South Asia in the world

South Asia in the world: Problem solving perspectives on security, sustainable development, and good governance

Edited by Ramesh Thakur and Oddny Wiggen

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Acknowledgements

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Figures

Tables

Abbreviations

ABM Treaty	Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty
AIA	Afghan Interim Administration
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BMI	body mass index
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
BOD	biological oxygen demand
CARs	Central Asian republics
CBMs	confidence-building measures
CICA	Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
EIA	environmental impact assessment
EPZ	export processing zone
FDI	foreign direct investment
GDP	gross domestic product
GEP	Group of Eminent Persons
GNP	gross national product
HDI	Human Development Index
IFI	international financial institution
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund

IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force [Afghanistan]
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence [Pakistan]
JKLF	Jammu-Kashmir Liberation Front
LBW	low birthweight
LOC	Line of Control [Kashmir]
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MAD	mutual assured destruction
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	non-governmental organization
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
NSC	National Security Council [Pakistan]
NTB	non-tariff barrier
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PKO	peacekeeping operation [UN]
PRGF	Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (IMF)
PSO	peace support operation [UN]
RAW	Research and Analysis Wing [India]
SACCS	South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAEU	South Asian Economic Union
SAFTA	South Asian Free Trade Agreement
SAPTA	South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement
SCCI	SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry
SEWA	Self-Employed Women's Association [India]
SLFP	Sri Lanka Freedom Party
SLMC	Sri Lanka Muslim Congress
SMEs	small and medium enterprises
TUF	Tamil United Front
TULF	Tamil United Liberation Front
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNP	United National Party [Sri Lanka]
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UNSAS	United Nations Stand-by Arrangements System
WTO	World Trade Organization

Foreword: Mutual interest – The United Nations and South Asia

Lloyd Axworthy

In May 2002, the United Nations University in Tokyo was the venue for an important gathering of scholars and practitioners to discuss the significance of South Asia in the emerging international constellation. The papers that were presented are now available for a wider audience in this collection edited by Ramesh Thakur and Oddny Wiggen. The book makes a strong and compelling case why this region deserves serious attention by analysts and policy makers concerned with issues of global security.

It is true that over the years there has been an intermittent focus on the ongoing Indo-Pakistani conflict over Kashmir, made more perilous by the possession of nuclear weapons. And certainly the attacks of 11 September 2001 brought the region onto centre stage with the US intervention into Afghanistan to hunt down al-Qaida and to destroy the Taliban regime that gave them sanctuary. Since that time the counter-terrorism campaign has been a dominant factor in the politics of South Asia. But, as the authors in this book make clear, there is a much broader security agenda at stake, which calls for a more comprehensive and intensive involvement of the international community. Whether it be the sheer scope of poverty amongst its population, the burgeoning conflicts and tensions of civil insurgency, the sourcing of drugs and various forms of criminal activity, the degradation of the environment, the abuse of child labour, the mistreatment of women, or the large numbers of refugees, this region is a cauldron of "human" insecurities that not only plague those who live

there but threaten to involve and engulf the stability and well-being of the world.

It is little wonder that a well-documented and well-argued *cri de coeur* emanates from the pages of this book, along with a strong appeal for forceful UN action and commitment.

Herein lies an irony. Fast-forward one year beyond the conference date to the post–Iraq War period and there is another side to the equation – the United Nations desperately needs the renewed participation and engagement of South Asia. The situation has become one of mutual dependence between the people and governments of the region, who need a collaborative, cooperative international system to help meet their problems, and the United Nations, which is the cornerstone of that multilateral system and needs the buy-in and support of this strategic region at a time when its credibility is diminished and the very premise of its existence is under attack.

Although the post-Iraq standing of the United Nations is at a generally low ebb around the world, its position in South Asia is in free fall. In the Pew Global Survey undertaken in June 2003,[1] the public attitudes of South Asians are highly negative: for example, 60 per cent of Pakistanis see the United Nations as having an irrelevant role in resolving security problems. The nationalist government of India is palpably disdainful towards multilateral cooperative action, and both it and the government of General Musharraf in Pakistan vie for the favour of being President George W. Bush's best friend. The situation of the United Nations as a peace builder in Afghanistan has been bushwhacked by a flawed reconstruction plan that turned power over to the warlords and kept international security forces confined to Kabul, resulting in a security morass. Rather than being constructive in the pursuit of greater human security, the developments in the region seem to be adding to the general erosion of the multilateral architecture.

Yet this volume offers a counterpoint to the current public disillusionment and the narrow and combative stance of too many of the region's political leaders. Many of the writers express the need to go beyond the war on terrorism and begin tackling the economic, social and military security issues in a cooperative context. I was particularly struck by the commentators' pride in the very significant role played by South Asian soldiers as peacekeepers, providing substantial contributions to UN missions around the world.

There is throughout this volume a clear expression of the need to establish collective answers, both globally and regionally, to the devastating impact of AIDS, environmental degradation, refugee flows and the threats arising from the instability and insecurity following the 9/11 attacks. This is a welcome and refreshing antidote to the constant protestations of ''go

it alone'' or simple bilateral responses that are so predominant in today's global debate. In fact it demonstrates that there could be a substantial constituency of support in South Asia for a renewal of multilateral institutions and a reform of international institutions in meeting transcendent global issues.

The neglect of and at times indifference to the importance of the region documented in this volume need to be redressed. This goes beyond tackling the problems of the area. It also requires efforts to enlist the region in the task of helping to build a global system of security that embodies the principles and outlook of human security and the protection of the rights of individuals to live in freedom from fear. If there has been one sin of omission that cries out for redemption it is the exclusion of the people of South Asia as rightful, full-fledged partners in making decisions at the United Nations that affect global society. This book shows the time may be right to begin addressing that fault. It could not come at a better time, because the world needs the infusion of ideas, energy and political weight that South Asians can bring to creating a more stable, equitable and sustainable world.

Note

1. Pew Research Center for the People, ''Views of a Changing World'', Pew Global Attitudes Project (Survey Report), Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, June 2003; http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/185.pdf.

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Introduction: South Asia's manifold challenge to the international community

Ramesh Thakur and Oddny Wiggen

The concept of "the international community", if it is to have practical meaning and encapsulate the notion of "solidarity without borders" instead of being an empty slogan, must come to terms with the multitude and gravity of the challenges confronting the peoples and nations of South Asia (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka). The scale of the problems faced in the region and the numbers of people involved are so huge that success or failure in South Asia pose defining challenges to the core mandates of the United Nations as the global arena for problem-solving. South Asia by itself accounts for one-fifth of "We the peoples of the United Nations". Developments in South Asia cut across the major faultlines of the UN system with respect to the challenges of economic development, environmental protection, food and water security, democratic governance and human rights, nuclear war and peace, inter-state and internal conflicts, and new security issues such as AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) and international terrorism. What happens in South Asia will surely shape the contours of the global community in the decades ahead.

Two of the central purposes of the United Nations as expressed in the UN Charter – to maintain international peace and security and to promote social and economic advancement – make it imperative for the organization to address these issues in South Asia. The United Nations University (UNU), in collaboration with the UN agencies in Japan, organized an international conference in May 2002 on "The United

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Nations and South Asia''. UNU in Tokyo is particularly well suited as a forum for discussing these issues as the major UN agencies are located in its headquarters building in Tokyo, ''UN House''. The South Asian embassies in Japan offered their support for the conference and collaborated in its organization. The conference was well timed in that 2002 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Japan by India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. But it was ill timed in that on that date India and Pakistan were in the middle of the biggest and most tense mobilization of their full military mights along the full length of their border. Yet, by presenting a forum for communication between different actors within the various sectors, the conference helped to alleviate the substantial lack of interaction and thus contributed to improved efforts at addressing the problems in South Asia.

The chapters in this volume are revised versions of the papers presented at that conference. Their emphasis is on discussing issues of particular relevance to the region and exploring the potential for improvement in both domestic and international efforts at alleviating the problems of South Asia. If and where appropriate, the role that the United Nations can play in this respect is also underscored.

One of the more interesting features of this volume is the divergence of cultures and writing styles of the scholars and the practitioners (officials, politicians, generals). Academics are addicted to notes, whereas practitioners are allergic to them. Many academics have to be reined in so that their contributions form chapters in a book instead of mini-tomes in themselves, whereas some practitioners have to be coaxed into extending their brief vignettes to a length and intellectual weight suitable for publication by a university press. Two of the UNU's five mandated tasks are to serve as a bridge between the normally isolated worlds of scholarship and policy and to serve as a platform for dialogue.[1] This volume is testimony to the need for dialogue not only between participants from the different nations and societies of a deeply divided region of the world, but also between the different professional cultures in the modern world.

Overviews

Former prime minister of India, I. K. Gujral, expresses the hope that the recent international interest in South Asia is not temporary and based solely on the threat of terrorism and nuclearization, but rather reflects a realization that the world community cannot be safe or happy unless it involves the billion-plus people of South Asia in the critical decisions regarding peace, security and development. According to Gujral, the most serious current challenge facing South Asia is terrorism. But the fight

against terrorism cannot be won by force alone. It is of course necessary to fight the jihadi culture. But, even without jihad, there would still be manifestations of terrorism in all South Asian countries in the form of insurgency movements. Therefore there is an urgent need to address the root causes of terrorism, such as lack of good governance, low levels of human development, and new threats such as drug trafficking and the spread of AIDS. Although the main responsibility for the problems and their resolution lies with the South Asian countries, the region has not been brought into the global developmental mainstream by the international community. The international community needs a peaceful, co-operative and dynamic South Asia; it is in its interest to facilitate this. Gujral sees great potential for development in South Asia in the fields of science and technology, as well as in traditional industries such as chemicals, pharmaceuticals, heavy industries, steel and electronics. For this potential to be realized, however, regional cooperation is necessary. India, as the leading power, can afford to be accommodative to promote such cooperation.

Sartaj Aziz, while calling for a comprehensive programme to reduce poverty in South Asia, also asks for UN action to reduce tension between the region's two nuclear powers. There is an urgent need to accelerate the pace of economic and social progress in the region and to meet the challenges of globalization. The United Nations must assume and discharge its responsibility to focus on the inequalities of the globalization process and regain a leadership role in providing a level playing field. Nor can the international community continue to overlook the security problems in the region. International assistance is needed to fight terrorism and extremism in the region as well as to stabilize Afghanistan. At the same time, Aziz calls for the United Nations to curb ''liberal imperialism'', that is, the notion that the so-called ''postmodern'' world can use force, pre-emptive attack or even deception to violate international boundaries with impunity.

Peace and security

An immediate concern of the international community is the region's impact on international peace and security. South Asia poses many potential threats to regional and global peace and security: it has two nuclear powers engaged in a major territorial dispute; there are several dominant insurgency conflicts here; terrorism is pronounced; and the refugee situation has the potential to be deeply destabilizing. There are also significant cross-regional linkages with respect to relations with China (one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council),

Central Asia (and Russia beyond), the Middle East and South-East Asia. How can domestic and international efforts at resolving conflicts in the region be improved?

Inter-state conflict

Since the end of the Cold War, the global pattern of conflict has shifted from inter-state to intra-state conflicts (many of which have transnational regional links), yet one of the remaining potential inter-state conflicts is found in South Asia. The situation is aggravated by the fact that the two potential belligerents are armed with nuclear-armed weapons. Whereas the stability of the nuclear deterrence between the superpowers during the Cold War was itself somewhat suspect, the relationship between Pakistan and India is qualitatively different and even more volatile (see Thakur, 2000). The two countries share a long border, which allows little time to decide whether to ''use or lose'' nuclear weapons in response to a perceived threat. Furthermore, Pakistan and India are involved in a territorial dispute over Kashmir. This dispute has already resulted in two wars between the countries and the possibility of armed conflict has not yet been eliminated. Neither country has second-strike retaliatory capability, which makes both of them more vulnerable to a pre-emptive strike than was the case between the superpowers during the Cold War. South Asia's relationship with and ties to neighbouring countries also have implications for the involvement of the international community in the region. A complicating element is India's disputed border with China, a third nuclear power with tangible interests in the region. Resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism in the region is also a cause for concern for regional stability. The disruptive nature of this potential conflict is exacerbated by domestic political volatility in all South Asian countries. It is imperative for the United Nations to contribute to a de-escalation of this conflict in order to maintain international peace and security.

Stephen Cohen cautions that, in light of the failure of past predictions, it is impossible to predict future use of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan with any confidence. It is likely that the future will look much like the current situation – a stable relationship between China and India and a rocky one between India and Pakistan, but with innate common sense or external mediation preventing an outbreak of nuclear conflict. However, Cohen also acknowledges the large number of political and military variables that might affect possible outcomes with regard to the nuclear future of South Asia, only some of which can be influenced or controlled by outside powers. He offers two suggestions: the international community should assist in managing crises; and security planners in the region should avoid overconfidence in deterrence and keep their arsenals

low so as to reduce the scale of the catastrophe if there should be a regional war.

Echoing many of the same themes, Christophe Carle emphasizes that the future security of South Asia depends on the relationship between Pakistan and India; the other security threats of the region pale in comparison. He points to the elements of instability in the subcontinent's nuclear deterrence. Contiguity undermines the development of effective and reliable command and control systems and, with ballistic missiles, decision-making time may be reduced to 5–10 minutes. The nuclearization of South Asia and the inherent volatility of the nuclear equation in the region mean that external actors, particularly the United States, have become increasingly important. Thus South Asian (in)security has been internationalized.

Intra-state conflict and transnational linkages

Most of the countries in South Asia have insurgency movements. The level of violence is variable, but several of these conflicts have been classified as high intensity. The separatist Tamil Tiger movement in Sri Lanka is one example, where an ethnic group seeks territorial withdrawal from the state entity. The Kashmir dispute feeds on and exacerbates political instability in both India and Pakistan. India faces further challenges in its north-eastern regions. The Maoist movement in Nepal impedes effective government in a similar way, and over the past few years commentators have expressed concern about the possible Talibanization of Pakistan. With these threats to political stability and territorial integrity, South Asia remains a region with a high potential for violence and conflict. How can the international community contribute to the peaceful settlement of these disputes? And what can be done domestically to defuse these conflicts?

Nepal has been much in the news in the past couple of years or so, in part because of the palace massacre of the royal family, but mainly because of the ferocity and intractability of the Maoist insurgency. Lok Raj Baral's chapter illustrates the close link between intra-state and inter-state conflicts. He points to the transnational elements of the conflict in Nepal, noting that India is often dragged into domestic issues in Nepal, a landlocked Himalayan kingdom sandwiched between two Asian giants with porous and open borders. Weakened states and enfeebled political institutions and leaderships are increasingly incapable of dealing with domestic crises in South Asia, which, in turn, breed inter-state conflicts. Cross-country migration and refugee flows, as well as the issue of treatment of one's own nationals in neighbouring countries, have the potential to trigger inter-state conflict. Conflicts occur over the exploitation of

natural resources such as Nepal's water, and over transit rights for a poor and small country seeking an outlet to the sea for its products. There are also challenges with respect to new security issues such as trafficking in drugs and women.

The insurgency in Sri Lanka has been going on for much longer and is also more ferocious: it is the Tamil Tigers, after all, who introduced and perfected the gruesome art of suicide terrorism. Kingsley de Silva notes that South Asia's record of violence in public life is unusual even compared with other post-colonial states. One special feature is the high number of public figures assassinated. Rajiv Gandhi was killed on Indian soil but in the context of Sri Lanka's bitter civil war. The Kashmir conflict has clearer external factors in its origin than Sri Lanka's but, once the conflict in Sri Lanka erupted and persisted, it was prolonged largely because of Indian intervention. In the Kashmir conflict, terrorism became a distinctive factor in the mid-1980s. The two principal protagonists remain inflexibly resistant to any change in their attitude on this issue. In Sri Lanka the Tamil movement was transformed from a relatively peaceful one until the 1960s into an extraordinarily violent struggle with regional ramifications in the 1980s. Assassinations and suicide bombings became central means of terror. Once terrorism becomes a major factor in the political struggle, de Silva notes, the prospects of negotiating a settlement become all the more difficult. A similar central trait is the marginalization of the so-called moderates.

It is argued by some that the major locus of international terrorism has shifted to South Asia. Terrorist acts are committed in relation to both internal and inter-state conflicts, and the level of violence is alarming. Allegations are also frequently made that governments may support cross-border terrorism to undermine neighbouring states. The phrase "aid, abet and harbour" terrorists has entered the international policy-making agenda since 11 September 2001. How can terrorism be curbed; how can domestic and international actors work to decrease terrorist violence? Is terrorism a purely security problem with no significant political dimensions? Can the challenge of "political terrorism" be met without addressing the fundamental political issues that may underlie it?

Peacekeeping

If South Asia poses a challenge to international peace and security, it is also true that the region contributes strongly to the UN efforts at peacekeeping. The chapters by Lieutenant General Satish Nambiar and Brigadier-General Syed Roomy must be read in the context of three of the world's top four UN peacekeepers being currently from South Asia: Bangladesh, Pakistan and India. Of the total of 44,715 military observers,

civilian police and military troops involved in UN peacekeeping operations (PKOs) in July 2001, 12,590 (28 per cent) were from South Asian countries. As of March 2002, Bangladesh was the biggest contributor to UN PKOs, Pakistan was in second place, India third and Nepal eleventh. What accounts for their continued commitment to UN peace operations in the light of the marked reluctance of some Western countries to accept the burden of UN peacekeeping?[2] South Asian countries contribute with unique and useful skills, for example the Indian army's experience in counter-insurgency operations. Are there wider lessons to be drawn from their experience in peacekeeping operations? One might be improved cooperation on training and perhaps institutional cooperation in the future. In the light of the contributions by South Asia to the United Nations and the size and importance of the region, one may ask also if South Asia has gained the influence in international forums that it ought to have. The generals call for adherence to recommendations from the Brahimi Report on UN Peace Operations, especially that troop-contributing countries must be involved in decision-making on mandates for missions. In addition, though, should South Asia have permanent representation on the Security Council (see Krishnasamy, 2001)?

Social and economic advancement

South Asia is home to about a quarter of the world's population, but has 43 per cent of the world's poor and accounts for only 2 per cent of the world's gross domestic product. The region is characterized by poverty, illiteracy and low life expectancy.[3] It does not compare well even by developing-country standards, let alone global benchmarks (see Table 1.1). The region has experienced improvement in all the main indicators, but with large geographical differences. What can the United Nations and the respective governments do, and how can efforts both domestically and internationally be improved to foster growth and development? How can population control be practised in a humane and ethical way and in conformity with religious beliefs, precepts and practices?

Hafiz Pasha points out that the absolute number of poor in South Asia has remained stable at about 400 million, despite economic growth in the region. He calls therefore for pro-poor policies to ensure ''growth with equity'' as the way to achieve poverty reduction in South Asia. From a UN point of view, further economic growth in South Asia is necessary in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals of reducing the incidence of global poverty by half the 1990s level by 2015. Poverty reduction hinges on reducing inequality through targeted pro-poor policies. However, economic growth is necessary but not by itself sufficient to im-

Table 1.1 South Asia in the world, 2000

	GDP/ capita (US$)	Adult illiteracy (%)	Life expectancy (years)	Population growth, 1975–2000 (% per annum)
World	7,446	–	66.9	1.6
Developing countries	3,783	26.3	64.7	1.9
South Asia	2,404	44.4	62.9	2.1

Source: UNDP (2002).

plement such policies. An improved level of governance would facilitate the adoption of such policies by helping to protect the general public's interests rather than being hostage to vested interests. To achieve the targets for poverty reduction in South Asia, pro-poor policies will have to be implemented at all levels: global (Official Development Assistance targeted at South Asia, and trade restrictions relaxed), regional (regional cooperation for peace, growth of trade and development of infrastructure), national (reconciliation processes, improved investment climate, better governance) and local (governance reforms, social mobilization). Nevertheless, a word of caution may be in order. Decades of supposedly pro-poor policies in India produced outcomes of rapid poverty multiplication, not poverty eradication. How do we distinguish rhetoric from substance in pro-poor policies, taking care to eschew one while promoting the other?

East Asia has often been held up as providing examples of successful state-directed or managed development. By contrast, South Asia has been a notable example of the failures of *dirigisme*. Now, in part under the influence of the "Washington consensus" on economic orthodoxy,[4] even South Asian countries are trying to embrace the market and engage with the international economy. At the same time, and in the opposite direction, they face pressures to adjust to the reality of globalization even as it has come under attack from critics.[5] The benefits or penalties of globalization raise further questions of how to alleviate poverty and promote rapid growth in South Asia. How can the need to liberalize in a global market be balanced with the need to protect economic sovereignty and policy autonomy, safeguard vulnerable industrial/manufacturing sectors, or quarantine cultural icons from baleful external influences?

Farooq Sobhan and Riffat Zaman point out that an immense opportunity exists in South Asia for a leap towards higher growth and welfare through expansion in trade and investment. But the countries of the region are constrained by inadequate access to finance for investment, a huge debt burden and current account deficits. Their share of official international trade is small, and trade among South Asian countries is still

more meagre. They suffer from an increasing trade deficit. They need to focus on trade, investment and technology. The role of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) will be crucial in the liberalization of intra-regional trade. SAARC cannot be an efficient organization unless and until all its members participate with full vigour on the same wavelength. In order to facilitate South Asian cooperation, a development mechanism needs to be in operation with effective regulatory bodies, well-functioning infrastructure and the determination of governments and civil society to carry forward a coordinated development strategy. In this context the utilization of power, water resources, transport and communications, pan-Asian highways, ports, capital markets, financial intermediaries and so on could promote trade and investment for development in South Asia.

Democratization, governance and human rights

When addressing these problems, the system of government is an integral part of the debate. South Asia has been central to the worldwide debate on bread versus liberty, and indeed on whether the choice is a false dichotomy. Arguments against the efficacy of democracy as a vehicle for sustainable growth within a framework of good governance in impoverished nations have been made for decades. In the South Asian context, there are two schools: one that holds that democracy in a liberal sense is not appropriate for South Asia, while the other (notably from the West) holds that democracy is not viable in unstable societies. India is the world's largest democracy, but is this necessarily the most efficient form of government for dealing with the low level of development in South Asia? Similarly, to meet the challenges posed by the ethnically heterogeneous South Asian states, does a strong central government or a decentralized political structure allow for more self-government? Is a secular state or a state asserting a religious identity better suited to face the problems of this region? Given experience elsewhere in the world, and given the size of the countries in South Asia, will the establishment and consolidation of institutions for protecting human rights in the countries of the region be a threat to or a safeguard for national integration?

Gautam Adhikari evaluates democracy in four states: Afghanistan (which has no democratic tradition and will depend on external assistance and security presence), Bangladesh (which is firmly on a democratic path but suffers from a lack of resources and should be externally supported), Pakistan (which because of prolonged and repeated spells of military rule has never had a sustained opportunity to develop democracy) and India (which is a democracy but ought to improve transparency

and accountability and decentralize). Afghanistan and Pakistan should be subjected to international pressure for incremental democratic nation-building; India and Bangladesh are democratic but need to improve their governance. Both Bangladesh and India are liberalizing their economies and decentralizing the polity. Adhikari argues that the international community should support transitions instead of dismissing democracy as irrelevant for stability with growth.

Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu believes that the problem of governance in South Asia stems in large measure from the failure to acknowledge social diversity and embed it in political and constitutional structures. This gives rise to and sustains a crisis of state legitimacy. Applying this to Sri Lanka specifically, he endorses the federal solution proposed in the peace talks in Sri Lanka as a tool for stability within social diversity. This has to be buttressed by an overarching political culture, as well as protection and strengthening of the electoral process, the media, multi-party democracy, the role and responsibility of civil society, and checks and balances on the exercise of authority. Perhaps most importantly, in order to substitute politics for violence, there is a need to provide effective political channels for articulating social grievances.

Environmental impacts and security

The economic development of South Asia can be closely linked to concerns about the degree of environmental degradation. Three major drivers behind this can be readily identified: a very high population growth rate, coupled with a lack of appropriate infrastructure; somewhat unfettered industrial growth without due environmental considerations; and major demographic shifts, including intense urbanization. Other factors, in particular poverty and lack of education, further exacerbate the impacts on the environment. Not without coincidence, these environmental impacts also adversely affect livelihoods and the availability of natural resources, forming a vicious cycle of destruction. Examples include exploitation of fisheries beyond the rate of replenishment, destruction of mangrove forests and the natural bounty contained therein, and pollution of river systems by urban and industrial wastes. In addition to affecting ecosystems and economic infrastructure, adverse environmental impacts also have very serious consequences for the health of people living in this region. The number of people suffering from poisoning by arsenic and fluoride is staggering. Air pollution in South Asia's congested cities is cited as a major cause of respiratory and cancer-related diseases. Access to clean drinking water remains a major challenge for this region.

Zafar Adeel and Awais Piracha review the current situation of human and economic development in South Asia, which is critically linked to the stresses on and depletion of environmental resources. With the help of a case-study of Punjab Province in Pakistan, they demonstrate that the environmental problems faced by the region are a result not of high levels of resource use or industrialization but of population pressure. They provide a summary of the available policy perspectives and set the stage for Adil Najam's discussion of environmental security issues. Najam draws five lessons from South Asia:

1. environment and security are best conceptualized within the context of sustainable development;
2. the challenge of environment and security in South Asia is principally a challenge at the domestic, even local, level, but it is a challenge common to the region;
3. institutions and governance are a bigger problem than resource endowments or geography;
4. the prospects of inter-state violence in South Asia over environmental issues are slim, but they can add to tensions and perpetuate distrust;
5. there is a small potential for a new generation of security relations in the region emerging around the nexus of environment and security that is based on the principles of mutual trust, harmony and cooperation rather than on legacies of distrust and dispute.

In fact the last point is taken up by Ashok Swain, who argues that, as a result of human-induced environmental destruction, the world is witnessing a sharp reduction in the availability of arable land, forests, fresh water, clean air and fisheries. The adverse effect of pollution on these scarce resources is worsened by the growing demand for them. The unequal distribution of these resources further complicates the situation. The outcome can be conflict. Nevertheless new research is pointing out that in some cases environmental scarcity might result in cooperation. Swain examines this with respect to two case-studies: the Indus River agreement of 1960 between India and Pakistan; and the Ganges River agreement of 1996 between India and Bangladesh. In both cases, despite volatile relationships between the countries, agreements on water-sharing have worked. The positive spillover effects of environmental cooperation are possible only if the state institutions are prepared and willing to take advantage of it. A democratically elected legitimate political authority will be more likely to provide a conducive atmosphere for the spread and sustenance of cooperation originating from environmental issues. This accounts for the success of the Ganges Agreement and the failure of the Indus Treaty.

Refugees

Of a total of more than 21 million ''refugees and others of concern to UNHCR'', South Asia has 3,030,562, or 14 per cent.[6] In view of current developments, this number may increase significantly. Neighbouring regions have similar or worse refugee situations, which may in turn exacerbate the problem in South Asia. Refugee flows are a destabilizing trait domestically, and since the 1990s the problem has increasingly been considered a threat to international peace and security and as such of particular interest to the United Nations. Similarly, there have been disputes over migration, such as when India tried to limit migration from Bangladesh. How do the United Nations and the respective states address refugee issues in South Asia, and how can this be done in a constructive and stabilizing way?

Regional cooperation

Another facet of these problems is the implications for regional security. As natural resources are over-exploited, increasing population pressures may lead to transboundary conflicts. This is most obvious for the sharing of water resources, and *inter alia* energy resources, in this region. The challenge for international organizations remains how to solve these problems in an integrated manner while promoting economic growth and development.

