, economic, environmental, socio-political. Thus, in brief, the main sources of threats to the security of Bangladesh have been outlined. Bangladesh appears to be constrained as far dealing with its immediate neighbours are concerned, which means that it will need to cooperate with them despite the fact that its internal security and stability could be adversely affected by them. However, this is not to deny the value of military power, which can

always act as a deterrent. Besides, the will of the people to combat external aggression is an important factor in raising the costs of any military action by an adversary. No matter how remote the possibility of aggression from the outside, Bangladesh should formulate a sound defence policy. While there are both external and internal sources of threats, on balance the latter are perceived to be posing more serious challenges for the security, stability and prosperity of the country. The main objectives of Bangladesh's foreign policy, viz., upholding its sovereignty, cultural identity, ideology are challenged by the forces of globalization. At the same time, while these factors do pose threats, it is difficult to determine exactly when and how they will evolve into threats to national security.

The most pressing task before Bangladesh is to achieve political stability, otherwise, it will not be possible for its diplomats to project a positive image of the country. Foreign policy is, after all, is an extension of its domestic policy; therefore, as long as Bangladesh is domestically not in order, it would not be realistic to expect it to have a credible and effective foreign policy.

After all is said and done, the paper ends on an optimistic note. Despite the challenges confronting the security and foreign policy of Bangladesh, it is yet possible to hope for a prosperous future. To be sure, political disturbances will be there, but they would be mere costs; the country would hopefully continue to tread the path to development and progress. The tragedy would be that, if we cannot effectively deal with the obnoxious effects of globalization undermining our social system thus our security, if we cannot compete and negotiate with the outside world from a position of strength, if we cannot take advantage of the positive aspects of

globalization, and if we fail to peacefully resolve our own domestic social and political problems, the process of development would be retarded - taking perhaps several more costly decades, instead of one.

Bangladesh needs to deal with challenges like transnational economic and financial forces, cross-border terrorism, arms and drug trafficking, climate change and environmental degradation through cooperation and coordinated efforts at both regional and international levels. The main purpose of Bangladesh's foreign policy in the present era should be minimizing the degree of vulnerabilities and reducing threats to its security, as well as possessing the ability to shape its security environment through an effective and realistic assessment of its national interests, and the promotion thereof through pragmatic and active diplomacy.