CHAPTER 1

Systemic Aspects of National Security: The External Dimension

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

In formulating the national security policy, a complex web of systemic and structural factors plays their respective role. In essence, these factors are domestic in nature, and the nation is endowed with sovereign right to manipulate them for serving its interests. This aspect has been dealt with in the previous edition of the book titled ‘Whither National Security Bangladesh 2007’ under chapter titled ‘Structural and Systemic Aspects of National Security’. In our previous endeavour, after having rationalised the comprehensive nature of national security in the context of Bangladesh along with a long catalogue of various structural and systemic factors, efforts were made to discern how the various deficiencies, weaknesses and lacunae associated with such factors affect the formulation of an effective national security policy. It was argued that as Bangladesh’s national security is now being studied by the country’s security experts within the framework of ‘comprehensive security’, the linkage between security and development becomes quite obvious. This linkage presupposes a well functioning economy in perpetuity to ensure, at all times, the security of the nation. In other words, any breakdown in the country’s economy is likely to generate forces for destabilising and undermining peace and stability in the country. There is, therefore, the need to securities development.

However, the systemic and structural factors have an external dimension also where the Westphalian concept of sovereignty finds its limitation in controlling them outside the territorial boundary of a nation. Despite this inhibition, as the system level analysis to international relations suggests, many factors external to countries
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and the world political environment combine to determine a pattern of interaction among countries and other trans-national actors to which the nation-states can hardly afford to remain indifferent. In this respect, it should be mentioned that the nation-states as a whole constitute a part of an international system and that various developments in this arena directly or indirectly influence the national security of a state. These developments are like uncontrollable cosmic events, yet they cannot be overlooked. The important fact to take into consideration is that such events or developments follow certain norms and values thereby setting patterns of behaviour at the international level with certain degree of predictability. While the systemic developments take place at the international level, it subsumes the developments at other levels too, i.e., national and regional. In particular, the regional events influence the security policy of a state and that too quite powerfully as region is the sphere with which a nation-state is integrated structurally. Taking these factors into consideration, our new endeavour would be to flesh out various systemic factors of external nature and determine their impact on the national security of Bangladesh.

1.1.1 Objectives
The main objective of the chapter is to suggest ways and means through which Bangladesh can bring the external unforeseen and adversarial factors to its security advantage. The task of course is a daunting one as it involves not only well crafted diplomacy but as well undertaking political and economic measures which may not always be cost-free.

1.1.2 Methodology
The chapter is based on empirical observation of facts, events and occurrences that took place in 2008 at the regional and international levels. Research materials from books, journals, newspapers, electronic media and few relevant publications constitute the research documents for the authors.

1.2 SYSTEMIC FACTORS OF NATIONAL SECURITY OF BANGLADESH: REGIONAL DIMENSION
As mentioned above, systemic level analysis subsumes the developments at the regional level too. This is because the region
and the context in which a state finds itself can complicate or reduce its security problem. Needless to state, every region has its own distinct security environment, defined mainly by the region’s geo-strategic and geo-economic positions. A complex web of dynamics arising out of the stated positions, in effect, determines the outcome as well as the nature and content of various regional geo-politico and security developments. Some discernible characteristics of such developments in a particular region are:

i) they are a product of factors peculiar to the region itself;

ii) they may be country specific or may encompass all or few of the regional actors;

iii) they are, in most cases, strongly influenced by the major extra-regional powers having interests in the region;

iv) they are, in most instances, an outcome of the policies that may either be common or at variance between the core and the periphery of a region;

v) their effects may be commonly felt by all the regional actors or that there may be a variation in such effects on the respective countries of the region;

vi) depending on the point iv, the response of the regional actors to any development may either be common or varied in nature and finally;

vii) the regional politico-security developments are dynamic in nature and they remain in a constant stage of change as dictated by the needs of time and space.

The above discussion points to three important aspects that a state in any region needs to take cognisance of as far as its national security is concerned. They are neighbourhood, the role of the dominant regional actor and the existence of common threats and risks. A disturbed neighbourhood can have adverse security implications for a state depending on its geographical emplacement in the region. Similarly, in the context of core-periphery interaction in the region, the policies and the actions of the core regional actor may either malign the security of a peripheral actor or latter may benefit from it. Finally, there arises the need to take a stock of common threats and risks, however, isolated or disparate they may be.
The year 2008 witnessed few developments in the three important segments, i.e., neighbourhood, centre and the region as a whole with their implications, direct or indirect, for Bangladesh's national security. First to take note of is Bangladesh's neighbourhood. For any South Asian state, its security policy can not remain oblivious of the fact that the region is one of chronic instability due to few hardcore conventional geo-security issues (centred around the Indo-Pak and India versus the smaller states) and the various non-conventional threats like economic backwardness, ethnic and communal violence, social unrest, insurgency movements, terrorism, trafficking in small arms and drugs, environmental degradation etc.

To begin with, it is the development centering around India-Pakistan that should first draw one's attention. Given the nature of hostility between the two nuclear powers, India and Pakistan, over a number of critical and contentious issues, the composite dialogue that was set in motion between the two in 2004 has been considered to be one of the most constructive models of peace building in contemporary time. Hence, the importance of the process for peace and stability in South Asia can hardly be exaggerated. While many positive steps in this direction yielded few tangible results for both India and Pakistan, in particular on trade and anti-terrorist issues, internal political developments, i.e., the killing of Benazir Bhutto, civil unrest due to strike by the Pakistani lawyers, squabble between the political parties, uncertain fate of ex-President Musharraf, indecisive nature of future politics etc. in Pakistan during the period 2008 caused a scar on the on-going peace process between the two countries. However, it is India's 9/11 (bomb explosion in Mumbai) at the year end that seemed to turn the trajectory of composite dialogue down in a maze of insecurity and uncertainty with respect to Indo-Pak relations. Since, in India's calculation, the perpetrators of Mumbai bomb blast were from Pakistan, the relations between the two almost touched a nadir in the year end. As a result, South Asia was on the verge of witnessing a conflict between the two countries at any moment until the US State Department intervened by assuring India that Pakistan would provide all the cooperation necessary with regard to the Mumbai investigation. While such a distant incident could not probably affect Bangladesh, nonetheless, the discomforting factor for the nation is the propaganda in many Indian quarters
about Bangladesh’s complicity in terrorist incident of whatever kind in Indian soil. In this respect, a threatening remark is very much echoed by Subhash Kapila in the following words, “Bangladesh too could become a target of India’s strategic ire if it fails to control hosting anti-Indian insurgents or being permissive in allowing Bangladesh as a springboard for Pakistan’s proxy war against India.”4 In this connection, it is relevant to mention that of late, Bangladesh has been projected as the safest abode for the terrorists by few vested quarters. While it is true that Bangladesh witnessed terrorist attacks in various forms on several occasions, labelling the country as harbouring terrorism with the outside elements is nothing other than a distortion of reality. Such propaganda affects Bangladesh psychologically with repercussions on its national security as well.

