CHAPTER II

SECURITY COOPERATION, CONFLICT PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT IN SOUTH ASIA
REGIONAL COOPERATION IN SOUTH ASIA: PROBLEMS OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT
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Introduction

From the very onset of de-colonization, South Asia has been beset with numerous interrelated domestic and inter-state conflicts. These were rooted in the colonial past as well as in the dynamics of the post-colonial development of South Asian societies. Intra-and inter-state conflicts in the region have often been compounded in the process of interaction with the outside world, particularly the East-West Cold War dynamics and Sino-Soviet rivalry. A combination of regional as well as extra-regional factors has gradually transformed South Asia into an area of permanent mistrust, endemic conflicts and recurrent wars.

Parallel to these, there had been efforts in South Asia aimed at reducing tension and even devising an orderly structure of mutual relations with a view to releasing some of the resources and energy for the fulfilment of the tasks of socio-economic development. However, while there have been a lot of talks on non-violence and peaceful coexistence, no-war pact, peaceful settlement of disputes, confidence-building and regional cooperation, there has not been a single proposal aimed at initiating a departure from conflict to a course of cooperation that could withstand the test of time. As a result, while during the post-colonial period regional cooperation became an order of the day for self-reliant socio-economic development, South Asia remained out of any cooperative framework.

As suggested by the post-colonial experience of inter-state relations in South Asia, the region was left with two options:
i. to employ efforts with a view to resolving the issues of mutual discord before initiating a process of regional cooperation; or

ii. to initiate a process of regional cooperation amidst conflicts and mistrust in the hope that regional cooperation itself would serve as a catalyst for confidence-building, conflict management and resolution.

South Asia tried the first option for about four decades with no tangible results. More frustrating, another four decades could have been spent trying the first option without seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. Such a situation tempted South Asian leaders to try the second option, the ultimate result of which was the creation of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) in 1985.

Being quite aware of the prevailing situation, South Asian leaders were highly cautious while setting the objectives of the organization. The SAARC Charter signed by the Heads of States or Governments of the member countries at the First Summit of the organization held in Dhaka during December 7-8, 1985 has stated that "increased co-operation, contact and exchanges would contribute to the promotion of friendship and understanding" among the member states and promote the "welfare of the people of South Asia". Disputes and conflicts between member-states were kept out of the purview of SAARC, particularly at the insistence of India. New Delhi was concerned that discussions on such issues would isolate it as it was involved in numerous conflicts with almost all of its neighbors. The Declaration on South Asian Regional Co-operation signed by the Foreign Ministers on August 2, 1985 specifically stipulates that "bilateral and contentious issue shall be excluded from the deliberations". The same was reiterated in the SAARC Charter.
The central objective of South Asian leaders was to initiate the process of regional cooperation amidst mistrust and conflicts in the hope that regional cooperation would generate a dynamism of its own in the process of which mutual confidence could be built, conflicts and disputes could be resolved or, at least, properly managed minimizing their damaging impact. Interestingly, the founding fathers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as well were motivated by the similar hopes while launching the Association amidst mistrusts and conflicts among its members.

The years since the emergence of SAARC have shown how swiftly politics in South Asia can oscillate between hopes and despair, conflict and co-operation, combativeness and constructive diplomacy. Despite enormous difficulties suffered by South Asian countries in their mutual relationship, SAARC achieved remarkable progress in concluding a host of agreements with a view to moving towards substantive areas of co-operation. These include the Agreement on South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) concluded in the Seventh SAARC Summit on April 11, 1993. The aim of SAPTA was to augment intra-SAARC trade. Accordingly, a list of 226 commodities for preferential tariff concessions, ranging from 10 to 100 percent, was approved by the Heads of State or Government of SAARC countries during the Eighth Summit held in New Delhi during May 2-4, 1995. With this final list of commodities, SAPTA came into operation on December 7, 1995. Meanwhile, SAARC has also decided to transform SAPTA into a SAARC Free Trade Area (SAFTA) by 2005. Subsequently, in the Ninth Summit of SAARC held in Male during May 12-14, the decision was taken to accelerate the process and form the SAFTA by 2001. The decisions were too unrealistic to be materialized.
In reality, the concrete achievements of SAARC, in terms of fostering either regional cooperation or friendly relations among the member-states, were insignificant. A regional politico-security environment full of suspicion and mistrust, and a host of bilateral conflicts among the member-states have constantly overshadowed the process of regional cooperation within the framework of SAARC.

Over the last couple of years, bilateral conflicts among South Asian countries have undergone a process that is contradictory in nature. India's relations with her smaller neighbors, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka in particular are witnessing a process of gradual improvement. Some of the most stubborn disputes in bilateral relations have been resolved amicably. Even Indo-Pakistan relations were displaying some signs of improvement. The formation of sub-regional groupings within SAARC and involving SAARC and ASEAN countries were in the process. All these generated certain degree of hope with regard to regional, sub-regional and inter-regional cooperation involving SAARC.

Soon, however, hopes turned to be an utter despair as Indo-Pakistan relations witnessed another spiral of deterioration, this time, with potentially devastating consequences. A sequence of events, the test of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan in May 1998, their failure to devise a *modus vivendi*, Pakistan's Kargil adventure and, by implications, *coup d'état* staged by General Pervez Musharraf in Pakistan brought Indo-Pakistan relations to its nadir since 1971.

Nuclearization and the intensification of Indo-Pakistan conflict that culminated in the Kargil crisis severely affected the ongoing process of regional cooperation in South Asia. Military take-over in Pakistan and the postponement of the 11th SAARC Summit scheduled to be held in Katmandu during November 26-28, 1999 as India refused to attend the Summit
because of 'concern and disquiet' over the military coup in Pakistan brought the SAARC process to a standstill. An initiative on the part of Bangladesh to end the deadlock did not bring desired result. Quite diplomacy as pursued by SAARC Secretary General Nihal Rodrigo to arrange the Summit also suffered the same fate. Thus, this time, conflict not only came to overshadow the process of regional cooperation under the framework of SAARC but also brought the SAARC process to a halt.

It is in this backdrop that an attempt would be made below to deal with the conflicts in South Asia, their impact on the process of regional cooperation and the problems of managing them. First, the paper would analyze the conflicts in South Asia, particularly their present state, and, how and to what extent they hinder the process of regional cooperation. Second, it would deal with the problems of conflict management. In this regard, emphasis would not be on the technical aspects of conflict management. Rather, the focus of this part would be why and how the ruling elites in South Asia failed even to generate a stake in effective conflict management and crisis prevention for the interest of mutually beneficial cooperation. Finally, an attempt would be made to present an outlook for the future.

**Cooperation versus Conflict: The Present State**

As indicated, SAARC was launched amidst deep-seated mistrust and numerous interrelated domestic and inter-state conflicts among the member-states rooted in the colonial past as well as the dynamics of post-colonial socio-economic and politico-cultural development of the region. For the convenience of our analysis, numerous intra-regional conflicts in South Asia would be divided into following three categories:
i. Divergent politico-security perceptions and priorities;
ii. Bilateral conflicts; and
iii. Indo-Pakistan conflict.

Before proceeding to the discussion on the issues, it may be mentioned that intra-state conflict with cross-border reverberations would also be discussed under bilateral conflicts as ultimately these turn to be inter-state ones. Indo-Pakistan conflict essentially a bilateral one would be discussed under separate heading. It is in view of the nature, intensity and magnitude of the conflict and, more importantly, its ability to determine the environment in South Asia with regard to conflict and co-operation.

i. Divergent Politico-Security Perceptions and Priorities: From India Doctrine to Gujral Doctrine

Traditionally, the security perceptions and priorities of South Asian countries have not only been divergent but also to a great extent diametrically opposite. At the centre has been and still remains India’s aspiration to a predominant role in South Asia deeply rooted in the historical and psychological factors. Since the ancient time, India, particularly the historical Hindustan, has been the centre of power in South Asia, which dominated the peripheries. The Great Aryan emperors, the Sultans of Delhi, the Mughals and the British, all made persistent efforts to dominate the peripheries with a great deal of success. In this regard, for about more than a millennium, Delhi was the centre of power except for the initial period of the British rule when Calcutta (also in India) was the capital. Indians still remember all these with a great deal of nostalgia. Even an Indian scholar with considerably moderate views recalls, “Through the greater part of history of South Asia, it was some power established in what is India today... that held an umbrella over the greater part of the region”.8
While the Indians view themselves as the heir to all the great rulers of the land, for practical purposes, specific reference to India is made more as the ‘Successor State’ to the British Raj. Thus, a group of Indian scholars headed by a luminary of Indian academia asserts that, “the Indians perceived themselves to be inheritors of the rights and privileges the British used to enjoy in what is now known as South Asia”.

What are these rights and privileges? Relevant to our context is the fact that “The British had conceived of the geo-strategic imperatives of Indian defence as embracing the whole Subcontinent of South Asia and extending to its environs, such as Tibet and Afghanistan, and involving command of the Indian Ocean”. India inherited this body of strategic thinking from the British and, with some modifications in the light of the changed context of regional and international politics, this remains the cornerstone of Indian security perceptions.

Thus, contemporary India conceives of her neighboring countries as lying within the Indian defence perimeter and being integral to the security interests of India. On the other hand, India’s neighbors themselves regard India itself as the source of their own insecurity against whom it is necessary to organise their own security interests, sometimes even on an extra-regional basis.

Such perceptions in the backdrop of disproportionately greater physical endowment of India coupled with New Delhi’s occasional attempts to transform its natural pre-eminence into imposed predominance serve as a constant source of apprehension, distrust and fear of smaller South Asian countries in relation to India. This remains the most important factor that motivated some South Asian countries to explore extra-regional security linkages whenever they found it to be expedient. In the circumstances, during the entire post-colonial period, two diametrically opposite perceptions dominated South
Asia’s security thinking as well as practical policy of the regional states.

Most of the smaller South Asian countries, either directly or indirectly, welcomed extra-regional great power involvement in the region with a view to counterbalancing the unchallenged might of India. In this regard, China and the US have been readily available. On the other hand, India’s policy was designed to keep the great powers – friends and adversaries alike – out of intra-regional affairs, so that it could exert its power and influence to bear upon the countries of the region. Even when developing closer cooperation with the former Soviet Union with a view to counterbalancing the Pak-US-China axis, India employed persistent efforts with a view to keeping all these extra-regional powers (including the Soviet Union) out of the region, though with a mixed success.

During the post-1971 period, India, from a claimant to the regional power status in South Asia, transformed itself into a contender for it. Accordingly, her strategic thinking on the region underwent further modification. Taking into account her historical heritage, geo-strategic position, economic and military potentials as well as international standing, Indian strategists developed a series of well-connected foreign policy and security perceptions with regard to its role in South Asia which are widely known as India Doctrine. To a significant extent, it is the South Asian version of Monroe Doctrine, wherein India views the entire region as a single strategic unit and herself as its sole custodian of security and stability.12

During the late-Indira period, and particularly under Rajiv Gandhi, this doctrine was put into action. As judged by Indian policy makers, over the four decades of its independent existence, the country has prepared itself to embark upon such a policy. Economically, politically and geo-strategically, it has emerged as the single-most dominant power in South Asia. It
has the world's fourth largest army, sixth largest Navy and eighth largest Air Force. Despite recurrent crises, its political system proved to be more stable than that of any South Asian country. In the international arena, it emerged as a factor that should be reckoned with by all the great powers. As judged by the policy makers in New Delhi, with the withdrawal of competitive involvement of great powers from South Asia due to the end of the Cold War, particularly their unwillingness to challenge India in the region, a vacuum was created setting the stage for India to fulfil its objectives envisaged in the India Doctrine.

While such a situation has been envisioned by India's founding fathers, Nehru in particular, in terms of the method of its implementation the policy was an antithesis to Gandhian non-violence and Nehruvian peaceful coexistence. It was heavy handed and dependent on the use of or the threat to use force in dealing with the neighbors. Indian policy towards the ethnic violence in Sri Lanka and the stationing of Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in that country under a controversial treaty in 1987, its intervention in the Maldives to suppress an attempted coup in 1988, and a virtual blockade imposed on Nepal following severe disagreements between the two countries over the trade and transit treaty in 1989 are the most illustrated manifestations of this policy.  

India's role as the self-appointed custodian of peace and stability in South Asia during late-1980s further reinforced the environment of mistrust and suspicion in the region. It was viewed by the smaller South Asian countries as an attempt by India to transform its natural pre-eminence into an imposed predominance. More disconcerting was the fact that the extra-regional great powers – on whom the smaller countries banked so much – have shown a distinct unwillingness to challenge India within the region. In the circumstances, the
smaller South Asian countries were deeply concerned that what happened with Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Nepal could be repeated with any other country. As a consequence, India's relations with its neighbors deteriorated severely. Its authority in the region reached the lowest ebb. The worst victim of such an unhealthy atmosphere in the region became the emerging process of co-operation within the framework of SAARC.

However, India has been unable to translate its preeminence into predominance, while paying a heavy price for the abrasive policy. The enormous costs incurred by India in terms of material and human resources to sustain its Sri Lanka adventure, the unhappy experience of deadlock in its relations with Nepal have brought, even during Rajiv Gandhi's rule, a change in Indian mind. Influential circles in India came to realize that the prevailing situation of mistrust cannot be congenial for the long-standing interests of the country in the region. They became aware that Indian diplomacy has failed to display the wisdom, sophistication and caution as displayed by the previous generation of its leaders. In concrete terms, they have clearly realized that it is necessary to devise more sophisticated methods of exerting influence on the neighbors than employed against Sri Lanka or even Nepal. During V. P. Singh's rule, Indian regional posture underwent a process of change. The withdrawal of IPKF from Sri Lanka, a comparatively conciliatory approach towards Nepal and to a lesser extent towards Bangladesh were indicative of the new trend in Indian thinking. The crisis over the Babri Mosque issue and the subsequent developments, have reinvigorated the shift in Indian policy away from foreign adventure to domestic problems. In view of sharp division of the society along ethnic, linguistic, regional, religious as well as politico-ideological lines and resultant violence, India appeared to be at war with itself. Any dramatic improvement in the domestic situation was unlikely and it served as a powerful restraint against foreign adventure.
While the policymakers in New Delhi came to recognize the country’s regional security posture of the 1980s as being counterproductive, Indian ability to undertake any courageous initiative, in this regard, remained circumscribed under P. V. Narasimha Rao. It was primarily due to the fact that the government was weak and vulnerable to domestic opposition. To an extent, it was also morally blackmailed by the rising tide of Hindu nationalism.

It was the 1996 elections and consequential changes that put India on the threshold of a radical change in its policy towards the neighbors both in terms of its regional security posture and bilateral conflicts. The 1996 elections brought to power a coalition government headed by the United Front. Under the United Front government, India has undertaken a rather courageous initiative with a view to replacing the abrasive security posture of the 1980s and resolving the country’s some of the long-standing disputes with the neighbors, and thus, improving the overall political climate in the region. The new policy is associated with the name of I. K. Gujral who served the United Front government initially as Foreign Minister and, finally, as its Prime Minister. His long-standing image as a liberal gave the initiative remarkable credibility.

Under the United Front government, particularly since I. K. Gujral had taken office, Indian policy towards its South Asian neighbors appeared to be on the threshold of a qualitative transformation. At the centre was a cautious, carefully-formulated policy proposition designed to replace the India Doctrine with what came to be known as Gujral Doctrine. The new doctrine was enunciated by I. K. Gujral in his Inaugural Address entitled “Security Concerns in Asia in the Early 21st Century” at a seminar in New Delhi on January 23, 1997. Gujral Doctrine is based on five principles that India is to be
abided by in its relations with the neighbors. Firstly, with its neighbors like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka, India does not ask for reciprocity, but gives and accommodates what it can in good faith and trust. Second, no South Asian country should allow its territory to be used for any activity against the interests of another regional country. Third, no regional country should interfere in the internal affairs of another one. Fourth, all South Asian countries must respect each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty. Finally, they should settle all their disputes through peaceful bilateral negotiations.\textsuperscript{14}

These principles are not applicable in case of Indo-Pakistan relations.\textsuperscript{15} This served the basis for some analysts to characterize the Gujral Doctrine, as being an attempt to marginalize and isolate Pakistan within South Asia and neutralize Pakistan’s potential to form a common front with the smaller countries against India.\textsuperscript{16} The Gujral Doctrine could very well be designed to detach Pakistan from other SAARC countries. But important point in the context of our analysis is the fact that it was, to a considerable extent, a departure from India Doctrine. The Gujral Doctrine conveyed the message that India is prepared to make concessions and accommodation in terms of bilateral disputes with its smaller South Asian neighbors.

