Security architecture of Bangladesh is more a product of default rather than design. Ad hoc and piecemeal responses of the government come about from time to time, following persistent media outcry and pervasive civil society criticism relating to specific issues and events. There being no evidence of a comprehensive National Security Policy, it is natural to surmise that no such holistic policy exists in Bangladesh. Strategy, structure, programmes, priorities and processes etc. relating to the totality of national security would be amongst the significant elements of a National Security Policy. Without a well-designed policy framework, national security issues cannot be addressed in a comprehensive and composite manner. It is widely believed, that is left Bangladesh exposed to many security threats and challenges. Pervasive insecurities are sapping away the vitality of the nation and engendering enormous wastage of precious national resources and power-base. Life and liberty of the people and their quest for happiness remain hostage to many insecurities.

Primacy of a holistic security in the development process is now widely recognised. Democracy and market cannot enjoy a healthy growth in an environment vitiated by disconcerting insecurities. Socio-cultural progress and economic development cannot take sustainable strides without an acceptable level of security. National government and development partners need to focus greater attention on security issues. Naturally, without continuous research and study security issues cannot be adequately identified and fully understood for necessary policy response. This brings us to the forgotten question of deployment of resources including funding for research and studies relating to national security. Neither the government nor the development partners seem to be paying much attention to security related studies and research. More investment in research in security sector would be an investment worth making.
Policymakers seem to be seduced by the idea that development is primarily a function of economic resources and security does not matter in development calculus. In this book the contributors have tried to highlight the enormous wastage and drainage of resources caused by lack of security in the society and the country. Corruption is eating away at the vital resources allocated for development. Incompetence, violence, terrorism and organised crime etc, create serious obstacles for socio-economic development. National security parameters constitute both the means as well as the end of total development process. In the gathering darkness of insecurities the road to development cannot be negotiated by the people, society and the nation. We are obliged to develop better understanding of the critical security issues.

The tenets of security are in a state of flux. It is important to adopt the concepts to the fast-changing realities in order to evolve a sustainable basis for viable national policies on security. The momentous changes in technology and ever shifting basic parameters of political and socio-economic environment—both nationally and internationally—need to be taken into account in designing a holistic national security architecture. It is evident that the extent and nature of change in security conditionalities defy precise evaluation. Some reference to conceptual aspects are included in this study only to put the empirical research in necessary theoretical context. It is not possible to capture the entire range of security challenges encountered by the nation today in a brief work of this nature. Many more issue specific research and studies will have to be carried out on a continuous basis to bring the national policies to bear on the security threats and challenges more precisely. BIISS is only seeking to draw attention to the neglected areas of research which are vital for national interest.

In a fast changing world, security issues keep on multiplying and mutating. National-level measures are isolated, fragmented and inadequate in the absence of a comprehensive security strategy. There is no national focal point for policy formulation, coordination and monitoring the government policies, plans and programmes for combating the threats to national security. Creation of a position for National Security Advisor and appointment of a qualified person to that position seems to be an absolute necessity. State-centric, at times even regime-centric, perception of
security leaves out non-traditional security concerns including human security out of the purview of security related efforts of the executive branch. The legislature and the judiciary need to be better integrated in a holistic national security architecture. Parliament has not been known to have debated much on national security policies and programmes. There is no Parliamentary Committee on National Security. A strident voice of the judiciary on national security concerns will go a long way to enhance public confidence in the efficacy of rule of law. The executive branch needs to carry out more reforms in the security related agencies of the government.

Leadership deficit in most of the state organs in respect of National Security has largely undermined holistic response of the state towards security challenges. Only transformational leadership can take the country out of the dismal security framework and forecast. Political leadership in both executive and legislature, judicial leadership at all levels of courts, bureaucratic leadership (civil and military) in all branches of the executive, civil society leadership, media leadership and leadership in academia and research community, all these can work in a collective architecture to put together a comprehensive national response to the burgeoning threats to national security. Isolated sectoral leadership cannot, all by itself, bring about substantive improvement in the current state of national power for meeting the escalating security challenges.

Perhaps time has not come for public debate or discussion on the quality of leadership at national level, particularly political leadership. Depending on the degree of collective tolerance and wisdom in our polity, may be in the future much needed applied studies can be made on the relevance and impact of leadership on national response to security challenges, emanating from inside and outside the country. We have chosen not to name leaders who themselves engendered serious security predicament for the nation through their singular failure to recognise the wisdom of negotiated management of political conflict and personal differences. Taking the country to the brink of civil war takes some amount of monumental follies and failures on the part of political leadership across the national political divide. When the political fault-line synchronises with personal vengeance and vendetta a grave national crisis ensues, like the one the nation had to encounter in January 2007. Statesmanship gave way to brinkmanship. Political
competition took the shape of violent confrontation. Arrogance of personal power destroyed the basis of national power. Blinded by primordial passion for personal aggrandisement and power, the political leaders not only choose the path of self-destruction but also took respective parties towards political suicide. The nation had to pay a great price in terms of suspended democratic governance.