In the immediate neighbourhood of Bangladesh, the Myanmar-Bangladesh dispute over maritime boundary resulting in incursion by the former into the latter's jurisdictional waters is, perhaps, the most disturbing political event that the year 2008 witnessed in the region. The event bears immense security implications for Bangladesh as it remains vulnerable to a country whose totalitarian political regime limits any prognosis about its future political behaviour. As evidences indicate, Myanmar, in the first week of November 2008, started offshore oil and gas exploration activities in the disputed waters of the Bay of Bengal despite Bangladesh’s repeated protests. The area, believed to hold huge reserves of natural gas, lies some 50 nautical miles off St. Martin’s Island (within Bangladesh’s maritime jurisdiction), and is claimed by both Bangladesh and Myanmar.5 The media reports indicate that four Korean drilling ships escorted by two Myanmar Junta naval ships started exploration of oil and gas in this disputed water believed to be rich in gas. As a counter-move, Bangladesh forwarded BNS Abu Bakr, BNS Madhumati and BNS Nirbhoy to the spot. Later, Commander of Bangladesh ship reportedly engaged himself in a dialogue with Myanmar counterpart after which Myanmar was compelled to remove its structures and equipment for gas exploration from the area under Bangladesh’s sovereignty. Finally, Bangladesh government conveyed its deep concern to Myanmar government summoning Myanmar envoy twice in Dhaka foreign office. Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh went to Yangon to discuss with Ruling military junta in an effort to pacify
tension and resolve the matter through discussion. The incident bears few implications for Bangladesh's national security:

i) Bangladesh's vulnerability in the south—the only opening for the country towards the outside world;

ii) the dispatch of Bangladeshi ships on the occasion is indicative of the country's readiness to protect its territorial integrity and sovereignty at any cost and finally;

iii) Bangladesh's recourse to dialogue and consultation is suggestive of the country's principle that 'peace and security in all frontiers' should be through dialogue and diplomacy.

At the centre where one observes India's predominance in geo-strategic, economic and military terms sans doubt, the Indo-US Strategic partnership and Sino-Indian relations dominated the South Asian political scene of 2008 in a newer form. In effect, these two developments are to be considered as the processes borne out of an enmeshing of common interests between the external and regional factors. Although their background and origin pre-date the year 2008, few additives were attached to them in the stated year, i.e., (i) the Indo-US strategic partnership received a new impetus in 2008 when the US Congress passed a resolution to provide civil nuclear technology to India in October 2008, (ii) in a similar vein, the Indo-China relations attained a new texture when with the visit of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to China in January 2008, Sino-Indian relations were framed within the parameters of a 'strategic partnership'. While the two Indian geo-strategic-political moves were undertaken on a calculation of various interests and objectives of the concerned parties, such moves, perhaps, can not go without their security implications for the region. India, henceforth, establishes a kind of relations with the external powers with whom Bangladesh too has been enjoying cordial relations since long. While the economic undertone of such relations may not be of concern to Bangladesh, nonetheless, the strategic aspect of the relations in particular between India and the US, causes concern not only in Bangladesh, but also in the smaller peripheral countries of the region. There is no gainsaying that the civil nuclear deal has been viewed in Pakistani strategic community with utmost concern, and the country itself has vowed to go for similar overture in the future. Given the fact that 'civil nuclear technology for peaceful purpose' is
considered by many as a blurred mission, there is the growing apprehension in the region that the Indo-Pak axis may witness a severe nuclear race in the future thereby injecting tension and mistrust in the region. As far as Indo-Sino relations in its newer form is concerned, it should be mentioned that such partnership between the two does not affect Bangladesh’s security directly. Nonetheless, it places Bangladesh in a political embarrassment as China continues to remain the primary supplier of military hardware to the former. In addition, from the politico-security standpoint, the strategic partnership between China and Myanmar too places Bangladesh in an awkward position vis-à-vis China in view of the recent dispute between Myanmar and Bangladesh over the maritime boundary delimitation issue.

It should be borne in mind that the processes like the Indo-US strategic partnership and Indo-Sino relations are not static in nature. There occur changes in such processes when conditions within major actors change to the extent that they affect the tangible or intangible assets of the concerned parties. However, for the purpose of the paper, a dispassionate analysis of these two developments would reveal their implications for the region in general, and for Bangladesh in particular. As such, they need reflections in detail which is given below.

1.2.1 Indo-US Strategic Partnership and Implications for Bangladesh

Indo-US strategic partnership is a major development in the geopolitical tapestry of South Asia. For long, India has been nurturing the dream of a long lasting partnership with the US as its foreign policy priority. The relations between the two took the shape of a strategic partnership rooted in shared values which is broad in nature and scope, with the two countries working together on global issues, including expanding economic freedom and democracy, ensuring plentiful sources of clean, safe, and reliable energy, protecting security, supporting innovation and technological advances and promoting public health.

The Indo-US strategic partnership, believed to be of military nature, is not new in so far as military cooperation between the two countries is concerned. This can be dated back even to the period when India was non-aligned with a pro-Soviet inclination during the
Cold War. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War brought about dramatic changes in Indo-US military alliance elevating it to the level of a strategic alliance between the two. The efforts towards forging this unprecedented relationship have, indeed, been relentless. Although the previous 12 rounds of strategic dialogue between India and USA from 1998 to 2000 after Pokhran II did not result in any agreement on non-proliferation, they did succeed in narrowing certain gaps in understanding between the two counties. This, as some political analysts have observed, implied the beginning of a real strategic engagement.

The beginning of Indo-US strategic partnership may be traced back to President’s Clinton trip to South Asia in 2000. ‘It was more a trip to India than to South Asia.’ With this, the two entered a new continuous, constructive and beneficial relation in the political and economic arenas. The Republican government continued with Clinton’s policy of inclination towards India. The 9/11 attacks marked a significant turning point of US security policy and its relations with South Asia. India offered its full cooperation to the US including the use of Indian bases for counter-terrorism operations. On 22 September 2001, the US waived sanctions that were imposed on India following its nuclear detonation and started providing assistance to India in an unbridled manner. Since then, there has been substantial progress in the area of security cooperation. The year 2002-2003 saw a series of high-level meetings and substantial cooperation between India and the USA. In 2004, the two sides embarked on a new bilateral programme, referred to as the Next Steps in the Strategic Partnership (NSSP).