The new trend in India’s regional posture and behavior was further facilitated by at least two factors. First is a remarkable change in Indian politics which began with the 1989 elections which, for the first time in India, failed to produce a parliamentary majority. It is an important turning point in Indian history with consequences not only for its domestic politics but also for the country’s regional behavior. Since the 1989 elections, Indian politics came to be seen as following what might be called an Italian model, or less benignly, an
Indian version of the French Fourth Republic – a situation in which no single party commands a parliamentary majority and governments are formed in a pattern of shifting coalition. Such a situation has further been strengthened by the outcome of subsequent four elections to the national parliament held in 1991, 1996, 1998 and 1999.

In the changed context, power is being shared not only within the ruling political parties and among the coalition partners but also with the opposition parties. Similarly, the influence of regional leaders on the centre is also in the increase. In the process, political and economic power in a highly centralized state is being decentralized gradually. Whether this would lead to the strengthening of the federation through effective decentralization of power or to the strengthening of centrifugal trends already prevailing in the country remains a moot point. An important point in this regard is that in the changed political matrix, the emergence of an all-powerful leader capable of mobilizing the necessary resources and public opinion at home for foreign adventure became less likely.

Second is the ongoing change in the world economy and its impact on India. Indian economy – a highly autarkic one with large-scale state owned enterprises – is going through an arduous process of economic liberalization. In the process, the country is making a qualitative shift away from reliance on the state owned enterprises to that on the private sector ones. Thus, opportunities for private investment both domestic and foreign are being created while the activities of the state owned enterprises are being gradually curtailed. The country’s longstanding protective trade regime is being liberalized opening its market to the outside world. The essence of the liberalization program is to transform regulated Indian economy into one relying on the interaction of market forces. The process of
economic liberalization is marked by difficult challenges as well as tremendous opportunities. It is compelling India to concentrate much of its resources and energy on the fulfilment of the economic task. This is also likely to serve as a restraint against abrasive foreign policy.

While these factors as discussed above, have put a considerable restraint on India's regional behavior, particularly in terms of making attempts to transform its natural pre-eminence in SAARC region into an imposed predominance, the ambitions remain very much alive and forceful attempts to fulfil them may revive at any juncture of history. It is particularly because of the fact that the current constraints as faced by India are not permanent, nor even long-standing. Moreover, the success of the ongoing process of democratization and economic liberalization may further strengthen Indian polity and economy and, thus, make the country more capable of fulfilling its long-standing regional ambitions. Therefore, recent changes in Indian attitude towards the neighbors still remain short of assuaging the suspicion of smaller South Asian countries to their giant neighbor. No less important point, even if the positive trends set by the Gujral Doctrine sustain, the management and resolution of intra-group conflicts in South Asia would continue to remain a highly difficult undertaking.

Now, the question is whether and how far the departure from India Doctrine to Gujral Doctrine would contribute to the process of regional co-operation in South Asia. Relying on careful analysis of the new doctrine, in theory as well as in practice, and India's policy towards its smaller neighbors, an analyst could be cautiously optimistic about the prospects for regional co-operation. In the context of Gujral Doctrine, India is undergoing a process of developments full of contradictions. I. K. Gujral was ousted from power before the new Indian
policy could take a concrete shape. More importantly, on March 19, 1998, a new coalition government headed by the Hindu nationalist Bharatya Janata Party (BJP) leader Atal Bihari Vajpayee took office. This has raised serious doubts about whether the policy propositions envisaged in the Gujral Doctrine would transform into a long-standing policy of India with regard to its neighbors or be lost into oblivion.

As discussed, India's urge for playing a predominant role in the region is deep-rooted and a variety of powerful lobbies continue to advocate an assertive role for the country in the regional affairs. BJP itself is a proponent of this school of thought, though the ability of the BJP government to pursue an abrasive policy in relation to the neighbors is circumscribed by a host of factors of domestic and international nature as well as by possible opposition on the part of some of its crucial coalition partners. For India, however, Gujral Doctrine remains a realistic policy proposition for dealing with the neighbors. It is particularly in view of the constraints and compulsions of India as discussed above. On the positive side, even after his massive electoral victory in 1999, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee did not undertake any initiative to replace Gujral Doctrine. A congenial atmosphere for meaningful regional co-operation involving India and her smaller neighbors would depend on whether India's regional behavior would turn the cautious optimism into confidence or despair.

ii. Bilateral Conflicts: Trends towards Accommodation

a. An Overview

Apart from divergent security perceptions, South Asia is beset with numerous bilateral conflicts. While some are rooted in the colonial past others are in the dynamics of post-colonial socio-economic and politico-cultural development of South
Asian societies. To be more specific, a complex web of factors that bedeviled inter-state relations in South Asia are: historical antagonism, irredentism, undefined land and maritime boundaries, cross-border affiliation of ethno-linguistic and religious groups, conflict of economic interests, sharing of common natural resources, and above all, a turbulent process of nation building accompanied by numerous intra-state conflicts and their cross-border reverberation. The list of concrete issues of bilateral discord would be too long. An attempt would be made below to discuss some of the most outstanding ones. Among the disputes inherited from the colonial past, territorial disputes are the most prominent.

Bangladesh and India inherited some territorial problems in the form of enclaves in each other’s territory as well as vaguely demarcated land boundary. Most crucial among them to Bangladesh was the Tin Bigha Corridor issue. Dahagram and Angarpota, the two enclaves of Bangladesh, are separated from Lalmonirhat District of Bangladesh by a small patch of Indian territory known as the Tin Bigha (one acre) Corridor. While the Agreement with a view to resolving the issue was signed on May 14, 1974, its ultimate resolution needed another Agreement on March 26, 1992 and was implemented on June 26 the same year. Resolution of a dispute over one acre of land following eighteen years after the signing of the Agreement is certainly a testimony to the lack of effectiveness of the bilateral mechanism for conflict resolution.

The issue was also quite insignificant in comparison with the dispute between the two countries over the sharing of the water of common rivers, particularly that of the Ganges water. Bangladesh and India share two international river basins viz., the Ganges and the Brahmaputra. Both the basins exhibit a two-fold natural problem: too little water during the dry season and too much flood water during the monsoon. The average
discharge of the Ganges is in excess of a million cusecs, which rises to two million cusecs in monsoons often creating severe flood problem for Bangladesh. In crucial dry season, i.e., January to May, particularly during mid-March to mid-May, the flow reduces to 55,000 cusecs creating a severe shortage of water. In the circumstances, India constructed the Farakka Barrage with a view to diverting 40,000 cusecs of water from the Ganges to the Bhagirathi-Hoogli river through a feeder canal during leanest period leaving Bangladesh with only 15,000 cusecs of water. Thus, the dispute over the sharing of Ganges water was created which in course of time turned to be a stumbling block in the way of co-operation between the two countries. Besides, Bangladesh and India shares fifty-three other common rivers in both the basins. While the dispute is resolved, the fate of other fifty-three common rivers is yet to be decided.

The maritime boundary between Bangladesh and India has not yet been demarcated. It has already given rise to a number of complex problems in their bilateral relations and the potential problems are beyond imagination. First such a dispute arose when Bangladesh Government in 1974 entered into agreements with six foreign oil companies granting them oil and natural gas exploration rights in the coastal areas of the Bay of Bengal. India objected to the venture. Positions of the parties with regard to defining their Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) diverge sharply. Bangladesh line moved southward from the edge of its land boundary, while the Indian line took a south-easterly direction, thus, creating an angle within which lie thousands of square miles of the Bay of Bengal claimed by both the countries as their EEZ. The issue remains unresolved. Failure to settle the maritime boundary issue gave rise to a number of disputes in their bilateral relations. Foremost among them are the conflicting claims over the ownership of a new-born island in the estuary of the Haribhanga River on the border between the
two countries. The island in Bangladesh is known as South Talpatty whereas in India as New Moore/Purbasha.

South Asia is a great melting pot that often looks like a queer amalgam of religion, race, language, caste and ethnicity. Its religious and ethno-racial diversity is one of the most complex in the world. There are six main religions - Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Christianity, Buddhism and Jainism - subdivided into numerous, not seldom, conflicting sects, hundreds of languages (including local dialects), scores of sub-national groups with distinct ethno-linguistic and cultural identity as well as countless tribal groups. With all its diversity, South Asia has survived for several millennia as a distinct civilization, while such diversities also served as a fertile ground for multifarious conflicts in the society, on occasions, shattering it to its very foundation.

While in case of such conflicts one also should refer to colonial legacy, the magnitude, intensity and impact of contemporary conflicts of the type are more a result of the post-colonial dynamics of socio-economic and politico-cultural development in individual countries as well as the region as a whole. The process of development in the region was far less responsive to the needs of achieving national cohesion out of diverse loyalties. And this refers not only to the process of socio-economic development, which exacerbated wide disparities in favor of 'ruling sub-national groups'. The political systems in South Asia also lack built-in mechanism to accommodate adequately the aspirations of minorities.

As a consequence of all these, intra-state violent conflicts along ethnic, religious and other parochial lines became constant phenomenon in all the South Asian countries (barring Maldives) with large-scale loss of life in some cases. How does such conflicts effect the process of regional co-operation?
One of the most significant aspects of intra-state violence over ethnic, linguistic and religious issues in the SAARC countries is that it often assumes inter-state character with cross-border implications resulting in the trans-border movement of refugees, dissidents and even arms. The list of such conflicts would be too long. Tamil separatist insurgency in Sri Lanka,\(^4\) ethnic conflict in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the issue of stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh,\(^5\) ethnic conflicts in Punjab and the Northeast states of India, ethnic conflict in Sindh in Pakistan,\(^6\) and conflict over the people of Nepalese origin in Bhutan\(^7\) are the most discussed ones.

Main reason behind the transformation of intra-state conflicts into inter-state ones is the fact that the ethnic, linguistic and religious bondage transcends national boundaries, and, as a result, such problems in one country create instant repercussions in another. In some cases, such problems have been connived or abetted from across the border with political motives. In others, failure to resolve intra-state conflicts gave rise to the perceptions (real or imaginary) of external threat. As a matter of fact, intra-state conflicts and their cross-border implications has been, and still remains, one of the dominant factors contributing to violent inter-state conflicts in South Asia. But as indicated, over the years, certain degree of preparedness has been displayed by India and her smaller neighbors to accommodate their differences.

b. Trends towards Accommodation

As already indicated, assumption of power in India by the United Front government, particularly the emergence of I. K. Gujral at the centre stage of Indian politics, and the enunciation of Gujral Doctrine initiated a process of the softening of New Delhi's approach towards its smaller neighbors and its preparedness to make concession and accommodation on the issues of bilateral discord. One of its crucial outcomes of the
initiative aimed at improving relations with the neighbours has been the relative improvement of the bilateral mechanism for conflict management. The bilateral mechanism for conflict management between India on the one hand, and her smaller neighbors separately on the other, improved remarkably. Subsequent period witnessed intense negotiations between Bangladesh and India, India and Nepal as well as India and Sri Lanka.

In the regional "charm offensive" as launched by India, Bangladesh came to be at the top of the agenda. Soon after the 12 June Elections in Bangladesh, a leading English daily, The Indian Express, in an editorial expressed hopes that the government in New Delhi and the new government in Bangladesh would be able to resolve the Farakka problem. In practice as well, following the change of Government in both the countries, the relations between Bangladesh and India, particularly with regard to bilateral disputes, began to move towards a positive direction rather quickly. A series of high level visits have been exchanged between the two countries during which Indian side assured Bangladesh that, "Highest authority of India wants quickest resolution of bilateral problems with Bangladesh. Indian authority is aware of the problems faced by the people of Bangladesh owing to lesser flow of water from Farakka barrage." Indian Foreign Minister I. K. Gujral even expressed confidence over the signing of Indo-Bangladesh accord on the sharing of the Ganges water before the ensuing dry season.

Finally, the diplomatic initiative culminated in a summit meeting between Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Deve Gowda. During the summit meeting, the two leaders signed a Treaty on December 12, 1996 that envisages the sharing of Ganges water between the two countries for the next 30 years. Under the new agreement, Bangladesh will receive a 50 per cent share of the
Ganges water when the water flow at Farakka is less than 70,000 cusecs. If the flow rises beyond that level, Bangladesh is guaranteed 35,000 cusecs; if it passes the 75,000-cusec mark, India is guaranteed 40,000 cusecs. Bangladesh-India Water Treaty is the outcome of a compromise on the part of both the sides. The Treaty marked an end to the oldest and, by far, the thorniest dispute between Bangladesh and India. Whether the Treaty could repair the damage in bilateral relations would depend upon the ability of the parties to sustain the arrangement for long thirty years to come. This is, perhaps, the most challenging task facing the two countries in their bilateral relations.

Another important milestone, in this regard, has been the Peace Accord on Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) signed on December 2, 1997 between the National Committee on CHT and the Parbattya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti (PCJSS). While a complex web of factors pertaining to the development of Bangladesh society, polity and economy contributed to the emergence and sustenance of the insurgency in the CHT, clandestine involvement of India in the imbroglio significantly complicated its resolution. An understanding reached between Dhaka and New Delhi in 1996 to co-operate with each other in dealing with cross-border insurgency paved the way for the signing of the Peace Accord. The Accord is in the process of implementation.

Over the last couple of years, some of the conflicts between India and her smaller neighbours have been settled successfully. New Delhi's relations with Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka are moving towards a positive direction. Facilitated by improved relations between India and Bangladesh, on the one hand, and, India and Nepal on the other, these three countries and Bhutan moved to form a sub-regional grouping within the broader framework of SAARC: South Asian Growth Quadrangle (SAGQ). It would encompass seven Northeastern states of India
and the three countries mentioned. Similarly, another sub-regional cooperation grouping, known as Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand Economic Co-operation (BIMST-EC), was also formed. While remaining outside the framework of SAARC, BIMST-EC is intended to serve as a bridge between South and Southeast Asia. While the formation of SAGQ and BIMST-EC is in its early stage and remain far from attracting popular attention and the interest of the business circles, the development itself generated certain degree of hope with regard to sub-regional and inter-regional cooperation involving SAARC.

Notwithstanding all these positive developments, the resolution of bilateral disputes between India, on the one hand, and her smaller South Asian neighbors, on the other, would continue to remain a highly difficult undertaking. First of all, this would require substantial compromise on the part of all the parties concerned particularly India. This would be a tremendously difficult task. As some reports suggest, Gujral was criticized at home for being too soft on Pakistan and he was also under pressure for not making compromise with other neighbors. As discussed, India's urge for playing a predominant role in the region is deep-rooted and a variety of powerful lobbies continue to advocate an assertive role for the country in the regional affairs. BJP itself is a proponent of this school of thought, though its ability to pursue an abrasive policy in relation to the neighbors is circumscribed by a host of factors of domestic and international nature as well as by possible opposition on the part of some of its crucial coalition partners.

The predicaments faced by other countries are as well difficult. Significant part of the ruling circles in most of India's smaller neighbors, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka in particular, have depended too much on anti-Indian rhetorics to gain popular legitimacy, and thus, cultivated powerful anti-
Indian lobbies. Even the part of ruling elites in those countries that consider it to be in the broader interest of their respective nations to find out amicable settlement to the disputes with India through accommodation often fall prey to the powerful anti-Indian lobbies. All these would severely constrain smaller South Asian countries’ quest for a compromise solution to the disputes with India. In Bangladesh, for instance, soon after the initiative to resolve the country’s long-standing disputes with India, including the sharing of Ganges water, was undertaken by the new Awami League government, these forces have began a desperate agitation directed against the move. Following the signing of the Treaty on the sharing of Ganges water, the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist party and Jamaat-e-Islami denounced the Treaty as being against the country’s interests.35

In the circumstances, India and Its smaller neighbors still have a long way to travel to realize the wisdom of making compromise solutions to numerous bilateral disputes that would facilitate a departure from conflict to a course of cooperation.

iii. Indo-Pakistan Conflict: From Bad to Worst

Traumatic birth of India and Pakistan in August 1947 that was preceded by long-standing Hindu-Muslim conflict and accompanied by a communal holocaust with some 800,000 casualties36 shaped a kind of relationship characterized by deep-rooted mistrust and hostility. In this regard, the focal point became a conflict over Kashmir, one of the longest and thorniest conflicts of Post-War era. They have fought three full-scale wars and numerous border skirmishes. Some of these border skirmishes lasted for days or even weeks and were about to develop into full-blown wars. As a consequence, a kind of relationship that persisted between India and Pakistan for the last over five decades could be regarded as one of perpetual
enmity. For quite long time, regional cooperation involving these two countries appeared to be unthinkable.