Complex and composite nature of comprehensive national security does not seem to have been fully perceived at the policy-making level. There was little initiative on the part of the government to bridge the yawning gap between evolving knowledge on security issues and practically non-existent long-term policy on the same. The products of continuing research by the academia and civil society seem to have been blissfully ignored by the policy establishment, both political and bureaucratic. The research community and media made modest efforts to draw the attention of political leaders towards critical security issues but they (the politicians) were more seduced by personal greed for spoils of office and the glare and glory of power inherent in national politics. In most cases national security was equated with regime-security and national defence. Traditional security issues are now substantially conditioned by non-traditional security threats. The fast changing matrix of security could not be perceived fully by the political establishment. Bureaucratic establishment, as always, remained more occupied with turf-war and domain specific power-grabbing and priorities. The holistic perspective of national security could not be perceived either by the political policy makers or the bureaucratic support providers for policy making. Political misjudgments, misinformation and self-fulfilling feed-back etc. contributed further towards total policy void, vacuum and vicissitudes in the field of national security. Patent absence of a fair balance of power and over-concentration of power in one political office further aggravated the precipitous slide towards insecurity. The net result is that the leaders (political and bureaucratic) landed the nation in a security morass and mess. The search for a way out has to continue. This compendium is a modest contribution of BIISS towards the national search for light in the deepening darkness of national insecurities.

BIISS has decided to make an annual survey of national security landscape starting from the year 2007. The state of national security will be monitored more closely by BIISS and every year
there will be a report to the nation on this crucial subject. This first ever report may have missed some issues and events in the domain of national security. We will continue to improve and enlarge our coverage of the critical security issues on the basis of feedback from the government, civil society, academia and media. In-house review of BIUSS will also seek to bring about qualitative improvements in this annual report. Efforts have been made to cover traditional security issues together with non-traditional security concerns in a composite and comprehensive framework. It is not easy to deal with substantially interconnected issues and events in isolation. Consequently, there has been some unavoidable overlappings and repetitions in different chapters. Our researchers have tried to academically address the subject with objectivity and fairness. Our prime objective is larger national interest as we perceive it. Comments, opinions and judgments etc. made in this book have been made only to emphasize the seriousness of the issues in the context of national security. The idea of derogating or deprecating any institution or individual has been far from our thoughts while designing this work and recording the security concerns of the nation. Our best judgment may not be seen to be enough in the measuring scale of some. But we leave it to the people to evaluate our sincere academic efforts.

National security is largely a function of national power. For that matter security at any level-national, communal, societal, human and personal etc. is largely defined by power at the given level. More power does not necessarily mean more security. But by and large power is a primary factor in a security framework. National power depends on national leadership. Developing national power, consolidating national power, harnessing national power and deploying national power—all these are generally contingent on national leadership. Hence the relationship between national leadership, national power and national security cannot be overemphasised. Our glorious war of liberation offers the finest example of historic convergence of national-leadership, national-power and national security. Notwithstanding enormous odds encountered by the liberation forces, the occupation army had to surrender to our national power. In this book an attempt has been made to understand national security in the perspective of national power and leadership. Structural and systemic aspects of national
security have been briefly analysed in Chapter 1. Structural and systemic deficits do present considerable handicaps to strategic development and deployment of national power and to that extent undermine national security. The problematic of democracy deficits and weak governance are seriously compounded by endemic corruption, political violence and multifarious terrorism. A composite and comprehensive national response is the only answer to these challenges.

Overt military threat will remain a possibility for the foreseeable future, given the nature of power-politics in South Asia, although the degree of probability will depend on many internal and external factors. Covert and insidious operations of unfriendly and hostile agents will require convincing smart power to tackle. Effective management of counter-intelligence activities of foreign intelligence agencies in Bangladesh and developing a viable concept of credible defence will be among the major challenges facing the nation. Traditional security threats and challenges will continue to bedevil our national defense policy. In Chapter 2 an attempt has been made to present some of the key issues confronting the nation in the matter of traditional security. Absence of a published or written defence policy and lingering ambiguities at the higher-level defence management-structure are among the issues that need priority attention of the legislature and the executive. Preparedness and professionalism of the defense forces need not be sacrificed through their prolonged exposure to civilian oriented commitments. 2007 has been a rather unusual time for the nation and for the armed forces. It is better for all to bring about a decent end to the special circumstances which keep the forces away from professional exercises and commitments. Defence cooperation with friendly countries is a very attractive option for Bangladesh to enhance the defence capabilities and preparedness. More public debate on defence issues will considerably help to integrate popular understanding and support for better defence preparations and stronger defence forces. A cabinet-level committee may be a good option for highest-level policy formulation, coordination and monitoring of defence related activities of the nation.