South Asia needs a regional identity and rationality. Niaz Naik laments the fact that South Asia remains mired in conflicts and tension. He lists the varied sources of instability: inter-state conflict, internal instability, terrorism, drug trafficking, clandestine arms sale, migration, trafficking in women and children, and the spread of HIV/AIDS. Regional cooperation is necessary to face the multidimensional threat to security in South Asia. Since the Male Summit in 1997, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has addressed pivotal issues such as fostering mutual trust, conflict resolution, promoting good-neighbourly relations and confidence-building. But, in light of the experience of other regional organizations, Naik concludes that the absence of an institutionalized security mechanism has hindered South Asian regional stability. He warns that South Asia is at a crossroads: ''either it can pursue a path of purposeful cooperation based on peace, development and reconciliation, or it can sink deeper into the abyss of hopeless poverty, deprivation, disease and illiteracy, resulting in the gradual erosion of the very core of our ancient societies.''

Nihal Rodrigo acknowledges the existence of two extreme views of

SAARC: it is ineffectual and incapable of responding to the challenges facing South Asia: or, as the only functioning intergovernmental organization in South Asia, it can contribute to peace and stability in the region and help cooperation among its member states. A realistic assessment falls somewhere between these extremes, he believes. Although criticized and unable to accomplish much in the three years preceding the Kathmandu Summit in 2002, the institutional framework of SAARC has facilitated closer South Asian interaction in a number of arenas. And Rodrigo notes that closer relations among the seven South Asian countries and effective regional cooperation are bound together symbiotically.

Human insecurity in South Asia

In many ways, environmental pressures and refugees stand at the intersection of national and human security (as shown, for example, by the sudden flare-up of tension between India and Bangladesh in February 2003 over the subject of ''illegal immigrants''). Regional cooperation within the SAARC framework has proven problematical within traditional, state-based and territorially grounded ''national security''; it may fare better with respect to de-territorialized and de-nationalized ''human security''.

Manzoor Ahmed discusses the concept of human security from the perspective of children and women in South Asia. South Asia scores badly on human development indicators, even compared with developing countries. The situation is especially grave for women and children with respect to education, health care, access to clean water and sanitation, and basic protection from threats to human existence. To improve the situation, effective and accountable governance and a redistribution of resources are required. For example, at present India spends 70 per cent more on defence and debt service than on the social sector. Ahmed recommends a prioritization of women and children politically, partnerships between different actors for social and development services, decentralization to improve governance, greater use of the legal system to promote the rights of the disadvantaged, higher priority to education, and regional cooperation. He also identifies possible roles for the United Nations in this process – as the forum for international consensus on goals for children and women, for raising awareness and for setting moral and legal norms; cooperation with countries on plans and action; and promotion of the role of civil society.

Santosh Mehrotra takes up in a more focused way the question of whether the worst malnutrition is linked to the worst gender discrimination in the world. Half of the world's malnourished children are to be

found in just three countries: Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. Child malnutrition cannot be reversed as the child grows, and it is both a symptom and a cause of poverty. South Asia has the worst record on all three indices of malnutrition: under-weight, stunting and wasting. In developing countries, on average 29 per cent of children are under-weight; in South Asia the figure is 49 per cent. The record is similarly bad for women, as indicated by lower height and body mass index. To counteract this, Mehrotra suggests that public distribution networks for food must be improved and loss through spoilage in warehouse storage reduced. Also, given the skewed food allocation within households, which discriminates against women and children, school feeding programmes must be set up and health care for pregnant women and infants must be improved.

Taking up the same theme, Rekha Datta identifies child labour and the lack of rights for self-employed women as major human security threats in South Asia. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are the primary agencies addressing issues of human security. She elaborates on a case-study of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), a trade union movement of sorts providing access to resources, capital, knowledge- and skill-building, use of technology, health care, savings for capital and for security, and literacy. SEWA has been at the forefront of NGO efforts for human security, silently changing women's lives. It has also had considerable policy impact – for instance, the Gujarat government recognized self-employed women as labourers – and, on an international level, SEWA has cooperated with the International Labour Organization (ILO). Datta concludes that, to improve human security, grass-roots activism must be integrated with policy-making on national, regional and global levels.

"9/11", Afghanistan and South Asia

Afghanistan has been a historical gateway to South Asia and a playing-cum-killing field for imperialistic great games in the region. Its security problems demonstrate only too graphically and tragically how national and human insecurity can in fact intersect and feed off each other. The terrorist attacks on US targets on 11 September 2001 ("9/11") provoked a massive US-led attack on the Taliban regime of Afghanistan. In discussing the implications of that, Samina Ahmed argues that continued conflict in Afghanistan will destabilize South Asia. Conversely, a pacified Afghanistan will promote regional stability, reduce the threat of terrorism in the region and create trade opportunities with Central Asian neighbours. Although the US-led coalition overthrew the Taliban, it has found it difficult to achieve the follow-up goal of eradicating the threat of

terrorism through political, economic and social reconstruction. Afghanistan's Transitional Administration faces multiple challenges: alienated ethnic actors contest its legitimacy; warlords still control their territories; infighting prevails over rule of law; and the slow pace of reconstruction is hampering reconciliation. National and regional security are threatened by the reluctance of international forces to expand their security presence beyond Kabul. As a consequence, the peace is fragile and, if conflict resumes, terrorism will return with it. Also, the unchecked war economy (involving drugs and arms trade) strengthens warlords and militias compared with the central government. India and Pakistan must refrain from interfering in Afghanistan's reconstruction to promote their own agendas, Ahmed urges. It is in the security interest of both to lobby for greater international reconstruction assistance. Non-intervention by neighbours in Afghanistan's affairs would enhance the prospects for peace and deprive extremists of support.

Mohammed Ayoob argues that, in its war on terrorism, Washington has attempted to untie the knot of Islamic extremism that has been at the centre of Pakistani–Afghan relations for years. It has recorded two modest successes: the establishment of an interim Afghan government with a moderate leader, and General Pervez Musharraf's pledge to break Pakistani-based terror groups and pull away from the theocratic state. But South-West Asia is still threatened by instability. Further conflict and fragmentation in Afghanistan could have ripple effects. Moreover, Afghan stability looks elusive: the government does not have control beyond Kabul; the strategic interests of external neighbours are at odds and they have different favourite clients; the warlords are benefiting from strife; the government has less resources and it is also unpopular because of the ban on poppy cultivation and the drug trade. With Afghanistan and Pakistan in unrest, Ayoob concludes that the United States needs support from India and Iran as the only responsible powers with capabilities and interest in South-West Asia's stability.[7]

In the third chapter on the subject, Amin Saikal agrees that "9/11" and the US response to it have had a profound impact on the political and strategic landscape of Central, West and South Asia, altering key geopolitical configurations in the area. The Taliban and al-Qaida have been replaced by a US-supported coalition, Pakistan has switched sides to join the United States, India has upped the ante with Pakistan over "cross-border terrorism" in the light of the US war on terror, Afghanistan and the Central Asian republics have been transformed into US footholds, Iran is encircled by US forces, and political Islam has been put on the defensive. In this fluid situation the United States and its allies have to choose either to remain fully engaged in Afghanistan for 5–10 years or to risk its falling into renewed fragmentation. The United States is ambiva-

lent about engaging in nation-building in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia. Yet this is necessary to stabilize Central, West and South Asia. The United States will need to adopt multilateralism in order to do this.

For a brighter tomorrow

The volume ends with two possible roadmaps for a better, more prosperous and peaceful South Asia. The pivot is the historic animosity between India and Pakistan.

Samina Yasmeen postulates that the negative mythology of "the other" provides the context for perceptions and decision-making between India and Pakistan. This has permeated the relationship since independence, and has been aggravated by three wars and the continuing rivalry over Kashmir. The symmetrical negative imagery pervades the two civil societies as well. Education (for example, history books), the media and cultural elements such as movies contribute to a "shared consciousness" that rests upon and fuels the demonization of the other. Yasmeen distinguishes between hawkish/orthodox and moderate schools of thought in both countries, and identifies the moderate tendencies throughout the turbulent relationship. Nevertheless, the orthodox perception of the relationship as a zero-sum conflict has influenced decision-making on the process of nuclearization as well as the missile race. Hawkish leaders in both countries have used the other country's difficulties and problems to tilt the balance in their favour. While recommending continuing efforts for moderation within and between the two countries, such as the Gujral Doctrine and Lahore agreement, Yasmeen suggests that, among external actors, the United States is better placed to play a short-term role as the facilitating superpower, while the United Nations should play a longer-term part, addressing the root causes of instability such as poverty, population growth rates, environmental degradation and the AIDS epidemic.

India's former High Commissioner (ambassador) to Pakistan, Gopalaswami Parthasarathy, reminds us that the conflict in Afghanistan has spilled over into Pakistan, the Taliban and its supporters have not been eliminated, and the Indian and Pakistani armies are still facing each other in Kashmir. But he argues that the nuclear dimension is exaggerated, being less threatening than the West thinks. For practical purposes, the two defence forces have known of each other's nuclear capability for a decade. Despite the persistent volatility, there are positive trends in the relationship between India and Pakistan, including the Lahore Summit (1999) and progress towards economic integration. It is now necessary to create the conditions for moving from conflict to cooperation. Parthasarathy compares the situation to that of Ireland and the United King-

dom over Northern Ireland, conciliated in part because they are both members of the European Union. He hopes that the vision statement from Lahore – of an economic union in South Asia by 2020 – will be implemented, because economic links and integration will facilitate conflict resolution. Mistrust must be reduced in populations – by people-to-people contact (tourism and exchange programmes), the media, trade and the promotion of cultural understanding – and also between governments, for example through agreements on a set of confidence-building measures for both nuclear and conventional weapons. It is important to create a climate conducive to bilateral dialogue. The SAARC summits in Lahore and Kathmandu show that positive development is possible, and that neither party gains by remaining hostage to the mistrust and animosity of the past.

In sum, the facts of geography have given the seven countries of South Asia a shared history and will ensure a common destiny. Neither enmity nor friendship, neither poverty nor prosperity, is predestined. With mutual and international goodwill, with the mustering of the necessary political will, and with the adoption of mutually conciliatory, market-friendly and pro-growth policies, the peoples and governments of South Asia could as yet take their fate back into their own hands and rediscover the greatness and the glory that once were theirs.

Notes

1. The other three roles are: serving as a think-tank for the United Nations, fostering a global community of scholars, and capacity development.
2. With respect to India, this is discussed in Thakur and Banerjee (2003). For a warning about the dangers of "creeping apartheid" in international peacekeeping, see Thakur and Malone (2000).
3. In the *Human Development Report 2002* (UNDP, 2002: 149–152), Maldives and Sri Lanka are ranked 84 and 89 on the Human Development Index, and India is ranked 124, which means they are all at the lower end of the medium Human Development bracket; Pakistan (138), Bhutan (140), Nepal (142) and Bangladesh (145) are in the low Human Development bracket.
4. The "Washington consensus" refers to the broad agreement among the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the US Government Treasury (all based in Washington DC) on three policy pillars: fiscal austerity (no government profligacy), privatization (no big government), and liberalization-cum-deregulation (free market competition rather than protection in both domestic and international economic exchanges).
5. One of the more powerful and trenchant critiques of globalization is from Joseph E. Stiglitz (2002), the former chief economist of the World Bank and the 2001 Nobel Laureate; see also Nayyar (2002).
6. Figures from UNHCR's estimate at the end of 2000 (PGDS/UNHCR, 2001).
7. For a comment along the same lines in the aftermath of the visit to India by the President of Iran, see Weiss (2003).

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Part I
Overviews

2

South Asia and the world

Inder Kumer Gujral

The world has not given the necessary attention, either in policy terms or intellectually, to South Asia and to its many potentialities as well as its problems. The background documents for this project aptly stated that "South Asia accounts for one fifth of 'We the peoples of the United Nations'". If one-fifth of humanity is not in peace and harmony with itself, if it is suffering from want and deprivation, if it is considered to be on the brink of a nuclear flashpoint, if its internal conflicts and distortions are giving rise to terrorism, it should be a matter of deep concern and discomfort to the world as a whole. I hope the recent interest in South Asia is not just because it is in the eye of the storm of terrorism, being in such close proximity to Afghanistan, or because two of its leading states have acquired nuclear weapons. I hope it is dawning on the world community that it cannot be safe or happy unless it involves the billion-plus peoples of South Asia in the critical decision-making regarding peace, security and development.

The most serious challenge facing South Asia and the world today is terrorism. The fight against it must be won with strength and determination. India has been confronting this menace for the past two decades and it has now reached a critical phase. India has been cautioning the international community not to take this danger to civilization lightly, or to condone the use of terror for narrow sectarian interests to serve some oddly perceived strategic purposes. But India has not succeeded so far in getting the much needed response. The horrendous events of

11 September 2001 have forced the world to realize that the alarm raised by India was not false or an expression of narrow concerns. The international coalition to fight terrorism has belatedly put all its resources and strength into the task and South Asia is playing a crucial role in this struggle. As this fight advances, the international coalition should ensure that those who gave birth to the problem by nurturing the jihadi culture do not covertly subvert and vitiate the fight. I am unable to understand why, even at a high cost to their own stability, some refuse to learn from the experiences of Afghanistan, whose highly civilized society was immensely harmed by the jihad culture. Ironically, encouragement of jihad against a neighbouring country soon boomerangs to strengthen sectarian forces. The operatives of both are trained in the same madrasas and camps that sanctified the killing of the French submarine technicians in Karachi, the butchering of Daniel Pearl, an American journalist, in a remote village of Sind, or the shooting dead of innocent women and children in a bus at Jammu in India. They and their mentors get away with these dastardly acts, which are causing deep fissures amongst the people and the governments of India and Pakistan, deflecting them from the avowed fight against institutionalized terrorism. Unless we collectively identify this common adversary and coordinate our strategies to eliminate this pestilence from the body politic of South Asia, the battle against terrorism may end in a chimera, causing immense damage to all countries of South Asia and the rest of the civilized world.

In the process of fighting this war, South Asia is becoming strategically restructured. The United States has consolidated its military presence in and around the region in order to play a role, not only in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but also in Central Asia, India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Although the purpose of this move is understood, it is likely to have long-term strategic consequences because other major powers in the neighbourhood, such as Russia and China, may at some stage be tempted to enhance their interest and involvement in these regions, which in turn may affect stability in the region.

It seems the collective vision of the South Asian neighbours is blurred. Instead of focusing on the common enemy (terrorism), they are spending huge amounts on defence and military capabilities. This is likely to encourage militaristic tendencies and further enhance *inter se* rivalries, thus providing covert support to jihadis. Increased defence expenditures will also impede their social security and socio-economic development programmes and set back the prospects of building regional understanding and cooperation.

We have still to realize that the war against terrorism cannot be won by force alone. Even very heavy bombardment of Afghanistan and elaborate combing operations along the Afghan–Pakistan border have not yet

eliminated the al-Qaida and Taliban remnants. They may soon be wiped out, but will that put an end to the cult and the mind-sets of terrorism? In the case of South Asia, the complexions of terrorism are many and varied. Although jihadi terrorism is the most menacing threat, there are other manifestations of terrorism in the region, such as the ideological insurgencies by Maoists in Nepal and the ethnic separatists led by the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka. Variants of these rebellious and sectarian movements are also active in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Bhutan.

When we look at the causes of terror and turmoil in the countries of South Asia, lack of good governance, even non-governance, with an utter disregard of the basic needs and aspirations of the ordinary people, emerges as an important factor. The region as a whole is low in global ordering in terms of economic prosperity and human development indicators; 40 per cent of the world's poor live in this region and the Human Governance Index places South Asian countries nearly at the bottom of global rankings. Further social distortions and political turmoil are caused as the region becomes a major transit route and production centre for drugs, and as the number of those affected by AIDS rises.

South Asia has also witnessed distortions in the structures of governance. The past decade has witnessed the rise of democratic movements in every country of the region, but feudal and autocratic institutions such as the military scotched them in Pakistan. The state structures and institutions were taken over by sectarian forces, creating serious problems of survival and identity for the minorities and the deprived sections. Political and vested interests have played significant roles in creating and nurturing the monsters of communal, ethnic and sectarian violence.

Although the South Asian states must bear the principal responsibility for what is happening in the region, the contribution of the international system and the global political and strategic order in encouraging conflicts and violence in South Asia cannot be ignored. For a long time the region was ignored as a basket case, and little effort was made to bring it into the global developmental mainstream. No sizeable investments were directed towards this region nor was any significant trade or developmental interest shown by the international community. The region's inter-state faultlines, particularly between India and Pakistan, were intensified by spillovers from the Cold War rivalry. In recent years, regional conflicts and terrorist organizations in South Asia have received support and sustenance from international drug trafficking networks, the trade in small arms, money laundering, and the ideologies of the various fundamentalisms.

The globalization of economy and information, although generating hopes and expectations, has not been without serious pitfalls. The 2001 report on human development in South Asia pointed out that "during

the globalization phase about half a billion people in South Asia have experienced a decline in their incomes'' and ''provision of social safety nets has been weakened in the region'' (Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, 2001: 2). The global slowdown has also made its contribution. With the prospects of global recovery now in sight, the pressures for economic restructuring are mounting. The painful side of restructuring is impinging rather heavily on the poorer and unorganized sectors of the South Asian labour force. Internationally, too, the weaker and the poorer regions have a hard time competing in a globalized economy that operates within a regime defined by the privileged and dominant sections of the prevailing global economic order. Markets, as we know, are seldom merciful to the weak and the vulnerable. If that were not so, the European and the American labour organizations would not be protesting so vehemently. It would be helpful if the speed and nature of change and transformation to market mechanisms took into account the realities of social and economic development on the ground. A developmental process that is not sensitive to human requirements in a particular context adds to social tensions, and we see this happening in all countries of South Asia.

Permit me to offer my homage to the late Mahbub ul Haq – that great son of Pakistan of whom all South Asians are proud. He told us in no uncertain terms that the state has to govern and govern in a humane manner. The democratic structure of governance may not be ideal, but it is the nearest to a constructive and practical system. But a democratic structure alone is certainly not enough. As we are seeing in some countries of South Asia, the sectarian character of the state causes social disharmony and upsets the peace. To keep the deviant states moving in the direction of a democratic, secular, plural and humane ethos, we have to build a robust civil society that can help prevent political distortions. A recent example occurred in India when the secular ethos of Indian civil society asserted itself powerfully in the context of developments in the state of Gujarat. The government not only faced defeat in the upper house of parliament but also suffered humiliation by its own allies. The Editors' Guild, the Human Rights Commission, intellectuals, business chambers, and the Women's and Minorities Commissions Organization all spoke with one voice to condemn acts of inhuman communal violence against innocent people. I am happy to say that civil society in South Asia has awakened in every country, and it needs to be strengthened and expanded.

Even within the areas of governance, there are some positive moves that need encouragement. South Asian countries have experimented widely in poverty alleviation, and some of these experiments have had remarkable success, such as the Grameen Banks in Bangladesh, food for

work programmes and reductions in adult illiteracy in some states of India, Sri Lanka and Maldives, and environmental conservation in Bhutan. The countries of South Asia need to learn from each other and from anywhere else they can.

Some countries in South Asia – India in particular – are poised to ''gate crash'' the knowledge era. South Asia's greatest asset is human resources and brain power. In some cutting-edge areas such as information technology, biotechnology, space and oceanography, India is among the front-runners and could become pivotal in a new technological revolution. Apart from these frontier areas of science and technology, the next decade could also see South Asian countries become the hub of some traditional industries, including chemicals, drugs and pharmaceuticals, heavy industries, steel and electronics.

In order to maximize individual experience, regional cooperation has a critical and decisive role to play. A vision of regional harmony, peace and prosperity is inherent in the Charter of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. That provides vital clues to address the diverse challenges facing the region, ranging from terrorism to food security. To build mutual confidence and comfort level, India must take the lead. Convinced that there is no zero-sum game in South Asia and that building mutual prosperity is in everyone's overall interests, as prime minister of India I tried to carve out a clear and simple approach in India's policies towards its neighbours. India is the biggest and most capable of the South Asian states, and it can afford to be accommodating without asking for strict reciprocity or sacrificing its own basic interests. Although I was able to practise this approach for only a short while, its positive impact was visible. We were able to resolve some of the most complex issues involving trade and the harnessing and sharing of water resources. This approach also helped India to initiate a process of peace- and confidence-building with Pakistan during my premiership.

My successor – Prime Minister Vajpayee – carried this process further in February 1999 by signing the Lahore Declaration with Pakistan's prime minister, Nawaz Sharif. Intervening events have spoiled the atmosphere of amity and peace, but the people of the subcontinent will be well served and spared much agony if the governments of India and Pakistan abide by the spirit of that declaration and distance themselves from violence and the jihadi culture.

The world needs a peaceful, cooperative and dynamic South Asia, not only as an attractive large and emerging market for its products, technologies, services and financial operations, and providing a pool of trained and disciplined workers, but more importantly as a bastion of democracy, tolerance and stability. The international community needs to make an effort and offer resources to help South Asia harness its full

constructive potential, correct its political, social and economic distortions and infirmities, and become an asset to the world.

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3

South Asia: Melting pot of global faultlines

Sartaj Aziz

Only when one looks at the formidable interaction of the political, security, economic, social and human problems of South Asia can the awesome nature of these problems and their grave implications for the future of mankind be fully grasped. It is equally important to remember that South Asia is where many global faultlines meet and therefore effective solutions to many of these problems cannot be found by domestic actions within South Asia alone. To provide a coherent framework for determining priorities, I shall concentrate on the following four topics:

1. reducing tensions between the two nuclear powers of South Asia;
2. evolving a common front against terrorism and extremism in the region and for bringing peace and stability to Afghanistan;
3. accelerating the pace of economic and social progress in South Asia and meeting the challenge of globalization;
4. launching a comprehensive programme to reduce poverty in South Asia.

Threat to global peace

The continuing inability of the United Nations to solve the Kashmir problem is the single most important cause of many other problems in South Asia. If the leaders of India and Pakistan had found a reasonable solution of the Kashmir problem in the 1950s, the per capita income of

South Asia would have been at least twice the present level and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) would by now be a functioning common market. Instead, Pakistan – after three wars with India, the loss of its eastern wing in 1971 and a disproportionately large burden of defence expenditure – is facing a formidable military stand-off with a country seven times its size. The stand-off started in January 2002 with the deployment of half a million Indian troops along the Pakistan border, the highest level of mobilization in 30 years. This is a very dangerous situation. The well-known Indian writer Arundhati Roy, in an article on state terrorism in Gujarat, wrote in *Outlook India*: ''The buzz is that engineering a war against Pakistan is going to be the BJP's strategy to swing the vote in the next general elections'' (Roy, 2002). In an article under the title ''The Kashmir Time Bomb'', the *Washington Post* said, ''the sub-continent is the only part of the world where nuclear war is today a serious possibility'' (Ignatius, 2002).

The central purpose of the United Nations, under the UN Charter, is to maintain peace and security. The United Nations and its important members cannot therefore continue their present policy of indifference towards one of the two most serious threats to global peace (the other being the Middle East). There is a need for bold and fresh thinking. The Secretary-General of the United Nations should consider launching a joint initiative through the five permanent members of the Security Council to promote durable peace in South Asia, by focusing, *inter alia*, on the following measures:

- persuade India and Pakistan to withdraw their forces from the border and to defuse the prevailing tensions through military de-escalation;
- request both countries to implement, in letter and in spirit, the Memorandum of Understanding signed during the visit of India's prime minister Vajpayee to Lahore on 21 February 1999, for confidence-building in the nuclear and conventional fields aimed at avoidance of conflict; in this context, it is important for both countries not to deploy nuclear weapons;
- encourage both countries to resume serious negotiations on Kashmir and other issues and to recognize that relations between India and Pakistan cannot improve unless they find a just and acceptable solution to the Kashmir problem.

In taking the initiative for promoting durable peace in this volatile region, the international community should also evolve a common view of the problem and narrow the options to specific guidelines for serious negotiations between the two countries. The world has changed in the past few years, with both countries becoming nuclear powers in May 1998 and both now being partners in the international campaign against terrorism after the events of 11 September 2001.

In responding to such a peace initiative, India has to face the stark reality of the Kashmir problem, rather than insist that it is only a problem of cross-border terrorism. If Kashmir is really a part of India, as India claims, then it should allow observers from the Commonwealth or the European Union to monitor the forthcoming elections in the Kashmir Valley, and to verify the percentage of voters actually taking part in these elections. (In the past few elections, the percentage of Muslim voters in Kashmir Valley, despite rigging, never rose above 5 per cent.)

Even on the issue of cross-border terrorism, Pakistan has taken unprecedented steps since January 2002 to curb extremist and militant organizations within Pakistan, but Pakistan cannot restrain the activities of freedom fighters within Kashmir, who are fighting for their right of self-determination, promised to them by the United Nations in the 1950s. They can be persuaded only by serious negotiations to find a solution acceptable to the Kashmiri people.

Terrorism and extremism

The growth of extremism and Islamic fundamentalism in Afghanistan and their spillover into neighbouring Pakistan are a direct legacy of the proxy war between the United States and Russia, which started in 1979 with the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. The United States launched a major counter-operation in close cooperation with Pakistan to recruit, train and fund thousands of Islamic volunteers or ''mujahidin'' to fight and eventually defeat a superpower over the next 10 years. But the United States and its allies walked away from Afghanistan soon after the Russian forces were withdrawn, leaving Pakistan to deal with the grave consequences of the decade-long conflict: 3 million refugees, an unprecedented influx of guns and drugs, and a formidable network of madrasas and training camps – some in Pakistan, some in Afghanistan – training thousands of volunteers every year. In the absence of any large-scale assistance for the rehabilitation of Afghanistan and in the face of conflicting claims by various warlords, who had superseded the traditional tribal leadership, a prolonged civil war further ravaged Afghanistan throughout the 1990s. The resultant disorder and chaos provided a very good safe haven for Osama bin Laden and his network to establish themselves in Afghanistan.

The tragic events of 11 September 2001 have set into motion another chain of events in the region, whose final consequences are difficult to predict at this stage. A concerted international coalition against terrorism was launched within days, with a focus on Islamic countries. The faceless enemies who had destroyed the Twin Towers were given the face of

Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaida network, and the Taliban regime was bracketed with the enemy because it had given shelter to Osama bin Laden. That provided the justification for launching a ferocious war on Afghanistan in which thousands of innocent lives have been lost but without capturing Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar and without bringing peace and stability to Afghanistan. Pakistan joined the international campaign against terrorism soon after it was launched in September 2001, and, after reversing its policy of supporting the Taliban regime, offered its airfields and other logistical support for air attacks on Afghanistan. It also took unprecedented measures to clamp down on extremist and militant organizations within Pakistan by banning many of them and freezing their accounts and other facilities.

Apart from the Indo-Pakistan tensions over the Kashmir dispute, there are high-intensity conflicts within most countries of South Asia. These include the Tamil Tiger movement in Sri Lanka, the Maoist insurgency in Nepal, sectarian and ethnic tensions in Pakistan, the continuing insurgency in the north-east of India and recent communal riots in Gujarat. These conflicts, which illustrate the structural problems inherent in heterogeneous societies, are serious obstacles to the establishment of sustainable political systems and viable institutions of good governance. South Asia will not be able to achieve peace and stability unless the governments concerned can successfully overcome these obstacles.