Even since 1985, when India following cautious calculations and Pakistan with lot of hesitations decided to joint SAARC, they never had a relationship that could be characterized as being correct. The post-Cold War era that marked a decisive shift away from conflict to cooperation and from military-strategic issues to economic ones, Indo-Pakistan relations did not undergo any change for the better. Instead, over the last couple of years, India and Pakistan were being more and more entrenched into acrimonious relationship. In a stark contrast to prevailing trends in the contemporary world, India and Pakistan tested nuclear weapons in May 1998. A year later, Indian and Pakistani soldiers came to fight in the Kargil area in the Kashmir Valley that put the whole world on sharp alert because of the danger inherent in a war between two nuclear powers. While the crisis over Kargil has been defused, the relations between India and Pakistan remains highly volatile and conflict prone. Following is an attempt to evaluate the state of Indo-Pakistan relations and its impact on the process of regional cooperation in South Asia. Concrete issues to be addressed are:

a. Kashmir dispute;
b. Arms race and nuclearization; and
c. Kargil Crisis: Implications for Indo-Pakistan relations

**a. Kashmir Dispute**

The dispute owes its origin to the partition of British India in 1947, which left the status of the princely states including Kashmir open as the rulers were given the option to remain independent or to accede to either India or Pakistan. The geopolitical circumstances of the time virtually excluded the possibility of Kashmir remaining independent. In view of the prevailing communal acrimony in South Asia, India was in a
rather advantageous position to court the Hindu Maharaja of Kashmir, as he was highly fearful of his Muslim subjects. These coupled with a Pakistan-sponsored rebellion in Kashmir led the Maharaja to accede to India in October 1947 which was challenged by Pakistan on the ground that the act was against the will of the people of Kashmir. Pakistan and India fought a war in 1947-48, which led to the division of Kashmir between the two countries with India retaining the control over approximately two-thirds of the land and Pakistan over about one-third.

While a UN-mediated cease-fire was achieved and a *de facto* border came to exist on the actual Line of Control (LoC), Kashmir appeared in the United Nations agenda as an unresolved dispute. On April 21, 1948, the UN Security Council with the consent of both the belligerents adopted a resolution, which envisaged that Kashmir's fate would be decided by a plebiscite. The proposed plebiscite, however, was not held as Pakistan and India could never come to an agreement on how and under what circumstances a free and fair plebiscite could take place.

Subsequently, India and Pakistan fought another war in 1965 over Kashmir, which ended in a UN-mediated cease-fire with no territorial gain for either side. Moreover, under the Soviet-mediated Tashkent agreement, both the countries agreed to settle the dispute peacefully. The Indo-Pakistan War of 1971, however, brought a change in the LoC in Kashmir with India occupying 500 square miles of the Pakistani part of Kashmir and Pakistan occupying 52 square miles of the Indian part of Kashmir and that was formalized in the Simla Agreement between the two countries.

Arguments, emotions, and the professed principles of either side over the Kashmir issue have become irrevocable, and appear to make accommodation almost impossible. New Delhi
considers the accession of Kashmir to India in 1947 as 'final and irrevocable'. It also does not recognize the validity of the UN Security Council resolution with regard to plebiscite any more.\textsuperscript{39} Considering the religious basis of partition, Pakistan continues to view the Kashmir issue as 'unfinished partition'. Thus, it insists that the future of Kashmir issue must be resolved in accordance with the UN Security Council resolution calling for plebiscite. The third option, Kashmir to acquire an independent status, is, however, rejected by both the countries.\textsuperscript{40}

Since 1989, the situation in and around Kashmir was deteriorating more and more due to the ongoing war between the Indian security forces on the one hand, and the Kashmiri militants, on the other. Until the Kargil crisis that would be discussed later, Pakistan cautiously refrained from sending armed 'volunteers' or its troops to Kashmir. Instead, it confined its support to the militants in providing training, weapons and safe sanctuary from which to carry out their operations.

The war in Kashmir resulted in the strengthening of military confrontation as well as the increase in violent incidences along the LoC. Prior to the Kargil crisis, there were some 90,000 troops in the Pakistani part of Kashmir. Opposing them were about 170,000 Indian troops. India had a further 250,000 paramilitary troops in and around the Kashmir Valley, most involved in internal security duties. Both the sides are capable of moving large number of reinforcements to the area within hours.\textsuperscript{41} There were large quantities of heavy weapons, from 81mm mortars to 155mm medium guns; many are positioned close to the LoC.

Reinforced military confrontation in the backdrop of war in Kashmir also significantly increased the number and ferocity of clashes along the LoC that included prolonged heavy mortar and artillery bombardments. The process, however, witnessed ups and downs. During 1991-92, India and Pakistan signed a
number of military CBMs.\textsuperscript{42} In practice as well, heavy firing along the LoC ceased almost entirely during the summer of 1992, signifying that higher direction had been given to this effect. For six years after the pause in firing of 1992, incidents of firing across the LoC varied in number and type and, although serious, did not often reach the level of prolonged (six hours and over) or heavy (involving more than six artillery pieces) on either side.\textsuperscript{43}

Following the explosion of nuclear devices by India and Pakistan in May 1998, however, the number and level of exchanges of firing increased remarkably. The situation deteriorated to the extent that the US Ambassador to India, Richard Celeste, stated in mid-1998 that “there is firing almost daily on the LoC in Kashmir,” given rise to concern that the countries were “closer to a war than the Soviet Union and the United States ever were.”\textsuperscript{44} Thus, already by the end of 1998, the fact that Kashmir remains the single-most vibrant source of large-scale war between India and Pakistan and the greatest threat to peace in South Asia was, once again, brought to the sharp focus.

b. Arms Race and Nuclearization

The cornerstone of Pakistan’s strategic thinking with regard to its rivalry with India was its desire to achieve parity in terms of military might \textit{vis-à-vis} New Delhi. This was also designed to resolve the Kashmir dispute in its favour. Pakistan’s all endeavors were centred on this objective. Thus, since the early days of its existence, Pakistan made persistent and, at times, forceful attempts to achieve parity with India in terms of military might. Constrained by its comparatively small size and modest resources, Pakistan sought to achieve this objective through the cultivation of extra-regional linkages. It allied with the US in the Cold War by forging bilateral security linkages
with the latter as well as by joining US-sponsored military alliances, Southeast Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO). The US contribution to Pakistan's armament program was, however, limited and very cautious. Being a potentially significant ally of the former Soviet Union in South Asia, India was deemed by the US too important to alienate and push deeper into Moscow's embrace. While China has been more liberal in arms and military technology transfer, its ability to change the correlation of forces in South Asia was limited. As a consequence, notwithstanding Pakistan's alliance relationship with the US and China, its objective of achieving parity with India in terms of military might remained far from being fulfilled.

Meanwhile, the emergence of Bangladesh in 1971 has decisively changed the correlation forces in the region in favor of India increasing Pakistan's traditional sense of insecurity. Pakistan could have no hope of counterbalancing India's conventional military might. The test of a nuclear device by India in 1974 further reinforced Pakistan's sense of insecurity vis-à-vis New Delhi. More than that, Indian superiority in terms of conventional military might generated a siege mentality in Pakistan. India's conventional military superiority, as expressed by the former Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Agha Shah!, hangs over Pakistan like a permanent 'Sword of Damocles'. Thus, in search of an alternative to counterbalance India's unchallenged conventional military might and its growing nuclear program, Pakistani strategic elite – principally upper echelons of the military and civil services – finally came to see the nuclear weapons as the only credible means to deter India and to rely on oneself for security.

The raison d'être behind India's nuclear program is rather complicated. Because of its overwhelming preponderance in South Asia, India wants to see itself as the custodian of peace
and security in the region. While it is an important factor and so is India's rivalry with Pakistan, the regional security scenario is not the central consideration that boosted India's nuclear program. Even the formal argument that it faces security challenges or threats from nuclear China may be a crucial factor but not the only one. India also aspires to play a role in the big club and that is vividly manifested in her efforts aimed at securing a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

However, New Delhi remains, far from being an economic power capable of extending long-standing and meaningful influence over the regional countries, not to speak about the international system. It is in this backdrop that India had to rely significantly on military might as a means of achieving its strategic objective vis-à-vis the region as well as the world at large. And its nuclear program remains a crucial component of its defence build-up. Indian analysts, Praful Bidwai and Achin Vanaik, however, considers the hardening of India's nuclear posture as a result of changing self-perceptions. Implicit in this has been the idea that such a self-image has not been based on the realistic calculation of India's strength. They have also asserted that India's motives for going nuclear have been similar to those of France and Britain who went nuclear “for reasons much more strongly connected to considerations of nationalist grandeur and delusionary self-importance”.

Whether India's self-image is real or delusionary is a matter of opinion. But the fact remains that India set the pace of the development of nuclear programs in South Asia and a nuclear arms race gradually took shape in the region. One specific characteristic of this race has been the fact that while both the countries acquired the status of de facto nuclear powers by the 1980s, none of them formally made such a
claim until 11 and 13 May 1998, when India tested the nuclear weapons again in Pokhran and Pakistan followed suit on the 28th and 30th of the same month in Chagai.

The central question is whether and how far the nuclear tests have worsened the security situation in the region. Despite the fact that the development has set contradictory processes in motion, so far, the idea that the nuclearization may have any positive contribution to the prevailing security scenario in the region remains controversial at best. One may argue that the nuclearization has compelled India and Pakistan to own up their nuclear capabilities, to think hard about nuclear deployment and to talk to each other about ways to reduce the risk of war. On the other hand, nuclear deterrents are designed not for hopes of peace but for threats of war, however remote. In a crisis, the risk that nuclear weapons will be used depends as much on the minutiae of methods of deployment, intelligence capabilities and command-and-control system as on the wisdom of political leadership.46

This involves a very high degree of risk, particularly in the context of Indo-Pakistan relations. When one considers the context of a nuclear war, even a very slim possibility generates the horror of the destruction of unimaginable magnitude. This makes the risk of a nuclear war unacceptable to all – the common people, the national leadership as well as the military strategists. While a powerful jingoist wave, for the time being, overshadowed rational thinking in India and Pakistan, rest of the region and the world at large were alarmed by the introduction of the nuclear dimension to Indo-Pakistan rivalry. Reasons are obvious. Even those analysts who exclude the risk of a 'Indo-Pak nuclear exchange' as a 'result of deliberate strategic planning', concede that the risk of such an exchange "as a result of miscalculations and accident is highly
convincing”. It is in this backdrop that virtually the whole world was alarmed at the nuclearization of South Asia.

In the wake of the nuclear tests, the West came to view South Asia as the most potentially hazardous flash point in the world. India and Pakistan found themselves in severe diplomatic isolation. Most of the Western countries headed by the US imposed economic sanctions against India and Pakistan. Both the countries were bound to suffer economically, politically and socially, though the extent of damage, in comparative terms, was certain to be more for Pakistan because of its greater external dependence. One of the important factors why the world opinion was vehemently against the nuclearization of South Asia has been a state of permanent tension between India and Pakistan and consequential danger of war between them. More importantly, there prevailed a tremendous lack of trust on the part of the developed countries on South Asian nuclear powers with regard to their ability to handle the nuclear weapons.

Meanwhile, in the aftermath of the nuclearization, Pakistan-India relations took a nose-dive and both the countries appeared to be concerned about a possible confrontation between the two, now, nuclear powers. As assessed by Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, the then High Commissioner of Pakistan in New Delhi, two issues were of crucial importance in facing the challenges thrown by the nuclearization. Firstly, to address the consequences, concerns, implications, risks and so on, that stem from the nuclearization. Secondly, to address the Kashmir dispute. As a matter of fact, a process of dialogue was initiated and two rounds of talks were held in Islamabad and New Delhi in December 1998 that ultimately resulted in a Summit Meeting between Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari
Vajpayee and his counterpart Nawaz Sharif during February 20-21, 1999 in Lahore.

The Summit produced three documents - the most important one being the Lahore Declaration. Other two are a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and a Joint Statement. All were signed on February 21, 1999 at the concluding day of the Summit. The Lahore Declaration signed by the two Prime Ministers outlined the basic principles that the two countries would be abiding by in their mutual relationship in the aftermath of nuclearization. These were essential but not enough. Further moves were required and expected. In all likelihood, both the countries were aware of their collective predicaments as well as tasks.

Following the eruption of Kargil crisis, some powerful circles in India came to argue that the Lahore Declaration and everything that goes with it have been a camouflage for Pakistan to prepare for the unexpected intrusion into the Indian side of the LoC in Kashmir. It is a highly simplistic view. After acquiring nuclear capabilities, Pakistan can not remain oblivious of the danger of a nuclear exchange and the need for devising some ways and means of managing the post-nuclear phase of relationship between the two countries. At the same time, politically and also emotionally-psychologically Pakistan remained as obsessed with the Kashmir issue as ever. Its nuclear capability has been perceived by the ruling elite, particularly the policy makers, as contributing to a favorable settlement of the Kashmir issue. Thus, however paradoxical it may appear to the Indians, Lahore Declaration and the Kargil are the ideas that have been simultaneously prevalent in the mind of Pakistani elite a discussion on which would follow.

c. Kargil Crisis: Implications for Indo-Pakistan relations

While Kargil crisis can not be considered as coming out of the blue, it is also the outcome of a series of strategic
misperceptions on the part of both the countries, particularly Pakistan, with regard to the significance of the nuclearization and the process of dialogue that led to the Lahore Summit. First of all, Indian leadership, including Prime Minister A. B. Vajpayee and Union Home Minister L. K. Advani, grossly miscalculated the significance of the country’s newly acquired status of a nuclear power in relation to New Delhi’s long-standing rivalry with Islamabad, particularly with regard to the Kashmir dispute. They thought that Pokhran tests have changed the correlation of forces between the two countries to the extent that Pakistan would never dare to make a fresh bid, particularly a military one, for the resolution of Kashmir issue in Islamabad’s favor. On the other hand, Pakistani elite came to perceive its nuclear capability as contributing to a favorable settlement of the Kashmir issue. As seen from Islamabad, its nuclear capability was to act as a deterrent, as a lever, that would neutralise India’s conventional superiority. This line of thinking generated a confidence in Pakistani mind that it could afford to initiate and conduct a low-intensity conflict in Kashmir with a view to internationalizing the dispute or, if possible, to put the issue back on the international agenda.

As a consequence, when a combination of regular Pakistani soldiers and Kashmiri militants had occupied positions previously held by the Indian army in Kargil, Indian forces were taken by surprise because, as Bharat Karnad puts it, the Indian army was “lulled into a certain complacency after the Lahore Summit”. The position of Indian intelligence or even the leadership was no better. Defence Minister George Fernandes, for instance, assured Indian people that “Pakistani occupation would be vacated within 48 hours”. However, soon the Indians realized that it was “an orchestrated and well-organized operation by the Pakistan army”. It was impossible for the Indian army to dislodge the intruders by frontal assault up steep ravines. Indian army was also unprepared for combat in such extreme conditions.
Then came Pakistan's turn to be surprised. Virtually, the whole world blamed Pakistan for creating the mess. Initially, the US has been even-handed publicly, though privately Washington put the onus squarely on Pakistan and asked the latter to pull out its men. The European Union also sent a similar message to Islamabad. Russia— a long time ally of India—embraced New Delhi’s view without any hesitation. Even a staunch ally like China has distanced itself from Pakistan. Sharif, who went to Beijing in a six-day visit on June 28 with great expectations, had to come back empty-handed on June 29. The Kargil adventure, or rather misadventure, made Pakistan quite friendless in international arena. India, on the other hand, earned a high degree of sympathy on the part of international community, particularly the US, primarily because Pakistan initiated the crisis and India prudently restricted its military operation against the intruders to its side of the LoC in Kashmir.