For the purpose of the paper, the security component of the partnership needs to be highlighted. The United States and India are building the foundation of a durable defense relationship that will continue to support their common strategic and security interests. The main contents of the security agenda of Indo-US strategic partnership are as follows:

- **Maritime Security Cooperation:** The United States and India are committed to a comprehensive cooperative effort to ensure a secure maritime domain.

- **Counter-terrorism:** The United States and India are jointly expanding the scope of counterterrorism cooperation, including work on bio terrorism and cyber security.
Military Logistics Support: The United States and India will soon sign an agreement to facilitate mutual logistic support during combined training, exercises, and disaster relief operations.

Defense Trade: The United States reaffirmed its goal to help meet India's defense needs and to provide the important technologies and capabilities that India seeks.

The partnership reached its climax when the US undertook a civil nuclear deal with India thereby setting the stage for India's tacit admission into the elite nuclear club of "Five". The deal will have far-reaching impact on regional as well as international relations. As some analysts point out, the most important is the Indo-US agreement to cooperate on missile defence (MD) both in the short and the long term. It must be mentioned that India was the first state that endorsed the US decision to launch its missile defence programme. Since then, India has been acquiring similar capability from Russia, and Israel. As such acquiring of missile defence capability by India directly destabilises the nuclear deterrence in South Asia as well as undermines Pakistan's doctrine of minimum deterrence as nuclear restraint. Beyond Pakistan, acquisition of MD by India also alters China's strategic calculations, particularly for the reason that India is one of the US allies in the MD plan. Japan is another such ally and given the altering parameters of Japan's defence policies and its strained relation with China, the latter will have reasons for concerns.

It is understood that there are positive constellations of factors present in Indo-US relationship. Despite this, there are other factors that may undermine the forging of such strategic alliance. The problem lies in both New Delhi and Washington stemming from a number of different sources namely historical, institutional and structural. Again, there is persistent criticism that the partnership agreement has turned India into a satellite or a junior partner of the US forcing India to accept the global interests of the US. There is also speculation about China being a factor in the emerging strategic partnership between the two.

Although in the short term the partnership did not alarm China, it could have adverse consequences for Chinese global and regional security interests in the long term. Some influential American commentators viewed the nuclear deal as a strong indication of
Washington's aim to make India as a counterbalance to China. This is particularly alarming because the Indo-US strategic partnership came at a time when America was putting pressure on its European allies not to waive arms embargo against China. The US also forced Israel to cancel a contract for the sale of radar-seeking remotely piloted vehicles to China. There is a concern in America about the growth of Chinese military, its monetary policies, its condemnation of Japan and its increasing power projection capabilities. According to a report, an unrestrained China is not very much in the interest of America and by bolstering India, the US could arrest the growth of Chinese influence in the India Ocean rim lands and Chinese penetration into Myanmar. Russia views this partnership as offsetting its involvement in Central Asia. Japan being the world's second largest economy is concerned about the partnership because of its strong linkage with global economy. Also Japan has a strong interest in the political stability of the Indian Ocean region and fears that this partnership would adversely affect the existing stability in the region. It is also concerned about the US-Indian cooperation in civilian nuclear energy. Japan's fear emanates from the fact that this cooperation would end up diverting Indian nuclear installations from fulfilling civilian energy needs to the enrichment of plutonium for military purposes. In brief, some of the implications of Indo-US partnership for South Asia, in general, and Bangladesh, in particular may be as follows:

- Acceleration of tension centering around India and Pakistan. This may jeopardise the composite peace dialogue between the two countries.
- The Indo-US partnership has a marine connotation too. It has turned India as proxy for the US in the Indian Ocean. Many circles believe that the resources of Indian Ocean, in particular, oil and gas have generated interest in both India and the US and hence to virtual control by them.
- The Indo-US partnership may draw Bangladesh in war on terrorism in South Asia. Bangladesh may become a target of Indo-US action against terrorism as India blames Bangladesh for harbouring terrorist elements of India.
- Since the partnership is of concern to China, Bangladesh being a traditional ally of the former faces a diplomatic embarrassment.
An imposition of Pan-Americana in South Asia through India - the country that is suspected by the smaller neighbours as being hegemonic and arrogant may go contrary to the security interests of many in the region.

The Indo-US partnership may bring the Israeli factor in South Asia as India enjoys cordial understanding with Israel.

1.2.2 Sino-Indian Relations and Implications for Bangladesh

As stated earlier, the establishment of a ‘strategic and cooperative partnership between India and China’ received further stimuli in 2008 when Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India, visited China at the beginning of the year. The visit was significant in the sense that both India and China expressed their determination to be seen as a ‘global public good’ in order to benefit the world. In this regard, the Sino-Indian relations with their impact on South Asia, in general, and Bangladesh, in particular, is taken up for a study below.

In Asian geo-political tapestry, the Sino-Indian relations have, in recent times, not only assumed significance of far-reaching magnitude but has also generated interest and queries of a large number of scholars and observers of international politics on certain counts. Most of such queries are centred on the following questions like:

i) how China and India, amidst divergence in perception and approaches vis-à-vis few regional and world issues between them can foster constructive relations?

ii) how is cooperation between the two possible when the two Asian giants are vying with each other to take control of the Asian balance of power?

iii) how India, aligned with the US in a strategic partnership that arouses mistrust and suspicion in Chinese mind can foster closer relationship with China?

iv) if China is believed to possess more or less all the critical determinants of a global power, what interest does India have to allow China to accrue benefits whatever from her?

v) Finally, what magic does India hold for China?

All the stated queries are raised mainly by those who see the Sino-Indian relations through the prism of neo-realism emphasising
thereby on the conflictive and competitive elements within the overall relationship. As Mohan Malik, Professor of Security Studies at Asia-Pacific Centre for Security Studies (Honolulu, USA) argues, ‘the bilateral relationship between China and India will be characterised more by competition than cooperation because the issues that bind them are also the issues that divide them. Neither power is comfortable with the rise of the other. Each perceives the other as pursuing hegemony and entertaining imperial ambitions.’

Mohan Malik's anxiety seems to be shared by a person no less than the India Foreign Minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee when he recently stated in Beijing that ‘India-China relations will be one of the more significant factors that will determine the course of human history in the 21st century. If the present indications are anything to go by, human history is in for some tough times ahead.’