The objective of curbing extremism in South Asia will be possible if there is peace and stability in Afghanistan. This, in turn, will require (i) extending the role of multinational forces from Kabul to at least four other cities: Herat, Mazar-e Sharif, Kandahar and Jalalabad; (ii) full support of the UN role in implementing the Bonn Agreement in letter and spirit and ensuring a truly broad-based Loya Jirga (traditional tribal Grand Council), leading to a more balanced transitional government; and (iii) converting the pledges of US$4.5 billion made in Tokyo in January 2002 for the reconstruction of Afghanistan into actual resource flows. The international coalition is spending US$1 billion a month on military operations in Afghanistan but cannot provide even US$50 million a month regularly to the interim administration so that it can pay the salaries of all its teachers, doctors and security personnel.

Another global faultline whose long shadows continue to fall on Pakistan is the unending and tragic saga in the Middle East. Al-Qaida and many other organizations that have been operating in Pakistan's neighbourhood trace their roots and desperate acts to the continuing occupation of Palestine and other Arab lands. Instead of the underlying causes being dealt with justly, these people and their sympathizers are now being pushed further to the wall. Encouraged by the unilateral decision to attack Afghanistan to counter terrorism, Israel launched a ferocious on-

slaught on the West Bank, killing countless innocent civilians. In fact, any country can now assume the right to act unilaterally against any other country, even on suspicion or allegation of terrorism, without presenting any evidence to the UN Security Council or the International Criminal Court. The United Nations must act to restore the sanctity of international law by prescribing a proper system to deal with such complaints and allegations, and it must also define terrorism to, *inter alia*, distinguish freedom fighters from terrorists.

Underlying the happenings in Afghanistan and the Middle East is a new and dangerous philosophy, which has been called "liberal imperialism". This is the doctrine of a new world order in which the powerful "postmodern states" no longer give paramount importance to the concept of a nation-state, exercising sovereignty within a well-defined geographical jurisdiction. In the name of human rights, curbing terrorism or global economic interests (such as safeguarding the flow of oil), the "postmodern" world can use "force, pre-emptive attack or even deception" to violate the international boundaries of pre-modern or modern states with impunity (Cooper, 2000: 37). The United Nations must assert its collective authority to curb this "liberal imperialism" before it is too late.

Realizing the development potential

South Asia, despite its enormous human and physical resources, has become the most deprived region of the world. Its per capita income (US$460, or US$2,260 in terms of purchasing power parity) is lower than that in any other region; its adult literacy rate of 47 per cent is also the lowest in the world; it is the most malnourished region of the world, with half its children being under-weight, compared with 30 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is the least gender-sensitive region and it has the highest human deprivation, in terms of access to health facilities, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities and opportunities for work and leisure. At the same time, South Asia is the most militarized region in the developing world, with the highest percentage of GDP going to military expenditures.

Is there a greater challenge facing the leaders of South Asia to change these priorities and grasp the opportunities for economic and social progress that the twenty-first century offers?

There are many positive elements in South Asia today, such as the progress in information technology, self-sufficiency in food, much greater emphasis on the development of human resources and a wide-ranging consensus on strategies to reduce poverty. However, the obstacles to

realizing the full development potential of South Asia are formidable. There are many internal obstacles, such as recurrent political instability, internal insurgencies and poor governance, but the international obstacles seem even more daunting.

Each country must assume primary responsibility for improving the living standards of its people. But in this task it needs, as a minimum, a level playing field and a fair share of global public goods. That unfortunately has not been forthcoming. The global economic system has always been more favourable for the rich and powerful countries, and the system of globalization that has been evolving for the past two decades has added to the chronic difficulties. This should be clear from the following examples of distortions and inequities:

• The global trading system works against the longer-term interest of low-income countries and poor people and does not provide a level playing field or a truly competitive environment. The World Trade Organization's policy of liberalizing trade concentrates on high-tech products largely of interest to developed countries, a few middle-income developing countries and multinational companies. Simple manufactures such as textiles and leather goods, which are of greater interest to low-income developing countries, are still subject to quotas and protectionist policies. Movement of labour, which is an important factor in the production cycle, is also seriously restricted.

• The developed countries provide subsidies totalling US$350 billion a year to their agriculture sectors, which is almost six times the total Official Development Assistance provided to developing countries. The developing countries, which primarily depend on agricultural exports, cannot compete in international markets with these subsidized agricultural exports from the developed countries. This has not only reduced the share of developing countries in global agricultural trade but also weakened their incentive system for increasing domestic production.

• The world monetary system creates excess liquidity every year by transferring purchasing power to the richest country in the world because the US dollar has been the main reserve currency. All attempts to establish a global system of liquidity creation by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), for example, which could distribute the resultant resources more equitably, have been turned down. Now, belatedly, the European Union is trying to secure a share in this liquidity through the use of the euro as a reserve currency, but it is facing serious difficulties.

• The flow of Official Development Assistance, which was partly a compensation for the inequities of the global system, instead of moving towards the internationally accepted target of 0.7 per cent of GDP, declined from US$87 billion to US$61 billion in the 1990s. The latest report from the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-

DAC, 2002) shows the figure fell further to US$51 billion in 2001. This was only 0.22 per cent of OECD countries' GDP (the United States provided only 0.11 percent). At the UN Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002, the United States and the European Union pledged to increase development assistance significantly in the next few years. But the projected increase is linked to many vague conditionalities such as "good governance", which may not be easy for many low-income countries to meet.

- The globalization package being offered to developing countries by the international financial institutions is not confined to liberalizing the economy but involves a new development philosophy that greatly restricts the role of the state in economic and social activity and imposes a standard "one size fits all" adjustment policy devised by the IMF/World Bank. The main emphasis of this policy is to achieve macroeconomic stability by reducing government spending, raising utility charges and eliminating all subsidies. In the process, the growth rate slows down, unemployment goes up, poverty increases and poor farmers become more vulnerable in a volatile and highly subsidized market. Even in terms of economic objectives, openness alone is not enough to attract investment. There are many other factors, including non-economic factors, some of which are outside the control of the country concerned.

The United Nations has a major responsibility to draw attention to these severe inequities of the globalization process and to regain the leadership role it abandoned in the early 1980s to the World Bank/IMF in providing a level playing field and in creating a more favourable global environment for developing countries. As explained in the next section, major rethinking is required if the millennium goals, particularly that of halving poverty by 2015, are to be achieved.

Reducing poverty in South Asia

A report by the Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre (2001) in Islamabad has presented some revealing but grim findings on the impact of globalization on the poor people of South Asia:

- Half a billion people in South Asia, or 40 per cent of its population, have experienced a decline in their income, despite a 5.4 per cent increase in the South Asian GDP during the 1990s.
- Under the influence of stabilization policies imposed by the World Bank/IMF demanding the elimination of subsidies and price support measures, and the resultant squeeze on the fiscal space, the provision of social safety nets has been weakened in the region.

- Globalization has not been accompanied by a reduction in poverty or improvement in human development since most South Asian countries have failed to maintain a balance between economic and social development policies. For most South Asians, the outcome of the globalization process has been higher prices, fewer employment opportunities, increased disparities in income and a higher incidence of poverty.
- South Asia suffers from an additional disadvantage in the globalization process because of the worldwide movement towards regional trading blocs. In South Asia, however, SAARC is facing serious political obstacles, and intraregional trade therefore remains low in comparison with such trade in other regional groups.

These conclusions, in the context of South Asia, fully support the strong consensus at the global level about the negative aspects of globalization and the recognition that the globalization process cannot deal effectively with the problems of poverty and the insecurities that arise from poverty.

It should not be difficult to comprehend why economic liberalization would not automatically benefit the poor. The concept of globalization is based on the principles of competition and, by definition, poor people and poor countries are on the lowest rung of the competitive ladder. The inherent inadequacies of an unregulated market system and the need to protect the poor are fully understood in the more advanced societies. That is why they have created laws and institutions against monopolies and malpractices to protect the consumer and small businesses; they have also developed elaborate systems of taxation, social security and welfare programmes to meet the basic needs of the poor in their societies. Unfortunately, at the global level they refuse to recognize the impact of globalization on poor countries and poor people and do not agree to similar taxation and social security policies at the global level.

The greatest threat to security today is poverty, but very few recognize the complex causes of chronic poverty and the policies and changes needed to address them. A determined attack on poverty will require a new development paradigm that recognizes the role of the state in protecting the rights of the weaker and poorer segments of the population and in meeting their basic needs. In articulating this new paradigm, we have to recognize:

- that balanced social development is a basic and essential prerequisite for sustainable development and that social problems are not simply the "inevitable costs" of structural adjustment;
- that sustainable development does not mean "development with environment" but involves a pattern of development that is meaningful for a large majority of the population;
- that social development cannot be financed merely from the residual financial resources spared by the adjustment process and that the poli-

cies that restrict demand and thereby increase poverty and unemployment must be modified by providing either a longer time-frame or additional external resources on soft terms; and

• that market-oriented economic policies are necessary for economic growth, attracting investment and improving competitiveness in international markets, but the pace of liberalization should not be faster than a country's institutional structure can cope with. Before large-scale liberalization is undertaken, effective regulatory mechanisms to deal with the growing volatility of the capital and foreign exchange markets need to be created.

A meeting of the SAARC countries' finance and planning ministers in Pakistan in April 2002 adopted a comprehensive Action Plan for poverty alleviation. The plan covers the internal policies and external support considered necessary for achieving balanced and sustainable development. The external agenda of the Action Plan may be more difficult to realize than the internal policies. The World Bank president, James Wolfensohn, during his visit to Pakistan in mid-May 2002, said, "The India–Pakistan conflict was the single most important hurdle in the way of poverty alleviation in the region" (*Dawn*, 19 May 2002).

In recent years, there have been seven high-profile UN conferences at the level of heads of state and government – on Children (1991), Environment (1992), Population (1994), Social Development (1995), Women (1995) and Food (1996), culminating in the Millennium Summit held in New York in September 2000. But very limited progress has been made in moving towards the goals adopted by these summits. The United Nations must evolve an effective institutional mechanism that can regularly monitor such progress and bring the results, including the causes of inaction, to the notice of the heads of state who actually attended these summits and made those commitments.

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Part II
Security

4

Nuclear weapons and nuclear war in South Asia: Unknowable futures

Stephen P. Cohen

Niccolò Machiavelli, Kautilya's Western counterpart, noted that luck or fortune played a greater role in the course of politics than any other factor. The great military theorist Clausewitz wrote about the ''fog of war'' – the uncertainties that envelop the participants in armed combat. We should draw our inspiration from these maxims, not an excessive faith in the power of reason and calculation to advance a nation's interests while avoiding catastrophe.

The future use of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan is impossible to predict with any confidence. The most that can be done is to set out a range of futures and develop policy recommendations for each, but it would be foolish to assume that a straight-line projection of the present will yield an accurate understanding of the future.[1] This conclusion has several important policy implications. The first is that policies made now on the basis of a firm vision of the future are as likely to be proven irrelevant or misguided as to be correct. The second is that the wide range of possible futures, and the uncertainty as to which will materialize, should lead to a degree of humility among analysts and policy makers. Low-risk and low-cost (if things should go wrong) policies should be favoured.

This scepticism comes from past efforts to predict the future. The nuclearization of South Asia had been predicted for decades, yet, when it came, it was a surprise. Then it was widely assumed that, being nuclear weapons states, India and Pakistan could no longer go to war. Indeed, some argued that the possession of nuclear weapons by both states would

eventually lead to a reconciliation of their outstanding differences. These expectations were wrong: the two countries did become embroiled in a minor war in 1999, and, despite their declared nuclear status, again went to the brink of war during the last month of 2001 and the first half of 2002; this crisis featured a full military mobilization and frequent nuclear threats. Finally, the expert community was surprised, although not shocked, by the revelation that the United States had persuasive evidence that Pakistan had moved its nuclear arsenal during the Kargil crisis in mid-1999 – it is possible that Pakistan's prime minister was also surprised when he was told this by President Clinton (see Riedel, 2002).

South Asia's nuclear ''pair'' is unlike the Cold War nuclear stand-off, or any other nuclear ''set''. Neither the European case, nor that of Israel, nor that of China provides many clues to the future direction that Delhi and Islamabad will take or how their nuclear programmes will contribute to peace and war in South Asia. Nor is the India–China nuclear equation fully understood.

This chapter presents a ''baseline'' projection of the current strategic status of the region and examines variations on the model. In these projections, the likely (and unlikely but important) alternative futures are surveyed. A final section offers policy implications.

The "expected" future

Many observers of the South Asian nuclear scene might agree on the following:
- There will no breakthrough in India–Pakistan relations, but war is unlikely. The future will see frequent crises, but deterrence based on nuclear weapons will inhibit escalation to nuclear war.
- The India–China relationship will remain stable. China will continue to ''balance'' India by providing strategic support to Pakistan.
- The global balance of power and the strategic relationships among the major players – Russia, China and the United States – will not change radically, and there will be no systemic impact on regional nuclear dynamics.
- Although the United States will retain an interest in cultivating long-term relationships with India and Pakistan, it will not intervene directly in the region, except during crises, when Washington will play the role of crisis manager.
- All of the region's nuclear players – India, China and Pakistan – will remain internally stable. There will be no sudden disequilibrium caused by a major change in the internal politics of any one of them so as to impact on regional strategic relationships.

- India and Pakistan will gradually increase the number of nuclear weapons they possess, and limited deployment of these weapons may occur. India and Pakistan may move to deploy mobile launchers. In 20 years, it is conceivable that India will have developed a sea-based deterrent, perhaps mounted on a surface vessel. China will have a relatively more robust arsenal, but it will not be seen as threatening by India.
- India's and Pakistan's command and control arrangements will be somewhat better than they are now, presumably keeping up with the slow accretion of numbers and increased dispersion of their nuclear forces.
- There will be little likelihood of a pre-emptive attack by India against Pakistan or against India by Pakistan or China, in part because the numbers will make such an attack difficult, and in part because of mobile basing. In the India–Pakistan case, both sides will be worried about miscalculations, and, as the numbers increase, the possibility of significant fallout on one's own country from even a successful attack will increase, thus enhancing self-deterrence.
- There will be continued uncertainty and ambiguity over different escalation scenarios. It will remain unclear to outside analysts where Pakistani (or Indian) "red lines" are drawn, i.e. where a provocation crosses a certain threshold that triggers a nuclear response. Indeed, it is likely to remain unclear to Indian and Pakistani policy makers themselves, and both sides will continue to rely on ambiguity, coupled with verbal threats, to enhance deterrence.

In brief, the future could look pretty much as it does today. In contrast with relatively stable India–China relations, India–Pakistan relations will regularly enter a crisis state. But the two countries are likely to move back again to longstanding "cold war" positions through their own common sense or the intervention of friendly outsiders. There remains a small possibility that they will not move back and that a crisis will "go all the way". At the time of writing (early 2002), India and Pakistan are in the midst of their most extended crisis, with well over 1 million men facing each other along the international frontier and the Line of Control in Kashmir. This crisis, and likely future ones, will always have nuclear overtones, which is why concern will remain about the South Asian nuclear balance. Quantifying the risk of actual war is important, but beyond the scope of this chapter. It may be analogous to the risk of a nuclear exchange during the Cold War or, perhaps, of a North Korean nuclear weapon falling on Seoul. Even if one could measure the risk at a particular moment in time, is it likely to increase over the years as the Indian and Pakistani arsenals grow steadily? Or is the likelihood of a large-scale exchange of nuclear weapons balanced by an improvement in the quality

of command and control structures and, above all, by the enhanced deterrent effect of an increase in destructiveness that such larger numbers would bring?

Three variations on the theme

Although it is tempting to assume that this baseline projection is accurate, if for no other reason than the lack of expectation that things will dramatically change, sharp divergence may occur. Some attempts have been made in the past to present alternative nuclear futures for the region. Most prominent among these is Ashley Tellis's set of five models, ranging from nuclear renunciation to the establishment of a ''ready'' arsenal (Tellis, 2001: 117–249). The models presented here go beyond Tellis's operational focus and are based on a wider set of criteria.

The models reflect likely futures in terms of four criteria: conceptions of deterrence, the size and sophistication of the arsenal, the relationship between levels of armed conflict, and the status of arms control. The *static model* envisions a period of modest growth up to or before 2020 until operational capabilities are sufficient to convince political decision makers that no more expansion is necessary. The model envisages a steady state in which deterrence is existential – the mere existence of undeployed weapons is considered by both sides to be sufficient to deter; the arsenal remains relatively small and a sea-based subsurface capability is eschewed; only marginal sub-conventional conflict is considered feasible (and perhaps even that is rejected); and a stable framework of arms control is in place.

In the *creeping growth model*, minimum deterrence is conceived of in larger numbers on the basis of some notion of redundancy against the event of a first strike; at least partial deployment is perhaps seen as necessary because ''credibility'' is equated with visibility; a limited conventional war is thought possible under the nuclear shadow; and there is little or no significant development in arms control, though there may be an underlying stability based on tacit understandings. Neither of these models is far removed from the current trend, but the trajectories they represent diverge significantly over time.

Finally, the *robust expansion model* represents a shift to thinking oriented to mutual assured destruction (MAD) and a more ambitious conception of limited deterrence – a smaller arsenal cast in the image of the American and Russian ones – accompanied by an open-ended acquisition and development process and a perception that a full-scale conventional war and a limited nuclear war are possible. In this model, there is limited interest in arms control because of doubts arising with respect to unilat-

eral verification. The three models can be placed along a continuum from non-offensive defence to offensive defence.

Potential changes resulting from shifts in major variables

The baseline projection embodies a number of variables. If these changed, the trajectory of the projection could change as well. Of the 10 variables, the first 5 are political, the next 4 military and the last a combination of both.

The India–Pakistan relationship

The period from 1947 to 1971 was an era of war between India and Pakistan. Following a relatively mild interregnum, the period since the mid-1980s has been one of repeated crises and constant border skirmishes, with tensions aggravated by the nuclearization of both countries. Recent developments have been less than encouraging. The matching nuclear tests of 1998 were followed by the short-lived bonhomie represented by the Lahore Declaration of 1999. However, the atmosphere was quickly vitiated by the Kargil conflict. The US campaign in Afghanistan, ironically, has for the first time in their troubled history placed the two countries on the same side, but the tension has actually *risen* instead of subsiding, as each seeks to use its closer relationship to the United States to force Washington to pressure the other. Could things get worse?

The terrorist attacks on the Jammu and Kashmir legislative assembly in October 2001 and on the Indian parliament in December 2001 are indicators of the potential for further deterioration in the relationship. It is conceivable that the secessionist problem in India may not only persist over time but become worse, in which case domestic pressures of the kind visible at the present juncture may impel the Indian government to retaliate by means of the use of some form of force, such as quick strikes against terrorist bases in Pakistan, or a tit-for-tat game of fomenting trouble in the Pushtun community that straddles the Pakistan–Afghan border. The result could be the ratcheting-up of tensions and the beginnings of a nuclear arms race as hardliners on each side gather support and press for stronger forces to counter the visible threat from the other side.

On the other hand, it may equally happen that, learning from the risks their confrontations expose them to, Indian and Pakistani leaders bridge the gulf that prevented a *détente* at the Agra Summit in July 2001. A really serious nuclear crisis, which is not inconceivable, would compel the two countries to seek a more stable relationship. One characteristic of India–Pakistan relations has been an increase in the number of crises and

sub-war conflicts; another has been the series of high-level summits that have taken place, and the general acknowledgement, even by Indian and Pakistani leaders, that South Asia needs – and may actually have – a ''peace process''. In brief, although there have been repeated crises, and both countries seem to be driven by a fear of losing that is even greater than the desire to win, there is also a powerful understanding that the present hostility over Kashmir is dangerous and damaging to their respective national interests.

The possibility of a general settlement on Kashmir cannot be ruled out, even if it is only an agreement to disagree. How would this affect the development of each country's nuclear programme? All things being equal, it is doubtful whether a settlement on Kashmir would lead to a reduction in weapons or anything but a slower pace in the development of new designs and delivery vehicles. However, a general peace might reduce the pressure to resume testing and to perfect new kinds of weapons, especially if international pressure against testing were to continue. Without new designs, and with the prospect of a lessening of general tensions between India and Pakistan, both countries might be content to freeze their systems qualitatively and quantitatively.

The India–China relationship

The India–China relationship is not entirely predictable in the long term. For a pessimist, there is plenty of reason to expect a deterioration in the relationship. The border dispute lingers, and is complicated by China's refusal to recognize India's sovereignty over its north-eastern state of Arunachal Pradesh and by the fact that Pakistan has allowed a part of Kashmir, where the Karakoram highway has been constructed, to come under Chinese control. China's propensity to use force in resolving a number of its international disputes (for instance, with Viet Nam and Taiwan and over the Spratly Islands) might still come into play. Both China and India have the potential to come under the control of more aggressive regimes in the event of domestic turbulence. Specific events could also aggravate the tension between them. If Tibet were to be inflamed by a burst of secessionism, a rightist Indian regime, irked by the sustained China–Pakistan nuclear missile nexus, might be tempted to exploit the situation to enhance its bargaining power, thus provoking an angry Chinese response. An India–China confrontation would likely have a nuclear dimension, with India – under a more direct threat – motivated to seek a higher level of deterrent capability than the baseline projection envisages. That in turn would, of course, invite a like response from Pakistan, though not necessarily so if the Indian nuclear upgrade is confined to the judicious deployment of intermediate-range missiles.[2]

Alternatively, an unstable successor regime in China might be tempted to consolidate its position by adopting an aggressive stance toward an insurgency-ridden north-eastern India or by assuming a hawkish posture in an India–Pakistan crisis, thereby precipitating the same result.

From an optimist's perspective, the long-term trend in Sino-Indian relations is distinctly positive and unlikely to be reversed. It may even be reinforced. The two countries have over the years agreed not to allow their border dispute to prevent steadily growing cooperation on trade and a broad consensus on the desirability of a multipolar world. The possibility of a loose understanding among India, China and Russia cannot be ruled out, particularly if the United States continues to exhibit its current proclivity toward unilateral decision-making on key international questions. In such a setting, China might prefer to assuage India's anxieties by gradually reducing its support for Pakistan, pushing for a quick resolution of the border dispute and – reversing its current stand on India's nuclearization – launching arms control talks. At the minimum, the rising graph of India–China cooperation would be sustained, perhaps placed on a steeper incline. Nuclear hawks would have one less argument for a more robust posture.

The global strategic environment

The post–Cold War global environment has been in flux, with conflict and cooperation coexisting. Different scenarios are conceivable that could have a significant impact on India's (and Pakistan's) nuclear posture. On the positive side, an accelerated integrative process of globalization has brought more and more nations into a seamless web of information flows, investment, production and trade. The winding down of the Cold War has simultaneously reduced great power tensions and the threat of a global nuclear holocaust. On the other hand, the threat of terrorism has had a dramatic impact on global security following the events of 11 September 2001. Inter-state rivalry has diminished. As Russia seeks a stronger European identity, its relations with the United States and Europe are showing signs of improvement in spite of its dissatisfaction with the American abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the US determination to proceed with its missile defence programme. But there is a greater element of uncertainty with regard to China's response over the long term.

One negative scenario for India involves growing rivalry and tension between the United States and China. Chinese leaders have shown a willingness to extend limited cooperation to the West on specific issues such as the hunt for Osama bin Laden and the campaign against the Taliban. But China's overall objective is to become one of the world's

independent power centres, to which end it is engaged in a major pro-
gramme of military modernization. There are important divergences of
strategic interest between China and the United States over Taiwan and
over the US missile defence programmes. There are also significant dif-
ferences over China's treatment of political dissenters. Specific events,
such as the Tiananmen Square incident, the bombing of the Chinese em-
bassy in Belgrade and the shooting down of an American surveillance
aircraft over Chinese territory in 2001, have created a lack of trust be-
tween these two states. To many Americans it appears that China sees
itself as the successor to the Soviet Union, as the new challenger to
American hegemony. Some have also argued that China's strategic cul-
ture embodies a tendency to use force in its approach to difficult external
disputes and that a future cold war cannot be ruled out (Johnston, 1995).
In that case, the United States might decide to resume nuclear testing
and pursue the fast-track development of missile defence, possibly pro-
viding Taiwan with a theatre missile defence umbrella. A crisis over Tai-
wan might occur. In such a deteriorating situation, China might expand
its arsenal rapidly and assume a more aggressive posture.

China's direct response – deploying more intercontinental ballistic
missiles, many or all with multiple warheads – might not directly threaten
India, but the overall threat environment would encourage India to move
toward a more robust posture, particularly if India–China relations are
vitiated by continuing Chinese nuclear and missile assistance to Pakistan.
A Chinese perception that India is part of a US strategy to contain China
would raise Sino-Indian tensions several notches. A more aggressive and
unstable nuclear relationship might emerge as a result. A strong Indian
nuclear response to changes in its relationship with China would inevit-
ably raise the strategic temperature between India and Pakistan.

On the other hand, a cooperative global trend might also emerge. The
present American tendency toward unilateralism might diminish over
time as the United States adopts a multilateralist strategy, perhaps in a
continuing effort to counter new terrorist threats or in the event of the
destabilization of the present Saudi regime. Growing costs and technical
difficulties could well cause a moderation of the US missile defence pro-
gramme. The United States, Russia and China might draw closer to-
gether and pay more attention to economic issues while cooperating on
common threats such as terrorism and communitarian radicalism. A re-
newed interest in arms control could bring a new agreement on cuts, the
beginnings of a multilateral framework on arms control and a new era of
strategic stability. In that case, India's own strategic environment would
become generally more stable, even if regional conditions are not en-
tirely congenial. In general, the existence or otherwise of global strategic

equilibrium is likely to have a significant effect on regional strategic developments.

An American role?

The United States has changed its South Asia policy a number of times over the past 50 years, siding weakly with India or Pakistan against the Soviet Union and/or China. This pattern could continue, but there are more radical possibilities. Washington could decide to side with India against Pakistan, providing technical and military assistance to the former, and even nuclear assistance should the international non-proliferation regime break down. If Pakistan is viewed as a failing state, and if it is seen as a part of the problem rather than as part of the solution so far as terrorism is concerned, the United States might think it is time to side entirely with India on the Kashmir problem and undertake a containment strategy against an increasingly unstable and radical Pakistan. This would lead American strategists to the contemplation of different strategies for containing or transforming Pakistan, and would also lead to Indian–American discussions about still another alternative: the breakup of Pakistan into its constituent provinces.

Should India and the United States draw close together, Pakistan would be under great pressure to adopt a more conciliatory posture toward India and negotiate a stable arms control regime with it. It is also possible that Pakistan would continue to maintain a hostile stance by drawing closer to China, though the probability is not great because of the difficulty Pakistan would have in resisting US pressure.

What about the converse? Less likely, but conceivable, would be a return to a pro-Pakistan policy by the United States, especially if India were to decline the role of balancer against China. It seems improbable now, but one could imagine India undergoing enormous political change as a result of its many and simultaneous economic, cultural, political and ideological revolutions. This could conceivably be an India with a very large nuclear potential. Such changes might even alienate the large and increasingly influential Indian-American community, which has hitherto been a "lobby" for closer US–Indian relations.

If India were to transform its identity and become more politically unstable at home and more aggressive abroad, it might well undertake an extensive nuclear testing programme and seek a close strategic relationship with other major powers, especially Russia, whose technology would be valuable. In such circumstances, the United States might view India as the state that needed containing, especially if China were to cease being a strategic threat in the minds of American strategists. India's likely re-

sponse would be a radical strategic shift to something like the robust expansion model.