Therefore, in the whole process of mediation aimed at defusing the crisis wherein the US played the decisive role, both blame and pressure was on Pakistan. Ultimately, the pressures worked. Nawaz Sharif decided to go to Washington with a view to finalizing the ways and means of defusing the crisis. Following the Summit meeting between US President Bill Clinton and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in Washington on July 4, 1999 a carefully worded joint statement was issued that signalled the end of Kargil crisis. The Clinton-Sharif statement accommodated all the demands made by India. In practice as well, Pakistan undertook appropriate measures with a view to withdrawing the forces backed by Islamabad from the Indian side of the LoC in Kashmir. With that, Kargil crisis came to an end.

The Kargil crisis has painfully revealed that while nuclearization has added a more dangerous dimension to Indo-
Pakistan security relationship that the two countries will have to deal with, it has not changed the traditional security relationship for the better. In other words, even in the environment of nuclearization, the threat of conventional war between India and Pakistan continues to persist. One of its consequences is the continuation of the arms race between the two countries – both nuclear as well as conventional.

In defending Kashmir from a possible Pakistani onslaught, India had an option of opening other fronts along Punjab and Sindh borders, as the terrain in Kashmir is more unfavorable to India than Pakistan.\(^67\) No less important, this strategy was also designed to divide Pakistan army, numerically smaller than the Indian one, into several fronts. India tried this option in the past. In the backdrop of nuclearization and particularly, Pakistan maintaining an ambiguity on the first use, this option involves a high degree of risk. In addition to Western pressure, this remains a reason why India refrained from opening a second front in the plains during the Kargil crisis. It is in this backdrop that pressure is mounting on the Indian government to prepare its forces in Kashmir for effectively dealing with any possible Pakistani onslaught.\(^68\) If the preparation of Indian forces in Kashmir increases, Pakistan will have to respond if it wants to stick to its current strategy towards Kashmir. In the event, arms race in its conventional form would be inevitable.

Meanwhile, following Kargil, Indo-Pakistan arms race seems to have been assuming a quite different connotation. A highly authoritative Indian strategist, K. Subramanyam, is already advocating for bankrupting Pakistan by announcing a sharp rise in defence spending which Islamabad would feel obliged to match. His argument is rather seducing to Indian audience, “The perfect war is subjugation of the enemy without going to battle.”\(^69\) The strategy appears to be an Indian version of US strategy towards the former Soviet Union, particularly during
President Ronald Reagan. In this regard, the success of the US strategy *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Union may encourage the Indians to embark upon such a strategy, though the strategy also could be quite dangerous for India itself. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Vajpayee and External Affairs Minister J. Singh's talk about India's need for a credible "minimum" deterrence is being seen by the analysts as hint at a second strike capability and the missile program aimed at that. In the circumstances, the Kargil crisis has further increased the danger of an expensive arms race, now extended to nuclear weapons, with dangerous implications.

The Kargil episode has left a deep imprint on Indo-Pakistan relations. India has developed a sense of being betrayed by Pakistan. In view of the understanding reached in Lahore, New Delhi has already characterized the Pakistan-backed intrusion across the LoC in Kashmir as a "betrayal of trust" by Pakistan. Restoring Indian trust on Pakistani leadership would be difficult and time consuming. Initiating a process of dialogue between the two countries, particularly a meaningful one, would continue to remain a difficult undertaking for some time to come. At the moment, it is in nobody's agenda.

By compelling India to fight a battle on Pakistan's terms, in a place and at a time chosen by Pakistan, Islamabad have severely embarrassed the Indian army in Kargil and government before the people. According to Indian sources about 400 soldiers have died in the Kargil episode. Western defence experts put the figure at more than 1,000. Whatever may be the real figure, it remains the bloodiest encounter between India and Pakistan since 1971. Capitalizing on these factors, certain circles in India are trying to mobilize public opinion and articulate a hawkish policy towards Pakistan. All these are having a deep influence over the shaping of long-standing popular approach in India as well as the country's practical policy towards Pakistan.
Pakistan has developed a sense of being severely humiliated. The Kargil episode that initially appeared to be a victory ultimately turned to be "an ill-thought-out adventure". The Pakistanis consider the withdrawal humiliating for Pakistan. Khalid Qayyum, the chief reporter of The Nation, assessed the outcome of Kargil episode as "Pakistan's worst-ever defeat on the diplomatic, political and media fronts". Fundamentalist forces in Pakistan have portrayed Sharif as having betrayed Kashmir and developed a Pakistani sense of being defeated by India.

Amidst chaos and confusion, public ire against Nawaz Sharif and volatile situation in Indo-Pakistan relations, Sharif was ousted by a coup d'état staged by General Pervez Musharraf on October 12, 1999. With the end of the Kargil crisis and military take over in Islamabad, Pakistan's problems certainly multiplied. Being blamed globally for initiating the crisis, humiliated in Kargil, ruled by a military junta, isolated in the international arena, and more importantly, with ever worsening domestic political and economic crises, Pakistan is likely to undergo a difficult process of development with unpredictable consequences.

The resolution of Kashmir problem – the central issue in Indo-Pakistan conflict – would continue to remain as illusive as ever. No possible combination of forces in power in New Delhi could afford to satisfy Pakistani claim on Kashmir. Even a humble Pakistan – defeated in 1971 – did not accept the Indian version of the resolution to the Kashmir issue: final division of the state between India and Pakistan along the LoC. Thus, the Kashmir problem is certain to persist for long time to come. As indicated earlier, Lahore Declaration and the Kargil are the ideas that have been simultaneously prevalent in the mind of Pakistani elite. Notwithstanding the humiliation suffered by Pakistan as a consequence of its Kargil misadventure, the
situation is likely to remain the same. The elite in Pakistan is quite candid about this. Even in the wake of Kargil debacle, the then Pakistani Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz asserted without any hesitation that, "if Kashmir is not resolved, there will be many more Kargils". Thus, the relationship between India and Pakistan would continue to remain as conflict prone and unpredictable as ever with only difference being the recent addition of the nuclear dimension to it.

Indo-Pakistan conflict has been, still remains and likely to remain in the foreseeable future as the single-most intractable obstacle on the way of meaningful regional cooperation in South Asia. Nuclearization and the intensification of Indo-Pakistan conflict that culminated in the Kargil crisis severely affected the ongoing process of regional cooperation in South Asia within the Framework of SAARC. Military take-over in Pakistan and the postponement of the 11\textsuperscript{th} SAARC Summit scheduled to be held in Katmandu during November 26-28, 1999 as India refused to attend the Summit because of 'concern and disquiet' over the military coup in Pakistan brought the SAARC process to a standstill. An initiative on the part of Bangladesh to end the deadlock did not bring desired result. Quite diplomacy as pursued by SAARC Secretary General Nihal Rodrigo to arrange the Summit also suffered the same fate.

Historical-communal antagonism, Kashmir dispute, three full-scale wars, continuous border skirmishes, arms race leading to nuclearization, and official as well as popular attitude towards each other full of suspicion, mistrust and hatred resulting in systematic jingoist waves shaped a kind of relationship between India and Pakistan that could be regarded as one of perpetual enmity. The Kargil Crisis is just a manifestation of it. No qualitative change in Indo-Pakistan relations has taken place over the last more than five decades
and will not take place in the foreseeable future unless these two societies undergo a qualitative transformation.

Fruitful regional cooperation involving these two countries, particularly as regional cooperation is understood at the dawn of the twenty-first century, appears to be a chimera. Excluding both of them from co-operative endeavors is an absurd idea and this does not need explanation. Excluding either of them is also unrealistic. Absurdity of excluding India is clearly understood. Pakistan's case may be explained. First of all, a cooperative grouping without Pakistan will not be a South Asian one as such. Rather, it would be a cooperative grouping between India and her smaller neighbors. Apprehension and fear of smaller South Asian countries in view of India's regional ambitions have already been discussed in details. Such an attempt would further strengthen anti-India lobbies in smaller South Asian countries and likely to produce reverse results. No less important point, it is not only India and Pakistan or conflict between them, but the ruling elites in South Asia collectively failed to generate a stake in effective conflict management and crisis prevention for the interest of mutually beneficial cooperation.

Problems of Conflict Management

Regional cooperation and for this purpose conflict management and resolution, confidence-building and the likes are issues that attracted significant attention on the part of South Asian scholars and practitioners. A large number of volumes have also been produced on the subject. While dealing with the problems of conflict management in the region, scholars and practitioners almost exclusively put their emphasis on how to manage or resolve the conflicts. Such efforts, so far, could contribute very little, if at all, to the proper management and resolution of bilateral conflicts in the region
that could create a congenial atmosphere for regional cooperation to flourish.

Inter-state relations in South Asia have been shaped under the influence of a host of historical, geographical, ecological, socio-economic and politico-cultural factors of highly contradictory nature. While some of them warranted close ties, others created severe conflict of interest. In addition, some factors, while creating high degree of interdependence between or among nations, also generated almost irreconcilable conflict of interests. The emergence of disputes in inter-state relations in the region, therefore, can be viewed as natural or even inevitable. Nonetheless, the persistence of all these disputes creating such a crisis of confidence in regional politics for so many years and with no solution in sight despite tremendous efforts on the part of the scholars and practitioners look bizarre. Obvious reason behind this could be the fact that the ruling elites in South Asia have no incentive for and interest in resolving the conflicts for the sake of regional co-operation. Instead, they have a vested interest in the continuation and occasional escalation of these conflicts. What follows is an explanation in favor of such an assertion.

a. Preponderance of Security Considerations over Development: The Disastrous Outcome

State inherited by South Asian countries from the colonial past have been ‘strong states’. Since decolonization, the region also is undergoing a process of state building instead of nation-building in the widest meaning of the word. As a consequence, the regional countries came to have even ‘stronger states’. Strong in the sense that state in South Asia, like in many parts of the developing world, is virtually omnipotent. It has concentrated too much politico-administrative and socio-economic power in its hand at the expense of institutions
outside the purview of the state. Its power is also hardly controlled or diluted by the effective functioning of a civil society. Moved by egalitarian and/or authoritarian motives state came to control, still controls and, by all indications, would continue to control a significant part of the economic resources in very poor societies. The state in the region, is also highly interventionist both by nature and by compulsion. It is also deeply involved in the management of and controls the economic life, down to the grass roots. It leads increasing number of researchers to treat state as 'a robust social actor' while dealing with the problems of governance.

Owing to the nature of the state as inherited from the colonial past a narrow elite came to usurp the state power notwithstanding the fact that the decolonization was a result of one of the most glorious national liberation struggle of the colonial era with passionate mass participation. While having omnipotent state under their disposal, the ruling elites in South Asia, from the very onset of decolonization, partly due to nationalist passion and inter-state conflicts inherited from the past but mostly to preserve their vested interest, embarked upon a development strategy with overwhelming preponderance of security considerations over socio-economic and politico-cultural development, particularly human development. In this regard, the security thinking was predominantly influenced by the so-called realist school that emphasised the primacy of state in security discourse. Its salience features are:

i. Nation states are the basic building blocks of the international system with unlimited sovereignty;

ii. Primary function of a nation state is to survive and enhance its power and position in a conflictual international system;
iii. Competition between states to maximize one’s interests often at the expense of others; and

iv. Development of individual state’s capability (military and other) to ensure security.

While this implies mostly to the two decisive actors in South Asia in terms of conflict and cooperation, India and Pakistan, others were also, to a significant extent, under the influence of similar perceptions. Exceptions were of insignificant influence. Even, Sri Lanka, the country, which gave the most preference, in South Asia, to human security even in the Cold War era, ultimately turned to be a traditional security state and the history is well known. However, in terms of regional cooperation, it is the approach of India and Pakistan to security that determined the environment in the region with regard to regional cooperation.

Even in the Post-Cold War era, when a holistic perspective on security that put people first in security discourse came to be the dominant one, South Asia remained non-responsive to the changes at the global level. It is pertinent to explain that state security requires investment in arms, and human security requires investment in people. Traditional security issues still dominate and are likely to dominate the security thinking and practical policy of regional states in the foreseeable future. Reinvigorated conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, intense arms race, particularly the nuclearization and the Kargil are indicative of the trend.

Concrete evidences also suggest the same. Global military spending declined by about 37 percent during the period 1987-94, while those in South Asia increased by 12 percent. During the same period, global standing armies have been reduced by 17 percent. But in South Asia, these increased by 7.5 percent. Similarly, military holdings (aircraft, tanks,
artillery, ships etc.) have declined by 14.5 percent in the world, but in South Asia these increased by 43 percent.\textsuperscript{63} In the broader perspective, India and Pakistan are almost solely responsible for the militarization of the region. Suffice it to mention that the share of India and Pakistan in the total military expenditure of South Asia is 93 percent and in total armed forces personnel is 87 percent. With so much underdevelopment and human deprivation, India maintains the fourth largest army in the world and Pakistan the eighth largest one.\textsuperscript{64}

With nuclearization and Kargil, military spending in India and Pakistan is witnessing a spiral of rather dramatic increase. The Indian media, including a team of The Economic Times, estimates that the country’s weaponization programme may cost about Rs. 5 billion spread over the next 10 years.\textsuperscript{65} The Muslim of Pakistan, however, put the figure at Rs. 3 billion a year for the next 10 years. A report of The Jane has an estimate of India’s nuclear potentials at par with France and China but ahead of Britain. If this estimate were correct then the costs for the entire program would be much higher than the projected Indian estimate. The Indian budget for 1998-99 has reflected the Indian newer vigor for defence preparedness. It has gone up to Rs. 473.83 billion, or 13 percent of the total budget, from Rs.363.63 billion in 1997-98 budget.\textsuperscript{66} If Pakistan wants to raise a viable nuclear deterrence, then it has to invest nearly on an equal footing with India. Then the cost estimate for Pakistan’s nuclear program could reach nearly the same of India’s one.\textsuperscript{67}

Thus, notwithstanding the fact that world has made a decisive shift away from military security to human security, from defence to development and from conflict to cooperation, South Asia remained immune to the changes at the global level. Before asking the question why, let us evaluate
the outcome of the strategy as pursued over the last five plus decades.

Overarching emphasis on the security of the state has by now severely deteriorated the security situation in South Asia and significantly increased the security concerns of the regional states, those of India and Pakistan in particular. Secondly, and most importantly, it has transformed South Asia, one of the most developed and most promising regions in the developing world at decolonization, into the poorest and the most deprived region of the contemporary world.

Let us start with a curious information indicating the region's economic status in 1949. Per capita income in Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan and present Bangladesh at that time has been higher than that in the Philippines, South Korea and Indonesia. Average per capita income of these four South Asian countries has been almost the double of that in the three East and Southeast Asian countries mentioned above. What may sound now almost unbelievable, per capita income in Japan at that time was less than double of average per capita income of these four South Asian countries. Where does South Asia stand now?

In terms of per capita income, South Asia has already turned to be the poorest region of the world. With 22 percent of the world population, it produces only 1.3 percent of the world's income. Nearly 40 per cent of the world's absolute poor numbering 500 million in 1993 live in the region. Its adult literacy rate of 48 percent is lower than any world region. Nearly half of the world's illiterate population is South Asian. There are more children out of school in South Asia than in the rest of the world and two-thirds of them are females. A striking contrast to the perceptions at the global level, it is not Sub-Saharan Africa with 30 percent of underweight children, but South Asia with almost half of its
children underweight remains the world’s most malnourished region.⁹⁰

Paradoxically, the region, which produced the world’s first lady Prime Minister and a host of them, and where still two ladies are leading two countries, offers the lowest economic and political opportunity to the women. The extent of human deprivation in South Asia is colossal. About 260 million people lack access to health facilities; 337 million have no safe drinking water; 830 million have no access to basic sanitation facilities.⁹¹ The list could be enlarged further and further exposing a kind of monumental failure on the part of South Asian ruling elites to face the challenges of development that put the region at the bottom of world regions as judged by most of the development indicators.

b. Conflict Management and Regional Cooperation: Lack of Incentive and Interest

The most pertinent question in our context is how such a monumental failure has influenced the approach and practical policy of the ruling elite and the state towards managing conflicts for the sake of regional cooperation.