While it is true that a few neo-realist explanations cannot be rejected totally, the fact remains that ‘hard politics’ oriented arguments with respect to Sino-Indian relations not only obscures its current multifaceted dimension, but that it leads one to overlook the myriads interests and concerns that bind these two powerful neighbours in a meaningful, proactive and constructive partnership. Such relationship is still in its budding process and is a continuing one with new dimensions being added to it every day – many of which the neo-realists may find difficult to explain as they fall within the realm of ‘soft realism’ and neo-liberal ethos. It is in this spirit that this section of the paper seeks to critically study the Sino-Indian relations by focussing on few important aspects. Given the fact that China's relations with India constitute an important element of the periphery or neighbourhood policy of the former, such relations can not go without some implications for Bangladesh that too lies in the same neighbourhood.

Any discussion on Sino-Indian relations necessitates phasing it out in several stages, each stage showing its own specific elements in the overall evolutionary process of the stated relations. Without going into a detailed discussion on this aspect, few salient features of Sino-Indian relations are discerned as follows:

- Despite unresolved territorial disputes, mutual suspicions over each other's military build-up and strategic intent, potential economic competition and the changing balance of power and realignments, China and India have witnessed
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almost an uninterrupted progress in their political, economic and security relationship since 1988 till to date with a brief interregnum between the period 1998 to 1999.

- The key factors which shape the domestic as well as foreign policies of both the countries in post-Cold War period are their perception of the changing contours of world politics, consensus on several issues, the desire for friendship based on domestic priorities and accommodate changes happening in international sphere. China's foreign policy emphasises military security and national sovereignty, economic prosperity and social welfare. Therefore, it has focused on establishing working relationship with as many states as possible, especially in the neighbourhood. Needless to say, the shift in the priorities of China’s foreign policy is due to the influence of non-governmental domestic actors and pragmatic approach based on consultation and consensus building. In a similar vein, India too has modified its foreign policy for promoting a rift free-environment in order to promote its geo-economic interests, evident very much in its peace initiative with Pakistan. China has probably understood that India cannot be prevented from being a dominant player in the Indian subcontinent and from creating space for its larger role in Asia.

- The emerging scenario of Sino-Indian relations shows how two countries can cooperate to establish a better global political and economic order by addressing the problems of developing countries on the issues of poverty, sustainable development and human rights, including alternative mechanisms to counter the current trends towards unilateralism in the international system. In the process, the major task facing both the countries is to promote the process of multi-polarity for world peace and ride the tide of globalisation for common development so that a just and fair international new political and economic order can be established.

- By all logical conclusions, economic interest is the most significant motivation behind expanding the network of diplomatic relations and strengthening bilateral relations between India and China. Economic ties between India and China are rapidly emerging as one of the most important
bilateral relationships in the world.\textsuperscript{15} Regarding the magnitude of India-China trade, several observations are in order.\textsuperscript{16} First, trade between the two countries has grown very robustly. Each country’s aggregate international trade is expanding by 23-24\% annually. In comparison, India-China trade grew at a 50\% rate during 2002-2006 and will increase by a further 54\% during 2007 to reach $37 billion. Second, after adjusting partner GDP (i.e., bilateral trade divided by the trading partner’s GDP), India’s trade with China is greater than that with Japan, the US or the entire world. After similar adjustments, China’s trade with India is only slightly below that with Japan, the US or the entire world. Third, China already is (or will shortly become) India’s number one trading partner. From China’s side, India already is one of its top ten trading partners. Also, China’s trade with India is growing much faster than with any one of the other nine. Thus, India is rapidly becoming an increasingly important trading partner for China. Fourth, India’s overall international trade is significantly below that of China’s, in terms of both absolute figures (for 2006, $306 billion vs $1,760 billion) as well as relative to GDP (34\% of GDP vs 65\% of GDP). Finally, even if the growth rate in India-China trade slows down to 25\% annually (a conservative projection) from the current rate of over 50\%, bilateral trade between them will be almost $75 billion in 2010 and $225 billion in 2015, i.e., as large as China-US trade just three years ago. As Anil K Gupta remarks, “These are very large numbers. People and business leaders need to start getting ready now for this radically different world.”\textsuperscript{17}

- The Sino-Indian relations are marked by the parameters and guiding principles and the establishment of a ‘Strategic and Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Prosperity’. In the latest visit to China by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India in January 2008, he remarked, “The rise of India and China must be seen as a ‘global public good’ which will benefit the world.”\textsuperscript{18} The statement acquires significance in the light of current economic meltdown and the importance of developing economies such as India and China in cushioning it.
For our purpose, it is relevant to take into account some of the implications of Sino-Indian partnership for Bangladesh which may be as follows:

- The growing Sino-Indian relations has a positive outfall for Bangladesh as it is friendly to both by the dictates of geo-strategic and geo-economies. The principles upon which the entire superstructure of Sino-Indian relations is based goes in conformity with the foreign policy ideals of Bangladesh like, peaceful coexistence, non-interference, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, peaceful international political and economic order. More important, the Sino-Indian quest for a more multi-polar world is indicative of the fact that not only the powerful, but the weaker states too have a role to play in the international community.

- The Sino-Indian relations serve as the most glaring example or model in contemporary world to amply demonstrate that ‘conflict cannot impede cooperation’. This serves as an example for Bangladesh on an important count that given mutual trust, confidence and consensus, cooperative endeavours can be undertaken with any country, whether near or distant. In this context, the India factor enters the scene. With a baggage of contentious issues between the two countries, Bangladesh is yet to witness a climate of mutual trust, understanding and confidence between herself and India. While in case of Sino-Indian relations, efforts were more forthcoming from China to allay India’s China phobia, such gestures are yet to be shown by India to dispel Bangladesh’s misgivings, if any, with respect to the former.

- The bolstering up of Sino-Indian relations can revive the moribund Kunming Initiative undertaken in 1999. The initiative envisages regional cooperation between China, India, Bangladesh and Myanmar. The cooperation as envisaged has a significant practical and strategic value as it envisions connectivity between the partners through construction of communication channels and networks. On a similar note, the observer status of China in SAARC can be a stimulus to future functioning of the organisation. As Chinese Foreign Minister, Li Zhaoxing stated, “China has always been committed to advancing regional cooperation and has paid
close attention to and supported the cooperation process of SAARC. China welcomes and appreciates the decision by the association to accept it as an observer (…) China respects the aspiration of SAARC countries and the principles of equality, mutual trust and win-win cooperation, and is ready to carry out exchanges and expand practical cooperation with SAARC to contribute to the cooperation process of SAARC as well as peace and development in South Asia.”