There are other possibilities, but American policy should not be regarded as immutable. Projections of nuclear technology and capabilities are constrained by physical and technical factors, but even these could be altered quickly were a major power to decide that it would assist India or Pakistan to enhance its nuclear arsenal and related delivery systems.

Political stability in India, China and Pakistan

India, China and Pakistan have each undergone periods of profound political instability in the past. India underwent an ''emergency'' in the 1970s that turned it into a virtual dictatorship; China experienced a prolonged internal upheaval in the form of the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s and 1970s; Pakistan has oscillated between military rule (sometimes with martial law) and weak civilian governments for its entire history. Further, Pakistan was physically divided in 1971, and all three states face several separatist threats, sometimes encouraged by each other.

As a variable, political instability affects their nuclear futures in two ways. First, there is the question of control over nuclear weapons: a state riven by political conflict may have problems in storing and safeguarding (let alone using) its nuclear weapons and fissile material stocks. Second, there is the question of perception: does political instability in one state raise the prospect in the minds of the leadership of its adversary that a moment of great opportunity or danger is approaching?

Although in the short run it seems improbable that instability in India could be of a magnitude that would affect the nuclear balance, it is not unimaginable. It would be especially likely in the aftermath of armed conflict or serious economic crisis. India is meta-stable, but a chronically weak centre, or disorder in states where there were significant nuclear assets, might raise questions concerning India's ability to protect its nuclear assets and its vulnerability to nuclear blackmail.

A similar argument may be made with respect to China. China has had its share of upheavals in the past. Although there is currently no expectation of renewed internal turmoil, it is important to remember that closed authoritarian societies are subject to deep crisis in moments of sudden change. The breakup of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia and the turmoil that has ravaged many members of the former communist bloc are examples of what could happen to China. A severe economic crisis, rebellions in Tibet and Xinjiang, a reborn democracy movement and a party torn by factions could be the ingredients of an unstable situation. A vulnerable Chinese leadership determined to bolster its shaky position by an aggressive policy toward India or the United States, or both, might

become involved in a major crisis with India, perhaps engaging in nuclear sabre-rattling. That would encourage India to adopt a stronger nuclear posture, possibly with American assistance.

At the moment, Pakistan seems to present the most immediate problem. Its non-Punjabi provinces are deeply resentful, its economy is teetering on the edge of collapse, it has undergone a traumatic reversal of policy in Afghanistan, and its political parties seem to be stuck in their personalistic rut. No credible civilian leadership is emerging among the younger generation of politicians, and the two civilian leaders of the 1990s – Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif – are distrusted by the military.

One political development must be singled out as critically important. This is the coherence of the Pakistan army. For decades, the unwritten ''golden rule'' of the officer corps has been that the army sticks together against the political order. This rule kicked in when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto tried to assert control over the military, and more recently in 1999 when Nawaz Sharif tried to insert his own man as army chief.

This pattern of army unity could be undone in one of two ways. First, the Pakistan army might suffer a military set-back that created a division within the higher ranks of the officer corps. Second, a politician might be successful in splitting the officer corps, perhaps along ideological rather than linguistic/ethnic lines. In either case, if the army lost its political coherence, there might be immediate consequences for Pakistan's nuclear programme and, in turn, for Indian calculations of risk and gain.

A politically divided Pakistani army might come under a military commander who is a demagogue or dictator. Wracked by domestic turbulence, Pakistan might worry less about the future of Kashmir than about the future of the Punjab heartland. It would be obsessed with access to the sea and control over Karachi and Sind, and would treasure its nuclear weapons as the ''last resort'' against an Indian intervention designed to create more secessionist states like Bangladesh. Pakistani officers have invoked the Masada scenario, but would such a regime take this step? Would it be able to prevent some officers from acting without orders and using nuclear weapons against Indian cities in such a crisis? Here, the standard of command and control that might be sufficient for a whole, united Pakistan might not be adequate to prevent unauthorized use.

For all the negative possibilities outlined above, actual developments may quite possibly be far more positive and reassuring. All three countries may experience relatively stable development, including the growth of greater democracy. At the very least, more stable orders are conducive to less external tension. Translated into the realm of strategy, this could mean an overall picture of restraint, the absence of major crises and the adoption of more dove-like nuclear postures.

Numbers and types of nuclear weapons

Numbers do count, as do the kinds of weapons in the possession of nuclear weapons states. Given the fissile material production capabilities of each state, it is possible to predict the numbers of bombs in their arsenals five or seven years ahead, but this could change dramatically if new production facilities were created or India were to start ''mining'' its spent fuel stocks. Further, the (presumably) first-generation designs tested by both countries could be perfected over the years, although this might require additional testing or assistance from states with more advanced nuclear programmes. The expansion of China's nuclear capability in itself is unlikely to affect the subcontinent. The Chinese modernization programme has not elicited anxieties in India. But, in conjunction with other factors, such as the deterioration in bilateral relations outlined above, an enhanced and more alert Chinese posture could result in a chain reaction from India and Pakistan.

Numbers and types matter in several ways.

(a) Larger numbers create command and control problems if more weapons are deployed. There are still greater problems if they are suddenly deployed during a crisis.

(b) The greater the number and the larger their size, the more potential there is for massive civilian damage. At the higher levels expected over the next 20 years, a nuclear war would lead to the virtual destruction of Pakistan as a state and the permanent crippling of India.

(c) At higher numbers and larger yields, with adequate delivery systems, either the Indian or the Pakistani systems or both could intersect strongly with nearby emerging nuclear sets. Paul Bracken (1999) has described the process by which a number of regional nuclear systems could be intertwined in a larger interactive nuclear web stretching from Israel to North Korea, and including China. At still further ranges, the United States and Europe might be included in Indian or Pakistani nuclear targeting doctrines. At the very least, the nuclear politics of the two countries would have a new and complicating dimension.

The quality of command and control in peacetime and crisis

A distinction can be drawn between command and control in crisis and non-crisis periods. A system that is reliable in ordinary circumstances may not be so during a crisis, and a weak command and control system may generate the fear that a state is planning a first-strike attack. Further, the quality of command and control must also be considered in terms of changing technologies and strategies: a system that is adequate

for 5 or 50 first-generation weapons may be inadequate for 100 advanced mobile systems that are widely dispersed.

In times of peace, the nature of deployment has diverse implications for command and control. For instance, if bomb cores are separated from their casings and other components, the risk of sabotage is higher, whereas integrated weapon systems are relatively more vulnerable to unauthorized launch, thus putting command and control systems under pressure. In times of crisis, there would be a natural inclination to disperse weapons as widely as possible, which would mean delegating launch authority or accepting greater vulnerability to a first strike, each of which is associated with a higher level of risk. The conjunction of policy makers' decisions, operational decisions and the actions of adversaries makes for a range of possible outcomes – from the stable to the catastrophic – that are impossible to predict.

This is a subject that has received a considerable amount of attention, and the possibility has been raised of assisting either the Indian or the Pakistani government to improve its command and control systems. As many observers have noted, a distinction has to be made between assistance that increases the reliability and stability of a nuclear force and the ability of the government to maintain control over its use, and assistance that enhances its strategic choices.

Strategic warning time and robustness of deterrence

Strategic warning time refers to the length of time a country has to prepare its forces for a response to an attack or to ready them for a first strike, once that decision has been made. Strategic warning time can range from seconds, in the case of highly alerted, deployed and rapid response forces hooked up to a sophisticated detection system, to days, in the case of weapons that are disassembled and dispersed. If we combine this with deterrence robustness – the assurance that a response to a first strike will be effective, in that the right number of the right kind of weapons will be delivered to the right targets (and the other side knows this to be true) – then essentially four different "states" are created: a very stable situation, in which a long strategic warning time is combined with a robust nuclear force (deterrence is credible but not provocative); a very unstable situation, in which a short strategic warning time is combined with a less than credible deterrent force; and two intermediate states – one in which deterrence is robust but strategic warning time is short (and thus very sensitive to the shift from non-crisis to crisis); and one in which deterrence is less credible but strategic warning time is very long (and also sensitive to the movement from non-crisis to crisis). Of course, in all four cases, plus those that cluster in the centre of the axes,

perceptions count, and hence some degree of transparency may be necessary to convey the robustness of deterrence and/or the ability to respond at leisure, as opposed to a hair-trigger response. Again, these diverse possibilities allow for a range of outcomes, particularly in crisis situations, and it is impossible to predict the decisions that will lead to one rather than another.

Theories of deterrence and the intersection of conventional and nuclear conflict

There are areas of convergence as well as divergence in Indian and Pakistani thinking on deterrence. India and Pakistan have in common a conception of deterrence that involves relatively small arsenals, a pre-deployed posture and a positive orientation toward arms control. However, they also differ on significant issues. One is the feasibility of covert military action under the shadow of nuclear weapons, which creates a "stability–instability paradox" (Krepon and Gagné, 2001). The Kargil conflict was one manifestation of this, jacking up tensions sharply between the two countries and raising the prospect of uncontrollable escalation into nuclear war. Pakistan's overall experience of the Kargil conflict was not an encouraging one. It did not place India under sufficient pressure to compromise at the negotiating table in Agra. On the other hand, Pakistan was branded an irresponsible nuclear power by world opinion and compelled by US pressure to call the venture off, which in turn brought domestic ignominy. However, Pakistan may have been a victim of its own initial success: a less glaring intrusion would have brought a smaller conflict, keeping the Kashmir issue alive without raising immediate fears of a nuclear dénouement. In the future, a Pakistani decision maker may be tempted to use the interventionist strategy from time to time to keep the Kashmir issue on the table – a strategy that will mean constant tension, periodic crises and the possibility of a nuclear confrontation.

The idea of a limited nuclear war is embedded in Pakistani nuclear thinking but it is rejected by most Indian strategists. However, the Indian position could change, and the statement by General S. Padmanaban (the Chief of Staff of the Indian army) that any nuclear use by Pakistan would justify a massive Indian response seems to have subtly changed Indian doctrine. The issue is not closed, particularly in view of the fact that some of the 1998 tests were evidently for low-yield counter-force weapons. A critical factor in nuclear decision-making in both states, but especially in Pakistan, is the relationship between the conventional military balance (or imbalance) and the nuclear balance. If sub-kiloton nuclear munitions were to be developed by India or Pakistan, they might be usable tacti-

cally in the plains, and even in mountainous terrain, where they could substitute for conventional forces. If nothing else, their presence would make it difficult for one side or the other to bunch up armour or amass large numbers of troops. Despite the obvious importance of this linkage, there is no adequate study of the connection between the conventional and nuclear dimensions. At present, it is not clear in which direction the conventional–nuclear linkage will lead the India–Pakistan relationship over time. There seems to be less likelihood, though, of a similar problem with respect to the India–China relationship.

A third possibility is that, as both India and Pakistan operationalize their respective arsenals, a technical imperative will come into play backed by those who will ultimately operate nuclear weapons – the armed forces – toward a more expansionary, perhaps even MAD-oriented, posture than is evident now. It is interesting that, in both countries, the understanding of "credible" deterrence tends to reflect some amount of MAD thinking about the adequacy of second-strike capacity.

None of the above is inevitable. On the contrary, it may be that the stability–instability paradox is put to rest by an appreciation of its counter-productiveness, or because the Pakistan leadership decides that all terrorism is a threat, or because there is movement towards compromise between the subcontinental rivals. The difference between the two countries on limited war may not in practice be more than conceptual. Finally, the political awareness of the risks and economic costs of an ever-expanding nuclear inventory may induce greater restraint.

Surprise events: A nuclear incident?

The attacks of 11 September 2001 show how a single incident can transform the behaviour and perceptions of many states. A nuclear incident in South Asia might have a comparable impact on Indian and Pakistani behaviour, and could influence the world's perceptions of both the region and the dangers of nuclear weapons. A nuclear incident *elsewhere* in the world might cause India and Pakistan to rethink their nuclear plans.

A nuclear incident is an event short of a nuclear war in which a device is accidentally or deliberately detonated or fissile material is used in such a way that it creates a radiation hazard for a large population. A nuclear *threat* is not an incident – these have been coming fast and furious from both sides for several years. However, a threat backed up by actions that indicated a high probability of use, that was publicized and that was taken seriously by decision makers on both sides would almost certainly have a significant impact on the future course of India–Pakistan nuclear planning. Such an event would be a South Asian equivalent of the Cuban missile crisis. It would also affect attitudes towards nuclear

weapons elsewhere in the world. There is also the possibility that a significant nuclear event would be asymmetrically perceived, with one side viewing it as a crisis and the other ignoring the gravity of the event. India–Pakistan relations are replete with such asymmetric crises, notably the 1962 India–China war – dismissed by Pakistan's leaders as an unimportant event caused by a provocative India – or the impact of the loss of Bangladesh on Pakistan, dismissed or forgotten by many Indians but still a hurtful memory for the Pakistan military.

What would be the most important and likely of the sub-scenarios? Theft is a possibility, as is unauthorized use. Perhaps even more likely is the possibility of accidental or inadvertent use, followed by the realization that no war was intended. This use could take place on the territory of the state that owned the weapon, or across the border. More frightening and far-reaching would be the detonation of a device – or the release of significant radioactive material – in an Indian or Pakistani city. Not only are Mumbai and Karachi vulnerable to a smuggled nuclear weapon, they have prime nuclear targets in the form of research and power reactors, and an attack along the lines of the World Trade Center and Pentagon airplane bombings is now further from the realm of the inconceivable. The entire set of Pakistani and Indian nuclear facilities could also be the site of a significant accidental release of radiation caused by mismanagement or sabotage. In these cases, the governments involved would have quickly to determine whether the radiation release was accidental or deliberate; if it took place at a moment of very high India–Pakistan tension, it could precipitate a chain of events leading to still more serious steps. In a sense, it is possible to envision a catalytic war between India and Pakistan triggered by an unrelated event, or such an event might be caused by an individual or group that sought to precipitate such a war.

Other surprises can be envisaged. Beyond five years from now, there may be new and inexpensive ways of producing fissile material, simpler and more effective weapons designs, and more sophisticated delivery systems available to India and, with assistance from others, to Pakistan too. There is likely to be a deployed Indian theatre missile defence, probably with American, Russian or Israeli technical assistance, and this might change the nuclear calculus between New Delhi and Islamabad in unknown ways. There might emerge a South Asian Gorbachev willing to take the kind of risk that would transform strategic relations dramatically. It is a sobering reminder that many of the most startling turns in global politics, such as Khomeini's revolution, the end of the Cold War and the events of 11 September, have caught us napping. Prudence requires us to expect the unexpected.

Policy implications

This analysis shows the large number of political and military variables that could affect possible outcomes with regard to the nuclear future of India and its neighbours. Of these, only some are within the province of outside powers to influence or control. The variables considered here are of two types: political and military. Although the latter do have some autonomy, it would be fair to say that politics is the prime mover of strategic relationships. Ultimately, nuclear postures and interactions are shaped by perceptions of threat, and these are fundamentally political in character. That having been said, the United States must distinguish between those variables over which it has little or no control, those it can hope to influence and those it can at best try to manage. It may be said at the outset that in no case is the United States likely to shape Chinese behaviour or thinking, except indirectly through the policies it follows directly toward China.

   The India–Pakistan relationship could be influenced to some degree if outside powers, presumably led by the United States, were willing to invest the effort and resources. Pakistan's floundering economy could be revived and, with the judicious use of loan conditionalities, its social and political structures (de-radicalization and democratization) addressed; pressure could be put on Pakistan to eliminate terrorism as an instrument of state policy, and on India to come to the negotiating table. The India–China relationship, however, is unlikely to be influenced by others, except to the extent that its future is determined by the altogether different dynamics of US–China relations. The global environment could have an important bearing on South Asia, but it is unlikely that, given its indeterminate effects, America or other powers would think of shaping policies with China and Russia, among others, on the basis of their eventual impact on the subcontinent. Nor is there much scope for ensuring the domestic stability of the three countries, with the exception, as noted earlier, of tied financial aid to Pakistan.

   Of the four military variables discussed above, outsiders will have little or no direct influence over three: the numbers and types of weapons, strategic warning time and robustness of deterrence, and conceptions of deterrence. At best, persuasion could be tried but, if India's and Pakistan's determination to go ahead is sufficiently strong to override their own history of restraint in the construction of nuclear capability, then it is unlikely that international efforts would have much effect. As regards command and control stability, America might play a useful role – working independently with India and Pakistan, extending advice and technical assistance to strengthen nuclear safety and security, and not waiting

for them to reach a joint confidence-building agreement. Safety concerns are particularly strong in light of the terrorist threat in both countries. Here, the primary challenge will be to convince states such as Japan and Germany, which have foresworn nuclear weapons, that technical assistance will not constitute a reversal of constraints imposed on proliferators.

Looking ahead more than a few years, possible futures are so diverse that it is difficult to make predictions with any confidence and harder still to devise appropriate policies to facilitate desired outcomes. I conclude by offering two modest suggestions:

1. The outside world should stand by ready to assist India and Pakistan in managing their inevitable crises and conflicts, and should not assume that the two states can, on their own, move down the road of a peace process.
2. The nuclear and strategic planners of these two states should avoid over-confidence and not assume that they, or their successors, will be able to avoid a nuclear incident or nuclear war. Deterrence usually works, but the perceptual fog that hangs over the leadership of each state, especially regarding the motives and capabilities of the other, is quite thick. They must prepare for crisis management, but strive to keep their own nuclear arsenals as small and as reliable as possible, if only to reduce the scale of the catastrophe that would be a regional nuclear war.

Notes

1. For a projection of the consequences of nuclear war at different levels, see Naim (1990). For an attempt to apply different arms control strategies to different stages of proliferation, see Cohen (1990). For a look at the public's response to the growth of nuclear programmes in India and Pakistan, see Cortright and Mattoo (1996) and Ahmed and Cortright (1998).
2. If intermediate-range missiles are placed within a *short-range* radius *vis-à-vis* Pakistan, they are not likely to be threatening to that country, though technically it is possible for such missiles to target Pakistan.

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5

International security in a nuclear South Asia

Christophe Carle

It is true that there is more to South Asian security than Indo-Pakistani relations. Land and maritime border issues exist between various regional states, and internal disputes and conflicts often have trans-border ramifications that affect regional security as a whole. But, whatever the importance of non Pakistani–Indian security issues in South Asia, these pale into somewhat lesser significance compared with the determining region-wide impact of the region's long-running sibling enmity. For better or for worse, South Asian security rests to an overwhelming extent with the authorities in Islamabad and New Delhi. This is not to deny the importance of other security questions in the region, but merely to recognize a fact of life since independence from the British in 1947.

Hypothetically, the imaginable futures for South Asian security could veer towards two starkly contrasting extremes, depending first and foremost on the course of the Pakistani–Indian relationship. At the rose-tinted end, peaceable and mutually profitable relations between India and Pakistan could be highly beneficial in themselves and also act as the engine-room of regional trade and economic integration in a South Asia which would thus embark on a new chapter in its history, bringing closer to fruition an untapped potential for growth and improvement of the human condition scarcely equalled anywhere else in the world. At the grimmest extreme, and unfortunately somewhat more plausibly too, Pakistan and India could become the prime actors in a nuclear tragedy, whose effects within and outside their respective borders defy the quan-

tifications that have recently been attempted. Then again, and perhaps more plausibly still, India and Pakistan will continue to plod along somewhere between these two extremes, avoiding an outright catastrophe but also forgoing potentially great benefits.

Despite the enduring centrality of the Indo-Pakistani relationship to South Asian security, much else has changed since the 1990s. The downgrading of the role of the former Soviet Union, the nuclear tests of 1998 and the attacks of 11 September 2001 and their aftershocks have all affected regional security in manners that may not yet have become fully apparent. In particular, all three of these developments have ushered in an unprecedentedly important and manifest role for the United States of America in South (and Central) Asia, whose consequences are a matter for sustained debate within the region itself.

One factor that has not changed in over 50 years is the persistence of discord. India and Pakistan show some of the world's most entrenched propensities to mutual distrust: events are contested, their interpretation is subject to dispute, intentions are dissected for ulterior motives, from among which the worst are all too often assumed, and words are all too often acrimonious. In the Pakistan–India dispute, it is not just the actions of each government that are scrutinized, criticized and condemned, it is the very essence of each state that is called into question by the other. In fact, measured against the intensity and persistence of ostensible signs of hostility, it is almost surprising that Indo-Pakistani relations have not deteriorated into open warfare more often or more fiercely.

A second enduring factor is the propensity for the outside world, and the international media in particular, to react to events in South Asia with an awkward succession of blithe indifference interspersed with fits of apocalyptic alarmism. Sustained attention and measured appraisals are usually in short supply.

A third observable element of continuity is the nagging suspicion, at least among observers as superficially acquainted with South Asia as I am, that there is an ingredient of not altogether uncomfortable tacit familiarity in some of the ritualistic bluster that Pakistanis and Indians repeatedly hurl at one another. On an individual level, novice outside observers seldom fail to be perplexed by the propensity of Indians and Pakistanis, be they officials or private citizens, to get along famously together in all manner of formal and informal situations, even at times when popular imagery (inasmuch as it exists at all, especially in Europe) would have expected them to be at each other's throats.

And yet things are of course far more serious than occasional histrionics might suggest. Although it is fashionable in some South Asian circles to deride foreigners' seemingly exclusive fixation on the nuclear dimension of regional security, the impact of nuclear weapons is unquestion-

ably central to South Asian security itself but also, and increasingly so, to global security as well.

If international media coverage were to be taken as an indicator, one of the most widespread misconceptions about South Asian security is the notion that the nuclear factor erupted suddenly on the scene with the tests by both countries in 1998. There was of course an element of surprise to onlookers, as is well illustrated by the debate surrounding the failure of foreign intelligence accurately to detect preparations for the blasts. In the longer-term perspective, however, the nuclear factor had been well and truly present for at least a decade prior to 1998. For at least that long, security planners and foreign policy makers in both India and Pakistan thought and acted in the knowledge of the nuclear capabilities and potential of their neighbour. That much was amply borne out by the speed with which Pakistan was able to reply in kind to the Pokhran II tests by India.

What remains intact and unresolved, however, is the question of the effect of nuclear capabilities – and later weapons – on bilateral and regional security and stability. The argument has often been made that the nuclear element was a factor for restraint, which helped to prevent escalation in tense situations such as on the occasion of the military exercises known as Operation Brasstacks in early 1987. But arguments on this score can usually work both ways. In support of the claim that nuclear weapons are destabilizing between India and Pakistan, one can point to both the Kargil operation of 1999 and the mobilizations and stand-off of the summer of 2002 and infer that even the overt possession of nuclear weapons since 1998 has not deterred or otherwise prevented situations of tension and indeed war. Proponents of the stabilizing virtues of nuclear weapons would surely contend that Kargil and 2002 illustrated just the reverse, namely that, in an explicitly nuclear environment, such serious situations did not escalate into full-scale strategic warfare. The debate is not about to be closed, any more than are retrospective arguments about the merits or demerits of nuclear postures during the Cold War stand-off between the United States and the former USSR. The more one learns about the unfolding of the Cuban missile crisis from declassified documents and participants' accounts, however, the less confident one can be about optimistic conclusions, and the more appreciative one becomes of sheer blind luck or divine intercession.

Among the various metaphorical devices used to illustrate what nuclear deterrence may or may not be, game theory provides a number of tidy, artificially neat and de-humanized patterns for analysing the purportedly rational behaviour of opponents locked in a confrontation. The popular simile of international strategy as a chessboard has the same clarity at the expense of any realism. But one of the few things that can

be said with any certainty is that there are at least diminishing security returns, and in fact a net decrease in security, as the number of nuclear actors grows. Possibly one of the best metaphors for security in a (nuclear) armed crowd is provided not by Professor Kenneth Waltz's celebratedly controversial paper entitled ''The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better'' (1981) but rather by Quentin Tarantino in his 1992 film *Reservoir Dogs*. Towards the end of the film, half a dozen armed men in a warehouse are locked in a tense face-off, each and every one pointing his gun at another. The scene drags on and brows get sweaty. None of the protagonists appears suicidal; in fact, most look desperate to get out of the imbroglio, preferably without too much loss of face. Good sense would lead all concerned to find some way of walking away from the confrontation. Instead, something – a noise, a cough, a glance – causes one of the gunmen to lose his nerve and fire, and within instants everyone is dead or in agony. Before the shoot-out erupts, the characters' last words are:

Joe: *. . . trust me on this.*
Mr White: *Don't ask me that.*
Joe: *I'm not asking, I'm betting!*

Such is deterrence in a (nuclear) armed crowd. It may work, and then again it may not, whether in South Asia or elsewhere. The choice is whether or not to take that chance.

South Asia is the region in which the largest number of nuclear powers are in the closest geographical proximity. The nuclear factor, more than anything else, explains the international interest in the fate of the region. Never has such interest been as manifest as in the summer of 2002. Amidst the mobilization of 750,000 to 1,000,000 men in arms along the Indo-Pakistani Line of Control (LOC) and international border, every major power from the United States to Europe and East Asia made its concerns known and urged restraint. Aside from the immediate concern of the United States about the impact of a South Asian conflagration on its own anti-terrorist operations in the region and its vicinity, such entreaties would not have been made, let alone in such earnest, had it not been for fears of escalation to – and past – the nuclear threshold.

The likelihood of such an occurrence remains hotly debated. Much discussion, especially since the 1998 tests, refers to the ''command and control'' of nuclear forces, that is, equipment and procedures designed to ensure that unauthorized or accidental use of nuclear weapons is as unlikely as possible. In response to such concerns, both Pakistan and India have stated that their nuclear assets are under fully effective and reliable control. Be that as it may, and whether or not any command and control

system can ever be considered fully effective at all times, it remains that simple geographical realities make South Asia an inauspicious setting in which to manage the risks inherent in a nuclear face-off. Distances are short and in view of the flight speeds of ballistic missiles, as well as the speed with which solid-fuelled ballistic missiles can be readied for firing (compared with their liquid-fuelled counterparts), decision-making slots in a perceived nuclear emergency would be extremely short, of the order of 5–10 minutes at the most.

Against this background, it is sometimes debated whether Pakistan and India may have become somewhat complacent in their assurances that the nuclear threshold is in no danger of being crossed in precipitous anguish or even mistakenly. Conversely, it is also sometimes argued (and feared) that bellicose rhetoric from either side is tantamount to playing with nuclear fire. There is no hard and fast answer to this dilemma of proper nuclear etiquette, except the rule of thumb that somewhere between blithe unconcern and frantic alarmism lies prudence, and that perceptions – even more than realities – are of the essence. Depending on one's standpoint, keeping a cool head can always be (mis)construed as complacency, and the expression of legitimate concerns can be (mis)-interpreted as warlike rhetoric.

The contribution that arms control (let alone disarmament) could make to improving the situation in South Asia has lately become a rather ethereally remote prospect. Numerous studies, meetings and worthy research programmes have delved into particular aspects of the issue over the past 20 years or so. They have produced a rich body of literature as well as copious amounts of hot air, and, perhaps most usefully, some such exercises have provided valuable channels for communication and discussion among Indian and Pakistani academics, journalists and scientists, as well as diplomats and military officers, whether retired or not.