Apart from past failures, no South Asian country has, so far, displayed the vision of undertaking any development strategy capable of dealing with the socio-economic and politico-cultural under-development, misgovernance, poverty, inequality, deprivation, degradation of environment, challenges of globalization and more importantly, consequential socio-political turmoil that pose a much greater threat to the region’s common future than the traditional security threats. This has affected the regional politics in South Asia with regard to conflict and co-operation in two ways. First of all, with no large-scale program of socio-economic development, South Asian countries have no or very little stake in a friendly neighborhood. Whether conflict or co-operation, it makes little difference.
Second, South Asia’s failure in socio-economic development and consequential socio-political turmoil created a constant pressure on the ruling elites to redirect mass grievances. As the experiences suggest, public display of intransigence on the issues of bilateral conflicts with the neighbors, occasionally, artificial escalation of such conflicts even to the extent of crisis situation emerged as the most convenient means of serving this purpose.

Thus, in stark contrast to the ASEAN countries for instance, where the ruling elites justify their legitimacy on the ground of economic performance, the ruling elites in South Asian countries have developed a habit of justifying political legitimacy through the cultivation of nationalist passion, often chauvinism, and not seldom, jingoism directed against the neighbors. In addition to serving as the main source of intransigence as displayed by the SAARC countries in relation to intra-group conflicts, this has also constantly vitiated the inter-state relations in the region.

The question remains why and how the ruling elite in South Asia could afford to do this despite the region being one of the most politicized one in the world. A host of reasons lies behind such a paradox. First of all, development models in South Asian countries have been very much similar, though may not be identical despite Nehruvian socialism in India and Sri Lankan version of socialism, on the one hand, and highly publicized anti-communist stance in Pakistan, on the other. The state in the region, is also highly interventionist both by nature and by compulsion. As indicated, with the significant part of national assets in its control, state was deeply involved in the management of economic life, down to the grass roots. As a consequence, the process of socio-economic and politico-cultural development in South Asia was accompanied by scramble for scarce resources among different segments of
the ruling elites that fared well during the colonial rule, while
the vast majority remained on the sideline of the process. This
has generated a host of multifarious intra-state conflicts among
the ruling groups, on the one hand, but mostly, state versus the
deprieved sections – classes, social strata, ethno-religious groups
and so on – on the other, often with cross border reverberations.

The conflicts of the second type were already discussed. Suffice it to mention, that state had very little to offer to the
deprieved sections, so, in most of the cases, it relied on the use of
brute force to settle such intra-state conflicts.

The model was, however, highly successful in preserving
itself through the cultivation of elite cohesion. By and large, it
could accommodate the interests of and/or bring under
control almost all the segments of the ruling elite – political
elite, civil-military bureaucracy, intelligentsia, professional
groups and even the business community – through
inducement. This, however, does not mean that there was no
descent or even rebellion, but to no avail.

There was also tremendous failure on the part of the
academia and particularly the civil society to articulate the
case for bringing fundamental changes to the development
model that would shift the emphasis from state security to
human security, and thus, create pressure on the ruling elite
for conflict management and regional co-operation.

Conclusions

Now the question is whether and how long can South Asian
countries afford to be bogged down in conflicts giving regional
cooperation, particularly SAARC, a low-key profile? Any
affirmative answer to such a question is certainly difficult. While
the prospects as explained above appear to be bleak, there are
also some factors and forces within and, more prominently,
outside the region with potential for reversing the trend. All
previous attempts initiated by regional forces to change the situation relying on regional factors have failed. South Asia still remains bogged down in conflicts. Let us evaluate whether and how far the radical changes at the global level offered any opportunity to the region for making a departure from conflict to a course of co-operation.

The world is awakened to a new series of phenomena and developments of far-reaching consequences. The most significant, in this regard, is the accelerated process of globalization. While movements of goods and services, labor and capital, information and ideas, across national borders are not new; its acceleration in the last decade or so marks a qualitative break with the past. The process of globalization is also all-pervasive. Not only the markets for goods, services and capital are being globalized, the process also embraces such areas like, information, technology, socio-economic, politico-cultural and even moral spiritual institutions, ideas and values. No country or region on earth can remain outside the reach of the globalization wave without risking being left behind and facing socio-economic and political turmoil with unpredictable consequences.

In the context of our study, an important factor is that South Asian states obsessed with security will, now, have to face the reality that the traditional concept of security has been overwhelmed by a holistic view of security. The latter puts people first and defines security in terms of the provision of safety, security and developmental opportunity for the citizens of a state rather than the state itself. Security of an individual in terms of his physical safety, socio-economic and politico-cultural rights as well as opportunities is as important as the security of a state in the traditional sense. The approach was based not so much on confrontation as on co-operation and accommodation with others, even with one’s adversaries. A
shift away from survival and strengthening of a nation state in the global system to ensuring the socio-economic and politico-cultural rights as well as opportunities of individual and groups within a nation state and the world at large. Two major South Asian countries are progressively marching against the trends at the global level. Sri Lanka, the first regional country to put emphasis on human security and human development, is now plunged into a violent ethnic conflict with no end in sight. Thus, bogged down in old-fashioned conflicts, South Asia has very little time and energy to devote to the issue of human security.

Another factor and, perhaps, the most important one in our context, is the globalization, as it is understood in economic terms. To this, South Asia has, so far, displayed a positive attitude, as the process of globalization has opened a host of tremendous opportunities to the regional countries. These include wider markets for trade, an expanding array of exportable commodities, larger private capital inflows, and improved access to information, technology and management. Economies in the region — highly autarkic ones with large scale state owned enterprises — are undergoing a process of liberalization. In the process, attempts are being made to do away with state owned enterprises, which have turned to be an unbearable burden on the taxpayers. The opportunities for private investment both domestic and foreign are being created. The long standing protective trade regime is also being liberalized opening the market to the outside world. The objective of the liberalization process is to transform highly regulated economies of the region into one relying on the interaction of market forces both domestic and global. While a process of economic liberalization is unmistakable, how far it would liberalize the regional economies remains a moot point.

The world today is more integrated than ever and the process of integration is accelerating further and further. In
the process, nations of the world are becoming more and more interdependent. Hence, the need for cooperation at the regional and global level is ever increasing. As discussed, while South Asian countries are increasingly being integrated to the world economy, at the regional level, even the slow process of cooperation is brought to a standstill. How can the region be integrated to the world economy while remaining fragmented regionally?

The opportunities offered by the process of economic liberalization and integration are also accompanied by challenges of gigantic proportion: adopting and maintaining a liberal trade and investment regime, maintaining the confidence of investors both domestic and foreign through preserving a congenial political and economic environment at the national and regional level, devising ways and means of facing competition in trade, and so on. The ultimate challenge, however, is to develop human resources through investment in people so as to prepare South Asian nations to face the professional/entrepreneurial challenges of the twenty-first century with the central objective being the transformation of population burden into human resources, a liability into an asset. This would include areas like, scientific-technological expertise, management, entrepreneurship and so on. In other words, South Asia will have to undertake a radical or, so to speak, grandiose program of socio-economic and politico-cultural development capable of overcoming underdevelopment, poverty, inequality, deprivation, and consequential socio-political turmoil as has been discussed.

Considering such an idea unrealistic would be myopic. As a matter of fact, such a myopic conservatism on the part of the ruling elites paralyzed South Asia's initiative three plus decade back when East and SoutheastAsian countries embarked upon programs of socio-economic development of gigantic proportion. South Asia missed the opportunity of radical socio-economic
transformation, conflict management and regional co-operation during the 1970s and 1980s. In the era of globalization as well the region has so far failed to display any courageous initiative.

However, if South Asia undertakes such an initiative, the experiences of ASEAN countries, our next-door neighbors, could serve as an example, though not a model. As it was observed in case of ASEAN, with the escalation of the process of nation-building, more and more efforts were required to concentrate to ensure the utmost success of this process. A sheer cost benefit analysis of conflict and co-operation gradually led to the diminishing influence of factors and forces, which encouraged abrasive foreign policy. The perception that the price to be paid for animosity and conflict is much higher than that for accommodation, and the gains derived from cooperation substantially overweigh those from confrontation and conflict grew stronger and stronger. In course of time, this generated increasing stakes in a friendly neighborhood. In view of ASEAN experiences and the current trends at the global level, it would not be unrealistic to expect that a process of radical socio-economic transformation at the national level in each of the South Asian countries could also shift the focus from politics to economics, from security in traditional sense to development as it is understood in the twenty-first century, from conflict to a course of cooperation at the regional level. What still remains an open question is whether and how far the process of change in South Asian economies would gain momentum and be capable of shifting the national focus away from politics to economics at the regional level.
Endnotes


2. "Declaration on South Asian Regional Co-operation", in *ibid.*, p.48.


7. In an informal Discussion at BISSL, Dhaka, on May 23, SAARC Secretary General Nihal Rodrigo made such an indication.


15. Indo-Pakistan relations would be dealt with separately in this paper.
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29. See, Jana Kantha, June 16, 1996.


35. *Ibid*.


43. Brian Cloughley, op. cit., p.60.
44. The Indian Express, August 1, 1998.
52. Ibid.
54. All the three documents signed at Lahore are published in The Daily Star, February 26, 1999.
56. Prof. Khalid Mahmud, op. cit., p.11.
64. *Asiaweek*, (July 9, 1999), p.17.
70. Arun Kumar Banerji, *op. cit.*
75. Ibid..
76. Ibid.
78. Ibid.
80. In an informal Discussion at BIJSS, Dhaka, on May 23, SAARC Secretary General Nihal Rodrigo made such an indication.
82. It attempted to put people first and define security in terms of the provision of safety, security and developmental opportunity for the citizens of a state rather than the state itself. The approach was based not so much on confrontation as on co-operation and accommodation with others, even with one's adversaries. Security of an individual in terms of his physical safety, socio-economic and politico-cultural rights as well as opportunities is as important as the security of a state in the traditional sense. A shift away from survival and strengthening of a nation state in the global system to ensuring the socio-economic and politico-cultural rights as well as opportunities of individual and groups within a nation state and the world at large. A shift away from conflict to a course of co-operation at the sub-regional, regional and international levels.


84. Ibid., p.81.


87. Ibid. p.100.


89. Data are adapted from, Mahbub ul Haq, op. cit., pp.1-26.

90. Ibid.

91. Ibid.

SAARC AND NEW PARADIGM OF SECURITY

S. M. Rahman

Regional Cooperation in South Asia (SAARC) was conceived by the founding fathers, with very laudable objectives and its launching in 1985 did augur well for South Asia. By any reckoning, South Asia is the most pitiable region, both in terms of economic and demographic indices and the lingering morbidity of inter-state tension, conflicts and prejudices, resulting in four wars within a span of half a century between two of its arch rivals - India and Pakistan, and running battles on the lines of control (LOC) in the wake of colossal insurgency in the Indian occupied Kashmir. This has intensified during the past decade to a proportion which has all the dangerous portents to escalate into a worst possible conflagration in the region, particularly keeping in view the stark reality that both India and Pakistan are now nuclear powers. The relations between the two estranged neighbors - ever since the Kargil episode have gone from bad to worse, and the 'nuclear deterrence' concept is losing its credibility to avert conventional or what is termed 'limited war'. Should that happen, giving credence to 'human restraint' not to push the nuclear button would amount to taking too naively a 'rational image' of man, when all wars in history -- ancient, medieval or modern -- have essentially been triggered due to "irrational" impulses. The idea to highlight is that prudence demands concerted efforts to get out of 'nuclear complacence' and pay heed to what Burns Weston contends "with the possible exception of ozone depletion, global warming, and related environmental concerns, nothing is more menacing to the long term well-being of our planet than the sincerely communicated threat to use nuclear weapons if
and when sufficiently provoked." South Asia happens to be a highly volatile and provocation-prone region.

Apart from the nuclear dread, conflicts are endemic, and all the SAARC countries have varying degrees of conflict with their neighboring states. The efforts to resolve conflicts have not been without success. For instance, between India and Bangladesh, a major diplomatic breakthrough was made when India handed over Tin Bigha enclave to Bangladesh and disputes over border demarcations are practically resolved. There are however, the lingering Ganges water dispute, besides some very minor ones. Similarly, between India and Nepal, the ‘transit treaty’, in December 1990 was a major bilateral achievement. There are some issues that still remain unresolved, but given the political will, these would not pose any major obstacles. Between Sri Lanka and India, the major cause of tension is the former’s perception that Tamil insurgency for independence is being fueled by the latter. There exists a conflict between Bhutan and Nepal on the issue of separatist movement among people of Nepalese origin demanding political autonomy in the southern districts of Bhutan, who want to be part of what is known as ‘Gorkhaland’, by carving out territories from Nepal, Bhutan and India. But these conflicts pale into insignificance if one sees the magnitude of antipathy and mistrusts that exists between India and Pakistan on the inflammable issue of Kashmir.

There are issues like Siachin, Wuler Barrage and Demarcation of Sir Greek etc., to be resolved, but it appears that peace in South Asia primarily hinges on the resolution of Kashmir imbroglio. How to achieve it, ought to be the central focus of SAARC. Unfortunately, SAARC has evaded pooling collective insight of the member countries to arrive at a consensus that would act as a moral force on both India and Pakistan to start a dialogue, with the explicit commitment on both sides,
that taking a rigid stance would only unleash violence and catastrophe. Sumantra Bose, rightly maintains, "Resolving the Kashmir issue will require restraint from, and dialogue between, New Delhi and Islamabad .. on searching for such a frame work, it is worth looking at other peace process models, as in Northern Ireland, which derive from similar historical partitions and are characterized by similar intersection of internal and external conflict." His message is indeed worth listening, "Ultimately, any peace-building process in the subcontinent is bound to be even more difficult and tortuous than its Northern Ireland counterpart, and chronically prone to crisis and break down. But the alternatives are grimmer still, and the forbidding obstacles may in the end seem trivial in comparison to the likely costs of not trying at all." 

According to Mahendra Lama, "to keep political issues out of bound of the SAARC, was "shrewd diplomatic maneuvering" by India. Pakistan, in contrast, has been harping on bringing political issues, for deliberations and consequently awareness has emerged that "by constantly evading political issues, SAARC has pushed itself to a farcical corner and rendered itself to an unrealistic and disoriented forum." When problems are pushed under the rug, they have a tendency to assume greater notoriety and complexity, and thus increasingly becoming resistant to solutions. But when they are faced boldly and squarely, they are rendered relatively soft and malleable. SAARC, must transcend from the narrow confines of bilateralism to the open space of multilateralism, and keeping all options open including mediation and arbitration as mechanisms to ensure peace with justice. Even in family feuds, and disputes, mediation and arbitration sometimes become necessary and when nations develop severe acrimony, bilateralism often accentuates obduracy and closed-mindedness. It goes to the credit of Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga, who in the 10th SAARC
Summit underscored the need for discussing political issues, as they pose attitudinal impediments towards building a climate of co-operation in the region. Without getting contentious issues out of the way, or substantially diluting their impact, a whole-hearted commitment to the lofty goal of "promotion of the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and improvement of their quality of life, acceleration of economic growth, social progress and cultural development," would remain a wishful proposition.

The Article X of the SAARC Charter, (General Provision), which prohibits 'bilateral' and contentious issues being discussed, ironically has a built-in brake, which has not allowed SAARC to really take-off in the real sense of the term. Had the 11th Summit, scheduled in November 1999 been held and not allowed to be postponed at the insistence of India, which incidentally has performed a hat-trick in this respect, perhaps, the concept of political issues to be included for discussion in the SAARC Charter would have made some headway. By imposing the decision of postponement, without regard to the feelings of other members, is a gross violation of democratic values of consensus and also robs SAARC of its "peoples character", and render it a club of heads of states, bureaucrats and officialdoms.

The argument advanced by India that as 'democracy' was toppled in Pakistan, and the Chief Executive happened to be a serving General, the situation was not conducive to holding of the Summit, was utterly illogical on several counts. In the first place, it is a semantic issue, whether the ousted government was really "democratic". In the very first session of the SAARC, Pakistan's participation was through President Zia ul Haq, who was a military ruler, and so was the host -- General Ershad from Bangladesh. Moreover, what type of governance comes in the wake of exigencies of a situation is entirely within the realm of internal dynamics of a country. Respect
for sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, is the sacrosanct imperative as contained in the UN Charter, which all nations must adhere to. But the most compelling one is that had the two heads of states, Atal Behari Vajpayee and General Pervez Musharraf come face to face in the post-Kargil emotionally charged atmosphere, the intensity of sub-continental heat could have subsided to an appreciable extent, favorable to the initiation of dialogue.