- The Sino-Indian relations would help Bangladesh to carry forward its ‘Look East Policy’ without creating anguish or misunderstanding in India. As observed, both India and China are vigorously involved in various economic engagements in Southeast Asia and Far East. In this context, it should be mentioned that ‘Look East Policy’ on the part of Bangladesh initially caused eye brows raised in Indian circle. The reality, however, is different. ‘India factor’ will continue to have its dominance in Bangladesh’s trade and commercial affairs as the country continues to remain Bangladesh’s one of the principal trading partners.

- The Sino-Indian relations that stress on cooperation on energy may allow Bangladesh to cooperate with China in exploring its off-shore oil and gas reserves without causing hiccup in normal Indo-Bangladesh relations.

- Lastly and more importantly, the Sino-Indian relation is likely to erode away the Indian perception that the smaller countries in periphery play ‘the China card’ against its geo-political interests. China has cemented cordial relations with Bangladesh through numerous trade and cultural agreements and construction projects. China also became the primary supplier of military equipment and training for Bangladesh. Various elements of military cooperation were put into the context of an ‘umbrella defence agreement’ signed between the two countries during the visit to Beijing of the then Prime Minister Khaleda Zia. India’s anxiety and concern at this development probably finds no ground as the agreement was never publicly projected in an anti-Indian framework. True, strategic considerations have played a role in the evolution of Sino-Bangladesh relations, but such relationship has been of
the normal inter-state kind for the development and economic benefits without any anti-Indian underpinning.

In brief, despite certain irritants that cause mutual suspicion and fear between India and China, like China’s strategic partnership with Pakistan, India’s strategic partnership with the US, the unresolved boundary dispute between the two etc., the fact remains that Indo-China relations are now on safe journey towards a very definitive goal i.e., peace oriented development. As Dr. Swaran Singh remarks, “(...) in fact, having developed mutual confidence on bilateral issues, the two have moved to regional and global initiatives (...) China-India rapprochement indicates a cooperative rather than a confrontationist attitude shared by both countries (...) flourishing China-India ties will have its reverberations across Asia and the rise of China and India, whether in economic growth or in military build-up, will inevitably have certain regional implications.”20

Finally, it is the nature of regional order that enters the security calculation of Bangladesh. It should be mentioned that the scale of the problems faced by the people of the region are so huge that success or failure in South Asia pose defining challenges to development programmes in the region for reasons like problem of governance, abysmal poverty, economic underdevelopment and disparity, crisis of political leadership, ethnic, social and cultural divisions, challenge of non-state actors, absence of correlation between security and development, problems of regional cooperation, lack of environmental protection, food and water insecurity, violation of human rights, presence of nuclear warheads, inter-state and internal conflicts, and new security issues like AIDS and international terrorism.

The South Asian nations being in the process of socio-economic development have to face monumental challenges in resolving the various problems stated above. In particular, they need to be on guard against any attempt to undermine their sovereign status, be it in the name of human rights, environment, intellectual property rights or security. The year 2008 has not been that promising for the region except that a ‘wave of democratisation’ was visible in the region as most of the regional countries were heading towards a change in their respective governments through elections. In Pakistan, the march towards democracy gained momentum despite various obstacles on the way like terrorist attacks by the Al-Qaeda
elements, suicide bombings, sabotage and arson incidents. While the country succeeded in installing a democratic government, much remains to be seen as to how as a 'front line state against the global war on terrorism', it succeeds in ensuring political stability and dispensation on its own without external prescription, in particular from the US.

In the immediate neighbourhood of Bangladesh, the political development in Nepal became also a major topic of concern in the region as the country, after many years of insurgency movement by the Maoists, was heading towards an election for installation of a democratic government. The election for a constituent assembly was held on 10 April 2008 that brought the Maoists to power. By the end of August, a Prime Minister and a President were selected and the country went under a coalition government with a new cabinet. Despite the peaceful transition, complex issues relating to the structure of the state remain till to date unresolved. Law and order situation in the country remains problematic. The opposition to the Maoists comprising of the Rightists not in favour of the constitutional monarch, the Nepalese Army's chief's assertion that he is against Maoists being inducted in the Army and the Madhesia movement in the Terai are the clear indications of political disenchantment against the present Maoist regime in Nepal.

Next to Nepal, it is the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan that draws one's attention. The Kingdom underwent a democratic process in 2008 through election. The Kingdom's first democratic elections endowed the people with a constitution that would transform the absolute monarch into a two-party democratic system. Bhutan's Tenth Five Year Plan that was floated just before the election is likely to boost up its economy and political governance. The strategic priorities under the Plan are:

i) encouraging industrial development;

ii) promotion of balanced regional development;

iii) integrated rural and urban development for poverty alleviation;

iv) expanding strategic infrastructure;

v) investing in human capital; and

vi) fostering good governance.
Despite this grand development design plus a new democratic polity, the Kingdom remains vulnerable to threats from the Maoists of Nepal that are steadily making inroads in the refugee camps and are poised to make its presence felt in southern Bhutan. As S. Chandrasekharan remarks, “This development is very unfortunate as this would in course of time affect adversely the lives of the remaining Bhutanese of Nepali origin in southern Bhutan and is also likely to slow down the process of third country settlement.” At distance, Sri Lanka in 2008 continued to remain dominated by the government’s determined efforts to liquidate the LTTE militarily from the areas presently under its control in the north. In a situation where the LTTE was getting cornered, many developments, in particular the frustrating efforts by the LTTE to regain their footholds could be serious enough to peril the life and property of many innocent civilians.

1.3 SYSTEMIC PARAMETERS OF NATIONAL SECURITY OF BANGLADESH: GLOBAL DIMENSION

In this section, ideas of system level analysis will be applied. System level analysis is a world view that takes a top-down approach to analyse global politics. This level theorises that the world’s social-economic-political structure and pattern of interaction (the international system) strongly influence the policies of state and other international actors. Therefore, understanding the structure and pattern of the international system will lead to understanding how international politics operates. The social, economic, political structure and pattern of interaction both at the international and regional levels strongly influence the politics of nations and hence their national securities. Since the world is now passing through unipolarity under the aegis of the US, developments flowing from the uncontested US leadership will be examined to find out their relevance for national security of Bangladesh. For example, the global war on terrorism, the global financial crisis, and US’s position vis-à-vis climate change will be discussed briefly in this section to decipher what implications they have on the national security of Bangladesh.
1.3.1 US Policy towards War on Terror in 2008

Throughout 2008, it seems that the US slowly shifted its focus from Iraq to Pakistan and Afghanistan in relation to the so-called war on terror. President Bush, in a speech, delivered on the occasion of fifth anniversary of Iraq war on 19 March 2008, mentioned that the US policy of surge-deployment of 30,000 additional US troops in Iraq since early 2007—has been proved effective against terrorists and extremists elements. As President Bush commented, “The surge has done more than turning the situation in Iraq around—it has opened the door to a major strategic victory in the broader war on terror.”