With respect to arms control and non-proliferation, however, the most frequent strand of advocacy has long been of the one-size-fits-all variety, which posits that Pakistan and India should join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In accordance with the letter of the treaty, they could do so only as non-nuclear weapon states. Ever since the NPT entered into force, such views, regularly trotted out by foreign officials and scholars visiting South Asia, have drawn intensely critical Indian fire, and even outrage at being thus called upon to ''sign on the dotted line'' of an unequal arrangement that would have enshrined India's nuclear abstinence while endorsing the status of China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States as nuclear weapon states. From the moral and political high ground delineated by its policy of refraining from converting its demonstrated nuclear prowess (the 1974 test) into an actual military nuclear capability, India's was a distinctly noted voice in

arms control and disarmament diplomacy. Having pulverized this special asset with the 1998 tests, India now finds itself defending precisely the type of "minimal deterrence" posture that it used to decry so eloquently in others only a few years ago. The new scenario consists in India's self-portrayal as a fully trustworthy nuclear power, with the clear connotation that Pakistan is somewhat less than that. Writing as one who has argued for about two decades that the NPT recipe did not stand a chance in India or in Pakistan, it appears all the more obvious since 1998 that nuclear weapons are in South Asia to stay for the foreseeable future. Other means (whether unilaterally applied or bilaterally, plurilaterally or multilaterally negotiated) will have to be devised if existing and future confidence-building measures (CBMs) are to pave the way to some form of regional arms control.

CBMs between India and Pakistan already have a long history, arguably dating back to the Indus Basin Waters Treaty of 1960. Some subsequent measures are designed to have a direct bearing on military stability, and indeed on missile and nuclear issues. Thus, for example, a communications link between the Directors General of Military Operations from both sides has existed since the late 1980s; the Lahore Declaration of 1999 makes provisions for mutual advance notification of ballistic missile tests; an agreement not to attack each other's nuclear facilities was signed in 1988 (and ratified in 1991); and, unilaterally, each side has undertaken a moratorium on further nuclear tests. It is worth noting that the missile pre-notification agreement has been scrupulously observed, as has been the annual exchange of lists of nuclear-related facilities, even at times of particular tension. The current climate of tension, however, is causing some disgruntlement with such CBMs.

The role of outside powers in South Asia used to be an entirely different affair during the Cold War, and Russia's eclipse, combined with the 11 September attacks and the subsequent war in Afghanistan, has made the United States the single most determining external influence on South Asia. Since the 1990s and the Clinton administration, it had become increasingly obvious that both Washington and New Delhi saw clear benefits in improved relations. The Bush administration's aversion to multilateral arms control treaties reinforced a sense that non-proliferation differences of the past would be less and less likely to get in the way of strengthened relations with India. The overt hostility of the United States government to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), for which India has made its own distaste plainly known, has played a signal role in this regard. Some hitherto vexing issues thus all but disappeared from the US–Indian agenda. It is also in this light that the Indian government's cautious approval of the US decision to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty should be inter-

preted. Moreover, given the known Indian interest in anti-ballistic missile capabilities (such as the Israeli Arrow system), it cannot have gone unnoticed that the abrogation of the ABM Treaty puts an end to the commitment of its former parties under article IX not to export ABM systems or their components to other states. Nuclear weapons and delivery vehicles, coupled with missile defence systems that, if acquired by one side, would sooner or later be deployed by the other, not to mention the obvious proximity of China, could together come to constitute a fascinating puzzle for armchair strategists, although the region would be uncommonly uncomfortable to live in.

It is now amply evident to all quarters that the United States is, whether by default or by design, the indispensable (or unavoidable, depending on one's perspective) external actor in South Asia. Never was this more clearly evident than in the spring of 2002: at the very time when US diplomacy was actively advocating restraint on both sides in the wake of terrorist attacks in New Delhi, in Kashmir and in Karachi, US forces were present on both Pakistani and Indian soil (performing anti-terrorist operations in or from Pakistan, and taking part in a military exercise with their Indian counterparts in Agra). Only a year earlier, such a scenario would have struck any observer as fantastic fiction. Some things have indeed changed since 11 September 2001.

The role of external powers, and of the United States first and foremost, looks set to increase durably. To that extent, debates on the "internationalization" of particular disputes between Pakistan and India are becoming an atavistic irrelevance. Like it or not, for better and for worse, South Asian security is increasingly internationalized, and this is largely a result of the 1998 decisions to go openly nuclear. The acquisition of nuclear weapons may or may not bestow certain strategic advantages and impose other costs. What it certainly does entail is a sizeable degree of international scrutiny and involvement, as well as suspicion and criticism. To a much greater extent than ever in the past, South Asia's security has become everyone's business. There may be no such thing as a globalization of security, but there certainly is an increasingly global interdependence of insecurities.

Exactly how that translates into US or other external powers' involvement in whatever form of exhortations, entreaties, pleas, pressure or offers of good offices remains to be seen. In particular, beyond the onset of de-escalation of the most recent military mobilization along the border by India and Pakistan, two aspects will need to be watched closely. One is the propensity of the United States and others to remain engaged in South Asian diplomacy even as other issues (notably Iraq and North Korea) loom larger in international priorities. The other is the willingness and ability of Pakistan and India to take advantage of receding tensions

(if the trend proves durable) in order to resume some form of purposeful dialogue.

Finally, over and above national and regional dimensions, security in a nuclear South Asia is seldom referred to as a "human security" issue, although the term could be particularly apt in this case. One need only imagine for an instant the effects of a nuclear exchange targeting large cities in South Asia to take the measure of the tragedy it would constitute, thus trivializing any debate about whether such a tragedy is more appropriately referred to as "national", "regional", "historic" or "human". That being said, the notion of "human security", as currently expounded, constitutes more a normative philosophical outlook than a guide for policy. The proximate genesis of the idea lies in the immediate post–Cold War years, when joyful relief at the demise of the East–West antagonism led some to hope and believe that other antagonisms the world over would abate in their turn. Peace dividends would be reaped and collective security worthy of the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations would become reliable enough to quell any residually bellicose states. No less than world order (rather than mere security) was the order of the optimistic day. To well-fed denizens of the industrialized world assembled in distinguished colloquia, security threats appeared so remote (both geographically and probabilistically) that new meanings had to be sought for the notion of security. Environmental, demographic, food and economic security were marshalled as new approaches fitting a new world.

But in Rwanda, Bosnia, Zaire/DRC, the Horn of Africa, Liberia and Sierra Leone – to name but a few – horrors occurred that gave pause for thought. Suddenly rediscovering the obvious (which had lain at the heart of the rich tradition of humanist thought since antiquity and without which no conception of human rights could have been possible), well-meaning observers decided that the real meaning of "security" was "human security". The observation had considerable merit, coming as it did from people most of whom never had the slightest life-threatening experience, whether individually or collectively. And, although there is clear pedagogical value in such a shorthand statement of a basic truth, one may pause to wonder just what proponents of human security thought that security was all about, until this fine revelation came to them so belatedly.

In fairness, the idea of human security ought to be assessed according to its own criteria – namely, for the tangible impact it seeks to have on the real-world security of ordinary human beings, beyond the political and territorial units to which they belong. Let us then see, in South Asia as elsewhere, how human security-oriented thinking and actions can improve people's lives and protect them from threat and violence, and whether such initiatives prove to be more successful than those inspired

by such conceptual breakthroughs of the past as proletarian international-ism, collective security, cooperative security or non-offensive defence, to name but a disparate few.

The centrality of South Asian security to global security has for some time been acknowledged only intermittently, before receding again into more or less complacent indifference. This may well have begun to change, but only time will tell. So far, being the thorn in each other's side has affected both Pakistan and India to their own as well as the rest of South Asia's tremendous detriment. Much has been said and written about the direct costs – and therefore the sustainability – of the massive deployments of Indian and Pakistani forces along the LOC and interna-tional border in 2002. But such manifest tensions, war talk, troop move-ments, and a popularized reputation as a so-called "nuclear flash-point" also bring to bear considerable indirect costs, for example in terms of foreign investment. The extent of such costs can only be guessed at, but their accumulation over decades cannot be insignificant. One can only surmise how events might have unfolded in the region had it not been for the persistent tension and recurring threat or use of force between India and Pakistan. But, whatever the precise contours of such an alternative scenario, there can be no doubt that the potential – and stubbornly for-gone – benefits of constructively peaceful coexistence, orderly and mutu-ally profitable interaction, trade, competition and integration between the two countries and their societies are tremendous. The virtuous spill-overs of such benefits also constitute great opportunities for the South Asian region in its entirety. Someday, some approximation of this potential may yet become a reality, and the wasted decades come to be viewed with dismayed disbelief. The question is how much brinkmanship it takes to get there, and whether a catastrophe can continue to be averted until then.

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6

National security: Inter-state conflict in South Asia (a Nepali perspective)

Lok Raj Baral

Regional insularity and conflict

The more we study the South Asian countries' security situation, the more enigmatic it appears. The end of the Cold War has brought about spectacular changes in other parts of the world in the patterns of bilateral, regional and global relations. South Asia, however, remains largely unaffected by such developments. Bilateral relations between and among the countries of the region have not improved nor are they characterized by the commonality of relations evident in other regional configurations such as the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the European Union. The five countries that gave formal shape to ASEAN – in the wake of intense perceptions of threat in view of the aggressive trends in communism allegedly emanating from the People's Republic of China, Viet Nam and their smaller allies in Indo-China – have now made ASEAN an aggregate of common interests, peace and security. All former foes have now become friends, and the regional system seems to be developing smoothly despite recent sluggishness in its overall activities.

By contrast, the South Asian countries are in turmoil – nationally, bilaterally and regionally. The domestic sources of insecurity are complex and difficult to assess, and the countries of the region seem to be unable to come up with any strategies other than relying on the weakened state structures. The agenda of national security is made more difficult than ever before by critical situations arising from entrenched social and eco-

nomic inequalities, the narrow base and idiosyncratic ways of the ruling élite within democratic frameworks, widespread corruption, alienation from mainstream political processes, and crises of state-building. South Asia can therefore be singled out as the most problematic region from the perspective of conflict. Some scholars have called it the ''zone of wars'' or ''zone of conflicts'' because the region is permanently plagued by inter-state conflicts and wars.

Although the conflicts vary from extremely intense and deep-rooted (India–Pakistan) to benign, the defence spending of the South Asian countries is increasing every year because of heavy reliance on the state as an actor. In India, defence accounts for 22 per cent of total expenditure. Pakistan, whose overall security and foreign policies are India-centric, is not far behind in defence build-up. Nepal is bogged down in a Maoist People's War and is preoccupied with mobilizing all sorts of resources for security. Nevertheless, the failure of the state to guarantee security has been acknowledged in Nepal, with an army spokesman admitting that the Maoist strength had not reduced despite anti-Maoist combat operations launched by the Royal Nepal Army, the Armed Police Force and the civil police. As of September 2002, 2,820 Maoist insurgents were confirmed dead and 900 missing, and 205 soldiers had been killed in the encounters (*Kathmandu Post and Rajdhani Daily*, 2 October 2002). Deaths of more than a dozen people a day show no signs of abatement.

Most South Asian states are now increasingly resorting to the military option to tackle all forms of conflict. Although a number of cases of negotiated settlement of conflicts in India can be cited, the trend is in general towards militarization. However, it is interesting to observe that the Sri Lankan ethnic war seems to be taking a new turn, with the Tamil Tigers giving up their demand for a separate state. If the Norwegian-brokered negotiation succeeds in ending the 20-year conflict, it is likely to blaze a trail in the area of peaceful conflict resolution.

The new security context in the wake of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001 has brought the United States closer to developments in South Asia. This has prompted both India and Pakistan to turn to the United States to bail them out, ''as evident from the present military stand-off'' (Navalakha, 2002: 3420). Other smaller countries of the region, particularly those involved in internecine intra-state conflicts, have also found in the United States an immediate ally against the upsurge of terrorism. Both India and Pakistan seemed to be scrambling to court the United States for help in realizing their diametrically opposed interests. Mobilized as it is against ''all forms of terrorism'', the United States has taken the lead in beefing up the security of these states. Thus, South Asia is now more ''securi-

tized'' or militarized. And, in such a broad international coalition against ''terrorism'', the alliance partners, especially the United States, judge all types of governments, democratic or authoritarian, on the same footing. Pakistan, for instance, which was treated by the United States and its Western partners as a pariah state after the military coup of 1999, is now an important ally for combating terrorism.

Although conflict has a variety of causes, ''incompatibility appears to be a key to the existence of conflict''. And, broadly speaking, ''conflict consists of three components: action, incompatibility and actors'' (Wallensteen, 2002: 16). In international politics, both intra-state and inter-state conflicts are significant because not only the coercive approach adopted by a state actor against an adversary but also the internal situation determine the origin, development and intensification of conflict. In Nepal, the Maoist People's War has very little to do with the external environment, although this group has reportedly established contacts with similar groups in other countries.

Proximity as a source of conflict

Proximity and incompatibility are interrelated in the South Asian context because of India's central position, having frontiers with most of its neighbours. Incompatibility theory can also be applied to both domestic and external contexts. When two actors take incompatible positions on issues that are vital to both, conflict is generated.

The opposing parties also externalize internal conflicts, thus demonstrating that the internal dimension of security and peace is more crucial in the region than the creation of a distant enemy for internal political mobilization. India, for instance, is often dragged into Nepal's domestic issues, the latest being the Maoist insurgency. Indians in general reject allegations that the Maoists are making use of Indian territory or that India is supporting them. Benign conflicts sometimes reach flash-point, as has been observed along the Indo-Bangladesh border or in India's relations with other smaller neighbours. However, such conflicts often arise from the proximity factor, which encompasses numerous aspects of bilateral relations. Even a minor irritant tends to assume importance for a small country whose national security is perennially vulnerable owing to too much interdependence with a big neighbour. As Barry Buzan has observed, ''[s]ince most states fear their neighbors more than distant powers, insecurity is often associated with proximity'' (2002: 2). Buzan examines the intricacies of relationships between large and small countries within what he calls a ''security complex'', which can be defined ''as a set of units whose major processes of securitization, desecuritization or

both are so interlinked that their national security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved separately'' (2002: 2).

Geographical proximity, a distinct sociocultural identity and contiguities buttressed by historical and civilizational commonalities have not only shaped South Asian interactions and conflicts, but also insulate the region from the rest of the world. This insularity is more pronounced in the post–Cold War context, particularly when the world had treated the region with benign neglect until the 11 September terrorist attacks on the United States. At the intraregional level, interactions among and between the South Asian countries take place within the geographical and other variables identified above. Thus, ''it becomes clear that geographic propinquity and intensity of interaction form the core variables that define a region. However, it is also significant that cooperation, conflict and interaction may determine the 'valid measurement of interaction''' (Ayoob, 1995: 56). Judged from this perspective, geographical proximity has not helped develop India–Pakistan relations; rather, their negative interactions not only are intense but also generate conflict between them.

Such attitudes are explained by smaller countries' perceptions of India, which looms large in their overall policy decisions or indecisions. Nepali foreign policy has made considerable headway in diversifying its external linkages, even after the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1950; moreover, India has not objected to the inclusion of certain elements that are not in accord with the spirit of the 1950 treaty. Yet the Nepali power élites, regardless of their political predilections, have shown circumspection when dealing with India, owing to an ingrained perception that India continues to be a crucial variable in the domestic power equilibrium as well as for establishing linkages with outside powers. Indo-Sri Lankan and Indo-Bangladeshi relations also exemplify such trends and attitudes, though the degree of the perception varies from country to country.

It is also worth observing that South Asian political élites tend to express anti-India sentiments during election campaigns; but once they come to power they start to view India with a certain degree of objectivity and realism. As Rehman Sobhan has remarked, ''it is arguable that particular governments within South Asia find it politically convenient domestically to perpetuate tensions with their neighbors in order to divert attention from their region. Such gestures of political opportunism tend to establish a symbiotic link between confrontational politics at home and within the region. Thus, the route to South Asian cooperation originates in the nature of politics at home'' (1998: 22). And if the central élites of South Asia continue to see security and conflict through a state-centric lens and ignore the many other components of security – such as the fulfilment of basic needs, poverty alleviation, an end to corruption, effective

and good governance, the qualitative transformation of society and polity in order to empower the people – the countries of the region will continue to generate internal conflict.

Inter-state conflict in South Asia seems to have originated mainly from countries' internal vulnerabilities and a "security complex" that creates incompatible situations. Weakened states and declining political institutions and leadership are increasingly becoming incapable of grappling with new domestic crises, which, in turn, breed inter-state conflicts. The distressing picture is of a region perennially haunted by the spectre of religious fundamentalism, as demonstrated by the orgy of communal violence in India's Gujarat state or in Pakistan and Bangladesh, where religious minorities and other groups are under threat. As a result of the internal Maoist People's War, Nepal too may fall prey to imported trends of communal division, despite its moderate and syncretic culture and history of tolerance. Although Nepal has not yet experienced sectarian conflict, such an eventuality cannot totally be ruled out because of open border, cross-country migrations, and the perception of the country as a conduit of terrorism, notwithstanding the government's efforts to control it. India constantly raises the issue of Nepali territories being used by a variety of anti-Indian elements that allegedly find their way into the heartland of India. Even though Nepal assures its southern neighbour that such hostile activity would never be allowed from Nepali soil, there is a credibility gap.

The role of religious fundamentalism in politics is becoming so powerful and alarming that even people with a degree of rationality and judgement have ceased to believe in the survival of these nations. "I have also believed what India would never survive was a communal divide. If our minorities – close to 180 million in strength – cannot see themselves as equal and honorable citizens, India will tear itself apart", bemoans Aroon Purie, the editor of *India Today* (8 April 2002). India's religious divide is inevitably linked with the fuelling of inter-state conflict. Secularism, which had been presented as the attractive face of modern India, is now described as "pseudo-secularism". The end of political ideology and the increasing tendency of political parties and leaders to latch on to such trends seem to produce greater divisiveness. Yet, to the credit of Indian pluralistic democracy, people have called for the secular tradition to continue, otherwise a country such as India cannot retain its integrity.

Inter-state migration

Another prominent aspect of the inter-state conflict is the current border regime in South Asia. Any action governments might take to regulate

borders becomes ineffective owing to a multiplicity of factors – both human and natural. Porous and open borders, cross-country migration and refugee flows, and the issue of the treatment of one's own nationals trigger inter-state conflict.

An open and porous border as a source of inter-state conflict is demonstrated by the Indo-Nepal border. We can conceptualize the open border regime as having the following characteristics (see Baral, 1990: 2):

- inter-state migration is taken to be a natural process that cannot be stopped;
- this phenomenon has until now received state sanction, as the border is delineated only for territorial integrity;
- the national identity of peoples commuting across the border is blurred, although in recent years Indians and Nepalis travelling by plane have been required to carry identity cards;
- migrants tend to settle permanently once they start working either in India or in Nepal;
- migrants and local people mix easily if they speak a common language and share customs and religion.

The Indo-Nepal open border is unique, and it has become a dominant agenda item in bilateral relations. Political parties and rulers, regardless of their political orientation, find it a convenient tool for point-scoring. Nevertheless, Nepali political leaders and intellectuals have not provided any alternative model for removing the occasional irritations that arise from an open border. There has been genuine concern about the likely negative impacts on the demographic balance of a country that has only 18 per cent arable land. The north–south flow of migration within Nepal has already overwhelmed the population in the Tarai, along with the concomitant trends of regional, ethnic and other forms of conflicts. The Tarai share of in-migrants increased to 78.4 per cent in 1991, whereas that of hill and mountain regions declined to 18.8 per cent and 2.8 per cent, respectively.

If the internal migratory imbalance is seen as a threat to Nepal's peace and stability, the threat of foreign immigrants is perceived as no less serious, despite a similar population movement from Nepal to India, where Nepali expatriates find employment. Politicians and other analysts argue that Nepalis in India, whatever their number, are like drops in the ocean, but that any number of Indians in Nepal would amount to a loss of national identity because the country is too small to absorb unrestricted immigration. Taking it further, some studies have suggested step-wise regulation of the Indo-Nepal border, starting with registration when crossing the border and going on to other methods including the passport system. Given the all-encompassing links between the peoples of the two countries and the sensitivity of the Tarai people to regulation of this type,

no government has yet adopted any such measures. The fact that cross-country migration and the facilities to be provided to both Nepalis in India and Indians in Nepal are explicitly mentioned in the 1950 treaty, which regulates the whole range of Indo-Nepal relations, is regularly mentioned in official and non-official circles. The controversy generated by the treaty revolves around the security, population and trade aspects, which have all been perceived by critics in Nepal as "unequal" because of the asymmetrical positions of the two countries.

Post-colonial South Asia has become conflict-ridden and conflict-prone mainly as a result of open and porous borders. First, there is the size of the migratory populations and the accompanying trends of religious, ethnic and regional conflict. The exodus of people from India to Pakistan and vice versa during and after Partition was not just an appalling situation; it also sowed the seeds of endemic conflict and animosity between the two countries. Inter-state migration and refugee conditions have become almost intolerable owing to the failure of the respective governments to deal with the issue dispassionately and objectively. On the contrary, the countries of the region follow dubious policy on the pretext of looking after the interests of their people in other countries. Bangladesh and India in particular have been taking opposite stands on the issue of cross-country migration: India is tired of and concerned about the phenomenal growth in the number of foreigners in the north-eastern states of India, whereas Bangladesh denies the presence of Bangladeshis in India.

Because the issues of citizenship, illegal immigration and stateless persons overlap in South Asia, the countries of the region are increasingly under pressure to grant citizenship to peoples whose identity is undocumented and unclear. Anti-foreigner agitation in Assam and Meghalaya based in sub-national identities led to the conclusion of the Assam Accord between Assam and the central Indian government in 1985. The memorandum of settlement explicitly mentioned the "profound sense of apprehension regarding the influx of foreign nationals into Assam and fear about adverse effects on the political, social, economic and cultural life of the state".[1] However, the Accord did not change the demographic position in Assam and other north-eastern states because the trickle-down effects of cross-border migration persist, despite the Indian government's decision to construct a barbed wire fence along the Bangladesh–India border. On the contrary, Bangladeshi rulers maintain that, because economic opportunities are no better in India than in Bangladesh, the question of migration from Bangladesh to India does not arise and they accuse India of resorting to a provocative "defensive build up".

The issue of citizenship in Nepal Tarai has attracted the attention of the main parties. It has been said that about 4 million people live in Nepal Tarai without citizenship. Taking this up as a cause, the Nepal

Sadbhawana Party gained the support of these people during the parliamentary elections of 1999. Similarly, millions of Nepalis living in India lack citizenship papers and those who fail to acquire citizenship in either India or Nepal may become stateless persons.

The presence of 1 million Bhutanese refugees in Nepal since the early 1990s has not only strained Bhutan–Nepal relations but also contributed to the degradation of the environment in Nepal. Even if the two governments agree on the repatriation of refugees to Bhutan, many of them are likely to stay in Nepal. So, for Nepal, the worst possible scenario is an increase in population and the attendant impacts on the country as a whole.

The border regime as an area of inter-state conflict remains a perennial problem between India and its neighbours. Bangladesh and India continue to suspect the misuse of borders, particularly when political parties themselves seem to treat the immigrants as potential votes. The "ethnic enclaves" created within the north-eastern states and West Bengal provide shelter to the immigrants. Millions of settlers from other parts of India have also created an atmosphere of tension.

The issues of cross-country migration, both legal and illegal, have to be understood in relation to the increase in population in India, Bangladesh and Nepal. Pakistan, which has experienced the highest population growth rate in the region, is to some extent insulated owing to tight controls along the Indo-Pakistan border and continued animosity between India and Pakistan. Inter-state relations between India and Pakistan have been traumatic since the time of Partition. The strict surveillance of even the closely monitored visitors to either country and the issue of entry have become more complex in recent years because of the spread of international terrorist groups across the world. In the Indo-Pakistani context, however, the alleged terrorists sent to Kashmir and other parts of India are agents of state-sponsored terrorism according to the Indian authorities; in other words, India perceives Pakistan as harbouring terrorist activities. Since many other countries in the region are entangled with terrorist groups of varying ideological and religious persuasions, the tactical convergence of all terrorists has now been acknowledged. The decline in ideology and the rise of fundamentalism in South Asia and other parts of the world have brought them closer together despite their diametrically opposed missions.

None the less, such a nexus is not wholly unfounded. From both national and international perspectives, the Maoist People's War in Nepal is more nativistic rather than aided and abetted by external powers and groups. Yet, a Maoist connection with the Revolutionary International Movement and other like-minded groups in India and other countries cannot be ruled out. In the context of global terrorism, it is said: "It is

difficult to imagine a world without terrorism in the foreseeable future, for it would imply a world without conflict and tension. There will always be groups, small and not so small, with grievances against other groups and an inclination toward violence'' (Laqueur, 2001: 81–82).

The way in which Nepal is perceived as a conduit for drugs and weapons trafficking, let alone trafficking in women from Nepal to India and other destinations, helps sow the seeds of inter-state conflict. Nepal is accused of anti-Indian activities, allegedly carried out by Pakistanis from Nepal. The fragility of the relationship between the two countries was demonstrated by wild rumours, circulated in December 2000, that the Indian film actor Rhitik Roshan had spoken out against Nepal. Some people in Kathmandu reacted angrily by setting fire to a cinema and vehicles and humiliating people from Tarai as if they too were Indians. Later, the main political parties played an important part in cooling tempers.

Water as a source of conflict

A general tendency of politicians to populism has also given rise to conflict. Politicians in Nepal have not yet articulated their own views on many crucial aspects of India–Nepal relations. For example, Nepal's water resource potential has yet to be used for mutual benefit. Although a number of projects have been agreed on harnessing the water resources of Nepal, no follow-up actions have been undertaken. The treaty between Nepal and India concerning the integrated development of the Mahakali River, which was signed by the prime ministers of India and Nepal in February 1996, is in limbo owing to the failure of both sides to prepare a Detailed Project Report (DPR). According to the agreement, the DPR was to be prepared within six months of the signing of the treaty.

Given highly divisive political opinions in Nepal, the Indian government was rather cautious about finalizing any treaty with Nepal without a national consensus having been forged on issues of water resources. Many Indo-Nepal treaties have run into difficulties in the past, dividing the nation into ''nationalist'' and ''anti-nationalist'' camps; those who concluded the Kosi and Gandak treaties with India were claimed to have compromised the vital interests of Nepal. Perhaps this attitude played a crucial role in the insertion of Article 126 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, which was prepared under the auspices of the Interim Government formed after the restoration of a multi-party system in 1990. According to this article, treaties and agreements reached between Nepal and any other country on peace and friendship, defence and strategic

alliance, the boundaries of Nepal, and natural resources and their distribution should be ratified by parliament by either a simple or a two-thirds majority, depending on the ''extensive, severe and enduring effect on the country''.

Since it is a preventive provision of the constitution, elected governments feel constrained about implementing this clause unless there is a consensus within parliament. Governments without a two-thirds mandate would never be able to get treaties and agreements ratified without the support of other parties. This has been understood by foreign governments, which urge the Nepali side to reach such a consensus before finalizing deals on the utilization of water and other natural resources. And a consensus was reached on the eve of signing the Mahakali Treaty in 1996, but it also split the main opposition party – the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist) (CPN-UML). One section of the CPN-UML saw the Mahakali Treaty as a sell-out to India, whereas a slim majority supported the other major parties in concluding the treaty.