The legacy of ‘mistrust’ between India and Pakistan is the basic impediment to peace and co-operation. South Asia, unfortunately was a great victim, of the old cold war rivalry as India largely served the Soviet interests, whereas Pakistan played to the tune of USA, particularly in fulfilling its objective of ousting USSR from Afghanistan, ultimately leading to the dismantling of the Soviet Empire. But the reward Pakistan extricated for such an eventual role was ironically much too meager. Neither the economic debt burden was negotiated to be written off, as in the case of Egypt (US$ 750 million) etc., nor was Pakistan treated at par with India on the nuclear issue, i.e., “acceptance of our nuclear expertise as necessary deterrent to India’s overwhelming numerical superiority in conventional weapons and equipment, almost a 4:1 ratio at places”. To top it all Pakistan even could not steer support for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute, despite USA’s recognition of Kashmir’s right of self-determination.

As a hot bed of Super Power rivalry and their power influence in the region, both India and Pakistan remained mortgaged to the senseless dialectics of ideological supremacy. The cost of the total US military expenditure for the entire Cold War was around $7 trillion. The anguish and sufferings to one fifth of the world’s population (nearly 1.2 billion people live in South Asia), by way of deprivations of
basic amenities of life, are indeed incalculable. India and Pakistan were spending nearly $19 billion per year on militarization, and the defense sector. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh have very dismal literacy rates, and practically in all social indices of development, they lag far behind the developing countries. It is a very sad reflection that in Human Development Index Ranking, as per Human Development Report 1994, India ranks 135, Pakistan 132, Nepal 149, Bhutan 162 and Bangladesh 146 among the countries of the world. (It is only Sri Lanka, which ranks 90). Taking into perspective the Syndrome of Poverty-Culture, South Asia is a ghetto of the World.

If the region (notably India and Pakistan) could have resisted the pressure to be sucked into the Cold War power struggle, and divert their resources in social sectors, it could be an abode of peace and prosperity. India's assertive and hegemonic ambitions, undoubtedly resulted in accentuating the sense of insecurity, which compounded with the historical legacy of deep seated antipathy against the very creation of Pakistan, led to an action-reaction vicious pattern of arms acquisition. Large resources of the governments of these two countries are consumed on military expenditures alone. It is, therefore, no surprise that nearly 430 of their people live below the poverty line. The heavy debt burdens are the major source of the drainage of their finances flowing out of the countries. The pace of economic development is hardly beyond 4% per annum, in contrast, China and South East Asian Countries (ASEAN) are respectably high. With such sluggish GNP growth rate, India and Pakistan cannot generate employment opportunities thus contributing to internal dissension, strife and turmoil. Prof. Ziring rightly says: "History repeats itself when populations are insecure and hence seek release from the anguish by brutalizing their neighbors. It is cardinal rule of international politics that
societies programmed to agree with others, initially raise havoc among their own." He further says, "Precisely, this is what is happening in the so called world's largest democracy, where presently, as many as one freedom struggle and five secessionist movements are going on".

Despite such an abhorring economic profile, India's recent overtures to acquire sophisticated ballistic missiles, is only indicative of her compulsive urge to be a global power. According to Wisconsin Project-Risk Report -India's single Prithvi missile with a range of up to 250 km, and nuclear capable mobile launcher, can deliver a 1000 kg warhead over a 2400 km range thus capable of targeting Beijing. The four stage polar satellite launch vehicle (PSLV), successfully tested last October, could be made into an Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) capable of hitting London, Tokyo or New York city.

Flirtation with extra-regional power, therefore, has considerably crippled the prospects of cooperation in the South Asian region, thereby undermining both security and prosperity. To view security in the narrow perspective of settling issues through war, is an outmoded and preposterous proposition. Based on the calculations of the cost of 1991 India-Pakistan war in ammunition, fuel and attrition, in the event a war of similar nature occurred (lasting 14 days), at today's prices would come to a total of Rs. 10058 crore - a horrendous expense that neither side can realistically afford.

India, as a responsible big power in the region has to reorient its attitude so that economic transformation of South Asia could be effected and security is achieved through a sense of 'togetherness', a resilience built on regional economic cooperation. Sagacity would not demand that South Asia, should break its relations with USA-the unipolar power in the World, or any prospective Super Power like Russia. This is not
possible. Extending a hand of cooperation to them would be beneficial provided ‘tags’ of conditionalities are not attached in the bargain. In other words, containment of China or Iran and for that matter any country labeled fundamentalist or otherwise, should not be the precondition. South Asia must exhibit tolerance for all nations of the world. After all moral imperatives cannot be sacrificed for building international relationships. Mikhail Gorbachev makes a very thoughtful observation:

"The future of human society will not be defined in terms of capitalism versus socialism. It was that dichotomy that caused the division of the world community into two blocs and brought about so many catastrophic consequences. We need to find a paradigm that will integrate all the achievements of the human actions, irrespective of which ideology or political movement can be credited with them. This paradigm can only be based on the common values that humankind has developed over many centuries. The search for a new paradigm should be a search for synthesis, for what is common to and unites people, countries, and nations, rather than that divides them."

A very perceptive point has been made: "India-Pakistan through nearly half a century of independence have yet to firm up their borders, in other words, establish national borders rather than military frontiers. National borders are there to stay and be respected. Military frontiers must always remain tentative and open to violations by aggressive military action. National borders offer transit to commerce, tourism and exchange of goods and services".

Paul Kennedy in his book, 'Rise and Fall of the Great Powers', had established through extensive research that the real source of power of any nation lies in its economic strength. He doubted if USA, could maintain its clout in view
of the fact that nations like Japan and Germany, defeated in the Second World War, had emerged as great economic giants, through their innovative technology, hard work and commitment.\textsuperscript{14} But unfortunately very soon, the wisdom, which had dawned upon USA, got lost in the euphoria of triumph of capitalism and defeat of communism, at the end of the Cold War. This was the thesis of the book by Francis Fukuyama - "End of History". According to him Western liberal democracy had established itself as the final form of known government.\textsuperscript{15} It was undoubtedly an ethos centric view of history and very soon it was repudiated due to emergence of conflicts in Bosnia and the Republics of the former Soviet Union.

Unfortunately, the controversial article written by Huntington, somehow has had greater impact on the Western mind, as it fulfilled the need to create a new enemy after the collapse of Soviet ideology. Huntington forewarned that the Western World would come into conflict for power with Confucian and Islamic States and 'fault lines' between civilizations will be the fault lines of the future.\textsuperscript{16} Huntington by profession, is a military sociologist but in propagating his thesis, he had catered more to the requirement of the 'military' rather than of the 'sociology'. After all, military establishments can only be rationalized if conflicts can be accentuated, sensationalized and even contrived. Moreover, the colossal armament industries of the West would collapse if there were no 'conflicts' in the world.

Vaclav Havel, propounds an alternative paradigm. "We must recollect our original spiritual and moral substance, which grew out of some essential experience of humanity. I believe that this is the only way to achieve a genuine renewal of our sense of responsibility for ourselves and for the world. And at same time, it is the only way to achieve a deeper understanding among cultures that will enable them to work
together in truly ecumenical way to create a new order for the world." He further pleaded, "A better alternative for the future of humanity, therefore, clearly lies in imbuing our civilization with a spiritual dimension. It is not just a matter of understanding, it is multicultural nature and finding inspiration for the creation of a new world order in the common roots of all cultures. It is also essential that the Euro-American cultural sphere-the one which created this civilization and taught humanity its destructive pride - now return to its own spiritual roots and become an example to the rest of the world in the search of a new humanity."  

If South Asian nations could steer a relationship based on accommodation and tolerance for each other’s cultural aspirations, the region would indeed be free from Cold-War-fixation. A new paradigm of development, is needed which "puts people at the center of development, regards economic growth as a means and not as an end, protects the life opportunities of future generations as well as the present generations and respects the natural system on which all life depends." "This paradigm will help build society where the right of food is as sacrosanct as the right to vote, where the right to a basic education is as deeply enshrined as the right of free press and when the right to development is considered one of the fundamental human rights."  

The "Security" concept in the 1990s has graduated to incorporate a four-fold extension. In the first, the concept of security is extended from the security of nations to the security of groups and individuals, it is extended downwards, from nations to individuals. In the second, it is extended from security of nations to the security of the international system, or of a supra national physical environment; it is extended upwards, from the nation to the biosphere. In the third operation, the concept of security is extended horizontally ... from military to political, economic, social, environmental and
'human security'. In the fourth operation, the political responsibility for ensuring security is itself extended. It is diffused in all directions from national states including upwards to international institutions, downwards to regional or local government, and sideways to non-governmental organizations, to public opinion and the press, and to the abstract forces of nature or of the market. Human security is the emerging ethos of the time, and as Vaclav Havel contends, "the sovereignty of the community, the region, the nation, the state, makes sense only if it is derived from one genuine sovereignty that is, from the sovereignty of the human being."21

The international commission on global governance, (1995) has quite unequivocally brought to focus that global security must be broadened from its traditional focus on the security of states to include the security of the people and the planet.22 The compilers of this Report, who are drawn from several parts of the world, have pointed to a very poignant reality, to which South Asian political pundits, must take a special note of. "Rivalry has always been inherent among sovereign states. In the past, states' efforts to increase their own security by expanding their military capabilities and forming alliances with other military powers invariably threatened the security of other states. The struggle for national security was a perpetual zero-sum game in which some states won and others lost. To continue on this path is to court disaster."23

Security is also inherently linked with the concept of social capital, as propounded by Putnam in his book, 'Bowling Alone'. In his article earlier, he expressed a worry that "while the United States had seen record growth in physical and human capital, its stock of social capital had fallen dangerously low."24 Social capital is present when individuals are able to work together according to a set of rules developed
through consensus. Social capital is absent when individuals are disconnected. Putnam thus maintains that "Socially disconnected individuals neither supported by dense social networks nor contributing to them are unhealthier, unhappier and commit more crimes." If a nation is only a conglomeration of groups, without being interconnected in dense social networks, it does not develop the robustness to withstand 'social viruses', which render a society weak and vulnerable. It is this dimension that must receive utmost attention by the SAARC Community. Burki rightly points out, "India has a higher proportion of its population living in poverty than Pakistan. Income disparity among its states is growing and is much more significant than is the case with the provinces of Pakistan. In spite of all this, India is considered a success, while it has become quite fashionable to describe Pakistan as a failure on many counts. Why this difference in perceptions? It is not intended to take pride, but to highlight that the region as a whole must lower the distance between the 'rulers' and the 'ruled', in order to become affluent in 'social capital'.

The poverty syndrome, which renders the landscape of South Asia, so utterly deplorable, is a legacy of the European conquest, when in 1600, the English East India Company, through a royal charter issued by Queen Elizabeth, got the monopoly of Commerce in eastern waters (Bay of Bengal), which practically provided an open general license to "make war, conclude treaties, acquire territories and build fortresses". The so called "trading companies" have used all coercive means to fleece the wealth of the Third World nations, who were once the torch-bearers of great civilizations in the world. The historical loot and plunder, of the colonialists has transformed the Third World to look abysmally impoverished. In other words, why "they" are rich, is essentially because "we" are made poor. The SAARC nations
Introspectively cognizing the determinants of their economic backwardness, should have mobilized their collective ‘will’, towards rectification of the gross injustices made to them, rather than dissipating their energies towards inter-state rivalries, tension and even engaging in war with each other.

It is not only economy which has gone into shambles, but the pattern of governance, was debased due to rigid adherence to a legacy which favored authoritarian leaders as they served the US interests. In the wake of the victory in the Second World War, the West and specially USA, suffered intense paranoia against the former Soviet Union and practically the entire Third World was transformed into 'Anti Communism Garrison', as pointed out by Jafri. He illustrates, "Dulles and Senator Joe MaCarthy let loose what was a cold blooded reign of terror all over the Third World. Civilian responsible governments established by law were subverted to make room for military Juntas committed to join the cold war against the Soviet Union. With only three notable exceptions (Nasser in Egypt, Soekarno in Indonesia, Nehru in India) most leaders and governments in Third World countries agreed to be rounded up to become the camp followers of the Anti-Soviet Cold War. They were to be paid for that. That was the beginning of a culture of bad governance in the Third World". In Pakistan such leaders were never in short supply - Ghulam Mohammad, General Iskendar Mirza, General Ayub Khan, General Yahya Khan and General Zia ul Haq, in succession.

Militarism has thus become a strategic fixation. This finds expression in grandiose military doctrine propounded by India - with its overly ambitious component a Triad force. There is an irony implicit in its concept of ‘minimal deterrence’. Shireen Mazari rightly points out, “India is now seeking to move beyond South Asian Geopolitical framework to what it is trying to define as ‘Southern Asian’ framework. And, the nuclear doctrine with its focus on Agni II and submarine-
based nuclear missiles as well as the eventual development of ICBMs and space-based systems is aimed at this Southern Asian geopolitical milieu. Within the framework of Southern Asia, India includes Central Asia, Afghanistan, Iran, Oman, South Asia, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and the northern Indian Ocean! So effectively India is moving into ASEAN and ECO regions also. It is a power game of global dimension and consequently is a frightening scenario. The SAARC countries, in view of the increasing nuclearism, on the part of India, and in turn, Pakistan's desperation to maintain a credible and legitimate nuclear deterrence, must cohesively move to expand the SAARC framework. They must seriously debate how best to achieve strategic security regime for South Asia, rather than relying on a simplistic assumption that the two nuclear powers of South Asia, would somehow exercise nuclear sobriety and follow what euphemistically is called Nuclear Restraint Regime. To keep over a billion people of the region, perpetually under such a high risk, would be a colossal blunder. Pressures must mount to free South Asia of nuclear dread. There ought to be a moratorium on proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and the nuclear weapons must not be deployed in that ready a position, that an inadvertent mistake may prove harbinger of 'Greek tragedy' for South Asia. In fact, the insight must be drawn on the military planners of both India and Pakistan, that military balance could still be maintained, if conventional force and high cost weapons, particularly of offensive nature are gradually reduced, as it was made possible for Europe through Paris Treaty.

The over-emphasis on the military dimension of power must be dispensed with to put South Asia on the road map of economic prosperity. Hassan Bin Talal of Jordan had proposed a way out. "Issues such as resources, the environment, refugees and arms control are by their very
nature trans-national, and must therefore be addressed collectively. This includes not only the regional players, but also the international community at large. For any one player to attempt to exert military, political or economic hegemony in the region can lead to stultification throughout the region, and the perpetuation of the material disparities that currently fuel the political economy of despair.31 This precisely is the South Asian predicament. True to the dictum of H.G. Wells, "human history is in essence a history of ideas." SAARC sensibility has to be nurtured on the idea, "that we have to replace the ideological antagonism of the Cold War, with a new reference system based on universal values and consensus."

Peace and security in South Asia demands that SAARC is galvanized to transform the region into a community of achievers, and regional cooperation becomes the catalyst to change, and a coordinated perspective make it as respectable and effective as is ASEAN and EU. SAARC, therefore, is a fulfillment of implementation of an idea whose time has come. It is a great dream, which must not be allowed to fade away. Alexis de Tocqueville's dictum is worth taking note of: "Claim too great freedom, too much license and too great subjection shall befall you."32 The power of globalization is grossly exaggerated. A perception has emerged that the power of money speculator is so enormous that when countries, such as East Asian, have tried to 'take off', pressures are mounted so that they are pushed back to a level that they do not cross the threshold, which is the domain of the developed world. In a typically stratified economic order, no financial institution from the developing countries could aspire to gain the status and clout of a multi-national, operating from the developed sections of the world.33

Ajami brings the appalling rich - poor dichotomy into focus when he says, "There is a zone of peace, to be sure, but
it is in the main in the industrialized world. There is an American primacy that underpins this new order, but there is no proof that Americans would willingly expend their blood and treasure to defend it. The market has triumphed over the command economy but the verdict is neither sacred nor necessarily permanent. Kofi Annan makes a perfect assessment in the following words, "It has been said that arguing against globalization is like arguing against the law of gravity. But that does not mean we should accept a law that allows only heavy weights to survive. On the contrary; we must make globalization an engine that lifts people out of hardship and misery, not a force that holds them down." SAARC must mobilize strong moral force against exploitative globalization and contribute to a new paradigm of knowledge utilization. Will and Ariel Durant pose a basic question - Is progress real? "How inadequate now seems the proud motto of Francis Bacon, "Knowledge is power"! Some times we feel that the middle Ages and the Renaissance, which stressed mythology and art rather science and power, may have been wiser than we, who repeatedly enlarge our instrumentalities without improving our purpose." The purpose is to promote a human face of SAARC.