Also, General David Petraeus, Commander of the US forces in Iraq, emphasised the success of surge when he appeared before Congress on 8-9 April 2008. Although Bush suggested he would send some US troops home on return of this success, he indicated that the war on Iraq is not yet over. Recently, Iraq and the USA have signed a security agreement that calls for the US troops to withdraw from Iraq by the end of 2011. President Bush during his December 2008 Iraq visit said that the Iraq war is decisively on its way to being won.

On the other hand, all through 2008, it looks that the US might be taking the war on terror back to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Despite adopting the policy of cooperation in fighting terror by Parvez Musharraf, White House pressed him to do more to curb terrorism. Even in July 2007, the superpower had threatened to carry out unilateral attack on Al-Qaeda hide-outs in Pakistan. And, when Musharraf was defeated in the 18 February 2008 elections, the message from Washington to the new Pakistan government vis-à-vis war on terror was loud and clear. An US official then stressed that the USA’s policy towards Pakistan would focus on fight in the tribal areas of Waziristan, where Taliban and Al-Qaeda have established a safe haven. And with the fall of Musharraf on 18 August and on the eve of Presidential election in Pakistan, the US ground-forces raided a Pakistani village situated one mile from the Afghan border. This assault that took place on 3 September 2008 was the first known US ground attack inside Pakistan against the militants. The assault was followed by a missile attack on South Waziristan that claimed the lives of 30 Pakistanis. Thereafter, in spite of Pakistani protests, the unilateral US attacks were kept mounting on Pakistan.
Moreover, Bush in support of these attacks argued that Pakistan has turned out to be the latest battleground for war on terror.29

Barack Obama, during his campaign as the presidential candidate, pledged to end Iraq war, reiterated to further strengthen US presence in Afghanistan and warned Pakistan to launch US attacks on alleged Al-Qaeda hideouts in that country. Bush had already taken unilateral military action against the militants harbouring inside Pakistani territory. And Obama is expected to continue to follow this policy as the US President.

The US assaults on Pakistan soil and the 26 November 2008 Mumbai terror attacks bear some implications for Bangladesh. All these show that terrorism is likely to spread further in South Asia. In this connection, Bangladesh government must remain careful and alert to take measures to curb and resist extremist and terrorist groups. In 2005, the country had its difficult period with terrorism. Now if terrorist organisations regain their ground in Bangladesh, then it might drag this country into the emerging South Asian war on terror.

1.3.2 Global Financial Crisis

In 2008, financial crisis gripped the US economy as well as European and emerging Asian markets. The crisis had its roots in the US housing markets where too many people got loans beyond what they could afford to pay back. When the loan defaulters kept emerging in large numbers, the lenders began to collapse. Consequently, financial institutes became more cautious about lending money to business sector and other financial institutions. With borrowing difficult to get for businesses and individual, uncertainty and recession sneaked into the US economy. The crisis had its impact on the US market by March 2008. Big mortgage lenders, firms, investment banks and insurance companies either collapsed or taken over by other banks. To address the situation, the Bush Administration unleashed a $700 billion bailout plan.

The US financial turmoil spilled over into the European and Asian economies too. As a part of emergency measures, the UK government nationalised couple of mortgage lenders. The governments of Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands formulated bailout programme for their banks and insurance groups. With sudden collapse of Iceland’s banking system, the country had to seek
financial help from IMF. Besides, Russia spent $200 billion for its financial sector; Hungary and Ukraine negotiated with IMF for loans.

As a major exporter of Ready Made Garments (RMG), the South Asian region also became vulnerable to the economic crisis of the US and Europe. For instance, India’s export dwindled in October 2008 and probably the country may not fulfil the export target of $200 billion in the current fiscal year. Besides, Indian IT sector is feeling the heat of this economic downturn as some 50,000 IT professionals might be losing their jobs. The economy of Pakistan is also strained by the global crisis. In October 2008, inflation in Pakistan was about 30%, its rupee was devaluated by roughly 25% in three months and budget deficit became 10% of the GDP. In this backdrop, Pakistan asked for emergency aid from IMF.

As far as Bangladesh is concerned, global economic turmoil might affect mainly the RMG industry and the remittances sector of the country. The US and EU markets have accounted roughly 75% of garment export of Bangladesh. Thus, the crisis in those economies is likely to decrease the demand for Bangladeshi RMG products. Besides, the current economic meltdown may disrupt the flow of remittances to Bangladesh from the oil-rich Gulf region. The region contributes just over 60 percent to the total remittances of Bangladesh. But with continuous dip in oil price, many Bangladeshis may become unemployed in the Gulf countries.

In contrast, there are views that suggest that the economy of Bangladesh might not suffer severely from the economic crisis because of relatively smaller proportion of foreign investment in the capital market. Also, it has been argued that demand for Bangladeshi RMG will not decline in the US and EU markets because Bangladeshi competitor in RMG sector i.e., China and Vietnam decided not to manufacture basic RMG items. More orders, as a result, are moving towards Bangladesh from these countries. Also, the high concentration of unskilled Bangladeshi workers in Middle East might not be affected by the current crisis due to the nature of their job.

To address any likely adverse impact of the economic meltdown on the local economy, Bangladesh government has already formed a taskforce. However, with no representative from the private sector, some Bangladeshi entrepreneurs have already raised doubt over the
success of the taskforce. Also, the government is criticised for not doing enough to tackle any future crisis. The government of Bangladesh can devalue its currency against US dollar, take steps to reduce dependency on imported raw materials for export and give tax rebate incentive to the exporters.

1.3.3 Climate Change

Perhaps the greatest environmental challenge that the world has been currently facing is climate change. Emissions of greenhouse gases—carbon dioxide (CO\textsubscript{2}), methane, nitrous oxide—resulted in from human activities have immensely influenced the climate to degrade. At present, use of fossil fuel lead to the emissions of 7 billion tons of CO\textsubscript{2} annually, whereas deforestation contributes 1.6 billions tons of CO\textsubscript{2} per year. The United States of America has been considered as the biggest polluter as it is the leading country as far as CO\textsubscript{2} emissions are concerned. Presently, the total US CO\textsubscript{2} emissions account roughly 25% of global emission. According to the Climate Change Performance Index 2008 constructed by a German based international organisation Germanwatch, the USA ranked 55 among 56 countries that are jointly responsible for 90% global CO\textsubscript{2} emissions. However, the US governments historically have been found to be less forthcoming in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Many governments have criticised the failure of President Bush to ratify the Kyoto protocol, which was signed by the Clinton Administration. In fact, the USA is the only country that had signed the Protocol and later backed out of it as President Bush argued that the Kyoto Protocol would damage the US financially. Moreover, during the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Poznan, Poland, from 1 to 12 December 2008, the US failed to clarify its position on the reduction of greenhouse gases emissions. The US was subdued when the official negotiation on reduction of CO\textsubscript{2} emissions had been going on. Such stance on the part of the government of USA could cause the other developed and developing nations to refrain from taking significant steps for lowering emissions level.