Bangladesh diplomacy has always been among the few success stories of the country. The compositie process of bilateral and multilateral diplomacy has been pursued by Bangladesh in
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securing and advancing national interests. Given a rather weak base of national power—both hard-power and soft-power—it has always been a great professional challenge for Bangladeshi diplomats to make an impact in international domain. Bangladesh diplomacy has been relatively more efficacious in multilateral diplomacy. In bilateral diplomacy, limitations of national-power base, absence of long-term and bipartisan foreign policy, strategic power asymmetry, and dysfunctional democracy etc. have been too difficult to overcome. Diplomacy will always remain the best option for managing our relations with immediate neighbours and other nations around the world. The operational aspects of soft-power of the nation are usually integrated in the holistic process of diplomacy. Nations peacefully interact among and between themselves through the framework of diplomacy. Most of the problems and issues between nation states are managed through diplomacy. Hence diplomacy is widely known as the first line of defence. In Chapter 3 an attempt has been made to relate diplomacy to the various external security challenges confronting Bangladesh. Everything said and done, diplomacy can be as effective as the domestic power base will help it to be so. Structural and systemic inadequacies of Bangladesh diplomacy have been analysed in this chapter and some policy options have been flagged. Bangladesh will have to invest more resources—human, financial and technological—to make diplomacy work better for national security.

Contemporary security discourse centres around both traditional and non-traditional security issues. In fact in a complex world all these issues impinge on one another in a comprehensive way and as such one aspect of national security cannot be fully understood without reference to the other. Some academics feel rather uncomfortable in extending the horizon of security problematic, since in their view the intellectual focus is thus diluted and dissipated. Notwithstanding the differences in research community, the policy makers around the world are more and more focusing on non-traditional security issues. Terrorism represents one of the major non-traditional security threats. Use of hard-power is not enough for dealing with this insidious threat. A composite mix of soft-power and hard-power i.e., smart—power is called for. Poverty, disease, illiteracy and economic deprivations are among the non-traditional security concerns around the world as well as in
Bangladesh. Chapter 4 of this book reflects on the non-traditional security issues facing Bangladesh. Poisonous fruits and adulterated food items are served to the people in the market place. Food laws are antiquated and weak. Compliance is almost non-existent owing to intractable socio-cultural factors. Enforcement is seriously vitiated by weak governmental machinery, rampant corruption among government officials who are mostly professionally incompetent. Poisonous food items and spurious medicine pose a serious threat to health security. Climate change is threatening to obliterate much of the land areas of Bangladesh. It is time to wake up to this existential security threat. Apart from seminars and conferences nothings much seems to be getting done on this critical issue. We have tried to underline some other key issues of human security as well. It is for the people and the civil society to take the issue forward and impress upon the government that time has come for action.

Civil society has a very important role to play in the matter of national security. Whistle-blowing, advocacy, research, analysis and public dissemination of facts are among the important contributions of civil society towards national security. Some civil society organisations may themselves become sources of insecurity owing to incompetence and wrong perspective. Being in the pay roll of some unfriendly foreign agencies may make some civil society institutions drivers of insecurity. It is believed that some civil society institutions including trade unions have been penetrated by foreign intelligence agencies and thus causing serious security concerns for the society. The civil society needs to play a more active and positive role in the domain of national security. Public–private partnership has to be developed for collectively facing the emerging threats to national security. In Chapter 5 some of these issues have been studied. Few policy recommendations have also been offered.

It is a statutory obligation of BIJSS to disseminate information on security issues facing the nation as well as to create public awareness about national options to meet the security challenges at all levels i.e., local and national, public and private, individual and collective, and government and non-government. During last thirty one years of its existence BIJSS has published many books, monographs and periodicals covering various dimensions and
aspects of national security. Lectures, seminars, conferences and workshops etc. are regularly organised by BIISS to highlight the security issues of the day. The great tradition of scholarship, objectivity and analytical dexterity bequeathed by the first Chairman of BIISS Late Professor M Shamsul Huq, former Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, continues to inspire the researchers of BIISS to uphold the high standard of academic responsibility and commitment.

In terms of security, where are we? Where are we heading for? Do we have a security vision? In more realist parlance do we have a security mission? Are we lost in the wilderness of security—oblivion? Are we fumbling in the wasteland of ignorance, indecision and ineptitude? Today, the stark question that stares the nation in the face is: Whither National Security?