Endnotes
3. Ibid.
5. Ibid. p.5.

9. Ibid.


18. Ibid. p. 34.


20. Ibid. p.6.


25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.


34. Tanvir Ahmad Khan. *op. cit.*

35. Quoted in *Globalization: Geoeconomic World Order*, *op. cit.*

A SOUTH ASIAN PEACE & SECURITY DOCTRINE

Shireen M Mazari

Introduction

The underlying assumption of this paper is that the only viable route to cooperation in South Asia is the security route, given the strategic disunity of the region and the common thread of negative factors including the fact that all the states of the region have, or have had, a dispute with India at one time or another.

Based on this assumption, the nuclearization of South Asia has created some interesting dynamics in relation to the security of this region. Underlying the new realities is a dialectical relationship between the now-expanded security parameters of the region, and the continuation of the Pakistan-India conflictual relationship, centering on Kashmir, as the defining characteristic of the region's disunity. As was the case in Europe till the post-1945 period, where the Franco-German relationship held the key to the region's stability or otherwise, so now the Pakistan-India relationship defines the future security milieu of the whole of South Asia post the region's nuclearization.

With both Pakistan and India not only testing their nuclear devices but also developing their missile capabilities, the whole nuclear debate has moved beyond the Pakistan-India bilateral relationship to a regional milieu. After all, the reach of the two countries' missiles, especially India's Agni, has brought the whole of South Asia and the bordering region of West Asia within the nuclear dynamics. And, since the whole rationale of the 1998 nuclear tests can only be explained in terms of intent
to weaponize and deploy the nuclear capability, it is imperative that nuclear stability be established in the region as a whole.

In other words, the Indian argument that the nuclear issue for India is not confined to the Pakistan-India milieu, but also involves China, has now become a reality - but not quite in the sense that India had argued. Now, India must consider the security requirements of all its neighbors in South Asia since any nuclear exchange or accident may well impact them directly - and will most certainly impact them indirectly in any event.

In order to give a nuclearized South Asia stability, there is a need to evolve a cooperative security milieu - since it has become abundantly clear that there can be no meaningful cooperation in any sector without an underlying cooperative security structure. Within this framework, a South Asian Peace and Security Doctrine can provide the beginnings of such a structure. Such a doctrine should be based on five principles, which will lay the foundations for meaningful multilateral cooperation in South Asia.

**The Five Principles**

**One: A Commitment to the UN Charter and UN Resolutions**

This would ensure a just and lasting solution to prevailing disputes - as witnessed in the case of East Timor. It is within this milieu that Pakistan needs to float the idea of Proximity Talks on Kashmir with the UN as the intermediary - a move that could break the deadlock over dialogue between Pakistan and India. After all, the Kashmir issue has been on the UN agenda for over fifty years so the UN has a moral obligation to intervene. In this connection, the Office of the Secretary General could be used to initiate the process and the other South Asian states, not party to the dispute, should give their support for these Talks.
Beyond the political sphere, such a commitment to the UN and UN resolutions would compel South Asian states to jointly implement UN resolutions relating to the field of human rights, social development, rights of the child and so on.

**Two: Preservation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the states of the region & non-intervention in their internal affairs.**

This principle would result in confidence by the smaller states of a hands-off policy from India. Since, all the South Asian states have, at some time or the other, felt the negative fallout of Indian interventionism, a commitment to this principle within the SAARC framework would go a long way to reassuring India's neighbors in terms of their security perceptions. A similar clause in ASEAN has gone a long way into establishing political trust amongst member states with ethnic/religious linkages across their borders.

**Three: Commitment to a SAARC Convention for the Protection of Human Rights, Including the Rights of Minorities**

This principle would reflect all the South Asian countries' commitment to human rights within their polities. In addition, such a commitment would improve the overall security environment of the region since all the states in the region contain minorities who have linkages within other states where they often form the majority.

**Four: Commitment to a Specified "Cooling Off" Time Frame and Dialogue in the Case of a Crisis**

Instead of a no-war pact, some institutional framework to formalize "cooling-off" in time of crisis may be more feasible. This can be suggested either at a bilateral or SAARC framework where dialogue between the parties automatically goes into play if a crisis erupts which threatens to have a military dimension. Perhaps a permanent security forum can be instituted.
Five: A Strategic Stability Regime

There is an urgent need for the establishment of nuclear stability in the region especially for a country like Pakistan, which needs to avoid getting dragged into a debilitating arms race. Pakistan should now be pushing for a Strategic Stability Regime for South Asia. Such a regime would have bilateral - that is, Pakistan-India specific - as well as regional components.

The Bilateral Components

To begin with, Pakistan needs to enunciate its nuclear doctrine - at least in outline. India has already put forward its nuclear doctrine - despite the fact that they still refer to it as a "draft" nuclear doctrine. Yet, the reality is that it has already begun to be operationalized. The Indian document defines India's post-nuclear security parameters. India had begun its operationalization after its nuclear tests in May 1998, and the doctrine that followed merely coalesced the various strands of the Indian perception of its new operational security milieu. After all, the doctrine as such does not touch upon the quantitative issues of numbers of missiles/warheads or finances. So it is more of a general enunciation of Indian nuclear policy within India's new, expanded geopolitical framework.

It is within this reference that the doctrine's notion of a triad of forces and ostensible 'no-first-use' must be studied. And within that reference point, Pakistan is one - albeit a critical one - amongst many factors. If Pakistan were the sole framework, then the triad of forces envisaged would be an expensive overkill.

When India went overtly nuclear, it did so within the parameters of a well-defined long term security policy and gradually the parameters of this policy are being carefully enunciated by Indian analysts. Primarily, India is seeking to
reassert its regional and global ambitions within the overall context of a nuclear capability. The reach of this capability has been translated into an expansion of India’s regional parameters as India once again seeks to be acknowledged as a major regional and global power.

India is now seeking to move beyond the South Asian geopolitical framework to what it is trying to define as a "Southern Asian" framework. And, the nuclear doctrine with its focus on Agni-II and submarine-based nuclear missiles as well as the eventual development of ICBMs and space-based systems is aimed at this Southern Asian geopolitical milieu. Within the framework of Southern Asia, India includes China, Central Asia, Afghanistan, Iran, Oman, South Asia, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and the northern Indian Ocean!

The draft nuclear doctrine reflects not only the military dimension of India’s new geopolitical security theatre; it also enunciates India’s position on nuclear arms control and disarmament. Indian experts contend that in reality there has been no arms race in the subcontinent for many years and that the nuclear factor is not necessarily a reason for such a race to begin now. On the nuclear issue, India continues to declare that its interests would be better served if there were no nuclear weapons but that such a situation demands global nuclear disarmament - not simply horizontal nuclear nonproliferation.

As for ballistic missiles, the Indian rationale is that they have already been deployed in India’s operational security region for many years now - not only in China and India but also in Iran and Pakistan. While Indian analysts concede to the need for establishing some form of strategic stability within the context of ballistic missiles in the region, India does not accept the notion of a "ballistic missile free zone in South Asia".

Pakistan, for its part, does not have to either get into a numbers game with India or specify its own minimal numbers
it may choose to develop. Instead, it should go for a one-rung escalation ladder knitted in tightly with a highly cohesive, state-of-the-art tactical conventional military. This means that it must acquire sophisticated conventional technology at the tactical, theatre level while maintaining a posture of one-rung escalation in case of all-out strategic war. This becomes necessary because Pakistan lacks spatial depth and should not needlessly waste its resources in a static conventional war.

A Strategic Stability Regime would also require Pakistan and India to establish a stable mutual nuclear deterrence. This, by definition, would require both countries to come to some agreement over missile deployments and numbers. Obviously, no one expects Pakistan to demand a missile-for-missile balance from India given India’s claimed security concerns in relation to China and its power projection ambitions beyond South Asia. However, in the case of missiles that are Pakistan-specific, such as the 

Prithvi, India will have to have an equitable equation with Pakistan. Also, if India seeks to opt for an even-spread amongst its nuclear triad of forces, then Pakistan needs to have an edge on land-based deployments in terms of numbers.

Also, both Pakistan and India need to work towards establishing credible command and control mechanisms. For Pakistan, the problem is simpler not only because the Pakistan military has been involved in Pakistan’s nuclear development, but also because the lines of communication for Pakistan are short. Given India’s expansive nuclear milieu - as can be judged by its ambitious nuclear doctrine - and the tussle for nuclear control between its military and its scientists, command and control is a major problem for India.

Risk reduction is also a critical aspect of stabilizing the nuclear factor. Given the nature of the Kashmir situation and India’s inability for over fifty years to legitimize its military
occupation of Kashmir through military and political means, nuclear risk reduction cannot be done in isolation from this conflict. This is not to say that a strategy for nuclear risk reduction cannot be in place until the Kashmir issue is resolved. Instead, the two issues need to be dealt with simultaneously for there is a vital linkage between them. In other words, there are two levels at which conditionalities have to be created if nuclear risk reduction is to become a feasible proposition. There is the political level and there is the technical level. Within these parameters one can put forward nine conditions that would be critical for nuclear risk reduction in South Asia.

i. Moves towards resolution of the most sensitive issue - Kashmir - through tripartite dialogue between Pakistan, India and the Kashmiris.

ii. Until the conflict is resolved through dialogue - taking into consideration the realities on the ground in IHK - the maintenance of an effective cease-fire agreement along the Line of Control (LoC) becomes an essential condition. For this purpose, the LoC as prevailed at the end of the 1971 war and as agreed to at Simla, needs to be reaffirmed in toto - which requires Indian evacuation of Siachin and all other territorial grabs made beyond the LoC since 1972. For, until that is done, there is no viable LoC that can be asserted. Without an enduring cease-fire there will always be the risk of escalation of conflict.

iii. Following from the above, in order to ensure the strict maintenance of a cease-fire and to prevent infiltration so as to establish trust on both sides there must be an agreement to place international observers (UN or SAARC) on both sides of the LoC.

iv. A nuclear dialogue with India aiming to establish nuclear stability. In order to maintain a stability in the nuclear weapons' development of both countries, a greater degree of transparency would be needed as well as the setting
up of a permanent framework for strategic stability dialogue. For this a common strategic language is essential - which is why notions such as 'minimal credible deterrence' makes little sense since the 'minimal' differs in each state's perception.

v. Avoidance of military brinkmanship and dangerous military practices - a condition also identified by Michael Krepon of the Stimson Centre. This would include restraint from military attacks across the LoC and threatening military maneuvers close to the border and LoC. In this context, while nuclear capability has made limited war a feasible notion for both Pakistan and India, to propagate such a war also reflects a dangerous adventurism, which must be resisted.

vi. Strengthen existing lines of communication between the two sides and enforce military confidence building measures (CBMs) already in place.

vii. Develop nuclear transparency and national technical means of verification. With regard to the latter, the US could provide technical know-how which would allow both sides to develop their own national technical means which become crucial for nuclear risk reduction in an environment where trust will be minimal in the immediate future.

viii. Secure nuclear systems against accidental war. Here again, the US could provide the technical assistance especially since it is so concerned about this issue in this region.

viii. Institute a permanent nuclear strategic dialogue structure that would strengthen trust between the two sides as well as deal with critical issues rapidly.

Then, within an overall nuclear strategic balance, both Pakistan and India would need to move towards mutual conventional force reductions, especially of offensive systems on the ground, which in the Indian case are Pakistan-specific
because of the terrain in relation to Indian neighbors like China and Bangladesh. The Paris Treaty for Conventional Force Reductions in Europe can be one appropriate model for Pakistan and India to examine.

The South Asian Components

First, the nuclearization of South Asia requires an immediate expansion of the SAARC framework to include security issues. Pakistan needs to suggest concrete proposals for this expansion - perhaps a SAARC Strategic Consultative Committee. The SAARC members need to be aware of the new nuclear danger posed by India's unbridled weapons development program - especially missiles. The aim should be to make India accept a multilateral framework for nuclear dialogue within South Asia.

Second, the SAARC members should be aware of the increasing military dangers of the continuing conflict in Kashmir to the region. Pakistan is said to be looking for a breakthrough on the Kashmir stalemate with India through third party mediation. If UN Proximity Talks not possible, then SAARC would seem to be the natural third party to intervene. After all, within a nuclear South Asia, the Kashmir dispute affects all the states of the region. It is time the South Asian states collectively pressurized India into seeking a substantive dialogue with Pakistan on Kashmir - and offered themselves within the collectivity of SAARC as a third party mediating force.

Third, the SAARC collectivity should also push Pakistan and India towards mutual conventional force reductions and stabilization of the nuclear deterrent. There must also be sharing of technological know-how in the field of nuclear accident prevention.

Fourth, since the Indian's have been only too quick to reject Pakistan's proposal for a Non-Aggression Pact (NAP) at a bilateral level, Pakistan should float this initiative within the South Asian framework. After all, while it does not deny any
state the right to use military force in self-defense, it does deter states from aggressing militarily. Of course, self-defense in global political language is a wide and vague term, but that is precisely what makes the NAP such a viable diplomatic and political option. It does not deny any state its military option but it does lower and stabilize the threshold of conflict. What then would such a pact/treaty imply?

- It calls on both sides to commit not to aggress against each other within a military framework. This implies that both India and Pakistan cannot simply intensify exchanges along the LoC into an all-out war against their international borders. A non-aggression pact will further build on the confidence-and security-building measures (CSBMs) involving the hot-line, communication facilities between commanders on both sides of the LoC and other such measures - some of which are already in place but not adhered to strictly.

- In the long term, if such a pact is signed, it demands a removal of aggressive weapon systems aimed at each other. And this is where the pact becomes significant for Pakistan, because ballistic missiles are classified as offensive weapon systems so India would have to reconsider deploying its Prithvi missile – especially, as it claims, in a conventional mode. So, it would necessarily have an impact on conventional offensive weapon systems. Both countries will also be required to move towards prohibiting the induction of the latest technologies and weapons into their conventional forces - especially those that extend the offensive military capability of either side. This would mean that India would have to desist from deploying its air-to-air refuellers, which increase the range of India’s already superior air power.

- Most importantly, a non-aggression pact does not deny either side a mutual minimal nuclear deterrence. If anything, it allows such a mutual deterrence to be the
mainstay of such a pact, because it denies either side the mad race towards ever-spiraling weapons' acquisition. Given that nuclear weapons are here to stay in South Asia, a non-aggression pact offers a stable strategic nuclear environment to Pakistan and India.

Fifth, SAARC should work out a joint nuclear arms control regime for South Asia, including a collective stance not only on international treaties like the CTBT and the FMCT, but also on arms control initiatives relating to waste dumping, arms industries and conventional forces.

Sixth, SAARC should gradually move on from this politico-military dimension of security to a more encompassing security framework. For instance, cooperation to ensure food security as well as the institution of a joint approach for dealing with natural disasters are just two dimensions that can be explored. In the case of the latter, there should be a SAARC Standing Committee on Disasters, which should provide rapid response in terms of aid and assistance in the case of natural disaster striking any SAARC member state.

Conclusion

While most of these principles may not be new, their politico-diplomatic advantage lies in their coming together within a cohesive doctrine to provide a foundation for stability and cooperation in South Asia – a necessity if the region is to exploit its developmental potential.

Endnotes

1. A clause should be included to clarify that this does not apply to regional disputes that have been acknowledged as being international in nature.
SECURITY COOPERATION, CONFLICT PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT IN SOUTH ASIA

C. Uday Bhaskar

Introduction

I would begin with some initial observations. Firstly, the present conference is an indicator of the multi-layered interaction that South Asia as a region has initiated in recent years. Secondly, the subject matter constitutes a rich theme, pregnant with meaning and I read the concept paper carefully. The principal points that emerge are the following – a review of SAARC as an entity highlighting the areas that have been identified for co-operation and the reference to "the domain of security that the South Asian leaders vowed not to tread."² It is further averred that the experience of the past fifteen years suggest "that contentious politico-security issues are hard to avoid, they need to be addressed, and addressed head on rather than in the informal process (now in place during Summits)".³ The impatience with the current framework and the progress made is evident and it has been proposed subsequently that "some are suggesting that perhaps a loose security forum parallel to SAARC, as in ASEAN, may be formed to enable the South Asian leaders to discuss the contentious issues that trouble them. The idea is not only to secure and salvage the SAARC process but also (of ?) evolving a mechanism for conflict prevention and management in the region."⁴ Finally, it is opined that there has hardly been any serious academic debate on the rationale et al of SAARC leading to the two premises for the current conference: first – for providing an intellectual underpinning to the whole set of questions related to new dimensions and perspectives on regional cooperation; and second – multiple
layers and different layers of cooperation in place of a single-track one, would hopefully provide synergic inputs to regional cooperation in South Asia. These are laudable objectives. But some of the assertions made and conclusions drawn in the concept paper warrant qualification and I seek some indulgence for this candor.