Nonetheless, to slow the growth of CO\textsubscript{2} emissions without harming the US economy, Bush has devised some policies that include tax incentives to encourage industry to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on a voluntary basis. But the policies have been criticised for they would only increase CO\textsubscript{2} emissions in the US.
Barack Obama is also critical about the Kyoto Protocol. Obama said that the protocol lacks meaningful and actionable emission target.\textsuperscript{40} Barack Obama’s victory, however, is a source of optimism for the protection of global environment as he is committed to take measures to fight the adverse effects of climate change. His target is to reduce US emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 and then a further 80 percent by 2050. For achieving that with smallest economic impact, Obama favours a market based programme named ‘cap and trade’. In the US, the programme worked effectively to reduce acid rain.\textsuperscript{41} Obama has also pledged to invest in increasing energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy.

Bangladesh has been considered as one of the worst hit countries due to climate change. Bangladesh tops the Global Climate Risk Index 2009\textsuperscript{42} followed by North Korea and Nicaragua.\textsuperscript{43} Scientists have predicted that Bangladesh will suffer from floods, salinity and droughts, which in turn will adversely affect food security and crop productivity. The country may also face riverbank erosion, sea water level rise and lack of fresh water in the coastal zones. These changes will threaten the significant achievements Bangladesh has made over the last 20 years in increasing incomes and reducing poverty, and will make it more difficult to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Climate change will severely challenge the country’s ability to achieve the high rates of economic growth needed to sustain these reductions in poverty. At this juncture, Bangladesh needs to pursue an active and front row diplomatic stance to achieve maximum support from the international community. The role of international community is important to fight the adverse effects of climate change. If the Obama led government is able to reduce the US emission levels it would have a positive impact on the environment of Bangladesh. At the same time, Bangladesh needs to look for the US and other country’s support for developing a climate-resilient agriculture. Bangladesh needs to acquire better adaptive strategy and ensure availability of green technology to the people.

Climate change and its various adverse effects on the country’s people bear immense security implications for Bangladesh. In effect, the securitisation of climate has received growing media and government attention since February 2007— following the release of the Fourth Assessment Report of the Working Group III of the IPCC, which clarified that it is a reality and a human induced phenomenon.
The issues related to the wellbeing and safety of the people are protection of human being from a variety of economic, social, ethnic, epidemiological and environmental threats, all of which are now studied under the rubric of human security. Since many of such human security issues bear cross-border implications, it cannot be viewed in isolation from the national security of a state. Such linkage between human security and national security may as well impact international security. The security consequences of climate change at the international, national and community levels are likely to include border disputes, mass internal and cross-border migration, and increased energy and resource shortages, which can lead to inter-communal violence and resource-based conflicts, civil unrest and intensified social stresses and humanitarian crises.

1.4 STRATEGIES AND POLICIES FOR BANGLADESH

In the preamble, it should be mentioned that the systemic factors, both of regional and global dimension, with their effects direct or indirect, on the national security of a nation remain outside its territorial jurisdiction. The power of a state in Westphalian sense ends at this point. As a result, the task of tackling the various issues, both at the regional and global levels, becomes too onerous for a nation. In our previous work, various policy propositions and recommendations were furnished in order to fill up the deficiency in various systemic factors of Bangladesh’s national security. Given the domestic context of the problems, a free and flexible approach was at hand to suggest several propositions and recommendations for bolstering the national security of Bangladesh. The relevant question now is: what would be the way for Bangladesh to chart out its course of actions in a milieu totally outside its control? The answer to the question would seek a two-phased solution, first to set its own house in order and project the strengths of the country rather than harping on the weaknesses and second, to approach the external world with caution, prudence and pragmatism. The former, therefore, speaks about making the domestic setting secure and the latter to focus on diplomacy with a combination of dialogue, consultation and negotiation.

With respect to the former, it is of utmost importance to build the country’s image first. Previously, the image of a country was considered intangible carrying marginal value affecting the question
of its security. But now it has assumed substantive importance affecting the national self-image, national security and as well as the development process. Bad image hampers security more than good image can enhance it. It is now believed that the image of a country is a precious foundation, which can be easily ruined but difficult to establish. Image means not only the image at present, but also aspects of its past and future. If the image of a country is in permanent crisis or even in transient doubt, it can invite external interference, thereby, keeping the national security of a country at stake. An ambivalent image seriously undermines a country's diplomatic and political options, discourages FDI, thwarts nation-building process and engenders further image crisis.

With respect to the latter, Bangladesh on the regional and international front, should opt for the promotion of multilateral mechanisms and associative diplomacy as means through which it can advance its ideas and initiatives and achieve its goals and objectives. This would entail the avoidance of short-term limited self-interests, which detracts from her long-term interests. The value of multilateral diplomacy to small states like Bangladesh has been widely discussed and talked about in international relations discourse. It has been observed that multilateral diplomacy is particularly relevant to the diplomatic activities of states like Bangladesh and that it is generally in their interests to pursue, as far as possible, a multilateral approach in their international relations. It benefits them because they can use their limited resources and greatly expand their international contacts more effectively. Multilateral diplomacy also complements bilateral diplomacy in offering opportunities for numerous bilateral discussions, which are particularly important for those states that do not have frequent contacts with each other. Also Bangladesh should put stress on the elements of lobbying. Lobbying capacity for Bangladesh is very important in order to influence the international rule making and policymaking.

1.4.1 Peace Culture in Bangladesh
Bangladesh’s role in regional stability has to percolate through three levels. First, it has to make its domestic front a strong one in political and economic terms and thereby bring a change in its image. Needless to state, one of the fundamental objectives of
Bangladesh’s foreign policy is the promotion and preservation of the country’s vital interests including its sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and viable economic development. Despite innumerable problems on the way of economic development, the country through concrete initiatives is now engaged in a countrywide poverty alleviation programme with the ostensible aim of maintaining social stability and peace. Also, various initiatives, mixed with moderation and pragmatism, have been undertaken by Bangladesh in several international socio-economic forums to promote the cause of developing countries in particular. Such initiatives call for strategies to stop failing investment, restructure and reduce debt, promote trade and encourage technology transfer. On the political front, while transition to democracy is fraught with many problems, growing public awareness about their democratic rights and privileges can no longer be ignored by those in power. As a result, democratic institution building continues to remain an ongoing process in the country with the avowed goal of meeting the peoples’ hopes and aspirations. The agenda for democracy must contain the following elements: freedom, good governance and rule of law, prosperity, peace and security. Growing awareness about protection of environment should also figure in the ruling circle despite the fact that the country lacks coherent environment diplomacy in order to look for a place in the global environmental arena. Bangladesh as a state with centuries-old history and rich cultural heritage, should consider the preservation of its culture and national identity as a necessary element for ensuring national security.