Despite ratification by parliament in accordance with the constitutional requirement, the Mahakali Treaty, which was seen as a good precedent for future agreements, failed to arouse much enthusiasm after it was signed. Party leaders who feared being cast as anti-Nepali dragged their feet following a new controversy raised by the critics of the treaty. Article 3 and the Letter exchanged with the treaty, which allowed India to use the water of the Mahakali River as in the past, became the central point of controversy. Part of Article 3 reads: ''Both the parties agree that they have equal entitlement in the utilization of the waters of the Mahakali River without prejudice to their respective existing consumptive uses of the waters of the Mahakali River.'' Clause 3(b) of the Letter exchanged by the two prime ministers underlines this: ''It is understood that paragraph 3 of Article 3 of the treaty precludes the claim, in any form, by either party on the utilized portion of the shares of the waters of the Mahakali River of that treaty without affecting the provision of the withdrawal of the respective shares of the waters of the Mahakali River by each party under this treaty.''

Replying to critics of the treaty, the minister of water resources, who had played a crucial role in negotiating the treaty, said: ''According to the generally accepted principle of water consumption having been followed for years, the prior right of any country is *ipso facto* established in the consumption of such waters. Hence the prior right of India has in principle been established over the waters of the Mahakali River that the country has been consuming from time immemorial. The question, therefore, does not arise as to why Nepal has recognized it.''[2]

The way in which false perceptions and the domestication of foreign policy stultify the normal conduct of inter-state affairs can be observed by

the manner in which several external issues were immediately picked on as conditions for ratification of the treaty by parliament. The *Sankalpa* (strictures) passed by the parliament raised several issues that were not relevant to the Mahakali Treaty. Issues from the treaty of 1950, such as alternative transit points, the repatriation of Bhutanese refugees from Nepal and security, were inserted in order to gain concessions from India before the ratification. Commenting on the *Sankalpa*, an Indian water expert has remarked: "It seems rather strange for a body to ratify a document and at the same time pass strictures. If the parliament of Nepal had serious reservations on certain aspects of the treaty, it could have refused to ratify it, or could have ratified it subject to certain conditions, which could in fact have amounted to non-ratification; but that is not what happened."[3]

The half-hearted approach adopted by the government and political parties to the implementation of the Mahakali Treaty has raised the issue of the credibility of both the government and the opposition in Nepal. How can a foreign government or other agency conclude a treaty if it fails to be implemented even after it has received the requisite parliamentary endorsement? During the visit of Prime Minister Koirala in August 2000, the issue of the Mahakali Treaty received detailed attention from both India and Nepal, as was reflected in the Joint Press Statement released on 3 August 2002:

The two Prime Ministers noted that the huge potential of development of hydropower resources in Nepal and the projected demand for power in India in the coming decades offered rich opportunities for cooperation to bring about rapid, environmentally sustainable economic growth on both sides of the border. However, the process of achieving concrete results had been relatively slow and needed to be accelerated. The Prime Ministers directed that a Joint Committee on Water Resources, headed by the Water Resources Secretaries of the two governments, be set up to discuss all important issues pertaining to cooperation in the water resources sector including implementation of existing agreements and understandings.... The Prime Ministers reiterated that the implementation of the Mahakali Treaty would be given high priority. They directed that the remaining investigations and studies be completed as per the schedule agreed upon by the Joint Group of Experts on Pancheswar and that the work on the preparation of the DPR would be addressed by the Joint Committee on Water Resources.

The floods that create havoc every year are a major source of interstate conflict. When the issue fails to receive adequate attention, it immediately tends to be politicized. Indo-Nepal relations are full of such examples, but solutions to many of them are mostly elusive. Bangladesh and India have had similar problems, which also involve Nepal because it is the upper riparian state whose rivers constitute the Ganga–Brahmaputra–

Meghna (GBM) basin. The Bangladesh National Water Plan (1986) esti-
mated that 90 per cent of Bangladesh's total flow originates in the upper
GBM basin. Each day approximately 3,400 million cubic meters of water
are discharged into the Bay of Bengal, which is about 3.9 times the aver-
age daily rainfall over Bangladesh (see Verghese and Iyer, 1993: 48). So
why is follow-up action not taken to implement the agreed agendas?
Some major hurdles standing in the way can be broadly identified.

First, the degree of domestication of Indo-Nepal relations remains
high. Nepali rulers have invariably used Nepal's relations with its neigh-
bours as a convenient tool for implementing domestic agendas such as
consolidation of the regime (1960–1990) and enhancing the prospects of
winning elections or staying in power, either by deliberately misrepre-
senting Indo-Nepal relations or by exaggerated nationalism that the in-
terested parties and lobbies whip up from time to time. The Mahakali
Treaty, particularly as it relates to the consumption rights of the lower
riparian, would not have generated conflict if different countries had
signed the agreement. Thus, too much domestication of foreign policy
creates hurdles to the effective implementation of treaties and agree-
ments signed with India.

Second, the weak leadership is bedevilled by problems of governance,
which have given rise to inter-state, intra-party and inter-party conflicts.
Party leaders who take decisions fail to persuade their own members to
fall in line with them, resulting in vociferous public debates on policies
approved by the parties. Moreover, there seems to be a lack of coordi-
nation and cooperation between party and government. This situation
is particularly glaring in the relationship between the ruling party (the
Nepali Congress) and its government, where the role of the prime minis-
ter was subservient to that of the party president. In July 2002, the
strained relationship between party president G. P. Koirala and Prime
Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba eventually led to the split of the Nepali
Congress on the issue of the State of Emergency. The party wanted to lift
the State of Emergency once it expired; the prime minister, who was
under pressure from the army and other security agencies to prolong it
indefinitely, defied the party. Instead of managing intra-party conflict, he
advised the king to hold a mid-term election by dissolving the existing
parliament. The Nepali Congress took strong exception to this and ex-
pelled the prime minister from ordinary membership of the party for
three years.

Third, political parties are not seriously committed to issues that are
crucial for the country once they have taken a decision.

Finally, the negativity that looms large in Nepal's relations with India
is a source of conflict. This is partly an inheritance from the past and
partly the reflection of the weakness of political leaders and others who

think that conventional wisdom and strategies will always mobilize people. During elections in the past, various aspects of Indo-Nepal relations were singled out for populist mobilization, which was expected to improve the chances of some parties. Yet, such populist mobilization appeared not to cater to their interests, suggesting that such issues are less significant for voters than mundane local issues such as water, health, education, roads, employment and other elements of social security.

Trade and terrorism

Inter-state conflict in South Asia is also triggered by the re-emergence of trade disputes between India and its neighbours. Because Indian trade relations straddle South Asia, they figure prominently as one of the areas of conflict. India's demand for transit or transshipment and Bangladesh's refusal to allow it, plus other issues concerning smuggling across the border, are always raised in bilateral relations. Commenting on the current controversy over Indo-Bangladesh trade, a Bangladeshi minister said: "India has made more than a billion dollar trade gap with us due to its aggressive national attitude. No major power in the world treats its neighbours as India has done with us." It has also been alleged that, although India allows duty-free access to 40 items, in practice Bangladesh would be able to export only 9 items (*The Hindu*, 14 April 2002).

The renewal of the Trade and Transit Treaty between India and Nepal and the political controversy generated by it have continued to dominate Indo-Nepal relations. In 1989, the Indian government's unilateral decision to discontinue the Trade and Transit Treaty not only strained relations but also proved to be fatal for the partyless regime led by the king. In 2002, the renewal of the Trade and Transit Treaty dragged on over the purported surge in about five items, whose main components were allegedly imported from third countries, into the Indian market. The export of some Nepali items, such as acrylic yarn, vegetable ghee, zinc oxide, copper wire, iron and zinc pipe, was opposed by India on the grounds that these items were flooding the Indian market and exceeding their quota. India demanded value added of 50 per cent, but climbed down to 25–30 per cent during the final negotiations. Since Nepal is a landlocked country, its search for alternative transit points for third-country trade always figures in Indo-Nepal relations. Surprisingly, however, the new transit points accepted by India for Nepal's third-country trade have remained underutilized.

The Indo-Sri Lankan Free Trade Agreement seems to have made less progress owing to the threat of import competition on items such as tea and textiles. India has allegedly pursued a protectionist policy on certain

domestic products. Sri Lankan tea, for instance, could not enter the Indian market because India imposed restrictions on the entry of tea. Since the countries of the region have not been able to improve their intra-regional economic relations despite the impetus of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), they prefer to go it alone with their neighbours. As a result, India's bilateral relations have become crucial for all South Asian countries except Pakistan – because of its conflictual relations with India. Even during the most normal situations, there has been very little bilateral trade between India and Pakistan.

In dealing with inter-state conflict, the upsurge in terrorist violence cannot be discounted in the present-day world. South Asia is likely to be in the midst of such conflicts indefinitely because its countries are experiencing various forms of state-sponsored terrorism, cross-border terrorism, internal terrorism, clandestine wars, or religious conflict deliberately fomented by interested groups. Moreover, as Jaswant Singh (2002) articulates, terrorism "redefines political geography, for it accepts no boundary; it is an ideology itself; it conquers and colonizes the mind through terror, it has thus redrawn the contours of geo-politics".

The focus of relationships between the countries of the region has now shifted to the issue of terrorism. The state is being called to account for its failure to address the basic problems of people, let alone the security guarantees it should provide. The vicious circle of poverty, crime and all other forms of conflict is likely to be further aggravated in the absence of intervention by the state. Nepal is now struggling to cope with the Maoist menace and has diverted 50 per cent of its developmental budget to combat operations.

The challenge of terrorism to the capacity of the state for conventional crisis management is becoming increasingly intractable. The terrorists strike fear into the people and the failure of government to reassure them has helped the Maoists' cause in Nepal. When the Maoists call for *bundh* (a strike), they are successful despite the full resources of the state being mobilized to foil it. None the less, the five-day strike organized by the Maoists in the last week of April 2002 seemed to provoke the people to defiance, and various professional and other groups took to the streets in their vehicles.

Externally, the terrorism issue has enhanced defence cooperation between and among the countries of the region and the world but, at the same time, it is also likely to create misunderstanding among them. India might view the increased involvement of extraregional powers in the anti-terrorist drive in Nepal with particular concern. US military experts have recently toured the areas badly affected by the Maoist insurgency. This was a follow-up to the visit of US Secretary of State Colin Powell in January 2002, and the US interest, though a part of the anti-terrorist

drive worldwide, is apparently viewed with great concern by both China and India because of Nepal's strategic position between the two. Although India seems to be cautious about showing its concern about such activities, it is understood that India has drawn the attention of the United States to the traditional and extensive relationship existing between India and Nepal.

Summing up

Inter-state conflict in South Asia is endemic, especially in the context of Indo-Pakistan relations. The foreign policy of the South Asian countries is Indo-centric, each dealing with India in a variety of ways. Moreover, India looms large in their domestic politics and in developmental, social, economic and security areas. Such all-encompassing relations would inevitably give rise to occasional disputes, although strategies for the prevention, containment, management and resolution of conflicts are also in place between India and its neighbours. In the past, when many countries of the region were under authoritarian regimes, there was a tendency to seek external sources of legitimacy. India always figured negatively in those days because Indian leaders, whether in government or in opposition, generated conflict by speaking critically of such regimes.

Now regime type is not a problem for many South Asian countries because of the changed political landscape since the end of the Cold War. However, the return of Pakistan to military rule and its abandonment of past policy have intensified inter-state conflict. Moreover, both India and Pakistan have missed the new opportunity to mend fences in the aftermath of 11 September 2001. They could have made a radical departure from their antagonistic relations and built a more cooperative and friendly relationship. Given the nature of their mistrust since the birth of Pakistan, and in view of the recent intensified conflict, it can be assumed that Indo-Pakistan relations are likely to remain conflictual even if the Kashmir problem is resolved, because Indo-Pakistan animosity is not connected just to the Kashmir issue. Only the restructuring of polity and society and a qualitative change in élite perceptions in both countries would make a difference.

For South Asian countries, the internal dimension of security, which implies comprehensive security, is becoming crucial for national security. If a government fails to address a problem concerning its people, more turmoil and upheaval will result. Moreover, the countries' propensity to conflict will always be high if they are engulfed in crises generated by factors such as the identity problem, élite perceptions and regime type. What is more significant is that conflicts, whether of domestic or interna-

tional origin, are being transformed into a "commercial enterprise". A recent study on Kashmir has shown the links between "militant operatives, security personnel and timber smugglers. Individuals close to resistance groups, as well as those in the state government, acknowledged the existence of such a nexus in off-the-record conversations" (International Center for Peace Initiatives, 2002: 11). This phenomenon is also observed in the Maoist People's War in Nepal, where the insurgents are reported to have been enticed by money and other inducements. When any war loses its ideological content, it tends to become more anarchic and terroristic. Thus, newer sources of insecurity are on the increase in South Asia. Countries that are in the grip of terrorism have to "spend a lot to get a little". It entails huge defence spending but fewer funds for development. Smaller countries such as Nepal, whose capacity for resource mobilization is too low to counter any threat, are therefore more vulnerable to the emerging crises.

Notes

1. See the text of the Assam Accord in *The Telegraph* (Calcutta), 17 August 1985.
2. See the text of the Mahakali Treaty, the Letter of Exchange, and Minister Pashupati Shumshere Rana's interview refuting criticisms of the treaty in Jha (1996).
3. For more details, see Iyer (1999). For genesis and development, comment and rebuttal, see Gyawali and Dixit (1999).

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7

Terrorism and political agitation in post-colonial South Asia: Jammu-Kashmir and Sri Lanka

Kingsley de Silva

Introduction

This chapter is a brief introduction to a neglected theme, the study of terrorism in the politics of post-colonial South Asia. Some questions relating to terrorism are raised; some answers are attempted. We need to begin the process of answering some of these questions by pointing out that the term "terrorism", like ethnicity, eludes precise definition (see Laqueur, 2001a,b). Some writers on the theme would do without a definition of terrorism at all and proceed to describe or discuss it in its many manifestations as a harsh reality in modern and contemporary world politics. In many ways this is preferable to the comfortable but bland moral neutrality of those who argue that one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter, and move from there to blur the distinction between terrorism and war, and between terrorism and ordinary criminal acts.[1]

Walter Laqueur, one of the most respected experts on terrorism, asserts that:

One of the better definitions of terrorism was provided by the US Department of Defense, which in 1990 described terrorism as "the unlawful use of, or threatened use of force or violence against individuals or property, to coerce and intimidate governments or societies, often to achieve political, religious, or ideological objectives." But even this working definition has not found acceptance among those

studying the subject. Perhaps the only characteristic generally agreed upon is that terrorism always involves violence or the threat of violence. (Laqueur, 2001b: 5–6)

Two American political scientists writing in 1982 attempted to explain the difference between terrorism and civil disobedience:

The obvious and most essential difference between civil disobedience and terrorism is clearly the latter's unswerving commitment to violence as a means of achieving the terrorist's goal, where civil disobedience uncompromisingly forswears all forces of violence. Both may require breaking the laws of a nation, but for civil disobedience the law that is broken as an act of protest must always be somewhat relevant or appropriate to the object of the protest. Terrorism has no such restraint. (Devine and Rafalko, 1982: 44)

We turn to Fred Halliday's concise introduction to ''Terrorism'' for a convenient identification of some crucially important aspects of terrorism:

[Its] central meaning is the use of terror for furthering of political ends, and it was originally used to denote the use of terror by the French revolutionary government against its opponents.... This usage of the term to cover terror by governments, has become less common, though by no means irrelevant, and in most contemporary usage the term covers acts of terror by those opposed to governments. The range of activities which the term covers has been wide, but four main forms of action tend to be included: assassination, bombings, seizures of individuals as hostages, and more recently, the hijacking of planes. (Halliday, 1993: 403–404)

Halliday adds that ''in the 1970s the term began to be used to cover acts of violence committed by political groups outside the country in which they were primarily active'' (1993: 404). One could include in this the suicide ''bombers'', human beings with explosives attached to their bodies, killing themselves but more importantly killing others in the process (often prominent political figures identified for assassination); provocative attacks on places of religious worship, including those of great historical importance; and in all of this a total lack of concern for the lives of the civilian population who happen to be around when the human bombs go off.

To illustrate the links between terrorism and political agitation in South Asia, two case-studies have been chosen in the two countries most affected currently by terrorism: Jammu-Kashmir in the north-west of India, and Sri Lanka, in its current ethnic conflict between the Tamil separatists in the north – and to a lesser extent in the east of the island –

and the forces of the government. In Jammu-Kashmir, the present phase of terrorism began in the mid- and late 1980s, just as it did in Sri Lanka, where terrorism grew in intensity in the 1980s and 1990s. Jammu-Kashmir is not the only part of India affected by terrorist attacks by separatist forces; it is just the most prominent. Terrorism is a feature of politics in parts of the troubled north-east of India, but the focus of attention has been always on terrorism in Jammu-Kashmir.

Terrorism in South Asia

Over the past 50 years, i.e. in the post-colonial phase of its history, South Asia has had a record of violence in public life unusual even for states and societies breaking free of colonial rule in any part of the world. One feature of this is the large number of heads of government or heads of state, senior politicians and other public figures killed by assassins. Indeed, no other part of the world has seen so many heads of state and heads of government, so many prominent personalities, political and national, become the victims of the assassin's bullets and bombs as South Asia over the past 50 years. In India it began with the assassination of Mohandas K. Gandhi in 1948. After a lull of over 35 years came the assassination of a prime minister, Indira Gandhi (1984), and seven years later of her son and successor as prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi, who was leader of the opposition at the time he was killed.[2] In the first two cases, the assassins came from within the country: M. K. Gandhi was assassinated by Hindu extremists, and in the case of Indira Gandhi Punjabi Sikhs were reacting against her government's rigorous policies against burgeoning separatist agitation in that part of the country. Rajiv Gandhi's assassins – the Tamil separatist group the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) – came from outside the country, from Sri Lanka.

In Pakistan, the country's first prime minister was assassinated within four years of independence, followed, as in the case of India, by a lull of over 25 years until the violent elimination of two heads of government/ heads of state. The hanging of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto is widely seen as a judicial murder. If this would not qualify as a terrorist act, the mysterious and violent death of Zia ul-Haq, the man who put Bhutto in jail and set in motion the train of events that led to his execution, would qualify as one because the plane crash in which he was killed may have been caused by a bomb planted in it.

When we turn to Bangladesh, whose founder and several members of his family were killed in 1975, to be followed by the assassination of his successor in 1981 (Gupta, 1981; Lifschultz, 1986; Mascerenhas, 1986), we are back to terrorism as a feature of South Asian politics. The shadow of

these assassinations still lies across the political landscape of Bangladesh like some sinister natural force seeking to regain dominance over public life.

Sri Lanka's record has been equally grim, perhaps even more so, beginning with the assassination of its third prime minister in 1959. Nearly 35 years later came the next assassination, of R. Premadasa, the island's second executive president, in 1993; three of its most prominent politicians were assassinated between March 1991 and October 1994, each of them a potential head of government, all of them, including Premadasa, assassinated by the LTTE. Among the victims of LTTE assassinations were several Tamil politicians, including A. Amirthalingam, the head of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), in 1990, and heads of Tamil separatist groups, rivals of the LTTE, all eliminated in a deliberate policy of securing primacy in the leadership of Tamil politics through a campaign of terror.

There is no parallel for this in the post-colonial states of South-East Asia, with the exceptions of Myanmar (Burma) in the earliest phase of its independence when Aung San, its prime minister designate, and several ministers of his provisional government were assassinated in July 1947 (Collis, 1956; Trager, 1966);[3] and Viet Nam during the years of its long civil war.

Indeed, political assassinations of leaders have been elevated to a macabre art form in South Asia, as has the exploitation for political advantage by the closest relatives of the victim of the assassins of the grief and sense of loss that often flows from the killings – or, more particularly, the public expressions of such grief and sense of loss. Developed into an elaborate ritual and high political theatre, the ultimate objective is personal or party advantage in the electoral process, or both. In the intensely competitive electorates of South Asia, sorrow has become an eminently marketable commodity. The beneficiaries have been the wives or daughters, principally, of a murdered leader and, occasionally, a son (Rajiv Gandhi, for instance) but not, so far, a husband. In this, if in nothing else, Sri Lanka was the pacesetter, beginning in 1960;[4] the assassination of S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike helped to bring his widow, Sirimavo Bandaranaike, to power (1960–1965, 1970–1977) and to national prominence as a political personality. Her first political campaign of July 1960 is a classic study in the deliberate exploitation of public expressions of sorrow for personal and party benefit.

Only one of these violent deaths in South Asia did not have an overt political motive – the assassination of Sri Lanka's third prime minister, S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, in September 1959. There the motive was a personal one. The man who planned the assassination – a *bhikkhu*, or member of the Buddhist order – had been closely associated with him, in

his eventually successful bid for electoral success in the mid-1950s, as one of the principal figures in an unusual movement of *bhikkhus*, who converted what might have been a normal electoral campaign in 1956 into a moral crusade on Bandaranaike's behalf. The man who did the shooting, also a *bhikkhu*, had been a minor figure in that campaign; he was a human instrument directed and driven by the personal enmity of the principal conspirator for the man he helped so much to bring to power. Even this murder, with a personal rather than a political motive, was not without links to the swings in the country's political moods of the mid-1950s and late 1950s. And in any event it had profoundly important political consequences in the emergence of Mrs. Bandaranaike to power, the first of South Asia's many political widows. She was to be followed a decade or so later by political orphans, if one may use that term to describe the Benazir Bhuttos, Rajiv Gandhis, Sheik Hasina Wajeds and Khalida Zias of this world. Sri Lanka's current executive president, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, could be described as being both a political widow and a political orphan (as the daughter of S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike and the widow of Vijaya Kumaratunga, assassinated in 1959 and 1988 respectively).

With the one exception of S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, every other assassination referred to above has had political motives. Some, especially those in India and Sri Lanka, were symptoms of a deep malaise in the political system, from the politics of Partition in India and Pakistan in their very early years, and thereafter from separatist agitation and ethnic conflict. Rajiv Gandhi's violent death was a unique example of an assassination directed by separatists from a neighbouring state, a consequence nevertheless of an ethnic conflict claiming a presumed mediator as a victim.

Case-study in terrorism: Jammu-Kashmir

The current crisis in Jammu-Kashmir continues to be South Asia's – indeed Asia's – most dangerous unresolved international dispute. That danger stems from two factors: the prolonged nature of the crisis, and its record of several episodes of warfare between the two neighbouring states of India and Pakistan. The conflict in the Kargil sector in Jammu-Kashmir, which brought India and Pakistan to the brink of war in 1999, and also the December 2001 attack on the Indian parliament attributed to Kashmiri separatists are the latest of these. On this latter occasion, Indian troops were massed in Kashmir on the border with Pakistan. It took several weeks before the tensions eased. The conflict in Jammu-Kashmir has two phases, with the mid-1980s as the dividing line. In the second phase, terrorism becomes a distinctive factor.

The Kashmir region is part of the Himalayan frontier of the *raj*, and the roots of the Kashmir conflict go back to the imperial conflicts of the nineteenth century as the *raj* continued to build a buffer zone between itself and the Tsarist empire. Although the British established control over Jammu-Kashmir, they let it remain a princely state rather than administer these territories under the direct rule of the *raj*. Even when they sought to establish boundaries with China and with Afghanistan in the Kashmir region, these were never clearly or fully demarcated.

The core of the current crisis could be identified as the diametrically opposed views on the legitimacy of the procedures through which the state of Jammu-Kashmir acceded to India: India claims that these procedures were legally sound; Pakistan insists that they violate the principles that guided the absorption of the princely states in India or Pakistan at the Partition of the *raj* in 1947 (Gupta, 1967; Lamb, 1991, 1994; Schofield, 1996; Behera, 2000; see also Thomas, 1992; among the early accounts of the Kashmir dispute is Korbel, 1966). Indeed, the Kashmir dispute arose out of a conspicuous reluctance on the part of the British at the time of the Partition of the *raj* to adhere strictly to the rules and policies by which the princely states were absorbed into the two successor states of the *raj*. The failure to resolve the Jammu-Kashmir problem at the time of the Partition was either the most egregious of the blunders that occurred at that time, or a matter of calculated choice in an effort to strengthen the principal successor state to the *raj*, India. From the outset, the leaderships in India and Pakistan compounded the original problem by turning the Kashmir issue into a symbol of their respective national identities. For Pakistan, Kashmir was part of the unfinished business of the Partition of the *raj*, the completion of the separate state the founders had dreamed of in the 1930s and 1940s. For India, control over Jammu-Kashmir was an assertion of the secularity of the Indian state. These diametrically opposed positions have left the Jammu-Kashmir issue even more intractable than the dispute between India and China over the border between the two countries. Today, more tension prevails over the actual Line of Control between the Indian- and Pakistani-held parts of Jammu-Kashmir than over the disputed boundary between India and China.

The Kashmir dispute has had an important military dimension for both countries. Ever since India crossed the international frontier of 1947 in response to an attack by Pakistani irregulars in Kashmir proper, the cease-fire line has become an extension of the international border. Nevertheless, this international frontier leaves both India and Pakistan dissatisfied. India insists on its rights to regions in Kashmir, which it claims should belong to it as heir of the rulers of Jammu-Kashmir. Large extents of territory in Ladakh are held by China, which India claims as belonging to it. Then there are the territories under Pakistani control in

what is known as Azad Jammu-Kashmir: Swat, Gilgit and the so-called Northern Territories. Pakistan aspires to absorb much of the Kashmir Valley and other parts of Jammu-Kashmir controlled by India. Whenever an opportunity to assert their rights presents itself, both India and Pakistan are quick to exploit it.

In the first two wars between India and Pakistan, in 1947 and 1965, Pakistan sought to challenge, if not reverse, the decision to convert Jammu-Kashmir into a state of the Indian union. One result of the first of these wars was that about one-third of Jammu-Kashmir was brought under Pakistani control. The second war gave Pakistan no advantage at all, and in the third, which took place in 1971 against the background of India's successful intervention in support of the East Pakistani separatist movement and the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent state, the diplomatic and political advantages were unmistakably with India (Sisson and Rose, 1990). The Simla Agreement of 1972, which brought the Indo-Pakistani war of 1971 to an end, was as much of an unequal treaty as anything the British had signed with weaker or weakened neighbours in the days of the *raj*.

Following the Simla Agreement of 1972, the Kashmir problem lost some of its salience as a territorial dispute between Pakistan and India for a decade or so. But the policy of benign (or not so very benign) neglect that India pursued over Jammu-Kashmir from the early 1970s began to confront a severe test in the changed situation in Kashmir in the 1980s, through a new development – the stirrings of a growing radicalization among the Kashmiri Muslims. Certainly the turmoil in the Punjab, which culminated in the seizure of the Golden Temple by the most violent of the separatists and eventually the attack on the temple by the Indian army and the assassination of Indira Gandhi, had its lessons for Kashmiri militants.

Kashmiri terrorism and the rise to prominence of separatist groups who resorted to terrorist tactics begin at this stage. Once the new radicalism reached Kashmir, the struggle was joined by radicalized Islamist groups from outside – from Afghanistan, for instance – and this was to have its impact on Indo-Pakistan relations and on regional security. Pakistan refused to be restrained in regard to events across the border on the basis of the Simla Agreement, an agreement signed during a period of extreme weakness. Kashmiri Muslims had begun to look beyond Pakistan, to Afghanistan, Iran and the Middle East. Equally important, the forces of nationalism that led to the prolonged resistance to the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union were soon at work in Jammu-Kashmir, transforming the nature of politics there in the process. The Jammu-Kashmir issue returned to its pre-Simla accord form of an emotional factor in the domestic politics of both India and Pakistan, but

especially in Pakistan. For both civilians and military leaders, Kashmir was a useful rallying cry and a readily available issue with which to divert attention from failures in social and economic policies. This profound change in the attitudes of the Kashmiri population in the 1980s illustrated the interaction between the national, regional (South Asian) and international factors in exacerbating an already tense situation.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was only one of the international factors that affected the situation in Jammu-Kashmir. The second, the Iranian revolution, was just as important.