The Concept of Security and SAARC

As a security analyst from the region, it is necessary for me to point out that the nature of the linkage between security and SAARC needs to be qualified and corrected lest there be any misperceptions. SAARC was set up on 8th December 1985 to facilitate and enhance regional cooperation and has seven members who adopted a common Charter. The main features of the SAARC Charter are: to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia; accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region; contribute to mutual trust and understanding; to promote active collaboration in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields; strengthen co-operation among themselves in international fora on matters of common interest; and co-operate with international organizations with similar aims and purposes. Furthermore, the SAARC Charter stipulates that all decisions are taken on the basis of unanimity and Article X (ii) excludes bi-lateral and contentious issues from the ambit of SAARC.\(^5\)

I may be indulged for this long preamble that dwells on the Charter of SAARC. It is necessary to point out that among the many areas and issues that are within the scope and mandate of the SAARC Charter, security, as the term is used in the conventional military interpretative sense is not part of the SAARC Charter. As the more diligent would have noted, the very word ‘security’ does not figure in the Charter.
However, paradoxically, the primary thrust areas for cooperation do relate to the human security dimension of the teeming millions – impoverished in the main – who constitute the majority of SAARC states.

Economic growth is at the core of the current SAARC endeavor and this is in keeping with the post Cold War global trend wherein regional economic cooperation has become an imperative. India has been urging this kind of interaction over the years and has initiated a number of agreements and proposals to this end. What is germane is that 'security' in the conventional sense is not part of the SAARC Charter and thus any attempt to establish a linkage between the two would not be in keeping with the letter and spirit of SAARC.

Moreover, meaningful progress even in the economic arena of SAARC has been held back due to the determined attempts of some states and even now the organization is yet to gain the kind of credibility and momentum as is potentially possible. Thus, adding issues that are not in the ambit of the SAARC Charter may be counter-productive since the organization is yet to acquire the resilience and strength needed to address such issues. This dilemma is noted in the concept paper and hence the feeling that a "loose security forum parallel to SAARC" may be desirable. This would be a case of attempting to re-define and recast the basic template of SAARC and borders on the imprudent. I have problems even with the ASEAN/ARF analogy since the latter is not comparable with SAARC/South Asia given the distinctive specificity of each region and the prevailing geo-political ambiance that nurtured them.

**Security Cooperation and Conflict Prevention**

As far as the SAARC region is concerned, traditional security concerns of the states need to be perceived in a holistic manner with due attention paid to the nature of the
region and its different members. *Prima facie*, it is again self-evident that India occupies a pivotal role in the region and no SAARC members have common borders with each other though they are all contiguous to India and the regional linkages that obtain are through the latter. Thus, any kind of common security asymmetry or a perception of insecurity as regards borders and territoriality is invalid, and would perforce have to be bilateral in reference to India. Where such asymmetries exist, they are being addressed on this plane and the Indo-Pak example, notwithstanding its abiding estrangement is a case in point. In extension, may I add that inter-state military conflict *per se* is not endemic to the region and this weakens the rationale for a security forum in the traditional sense of the phrase.

Yet, security as a concept has undergone a significant transmutation in recent years and it is this conceptual shift that merits scrutiny for its SAARC relevance and may I offer what may be termed as 'one Indian's view' on the subject. Most of us are familiar with some new formulations about the concept of security after the end of the Cold War and the dominant punctuation is ascribed to Barry Buzan and Ken Booth. This analyst has attempted a further extrapolation suggesting a shift from the exclusive military nuclear comprehension of security in the Cold war decades, to one of a more inclusive nature that prioritizes economic and societal indicators. But the ultimate determinant as both biology and sociology prove remains survival – a point made by Buzan as well when he notes: "The bottom line of security is survival, but it also reasonably includes a substantial range of concerns about the conditions of existence." I wish to explore the genesis of this formulation about security and forward a South Asian provenance, if I may in co-relation to the state as an entity and national security as a concept.
Human thought has cogitated at length about this primary aspect of survival and one can come across many such references embedded in the earliest civilizations of the world. India is an ancient civilization-state - perhaps the only unbroken one that has evolved from one historical epoch to another without repudiating its past and I shall highlight some aspects of the earliest interpretative accounts of the concept of national security. Ideologically, India has been wedded to the concepts of peace and non-violence on one hand, and equity and rectitude on the other. The latter concept is often referred to as 'dharma' in early Indian thought. Let me dilate on this concept or value.

Dharma is applicable to individuals and move along the social scale to encompass larger groups such as the family, the extended community/village and could be extrapolated to the nation-scale in its modern sense. Thus, a relationship between states predicated upon a true adherence to the spirit of dharma, which steers national endeavor towards shanti or equitable peace, to my mind, forms the conceptual bedrock of comprehensive security in an Indian matrix.

It must also be added here that for such security to be truly comprehensive, this adherence to the twin concepts of dharma and shanti between states would need perforce to be complemented by a commitment towards the security of the individuals who constitute the said states. This internal dimension may not be within the purview of our current deliberations but the dharma or duty of a ruler also emphasizes this aspect. According to the Arthasastra of Kautilya (c. 4th century BC), a harmonious relationship between the ruler and the ruled or populace is mandatory and: "In the happiness of his subjects lies his (ruler's) welfare. He shall not consider as good only that which pleases him but treat as beneficial to him whatever pleases his subjects."
In the commentary accompanying the *Arthasastra*, this is elucidated as: "The duty of the ruler to protect his subjects is, however, often expressed not in terms of *raksana* (protection) or *palana* (governance) but in terms of ensuring their *yogaksema*. This implies something more than mere protection of person and property. Yoga refers to the successful accomplishment of an object, while *ksema* refers to the peaceful, undisturbed enjoyment of that object... *yogaksema* implies the idea of welfare, well-being, including the idea of prosperity, happiness and contentment." 10

Thus, truly comprehensive security must move harmoniously from the individual to the larger group coalescing in the nation-state. If *yogaksema* addresses the security within the state, the twin concepts of *dharma* and *shanti* define the framework for such comprehensive security among states. Ancient Indian thought perceived the whole world as being one extended family—the concept of *vasudevakutumbakam*—and situated human endeavor and aspiration within the larger canvas of nature and a macro cosmic-order.

Here, the correspondences with late 20th century anxieties about ecological balances and environmental protection in an interdependent world need little reiteration. In essence, there is a conceptual linkage between what constituted macro-security at that point in time - the imperatives of state and ruler, with the dictates of macro-security - the protection and well-being of the individual and normatively, we find this core being retained in the modern Indian sensibility. And I dare say, in the South Asian sensibility for much of this finds reference in the spirit of the SAARC Charter.

Thus, it may not be invalid to reiterate the central point of the theme of our deliberations — namely that the new dimensions and perspectives on security need to be interfaced
in an astute and innovative manner within the regional grid. There is a genealogy that we can locate and the challenge perhaps is to package and market old wine in a new early twenty-first century bottle! May I therefore, submit that security be defined or interpreted in its most inclusive manner as far as our deliberations are concerned. And that this is perceived as a hexagon with three principal arms – the political, economic and military. The three complementary arms are the societal, environmental and technological strands – the components being flexible to accommodate related elements such as energy, food, water et al. SAARC is already addressing many of these issues – albeit with less vibrancy and determination than what we all hope for.

It is the military security aspect that warrants closer attention in terms of its regional relevance. It is a subjective concept and acquires appropriate specificity only when it is underpinned by an appropriate contextual validity. Consequently, military security can be perceived as a broadband issue in the uneasy post Cold War years. This bandwidth ranges from the macro - namely weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and related trans-border military capability, through the traditional edifice of the conventional military capability of individual states, to the micro - namely those non-military threats and challenges to the security and stability of individual, society and state viz., a combination of fundamentalism, terrorism, narcotics, small arms and demographic drift. The priority accorded to each of these issues - that is from the macro to the micro is in turn a function of the individual nature of the state in question and the strategic culture that characterizes its leadership and intelligentsia and the regional/global ambiance.

Locating the pursuit of security in this context, it is the contention of this paper that the use of the term South Asia, which is restricted to the seven SAARC nations is misleading
and excludes the geo-political and geo-strategic environment that influences the reality of the region. Many of the issues impinging on the military security perceptions of the region have a relevance that calls for a more inclusive geographic term - and I would propose that the term "southern" Asia would be more representative - as opposed to "south" Asia. The former classification would include the swathe of nations and regions from Saudi Arabia in the western part of the continent through the Arab/Muslim world, to parts of Central Asia and Afghanistan through China - the most significant actor in Asia - through parts of ASEAN to the Malacca straits.

It will be noted that many of the security issues that animate regional and global discourse have a relevance within this southern Asian region and the developments within this region impact in turn on the larger global canvas. For instance, it would be invalid to restrict the nuclear-missile issue to "south Asia" only and exclude China-North Korea on one hand, and Israel on the other. And recent techno-strategic developments as regards missile defenses seem to suggest that what is happening in the USA will impact the responses of Russia in the first instance - and this in turn will have a bearing on the security calculus of East Asia that includes China and Japan amongst others. In like fashion, it is the contention of this paper that as regards the micro element also - namely terrorism and narcotics et al - the exclusion of Afghanistan and the periphery abutting it would not be valid - more so when the kind of Islamic militancy and terrorism spawned under the banner of 'jihad' has deep seated implications for many of the southern Asian states. Thus my related proposition is that when dwelling on security, it would be more advisable to introduce a greater inclusiveness in the classification of the region - and perhaps invoke a "southern" Asian context.
Specific to the region and the sub-continent, there can be no denying that the total security environment has undergone a significant transformation after the May 1998 nuclear tests by India and Pakistan. The nature of the estrangement and hostility between the two largest states of SAARC over Kashmir is well known and merits little repetition to this audience. What is germane is the chronology of events in recent years. After May 1998, India initiated a dialogue with Pakistan under the then civilian leadership of Mr. Nawaz Sharif that led to the historic breakthrough in Lahore in February 1999. However, the optimism generated by Lahore was short-lived for the Pakistani military establishment encouraged and abetted a military misadventure in Kargil - a limited war that ended with the withdrawal of Pakistani troops and irregulars from the Indian side of the Line of Control.

The Kargil War of 1999 symbolizes the many complexities that need to be addressed when reviewing the security situation of southern Asia. Both India and Pakistan are now states with nuclear weapons - however rudimentary their capabilities when contrasted with the five declared nuclear weapon powers. Pakistan attempted to use its nuclear capability as an instrument of coercion in embarking upon a low intensity conflict and armed aggression against India - which it perceived would not respond firmly due to a fear that the conflict if initiated would escalate to the nuclear level. However, events proved otherwise and the sheer guts and professionalism of the Indian armed forces led to the rout of the Pakistani designs. Significantly, the international community did not endorse the Pakistani initiative - to the contrary, Islamabad was censured for its misuse of the nuclear capability.

Yet, it merits reiteration that to the extent that strategic capabilities of states must be factored into the calculus of potential adversaries or challengers, it is necessary to
understand the strategic culture of the state in question - and here Pakistan offers a very interesting case study in terms of the militarization of state and society. The army is back in the driver's seat in Islamabad and the dominant perception in the global community that some elements in the Pakistani establishment are active in supporting Islamic militancy and terrorism as an off-shoot of the 'mujahedin' fervor is causing anxiety through the region and beyond. Islamic militancy, narcotics and the proliferation of small arms is an explosive cocktail and the entire southern Asian region can be affected by this virus - if it is not resisted firmly.

Security in the region is vitiated in the main due to a complex interplay of the perceived national interests of the individual states and the support provided to them by the major powers. Much of the WMD proliferation in the region can be traced to the direct involvement of China and its allies and the insecurities so generated have led to the current turbulence. The southern Asian region and the sub-continent in particular have been subject to considerable scrutiny in the wake of the visit of US President Mr. Bill Clinton and what is evident is that the global community led by the US is carrying out a review of its perception of the region.

Security Cooperation and Management

To revert to the basic question - is it possible to envisage any degree of cooperation on these military security issues at the regional level? My answer is an emphatic yes. There are areas that can be culled out from this broad bandwidth that could from the core of Track II deliberations - and some of them are already part of the SAARC effort. If I may use a broad brush, I would identify the whole issue of WMD or macro military capabilities. There is an existential threat that WMD pose to the world at large and no amount of magisterial declarations of techno-strategic inevitability can dilute this
reality. Raising those contentious questions about the relevance of the nuclear weapon and the missile it is lashed on to in the security doctrines of the major powers is frankly, everybody's business. Urging restraint in the deployment of WMD (and by extension national missile defenses) as a first step and working towards total global disarmament is an area for potential cooperation and consultation. At the lower of the scale, micro security issues hold immense possibility. As indicated earlier, I have classified these under the awkward acronym – FUNTERNASADD or a complex inter linkage of fundamentalism, terrorism, narcotics, small arms and demographic drift.

As many of you are aware, individually and collectively the states in the region are trying to grapple with this cocktail of threats – often ineffectually. But we are not alone and the recent incident of the damage sustained by the US warship, the USS Cole in Aden, Yemen is case in point. SAARC has made a tentative attempt to address some of these issues through the two conventions on terrorism and narcotics. Some states have ratified these legislation but this is only a very hesitant first step. Enormous work needs to be done collectively to bring about a uniformity in the legislation and the penalties among all SAARC states to make these conventions work on the ground in an effective manner that will restore state credibility across the board. Cooperation in this area is paramount to my mind and needs no further reference to Track I since the initial groundwork has already been done.

I also have some thoughts on the traditional edifice of the military that is located between the macro and the micro that I had identified. Currently, all the interaction that exists among SAARC members in this area is bilateral and confined to Track I. However, there are some areas that Track II
cooperation could explore. The UN as the most esteemed global body is deeply concerned about its ability to meet the growing Peace Keeping demands made on it. And again as we are all aware, as a region, South Asia has an impressive track record in this arena. Pooling of expertise and experience and evolving appropriate doctrines and methodologies that would harness this gene pool in the most optimum manner is one area for scrutiny. Yet, another is the need to have a regional disaster relief response mechanism. It is tragic that parts of the Bay of Bengal littoral are regularly ravaged by the fury of nature. Early warning, surveillance, relief operations and logistics can be pooled as part of a regional cooperative framework and persuasive proposals can be arrived at in Track II that could be passed on to Track I. This in turn leads me to a favorite sub-theme of mine - regional naval cooperation. In as much as we have sub-regional economic groupings such as BIMSTEC, I would propose co-operation among Bay of Bengal navies as a potential area - with the mandate addressing totally apolitical areas such as search and rescue at sea, disaster relief et al. Understanding the narrative of the past objectively, is to my mind crucial in negotiating the rapids of the present. The region collectively has a rich military history and even while recognizing the many sensitivities that abound in the matter - I need hardly spell them in Dhaka - I would suggest that a collective effort in this area merits scrutiny by more qualified people.

It is on this area of qualified and eminent people that I will now make a tangential observation. The concept paper avers that there is inadequate serious academic debate within SAARC. I have a slightly different view on the matter. We have a reasonable amount of very sincere effort that is in various stages of evolution - but they are constrained by the cross we
all carry - inadequate resources - in terms of further refinement and implementation. But the effort of people like the report submitted by the Group of Eminent Persons established by the Ninth SAARC Summit should not be dismissed. More need to be done to improve the comprehensive human security of the region but in the ultimate analysis, a gradual approach that can build on the advances made within the existing scope of SAARC may be more prudent and desirable.

**Conclusion**

Security can be a win-win framework in the post-Cold War years if normative rules and guidelines are respected and the competing interests, aspirations and anxieties of the principal interlocutors are accommodated. To that extent the attempt must be to harmonize the security pursuit between individual, society and state in a domestic context - and among states at the regional and global level. Security ultimately is indivisible and must be pursued in an equitable manner if it is to be sustainable in the long term.

**Endnotes**