Through a strong domestic base, Bangladesh can initiate efforts to reinvigorate the SAARC process of cooperation on soft issues, promote dialogue on contentious issues in the region, act with the external powers (like the US) in combating terrorism and advocate a halt to arms race in South Asia, lend credence to Track II diplomacy, promote coexistence in the region, fight media blitz etc. In order to bring credibility in Bangladesh’s efforts, the country needs to participate actively in various inter-governmental organisations like the UN, the NAM, the Commonwealth of Nations etc., and stand for international laws and norms, voice against the use of force in settling disputes, demonstrate moral and normative positions on international issues.
1.4.2 Regional Stability

Bangladesh is well aware that peace and stability in the region is contingent upon certain factors like:

i) even if the power structure in a particular region is asymmetrical in nature, the powerful actors would desist themselves from such acts that create doubt, suspicion and fear in the minds of the weaker states;

ii) there should be a certain degree of regional cohesion and solidarity so as to enable all the actors in the region to co-exist peacefully and interact with each other in a positive and constructive manner;

iii) the regional states should render efforts to manage, if not totally eliminate, problems that create frictions and antagonisms of ethnic, communal, sub-national or socio-economic character within these states themselves, thereby eliminating intra-state tensions;

iv) inter-state tensions should be kept at a low level and there should be certain institutional mechanisms to eliminate them and finally;

v) the regional actors should share a certain degree of commonality in their perception of external threat to their region.

Unfortunately, however, South Asia is far away from meeting all such criteria. Bangladesh, thus, believes that through a strong domestic base, it can initiate efforts to reinvigorate the process of cooperation in the region. In this respect, the country’s emphasis is on soft political issues and promotion of dialogue and consultation on contentious issues in the region. It also seeks to act with the external powers like the USA, in combating terrorism in all forms and manifestations. As indicated earlier, the country advocates a halt to arms race in South Asia, lends credence to Track II diplomacy, supports coexistence in the region and shows readiness to fight media blitz, etc.

1.5 CONCLUSION

As has been revealed in the analysis, the complex web of systemic factors, both of international and regional nature, influence/affect
Bangladesh’s national security in one way or the other. In the face of such challenges, Bangladesh is, indeed, constrained to act independently on its own. The constraint emanates not only from the confinement of state authority within the national boundary, but as well from the resource endowment that Bangladesh as a small and poor state lacks. In this backdrop, Bangladesh, in order to encounter the multifarious security challenges at the regional and international levels, needs to deal with the broader issues of general capacity building that would give her the strategic space to play its own role vis-à-vis all situations. From a normative perspective, it can be safely stated that Bangladesh recognises interdependence, malice to none, reciprocity etc. as central to the cooperative character of its relations with the outside world. Since the external milieu produces unavoidable variables (conflict, violence, chaos, unrest etc) due to the Hobbesian nature of world politics, there is, at first, the utmost need for a more pragmatic and effective strategic calculus and a sophisticated understanding of the international and regional environments. It is through such understanding that a more sustainable policy and direction can be formulated at both the domestic and external fronts of Bangladesh to promote and advance her national and security interests. In effect, both the policy and direction should form process to be marked by rationality, wisdom, prudence and continuity. It is only then that Bangladesh is expected to achieve viability, acceptability, capacity and a meaningful status for herself for playing a constructive role in the external environment for meeting its security and foreign policy challenges.

Needless to mention, in contemporary world, Bangladesh as an independent entity is well bestowed upon with the opportunity to reap the benefits of democratic governance, laissez-faire economy, good governance, globalisation, effective human rights regime, regional and international cooperation, maintaining environmental standards etc. in order to overcome its weaknesses whatever. While challenges in extracting the advantages out of such forces may be many, in the ultimate analysis, it is the policies, strategies and actions of the political leadership that would be a deciding factor in making the state a strong entity. In more tangible terms, the strength, success and security of Bangladesh rest on the country’s political commitment to certain fundamental values and principles like concern for human security and dignity, strong position against
terrorism and conflicts of all types, awareness about the threats from weapons of mass destruction, encourage global economic growth and ensure participation in it, expand the circle of development, cooperate with all centres of global military and economic power. Finally, and perhaps, the most important commitment should be to ameliorate the country's security institutions to meet the challenges and opportunities as demanded by time and space.

Endnotes

2 The issues that constitute the composite dialogue are: (i) Peace and Security including CBMs (ii) Jammu and Kashmir (iii) Siachen (iv) Wullar Barrage Project/Tulbul Navigation Project (v) Sir Creek (vi) Terrorism and Drug Trafficking (vii) Economic and Commercial Cooperation and finally (viii) Promotion of Friendly Exchanges in various fields.


9 Ibid.


16 All points stated in ibid.

17 Ibid.


19 Publication by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People’s Republic of China, 03 April 2007.


21 The Terai region of Nepal is the long strip of the plains of Nepal adjoining Indian territory and is inhabited by the Madhesis, an ethnic group of Nepal of Awadhi, Maithali and Bhojpuri descent. They form 35% of Nepal’s population. Despite their sizeable proportion of the Nepalese population, the Madhesis have long been discriminated as second class citizens of Nepal in terms of job opportunities in Nepal’s administration and in representation in Nepal’s political set-up. This, despite the fact that the Madhesis and the Terai region makes an overwhelming contribution to Nepal’s economy, both agriculture and industry. Subhash Kapil, “Nepal: Political Turbulence from a New Quarter,” available at www.boloji.com/plainspeak/118.htm, [accessed on 18 March 2009].


35 Ibid.
42 The Index was launched at the recently concluded Poznan Conference on climate change.
44 In accordance with Article 25 of the Bangladesh Constitution, the fundamental policy goals include: (i) promotion of regional and world peace; (ii) security and disarmament; (iii) the cause of economic and social development; (iv) the central role of the UN in the cooperative management of the world's problems. Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha, available at www.bssnews.net/about_foreign_policy.php, [accessed on 30 July 2009].