By the mid-1980s the drift towards violence was virtually inexorable. The defeat of the Soviet forces in Afghanistan and their departure from that country led to a dramatic increase in violence in Kashmir. Kashmiris trained by Afghan mujahidin, and mujahidin groups themselves, had a major impact on the politics of Jammu-Kashmir and on the separatist groups there. The mujahidin included mercenaries from all parts of the Islamic world – Libya and Iran, Sudan and Egypt – and from Bangladesh, who, having secured a victory over the Soviet forces, turned their attention to Jammu-Kashmir.

Kashmiris trained by the mujahidin, and the mujahidin themselves, had an enormous influence on Kashmiri separatist forces, from the Jammu-Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) to other and more violent groups, some smaller, some larger than the JKLF, often in conflict with each other but more often in conflict with Indian security forces present in Jammu-Kashmir in enormous numbers (Amin, 1995; and Bose, 1997).[5] Separatism was now linked with terrorism through the adoption of the techniques of resistance and aggression popularized by the mujahidin in Afghanistan. Dissidents were targeted for elimination and more Kashmiri Muslims were killed in the process than others. Over 100,000 Kashmiri Pandits moved out of the Kashmir Valley to Jammu, Delhi and elsewhere. Their lives were too insecure in the Kashmir Valley.

Pakistan facilitated the transfer of the mujahidin from Afghanistan to Indian-controlled Jammu-Kashmir. The assistance from Pakistan has taken several forms: provision of military training, the supply of weapons, safe houses and "bases" for the separatist guerrillas. Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) has been prominent in helping to sustain the Kashmiri resistance. In 1992, George Fernandes, then India's minister for Kashmir affairs, put Pakistan's role in its proper perspective: "I do not believe any foreign hand created the Kashmir problem. The problem was created by us … and others decided to take advantage of it" (1992: 286), a point as valid today as it was in 1992. Ten years later, Fernandes, now Union minister of defence, has not indulged in any reiteration of this theme. There is, instead, an intensity in his attacks on terrorism in India, Pakistan and their neighbours, and indeed in the world in general, that

leaves little room for the balanced judgement he showed in 1992 (Fernandes, 2002).

Improvements in mountain-climbing techniques have made it possible for both India and Pakistan to send soldiers into the Siachen glacier region (Wirsing, 1991), in a prolonged confrontation over the border in one of the most inaccessible parts of Kashmir. Here the soldiers are more vulnerable to the bitter cold than to the weapons used by the opposing army.

None of the recent changes in the world around Jammu-Kashmir have affected the public posture of the governments of India and Pakistan. The fact that Kashmir is an integral part of India is treated as something beyond debate by India. Any attempt by Pakistan to raise the issue at a diplomatic level is dismissed as an attempt to interfere in India's internal affairs. For Islamabad, Kashmir is an unresolved international dispute. The two principal protagonists remain inflexibly resistant to any change in their attitude.

Case-study in terrorism and separatist agitation: Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka provides an excellent case-study of the emergence of a separatist movement and its transformation from relatively peaceful agitation in the 1950s and 1960s to its present position of being an extraordinarily violent struggle with regional ramifications. Although external forces were less important in precipitating the present crisis than they were in Jammu-Kashmir, the geographical location of the majority of the Tamil population was conducive to the growth of separatist sentiment. Where an ethnic (or religious) minority is concentrated in a region or regions of a country, and indeed constitutes the overwhelming majority of the population there – as is the case with the Tamils of the Jaffna peninsula and Jaffna district in Sri Lanka in the north of the island (and to a lesser extent in the other component districts of the Northern Province) – and where, in addition, there is a very large population of co-ethnics in close proximity just across a narrow and shallow sea – in what was once the Madras Presidency of British India, and since the mid-1950s the state of Tamil Nadu – geography and demography combine to provide an ideal breeding ground for a separatist movement. Ethnic cohesion and a heightened sense of ethnic identity, important ingredients for the emergence of separatist sentiment, had existed in Jaffna and the Jaffna district since the mid-1950s; indeed, some would argue that these had been in existence since the 1940s in the last decade of British rule.

However, the striking feature of the emergence of Tamil separatism in Sri Lanka, in contrast to contemporary separatist movements in Myan-

mar, Thailand and the Philippines, is its late development. It took 25 years or more for early manifestations of separatist sentiment (in the late 1940s and early 1950s) to develop into a full-fledged separatist movement. That transformation was the result of the operation of a number of factors. These included a sense of relative deprivation at the loss of, or the imminent loss of, the advantageous or privileged position the Tamil minority enjoyed under British colonial rule, and a perceived threat to the ethnic identity of the Tamils from political, economic and cultural policies introduced in the mid-1950s and thereafter; all of this resulted in perceived grievances of a political or economic nature, or both. There were, in addition, episodes or incidents of ethnic violence from the mid-1950s – in 1956 and 1958.

The Tamil response went through several stages and phases, beginning with peaceful political pressure in the mid-1950s, moving on to episodes of civil disobedience in the early 1960s and then to incidents of violence in the 1970s; that violence itself graduated from sporadic incidents to more systematic attacks directed against state property, the police and security forces, until it became a dangerous threat to the integrity of the post-colonial Sri Lankan state by the early 1980s. The avowed objectives of the agitation in the earliest stages were greater autonomy for a region or a people within the Sri Lankan polity. This agitation moved on to pressure for conversion of the island's unitary structure to a federal or quasi-federal one, until it reached its current phase of an armed struggle for a separate state encompassing most or parts of the northern and eastern littoral regions and their hinterlands (see de Silva, 1998).

By the mid-1970s, radicalization of politics in Jaffna was an established fact, and with radicalization came violence, including the beginnings of a terrorist campaign that was to last throughout the next two decades. At the beginning that campaign was a bitter internecine struggle between competing separatist forces in which the targets, in carefully chosen acts of political violence, were Tamils associated with the United Front government of that period – a coalition between the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and Marxist parties. There was, for example, the attempted murder of a pro-government Tamil MP, followed by the murder in 1975 of the SLFP mayor of Jaffna, Alfred Durayappah, the most prominent of the Tamil supporters of the United Front government in the north. This takes on a special significance as the first political assassination associated with the future leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Velupillai Prabhakaran, then a youth of 17. In an interview with the well-known Indian journal *India Today* (30 June 1986), he later claimed that it was his "first military encounter".[6] And so there began a familiar cycle of politically inspired violence: political rhetoric that espoused a resort to violence was followed soon enough by violence, whether in the form of

attacks on the police or the killing of carefully chosen victims (generally supporters of the government in the Jaffna peninsula) aimed at conveying the chilling political message that opposition to and indeed deviation from the Tamil United Front's (TUF) – the predecessor of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) – programme carried fearful risks. A part of this programme included bank robberies, generally to finance the political activities of these groups but also to line the pockets of the leaders.

More ominously, by the mid- and late 1970s the increasingly turbulent politics of the Jaffna peninsula began to be treated in Tamil Nadu as an integral part of its own internal politics. The process of internationalization of Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict had begun. The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, effectively checked from pursuing its separatist goals in India, took vicarious pleasure in giving encouragement and support to separatist tendencies among the Tamils of Sri Lanka. To the latter, worsening relations with the United Front government tended to make ties with Tamil Nadu more attractive than they had once been. Although the links were still fitful and tentative, Tamil politics in Sri Lanka now had a regional rather than a purely local impact because of the Tamil Nadu connection.

These militant groups, who had begun as foot soldiers of the separatist struggle and had become a vital link between the established politicians of the TUF (and its successor the TULF) and the Tamil people in the north and east of the country, were in no mood to let the TULF settle down to a more sedate role befitting its national position as an opposition group within parliament, with its leader occupying the influential position of Leader of the Opposition, which he did from 1977 to 1983. They were soon – by the late 1970s – much more than mere foot soldiers: they moved upwards to subaltern status, and then to a position of the alternative leadership; they stamped their influence on the ideology of separatism by giving it a more radical form through their emphasis on political violence. From that vantage point they proceeded to determine the strategy and the tactics for the campaign for separatism. They did it in association with the TULF whenever that was possible, and in opposition to them if they thought it necessary. By the early 1980s the parliamentarians of the TULF were compelled to cede to them the primary leadership in the separatist struggle. In that position of leadership – and here again there was a remarkable similarity to a radical nationalist Marxist force in the Sinhalese areas of the country, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna – they scorned parliamentary politics and proclaimed a preference for violent tactics and a resort to terrorism.

A study of the LTTE's brief and tempestuous history provides a classic example of two trends in separatist struggles in many parts of the world

(Swamy, 2002; O'Ballance, 1989; see also Peiris, 2002; Gunaratna, 2002: 257–262; de Silva, 2000): first, the youthful cadres linked to conventional political parties for a common political struggle successfully undermine the latter's leadership in situations of violent resistance to the state; and, second, a small, violent group among the separatist agitators and activists is able to establish their supremacy among them through a ruthless and bloody internecine struggle. No similar group in other parts of South and South-East Asia illustrates the operation of these two trends better than the LTTE does. In less than 15 years it has succeeded in dominating regional politics in the Jaffna peninsula and in the Tamil areas in the north and east of the island, systematically rendering its former mentors, as well as its rivals and opponents, within the Tamil community peripheral and dispensable while, at the same time, posing a serious threat to the integrity of the state. One by one, its rivals and opponents among Tamil separatist groups succumbed to the relentless violence of the LTTE. An essential feature of the process was the physical elimination of the leadership of several important Tamil separatist groups, rivals and even one-time associates of the LTTE, and of hundreds of the cadres of such groups. At its foundation and modest early beginnings in 1972–1976 to 1983, the LTTE was only one of several separatist groups operating in the Jaffna peninsula. As we have seen, the LTTE cadres were originally foot soldiers and, occasionally, shock troops in the TULF campaign of opposition to the United Front government in the 1970s. Both drew sustenance and nourishment from the association, the armed separatist groups gaining respectability in the Tamil electorate through their association with the TULF and the latter, in turn, relying on the muscle power of the former to enforce a conformity to their separatist programme in the north and in parts of the east of the country.

Between 1977 and 1986 the TULF consistently lost ground to the LTTE, which established a dominance in the political life of Jaffna and over the Tamils of the peninsula that it has retained and consolidated since 1986 (de Silva, 1986: 313–314, 325, 347). Needless to say, public support for the LTTE increased exponentially after the anti-Tamil riots of 1983, the most destructive by far of the post-independence riots in terms of damage to property and lives lost. This became one of the most significant turning points in Sri Lanka's recent history for another reason, when regional support from Tamil Nadu became more open than ever before and the once covert support from the Indian government for Tamil militants in Sri Lanka became overt, thus helping to transform Tamil separatism into a really formidable force. The role played by Pakistan's ISI in Jammu-Kashmir was played by India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) in regard to the Tamil separatists in Sri Lanka.

The LTTE, which was not a favourite of the RAW, quickly seized the

leadership of the movement. It was helped by the short-sighted decision of the TULF leadership to seek refuge in Madras after 1983; the threat to their lives actually came from the LTTE itself rather than from others, but it was more politic not to blame the LTTE. The LTTE was soon strong enough to engage in a struggle on two fronts: against the security forces of the Sri Lankan state, and in internecine warfare in which it systematically eliminated all rival groups, culminating in the brutal massacre of the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization group between 1 and 3 May 1986 in Jaffna and the killing of its leader, Sri Sabaratnam.

In the early 1980s, there had been at least three prominent Tamil separatist groups and three contending leaders. By 1986 the LTTE under Velupillai Prabhakaran had triumphed over them all, and established its position as the only significant Tamil political group and the undoubted heir to the separatist ideology originally propounded by the Federal Party and its descendant, the TULF, under the leadership of S. J. V. Chelvanayakam. From this point onwards the LTTE had no real rivals among the Tamil political groups in the island. It set the pace and arranged the political agenda of Sri Lanka's Tamil minority. It also set about eliminating members of the TULF leadership living in Jaffna, killing them at regular intervals from 1989 onwards, including the TULF leader A. Amirthalingam himself in that year. Whereas it took 10 years physically to eliminate the bulk of the TULF leadership, it took a mere five years – up to 1991 – to eliminate the leadership of yet another of its rivals, the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (Jayatilleka, 1999; and Peiris, 1999).

Among the distinguishing features of the LTTE cadres, especially those sent on missions in the Sinhalese areas of the country, was the cyanide capsule they carried, dangling from a gold or gold-plated chain. This was evidence of the ultimate commitment to a cause, a readiness to commit suicide on its behalf rather than surrender or be captured, a level of commitment that a more conventionally trained regular army cannot match and cannot be expected to match. The cyanide capsule was, by its very nature, a weapon of defence. But the underlying philosophy – a readiness to die for a cause – soon had another facet when it involved a conversion of politically inspired suicide into a deadly offensive weapon through the human bomb. Male or female young persons were programmed to kill others in the process of sacrificing their own lives. The LTTE did not invent this macabre killing technique but learned it from others; perhaps the role models were the two suicide ''bombers'' who wrecked the US marines barracks in Beirut on 23 October 1983, killing 241 of them and demonstrating its value as a technique of guerrilla warfare in an incident that attracted enormous international publicity (see Cobban, 1985: 202–203). The first LTTE suicide ''bomber'' attack came

over three years later, on 5 July 1987 to be exact, when an LTTE opera-
tive using the *nom de guerre* of "Captain" Miller drove a vehicle into a
school in Jaffna housing Sri Lankan troops, killing 18 of them and killing
himself in the process (Swamy, 2002: 241–242). Once its effectiveness as
an offensive weapon was demonstrated, the LTTE set about the business
of perfecting the grisly technique of using suicide "bombers" for the
purpose of killing chosen victims. These were quite often persons of im-
portance in politics, but there would be others as well, less prominent.
With over 200 suicide bombers over 15 years, the LTTE became the most
accomplished exponent of this form of terrorism in the world.

The meticulous planning that went into such attacks was demonstrated
to the world in the killing of Rajiv Gandhi in May 1991 near Chennai in
Tamil Nadu, while he was campaigning during the general election to the
Lok Sabha. The suicide bomber was a Sri Lankan Tamil female. Two
years later, on 1 May 1993, a male suicide bomber of the LTTE elimi-
nated R. Premadasa, the Sri Lankan president, and a dozen or so of his
security and personal entourage. No other guerrilla group in any part of
the world could claim that it had killed a former prime minister and
leader of a major political party of a large regional power, and followed it
by assassinating the executive president of the state against which it was
in rebellion. In October 1994 another suicide "bomber" killed the presi-
dential candidate of the United National Party (UNP), Gamini Dis-
sanayake. On this occasion, over 50 persons in the gathering were killed,
including several former and potential cabinet ministers and the general
secretary of the party. Up to now, this has been the largest number of
persons killed by a suicide bomber in Sri Lanka.

The presidential election of December 1999 provided the LTTE with
the opportunity to attack President Kumaratunga, this time through a
female on the night of 18 December. The president escaped with minor
injuries. Once again, security staff and bystanders were among those
killed. On the same night, another LTTE suicide bomber, a male on this
occasion, chose an election rally to kill a former general in the army who
was expected to get a cabinet position if the UNP had won; 12 others
were also killed on that occasion and nearly 50 wounded. The killing field
was at Ja-ela, a township close to Colombo on the road to the national
airport.

All this was apart from a staggeringly long hit-list of politicians and
public figures, Sinhalese and Tamil, who were blown to bits with time
bombs or occasionally shot to death. Among those killed in this latter
manner was Lalith Athulathmudali, in April 1993, who had master-
minded the military campaign against the LTTE from 1984 to the end of
1988 as minister for national security, and Ranjan Wijeratne, in March
1991, who played a similar role from 1989 to 1991 as deputy minister of

defence. Between 1991 and 1994 the LTTE eliminated the core of the UNP's political leadership of the 1990s.

The LTTE's treatment of minorities who live or lived in their midst in the Jaffna peninsula has been extraordinarily brutal. During the whole course of Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict, the only incidents of ethnic cleansing have been organized by the LTTE. The Sinhalese population of the Jaffna peninsula has been either killed or compelled to flee. The Sinhalese were a much smaller minority than the Muslims there. The LTTE attacked the Muslims of the Northern and Eastern provinces at regular intervals between 1984 and 1990 and killed over 300 of them, including the massacre of 120 Muslims at evening prayers in August 1990 at a mosque in Kattankudy in Batticaloa in the Eastern Province (see de Silva, 1998: 268). The attacks culminated in the expulsion of the whole Muslim population of the Northern Province (estimated at 75,000 persons) *en masse* on 22 October 1990 (de Silva, 1998: 269; see also Hasbullah, 1999: 337–339). These victims of ethnic cleansing continue to live as refugees in the Sinhalese areas of the country, either in centres of Muslim habitation or among the Sinhalese.

The reference to the massacre of Muslims while at prayer in a mosque serves as an appropriate point of departure for an examination of another distinguishing feature of the LTTE's attitude: a total lack of concern for the religious sentiments and sensitivities of those it regarded as its opponents or enemies. We need to begin with an incident on 14 May 1985 when LTTE guerrillas dressed in military uniforms attacked the ancient city of Anuradhapura – the capital of Sri Lanka for over 1,000 years (to the tenth century CE) – and gunned down over 150 persons of all ages, all of them civilians (Swamy, 2002: 147–148). They also attacked one of the two most sacred sites of Sri Lankan Buddhism, the precincts of the bo- (bodhi) tree, perhaps the oldest identifiable tree in the world, believed to be a sapling of the bo-tree under which the Buddha attained enlightenment at Gaya in India and brought to Sri Lanka in the time of the Mauryan Emperor, Asoka. The complicity of India's Research and Analysis Wing in this attack was suspected from the outset and is now documented through reliable sources.[7] Two years later, on 27 July 1987, a group of LTTE operatives massacred 32 *sâmançras* (young *bhikkhus* in training) at Arantalawa in the Eastern Province. Then on 25 January 1998, the LTTE blew up a large section of the Dalada Maligawa (Temple of Tooth) in Kandy, the most sacred site of Buddhist worship for the Sinhalese and for the Theravada Buddhist world. Fortunately, the tooth relic of the Buddha was not harmed, but there was extensive damage to the building. In attacking the Dalada Maligawa, the LTTE was emulating Portuguese, Dutch and British invaders of Kandy of the past, except that there was no LTTE invasion, but simply a case of operatives sneaking in to organize the bombing.

Separatist groups that indulge in acts of calculated violence are often accused of being terrorist organizations. Few separatist groups operating in South and South-East Asia have deserved this epithet more than the LTTE. Generally such groups have a terrorist section operating in association with it or as a peripheral unit. With the LTTE, terrorism is part of its core, and has been so from its inception. How much of this terrorism derives from the political culture of internecine warfare and fratricidal violence in which the LTTE has had to operate, and how much is due to the nature of its leadership and of its leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, are matters for debate. There is no doubt however that the leader's personal attributes have much to do with it. In a *New York Times* article (29 May 1995), John Burns, Delhi correspondent of that newspaper, captured the essence of the problem thus:

He has shown a bloodthirstiness in dealing with opponents that has been compared with some of the cruellest figures in recent Asian history, including Pol Pot of Cambodia.

Prabhakaran, who is 40, leads a movement whose deeds, in scale, pale alongside the genocide committed by Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge of the 1970s . . . But what they lack in scope, they make up in brutality. . . .

[He] has established a rule of terror in the city of Jaffna. According to scores of accounts from defectors and others who have escaped the Tiger tyranny, many of his own lieutenants have been murdered; Tamils who have criticized him, even mildly or in jest have been picked up, tortured, and executed; others have been held for years in dungeons, half-starved, hauled out periodically for a battering by their guards.

Five years later, much the same assessment of him was made by a distinguished Indian political analyst.[8]

Conclusion

The brief studies on separatism in Jammu-Kashmir and Sri Lanka in this chapter illustrate some of the facets of terrorism in the politics of South Asia and provide some clues to how terrorism establishes itself where a political system is under unusual and great stress. Once terrorism becomes a major factor in the political struggle, the prospects of negotiating a settlement become all the more difficult, as is the case in Jammu-Kashmir and Sri Lanka.

To a much greater extent than Sri Lanka, the Jammu-Kashmir situation illustrates the importance of external factors as a stimulus of terrorism and in the triumph of those most prone to violence in political

contests. Jammu-Kashmir was too close to some of the most disturbed parts of the Islamic world – to Afghanistan and to Pakistan, if not to Iran itself – to escape the pull of ideological forces at play there and of the more violent techniques of political agitation. It was at once a domestic, a regional and an international conflict. Terrorism came to influence every one of these aspects in the Sri Lankan conflict, where the internationalization was done largely by India. But, in contrast to Jammu-Kashmir, the terrorist features of the separatist struggle were indigenous in inspiration, although, once the conflict erupted and persisted, it was prolonged largely because of the Indian intervention. Indian intervention made the Sri Lankan Tamil agitation more complex and violent than it had been before. In his well-known study of the LTTE, M. R. Narayan Swamy, an Indian scholar/journalist, made this point very clearly.

The lack of knowledge and reliable information on the covert role of India in Sri Lanka until the 1987 accord was one of the factors which precluded an intelligent analysis of the Indian involvement. Few Indians were aware of the kind of military muscle India was providing to Tamil groups to take on the government of a neighbouring country. Most Indian commentators were taken in by New Delhi's repeated assertions that it was not involved in the arming and training of the Tamils. Many Indians genuinely believed that the Indian connection was confined to Tamil Nadu and MGR and that Rajiv Gandhi had probably reversed the clouded involvement begun during his mother's tenure.

No one asked questions when Tamil groups with Indian patronage massacred innocent Sinhalese – although the killings of innocent Tamils by Sri Lankan security forces was always denounced loudly. It would be pertinent for Indians today to look back and see how the average Sri Lankan must have felt over the brazen patronage extended to people dubbed ''terrorists'' by Colombo. Tamil groups based in Tamil Nadu openly claimed credit for attacks on government/military targets in Sri Lanka – without inviting any criticism from the Indian government. Imagine the Punjab or Sind legislature in Pakistan announcing monetary aid to Kashmiri/Khalistani militants. Yet this is precisely what the Tamil Nadu legislature did in 1987. (Swamy, 2002: 331–332)

There is some similarity between the two conflicts in the marginalization of the so-called moderates. The Sri Lankan situation illustrates one unpalatable reality in such conflicts: the moderates propose a programme that is seemingly attractive, but with the passage of time, as events unfold, they lose control and are pushed to the periphery of the new political system. The Sri Lankan situation as regards Tamil politics illustrates this development with a clarity that is not always available in similar situations. Terrorism was a fact of life in every stage of the political struggle, which culminated in the marginalization of the moderates.

In Jammu-Kashmir as in Sri Lanka, those most prone to violence inherited the system. The process often led to violent conflicts between the separatist activists who triumphed over the moderates. The Kashmiri Muslims succeeded in ensuring that there was a multiplicity of separatist activists. The situation in Sri Lanka was fundamentally different: there the struggle for supremacy among the separatists culminated in the triumph of a single group, the sole "leaders" of the Tamils. Every other group was crushed, the leaders and other activists killed in conflict. Those who survived were reduced to servility, and they were able to remain in politics only if they served the needs of the winner. Worse still, the struggle not only led to the success of the most violent, it also led to the triumph of a single individual at the top of the pile.

Notes

1. See the discussion in Turk (1982) and Devine and Rafalko (1982). See also Wardlaw (1982) and Wilkinson (1979).
2. There is an easily accessible account of these assassinations in Tharoor (1998: 16–49).
3. For a recent assessment of the implications of this incident, see Ghosh (1998: 71–73). See also Oung (1996).
4. Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike was adopted as leader of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party during the parliamentary election of July 1960, an election that her party won with ease. She became the first woman to be elected as prime minister in recent times.
5. The Hizbul Mujahideen is often described as the largest Kashmiri militant group today. For a convenient list of such groups, see Abbas (2000).
6. The article was entitled "Profile of a Tiger". Durayappah was unarmed at the time of his killing – he was returning from a *kovil* (a Hindu temple). He was unsuspecting as well.
7. See Swamy (2002: 329, fn 10) for a reference to the RAW inspiration behind the attack.
8. Noorani (2000), in an op-ed piece in *The Statesman*, 5 June.

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8

South Asian contributions to United Nations peacekeeping operations, with particular reference to India's participation

Satish Nambiar

Introduction

The United Nations Organization was conceived at London in 1941 as the successor to the League of Nations, which was perceived to have failed in its most important function, that of preventing a second world war. On 1 January 1942, 26 countries at war with Germany and Japan met in Washington, where they expressed their conviction that the anarchy of international relations must be controlled. The Charter of the United Nations, as signed in 1945, set out a code of behaviour by which nations would work together to eliminate aggression and to promote economic and social security. The central aim of the United Nations Charter was to "maintain international peace and security, and to that end, take collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression".

Chapter VI of the Charter, regarding peaceful settlement of disputes, obliges parties to a dispute that is likely to endanger international peace and security to seek a solution by "negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice". Chapter VII of the Charter confers powers on the Security Council to resort to the use of armed force, should various other measures fail, in order to maintain or restore international peace and security. Under this Chapter, member states are also required to provide armed forces and other as-

sistance and facilities for the purpose. In pursuance of this provision, in April 1947 the Military Staff Committee (also provided for in this Chapter) produced a report that agreed that the five permanent members should provide the bulk of the armed forces. But members of the Committee were unable to agree on the size and locations of such forces and the balance of contributions, primarily owing to the degree of political mistrust that then prevailed. The military arrangements foreseen in the Charter therefore never became reality, leaving the United Nations without the means of enforcement to promote its central aim.

The concept and evolution of United Nations peacekeeping operations

In the early years of the existence of the United Nations therefore, while the use of military personnel on a large scale and under the exact terms of the Charter was being discussed with diminishing prospects of agreement, experiments in using military personnel on a far smaller scale evolved almost by accident. Small groups of unarmed military observers formed part of the United Nations missions in Greece in 1947 and in West Asia and India/Pakistan in 1949. This became a regular feature of United Nations peacekeeping missions, and continues to this day, even in missions where armed military contingents are deployed.

There is, in fact, no specific provision for peacekeeping in the United Nations Charter. It is an invention of the United Nations Secretary-General and the Secretariat, and evolved as a non-coercive instrument of conflict control under the provisions of Chapter VI at a time when Cold War constraints precluded the use of the more forceful steps permitted by the Charter under Chapter VII. During the Cold War, neither of the two superpowers was amenable to United Nations intervention against their allies or within their spheres of influence. Hence an improvisation emerged – *peacekeeping without combat connotations*.

As it evolved over the years, peacekeeping became an extraordinary art that called for the use of the military personnel not to wage war but to prevent fighting between belligerents; to ensure the implementation of cease-fires agreed upon by the parties to a conflict; and to provide a measure of stability in an area of conflict while negotiations were conducted towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict. To that extent, it is important to distinguish between the concepts of "collective security" and peacekeeping in the international environment. Whereas the former is a punitive process designed to be carried out with some degree of discrimination, but not necessarily impartially, the latter is politically impartial and essentially non-coercive. Hence peacekeeping was, and has

always been, based on a triad of principles that give it legitimacy as well as credibility:
• the consent of the parties to the conflict,
• the impartiality of the peacekeepers, and
• the use of force by lightly armed peacekeepers only in self-defence.
   The premise on which international peacekeeping is based is that violence in inter-state and intra-state conflict can be controlled without resort to the use of force or enforcement measures. Needless to say, there are many theorists, and no doubt a few practitioners, who are of the view that force needs to be met with force. An objective analysis of the history of conflicts would make it evident that the use of force and enforcement measures, particularly in internal conflicts, tends to prolong the conflict rather than resolve it speedily. This is not, however, to suggest that the use of force is to be ruled out altogether. In certain circumstances, use of force may well be called for as a catalyst for peaceful resolution.

The Cold War era

In the first 45 years of the existence of the United Nations, in so far as conflict resolution is concerned, there were many significant instances where peacekeeping was not applied. In superpower confrontations such as the Berlin and Cuban missile crises, the United Nations had only a peripheral role. In situations where superpower interests were directly involved, as in Czechoslovakia and Hungary and also in some Latin American conflicts, the United Nations played only a marginal role. West European nations did not permit any significant role for the United Nations in conflicts such as Northern Ireland, the conflict between the United Kingdom and Iceland over fishing rights, and the Falklands War. Similarly, the United Nations was excluded from a role in a number of conflict situations in Asia and Africa – the Chinese occupation of Tibet, the Sino-Indian and Sino-Soviet border conflicts, the war in Indo-China, the Vietnamese action in Kampuchea, the Chinese action against Viet Nam, and the conflict in the Horn of Africa. Notwithstanding these exclusions, United Nations peacekeeping operations covered various corners of the globe in furtherance of one of the primary purposes of the United Nations Charter; namely, the maintenance of international peace and security.

Post–Cold War era

With the end of the Cold War, United Nations activities in the maintenance of international peace and security increased considerably, the im-

pact being both quantitative and qualitative. As of 31 December 2001, the United Nations had mounted 54 peacekeeping operations; of these, 13 were established in the 40 years from 1948 to 1988, when UN Peace-keepers were the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, whereas the other 41 have been mounted since. In January 1988, 11,121 military, police and civilian personnel were deployed in United Nations peacekeeping oper-ations (PKOs), and the annual budget for peacekeeping was US$230.4 million; in September 1994, at the height of PKO commitment, 78,111 personnel were deployed and the annual budget was US$3.6 billion. However, the numbers declined thereafter and have only recently started going up again. As of 31 December 2001, the total number of military personnel and civilian police monitors deployed was 49,095. The figures for the number of countries contributing contingents showed a corre-sponding increase from 26 to 74. Though this figure later dropped to 37 as a consequence of a degree of retrenchment following what were per-ceived to be inadequacies of United Nations missions in the 1990s, it is a matter of some satisfaction that the international community is now in-creasingly committed to United Nations peace operations. This commit-ment is reflected in the fact that by 31 December 2001 the number of troop contributor countries had risen to 87. Of some significance is the fact that, of the 15 missions currently deployed, 5 are in Europe, 4 in West Asia, 4 in Africa, 1 in East Timor and 1 on the Indian subcontinent. The irony is that the deployment in Europe is in addition to a significant regional investment by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a military alliance.

The qualitative change is even more important, in that most of the recent conflicts have taken place, or are taking place, within states or between elements that were part of unitary states until they began to fall apart. The conflicts have not always been fought by national armies, but have involved paramilitaries and irregulars; in this process, civilians have been the main victims (90 per cent nowadays, against 10 per cent a de-cade or so ago). In many cases, state institutions have collapsed; in a few cases, there is no government. As a result, humanitarian emergencies have forced the international community to intervene. This is why the demands on United Nations peacekeeping have gone well beyond tradi-tional peacekeeping. PKOs now encompass activities such as the demobi-lization of troops and armed paramilitaries or irregulars, the promotion of national reconciliation, the restoration of effective government, the organization and monitoring of elections, and the provision of broader support to humanitarian aid missions, including protection of ''safe areas'' and escort of relief convoys. United Nations peacekeeping oper-ations have therefore become more expensive, more complex and more dangerous.

South Asian participation

Of all the United Nations activities, peacekeeping operations have attracted maximum attention during much of its almost 60-year history as an organization – primarily because conflicts make dramatic news and the deployment of an international military force by the Security Council to preserve a fragile peace makes a good story that can capture public interest in this electronic age. Of course, the publicity generated by its peacekeeping activities in the past was, for the most part, beneficial, especially in times when the Organization did not otherwise enjoy public confidence or credibility. In recent years, particularly since the deployment of United Nations forces in some intra-state conflicts in the early 1990s where there have been perceived inadequacies, even peacekeeping operations have drawn considerable adverse comment. However, India and the other countries of South Asia can take pride in the fact that, even in the context of such adverse comment on United Nations peacekeeping operations, their commitment has been quite remarkable.

India's contribution

As one of the founding members of the United Nations, India has made a very significant and unconditional contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security in every way. In no other field of activity has this been more manifest than in United Nations operations, commencing with its participation in Korea in 1950. To date India has participated in 36 UN operations across the globe, and has the unique distinction of having provided personnel for every single peacekeeping operation undertaken by the United Nations in Africa – an enviable record by any standards! The United Nations operation in Korea, led by the United States, was a major military undertaking. India participated militarily with a medical unit comprising 17 officers, 9 junior commissioned officers and 300 other ranks. It then provided a Custodian Force of 231 officers, 203 junior commissioned officers and 5,696 other ranks under the command of Major-General S. P. P. Thorat for the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission, of which the Chairman was Lieutenant General K. S. Thimayya. India also contributed significantly to the Indo-China Supervisory Commission in Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam, deploying 970 officers, 140 junior commissioned officers and 6,157 other ranks over the period 1954–1970 and a medical detachment from 1964 to 1968.

The use of armed military contingents for United Nations peacekeeping was first resorted to with the deployment of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF 1) in the Gaza Strip and the Sinai after the Arab–Israeli war in 1956. From 15 November 1956 to 19 May 1967, 11

infantry battalions from India served successively with this force – a total of 393 officers, 409 junior commissioned officers and 12,393 other ranks in all. Major-General P. S. Gyani and Brigadier I. J. Rikhye were Force Commanders in this operation. This operation became a model for many subsequent peacekeeping operations. The success of UNEF apparently led the Security Council readily to accept a request by the Congo in 1960 for intervention on attaining independence from Belgium. The United Nations accepted responsibility for ending secession and reunifying the country. The rules of engagement were modified to cater for the use of force in defence of the mandate, in carrying out humanitarian tasks and in countering mercenaries. India's contribution to the Congo operation was not only substantial but vital. Between 14 July 1960 and 30 June 1964, two Indian brigade groups comprising a total of 467 officers, 404 junior commissioned officers (JCOs) and 11,354 other ranks participated; 36 Indian personnel lost their lives in the operation and 124 were wounded. Captain G. S. Salaria of the 3rd Battalion of the 1st Gorkha Rifles was posthumously awarded the Param Vir Chakra, India's highest gallantry award.

The United Nations operations in Cyprus, launched in 1964, saw three Indian Force Commanders: Lieutenant General P. S. Gyani, General K. S. Thimayya, who died in harness on 18 December 1965, and Major-General Diwan Prem Chand. Lieutenant General Diwan Prem Chand also distinguished himself as the Force Commander in the United Nations operations in Namibia in 1989, which oversaw that country's transition to independence.

In recent years, India has provided military observers to many of the United Nations missions deployed to keep the peace in various parts of the world: Iran and Iraq in 1988–1990; Angola in 1989–1991; Central America in 1990–1992; on the Iraqi–Kuwait border after the Gulf War in 1991; El Salvador in 1991; Liberia in 1994. India has provided police personnel to a number of United Nations missions, for example in Namibia, Cambodia, Haiti, Bosnia-Herzegovina and, most recently, Kosovo. Military contingents have been made available for a number of United Nations operations. A total of 2,550 all ranks in two successive battalion groups formed part of the United Nations force in Cambodia in 1992–1993, which monitored a cease-fire between the Cambodian government forces and the Khmer Rouge and assisted in the election process. A battalion group of about 1,000 all ranks served with great distinction in Mozambique in 1992–1993 and brought about a peaceful transition in that country. A brigade group totalling about 5,000 all ranks served in the United Nations mission in Somalia in 1993–1994 and drew acclaim from all parties to the conflict for their impartial conduct and the provision of succour through various welfare projects to the communities in the area

of responsibility. A battalion group and an engineer company totalling over 1,000 all ranks served in Angola in 1995. About 800 all ranks formed part of the United Nations mission in Rwanda in 1994–1995, which helped the country re-establish governance and the rule of law. A contingent comprising 131 officers, 163 JCOs and 2,613 other ranks served with the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone, together with 14 military observers and 31 staff officers for over a year, and acquitted itself most creditably in operations against the rebel forces. It is of relevance that, as regards the former Yugoslavia, the Government of India had, at the request of the Secretary-General, deputed me as the first Force Commander and Head of Mission. In that capacity I set up the operation from scratch in very difficult circumstances and commanded it for a year from 3 March 1992 to 2 March 1993. In 1994, when United Nations peacekeeping deployment was at its peak, India had more than 6,000 peacekeepers deployed in United Nations peacekeeping operations worldwide.

The deployment of 2,877 personnel as of 31 March 2002 reflects the commitment of troops, military observers and staff officers and civilian police from India in 9 of the 15 UN missions currently in operation. It includes the Force Commander in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, with a battalion group contingent together with a number of staff officers. A battalion group is deployed with the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia/Eritrea. Military observers and/or civilian police personnel are deployed with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), the Iraq–Kuwait Observation Mission in Kuwait, the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) in Western Sahara, where the Police Commissioner is from India, the United Nations Mission in Bosnia–Herzegovina, the United Nations Mission in Kosovo, and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). One colonel is deployed in northern Iraq with the United Nations Guards Contingent in Iraq, and there are three staff officers at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. And, as of 20 May 2002, Kamlesh Sharma has been appointed as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the UN operation in East Timor to assist that newly independent country in its transition.

Pakistan

Pakistan first participated in United Nations peace operations with the provision of ordinance and transport units and staff personnel for the mission in the Congo from July 1960 to June 1964. Since then, it has provided personnel for military contingents, military observers and staff officers, and civilian and electoral supervisors in 27 United Nations op-

erations worldwide (including Yemen, West Irian, Cyprus, Namibia, Western Sahara, Somalia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Liberia, Cambodia, the former Yugoslavia, Georgia, Haiti, Kuwait and Angola). It provided the Special Representative for the United Nations operation in Western Sahara in the person of Major-General (Retired) Sahibzada Yakub Khan; the commander for the West Irian mission from October 1962 to April 1963 in Major-General Said Uddin Khan; and the Chief Military Observer for the Somalia mission from June 1992 to March 1993 in Brigadier Imtiaz Shaheen. As of 31 March 2002, Pakistan is the second-largest troop contributor, with 5,455 personnel deployed in 9 of the 15 United Nations missions in operation. The Chief Military Observer of UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone is Major-General Syed Athar Ali from Pakistan.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh commenced its participation in United Nations peace operations with the provision of military observers for the United Nations mission that supervised the cease-fire after the war between Iran and Iraq from August 1988 to February 1991. Brigadier General Shaheed Anam Khan was the Acting Chief Military Observer of this mission from November 1990 to February 1991. Since then, Bangladesh has been at the forefront of United Nations peace operations, having participated in 27 missions to date. It has provided personnel for military contingents, military observers and staff officers, civilian police and medical personnel in Namibia, Western Sahara, Somalia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Liberia, Aouzou Strip in Chad, Cambodia, the former Yugoslavia, Georgia, Tajikistan, Haiti, Kuwait and Angola. The Force Commander for the mission in Mozambique from March to December 1994 was Major-General Mohammed Abdur Salam. Bangladesh provided the Police Commissioner for the UN Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) from March 1995. As of 31 March 2002, Bangladesh is the largest troop contributor, with 6,006 personnel deployed in 10 of the 15 UN missions in operation. Major-General Kazi Ahsaq Ahmed of Bangladesh is the Chief Military Observer of the mission in Georgia.

Nepal

For a country with a relatively small resource base, Nepal's contribution to United Nations peace operations has been quite remarkable. It commenced with the provision of military observers for the first operation set up in West Asia on 11 June 1948, namely the United Nations Truce Supervisory Organization (which incidentally still continues). Major-General Krishna Narayan Thapa was the Force Commander of the mis-

sion from October 1992 to November 1993. He was later the Chief Military Observer and subsequently the Force Commander of the Iraq/Kuwait mission from December 1993 to December 1995. Nepal has since provided personnel for military contingents, military observers and staff officers, and civilian police for a total of 20 missions. These include the second mission of the United Nations Emergency Force in the Gaza Strip and Sinai, the missions in Lebanon, India–Pakistan in 1965–1966, Somalia, Mozambique, Namibia, the former Yugoslavia, Haiti and Afghanistan/Pakistan and the Iraq/Kuwait mission. As of 31 March 2002, Nepal has 1,129 personnel deployed in 8 of the 15 United Nations missions in operation.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's capacity to participate in United Nations peace operations has been greatly inhibited by its internal problems. Even so, the country provided civilian police monitors for the United Nations operations in Mozambique from December 1992 to December 1994. One may hope that, as the internal situation stabilizes, Sri Lanka will participate more vigorously in United Nations peace operations.

The impact of participation

Spontaneous and unconditional participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations over the years has clearly demonstrated the commitment of the countries of South Asia to the objectives set out in the United Nations Charter, not just in terms of rhetoric and symbolism, but in real and practical terms, even to the extent of accepting casualties to personnel. This commitment has been acknowledged by the international community, successive Secretaries-General and the United Nations Secretariat. As far as India is concerned, the effectiveness of such participation and commitment to United Nations peacekeeping efforts has drawn respect and praise from fellow military people of other countries and others who have served jointly with its commanders, observers and contingents in various parts of the world. Hence, the image of the Indian army in the international arena is that of a highly competent, professional and well-trained force. This perception is also largely true of the armed forces of the other South Asian countries. It is a matter of some interest that, as of 31 March 2002, out of 87 troop contributor countries, Bangladesh has deployed the most, with 6,006 personnel; Pakistan is in second place with 5,455; India is in fourth place with 2,877; and Nepal is eleventh with 1,129.

The Indian army's experience in conducting counter-insurgency operations within the country with great understanding and compassion for the locals of the areas affected by insurgency enables it to put into practice techniques and approaches in United Nations peacekeeping operations that are unmatched by most other contingents. Much of India's participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations relates to national security interests. India's participation in the Korean and Cambodian operations demonstrated its stake in the stability of East and South-East Asia. Its vital interests in West Asia, in terms of both its energy requirements and its traditional connections, have been more than adequately reflected in its participation in the United Nations peacekeeping operations undertaken in the Gaza Strip and Sinai, Iran/Iraq, Iraq/Kuwait, Lebanon and Yemen. India's geostrategic interest in the stability and well-being of the newly emerged states of Africa has been demonstrated by its contributions and participation in the operations in the Congo, Namibia, Mozambique, Angola, Somalia, Liberia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone, and now in the Horn of Africa.

The way ahead

After a short period of retrenchment induced by the perceived inadequacies of some of the UN operations undertaken in the early 1990s, there has been a significant revival in the application of operations for the maintenance of international peace and security. In recognition of the inescapable need for this essential tool of conflict control, a panel was set up by the Secretary-General to carry out a detailed review of United Nations peace operations. The panel, headed by Lakhdar Brahimi (a former foreign minister of Algeria) and comprising a number of eminent persons from the international community with experience in various disciplines, submitted a comprehensive set of recommendations that were presented at the Millennium Summit in August 2000. Many of these recommendations are being implemented and others are under consideration and discussion.

One of the panel's important recommendations is that troop contributor countries must be part of the decision-making process in the United Nations Security Council that leads to the formulation of mandates for peacekeeping missions, their mid-course modification, the composition of forces and their scale of equipment. These cannot and must not be decisions taken by a handful of countries, and certainly not just by countries that make no troop contribution to a mission. This is vital as far as framing or modifying the Rules of Engagement are concerned, because these affect the functioning of the troops in the mission area and, more im-

portantly, their very lives. Given that four countries in South Asia – Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan – provide almost one-third of the total forces deployed in United Nations peace operations worldwide, the countries in the region need to develop a consensual approach in this regard, so that their voices are heard and their views acted upon in the corridors of power in New York. It would be appropriate for the South Asian representatives at the United Nations to act in consonance, in order to secure greater participation by the developed world in United Nations peace operations and also to ensure total political commitment to missions once they are set up.

Now that peacekeeping training centres have been set up in Bangladesh, Nepal and India, these institutions should establish formal links for sharing their experiences and effect coordination in evolving common guidelines and syllabuses for training. Equally, much value could be derived from the conduct of joint training exercises.

At the operational level it would be useful to consider the scope for strengthening the United Nations ''Stand-by'' arrangements. One of the major shortcomings at present is the inability of the United Nations rapidly to deploy sizeable forces with a functional headquarters into a mission area after a Security Council decision has been taken. With institutional coordination between the training centres in South Asia, it might be feasible to activate a brigade-level joint headquarters together with battalion-size contingents for rapid deployment when required. Needless to say, such an arrangement would need a demonstrable degree of political statesmanship and determination. There will also be a need for assured logistics lift capability from a country such as the United States.

Finally, it is no revelation that at present the institutional benefits that accrue from United Nations peacekeeping operations, such as contracts for provisions and services, are secured only by firms and entrepreneurs from some of the Western countries. The representatives of these firms and countries are familiar with UN procedures and are in touch with the Secretariat on a regular basis for this purpose. This stranglehold needs to be broken with a concerted effort by South Asia's enterprising firms and entrepreneurs, assisted strongly and publicly by their governmental agencies and the permanent missions in New York, so that some share of these benefits is derived by the people of the South Asian region too.

9

The United Nations and South Asia: Bangladesh's contribution to UN peacekeeping

Syed Fatemy Ahmed Roomy

As major contributors to United Nations peacekeeping forces, South Asian countries need to examine UN requirements and identify problem areas. They also need to examine the reasons for their failures and successes in order to evolve a *modus operandi* to meet future challenges. This chapter deals with these issues, centring on Bangladesh, currently the largest contributor of peacekeepers in the United Nations peace effort. An attempt is also made to examine UN requirements for peacekeeping operations in relation to South Asian preparedness. Finally I suggest measures to improve effectiveness.

Peacekeeping operations and Bangladesh

Faith in the principles of the UN Charter constitutes the most important cornerstone of the foreign policy of Bangladesh. Bangladesh is one of the few countries in the world that has recognized the Charter of the United Nations in its constitution (Article 25). Thus, Bangladesh's participation in UN missions is based on a firm legal framework (Ali, 1998: 43). Bangladesh commenced its journey as a member of the international peacekeepers' club in 1988 by participating in the UN Iran–Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG). Following great success in UNIIMOG, Bangladesh was next invited to participate in the UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) in Namibia. From then onward, Bangladesh was

invited to participate in almost all the missions owing to its sincerity, impartiality and professional competence.

Ongoing peacekeeping operations

Currently Bangladesh is participating in 10 different peacekeeping operations (PKOs) with a total of nearly 6,000 officers and men. The present deployment of forces from Bangladesh in various assignments is shown in Table 9.1.

The most striking feature of the present deployment is the contribution to the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). Here Bangladesh has

Table 9.1 The deployment of Bangladeshi forces in UN peacekeeping operations, 2002

Mission	Observers	Staff	Contingent	CIVPOL	Total
UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO)	6	–	–	–	6
UN Iraq–Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM)	6	–	766	–	772
UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG)	5	–	–	–	5
UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET)	0	15	524	34	573
UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)	1	–	–	94	95
UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC)	12	7	–	–	19
UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)	10	13	4,248	6	4,277
UN Guards Contingent in Iraq (UNGCI)	11	–	–	–	11
UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE)	6	7	160	–	173
UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH)	–	–	–	26	26
Total	57	42	5,698	160	5,957

Sources: Bangladesh Armed Forces Division, as at 28 February 2002, and Bangladesh Police Headquarters, as at 17 April 2002.

Table 9.2 Numbers of Bangladeshi officers participating in peace support operations, as at 2002

Type of deployment	Strength participating				
	Army	Navy	Air force	CIVPOL	Total
UN peacekeeping operations	19,210	172	397	1,112	20,891
Operation Desert Shield (US-led coalition force in Gulf War)	2,193	–	–	–	2,193
Total	21,403	172	397	1,112	23,084

Sources: Bangladesh Armed Forces Division, as at 28 February 2002, and Bangladesh Police Headquarters, as at 17 April 2002.

the largest force, with 4,271 officers and men. This comprises nine contingents, including the Bangladesh Sector Headquarters, and 23 military observers and staff personnel.

Completed missions

Bangladesh has successfully accomplished 17 UN peace support operations as well as Operation Desert Shield. A total of 21,972 officers and troops participated in those assignments. Table 9.2 summarizes the assignments completed by Bangladesh.

To date, Bangladesh has taken part in 27 peace support missions around the globe. Bangladesh had for several years been the highest troop-contributing country for UN peacekeeping operations. Bangladesh is now also emerging as an important contributor of civilian police (CIVPOL) for UN missions. In all those missions, the performance and conduct of the Bangladeshi peacekeepers have been highly praised, once even personally by former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali and recently by Kofi Anan (Ali, 1998: 41).

Operations in coalition

Participation in multinational forces and operating in coalitions is another unique experience for Bangladesh.

Operation Desert Shield

Bangladesh participated in Operation Desert Shield with 2,193 officers and men in the coalition force led by the United States. The six-week

hostilities were a rare experience for the 20-year-old Bangladesh army. The 30-nation coalition force, authorized by the United Nations, led to the expulsion of the Iraqi armed forces from Kuwait.

Operations in Haiti

In order to restore democracy in Haiti, Bangladesh was part of a multi-national force led by the United States in 1994. A total of 2,043 officers and men participated in two contingents in succession.

Rebuilding operations

Since the end of the Gulf War, Bangladeshi officers and men have continued to assist in rebuilding the war-ravaged Kuwait through various projects. Clearing mines from all over Kuwait was one of the major tasks, which was done very professionally. Bangladeshi forces are undertaking various engineering projects in East Timor. Bangladeshi forces may also participate in rebuilding Afghanistan.

Sacrifices made

While serving in peace support operations, 21 members, including two lieutenant colonels and a major, have made the supreme sacrifice and another 33 sustained injuries as the result of various armed actions, mine blasts and other accidents (see Table 9.3).

Table 9.3 Bangladeshi casualties in peace support operations, as at 2002

	Casualty	
Mission	Death	Injured
UN Transition Assistance Group, Namibia (UNTAG)	1	–
UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC)	1	1
UN Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ)	1	3
UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM)	1	5
UN Iraq–Kuwait Observation Mission (UNIKOM)	4	3
UN Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR)	–	3
UN Protection Force, former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR)	2	13
UN Mission in Haiti (UNMIH)	1	1
UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG)	1	2
UN Guards Contingent in Iraq (UNGCI)	1	1
UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET)	1	–
UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL)	7	1
UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE)	–	–
Total	21	33

Source: Bangladesh Armed Forces Division, as at 28 February 2002.

Mark of professionalism

On various occasions Bangladesh contingents have performed very well and made their mark. Notable among those are:

- UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC): the Bangladeshi contingent was deployed in the most dangerously contested area of Siem Rieo. This sector was considered to be the most difficult area in the country and the heartland of the Khmer Rouge guerrillas. The Bangladeshi contingent disarmed thousands of rebel troops, including militias.
- UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the former Yugoslavia: at times the situation became quite unstable and complex, which perplexed many participating countries. When Serbs encircled the Bangladeshi contingent, cut off all its supply routes and started hostile attacks, the men displayed indomitable courage and proved their efficiency without any losses.
- UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM): when the situation became complex, owing to the European and US decision to withdraw, the Bangladeshi contingent continued to perform its task. Their prudent actions kept the situation under control and favourable to the United Nations.
- UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL): in 1999, when India and Jordan decided to withdraw their troops, it was Bangladesh's commitment to the United Nations that helped UNAMSIL to flourish once again.

Achievements

Through Bangladesh's participation in UN peacekeeping missions and other coalition forces, it has achieved some operational capabilities. These are:

- *A pool of experienced and trained peacekeepers*. Bangladesh's experience of the past 14 years, together with methodical training, has created a large pool of peacekeepers. Bangladesh is now in a position to contribute to the UN Standby system.
- *De-mining capability*. Bangladesh earned such a good reputation in de-mining Kuwait that the work of other countries had to be certified by Bangladesh. It also de-mined a major area in Angola. Bangladesh now has vast experience with improvised explosive devices and unexploded ordnance.
- *Logistics support system*. The Bangladesh army has gained huge experience through its deployment in Sierra Leone, where almost a brigade group is operating. Bangladesh logistics units are supporting this brigade group.

Factors contributing to Bangladesh's success

Since the commencement of Bangladesh's contribution in UN assignments in 1988, the credibility of Bangladeshi peacekeepers has spread far and wide. The factors that have contributed to Bangladesh's success in UN assignments are:

- *Discipline.* Because of their high standard of discipline and conduct, Bangladeshi military personnel are considered extremely suitable for UN peacekeeping. Bangladeshi forces received help and cooperation from all elements of the mission, which helped them to perform their assigned tasks successfully.
- *Proper training.* Bangladesh arranges appropriate training for all officers and men proceeding on peacekeeping missions. This training helps them to carry out their assigned duties efficiently.
- *Motivation.* A sense of responsibility, a dedication to UN duties, an appropriate attitude and adaptability have also contributed to Bangladesh's success.
- *Neutrality.* Bangladesh's neutral posture in global politics is an important contributing factor. Bangladesh sets priorities that are guided by its commitment to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. This is the cornerstone of its success.
- *Values.* Moral and religious values are another aspect of Bangladesh's success. Since Bangladesh started participating in UN missions, it has had only three cases of HIV.

UN requirements for peacekeeping operations in relation to South Asian preparedness

The United Nations has many requirements of member states for conducting multidimensional peacekeeping operations. The most important of these are:

- *Rapid response.* Once a decision is taken for deployment, member states should be able to respond quickly.
- *Training.* The troops being deployed should be appropriately trained to carry out the assigned job.
- *Logistics.* The troops, once deployed, should be maintained by a well-prepared logistics system.

Requirement of a rapid response

When a decision is made for deployment by the Security Council, the United Nations has to react rapidly. Such rapidity can be achieved only

with a standing army, which the United Nations does not have. To compensate for this problem, the United Nations has formalized an idea for a UN Stand-by Arrangements System (UNSAS). In this connection, the Brahimi Report spelled out a few clear-cut requirements from the member states. Notable among those are:

- Member states should be encouraged to form several coherent brigade-size forces with the necessary enabling forces, ready for effective deployment within 30 days of the adoption of a Security Council resolution, and within 90 days for complex peacekeeping operations.
- A revolving ''on-call list'' of about 100 military officers to be created in UNSAS to be available on seven days' notice to augment nuclei of planners from the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, with teams trained to create a mission headquarters for a new peacekeeping operation.
- Parallel on-call lists of civilian police, international judicial experts, penal experts and human right specialists must be available in sufficient numbers to strengthen the rule of law institutions, as needed, and should also be part of UNSAS.
- Member states should establish an enhanced national ''pool'' of police officers and related experts earmarked for deployment to United Nations peace operations.

This kind of requirement puts huge organizational as well as financial pressures on member countries.

South Asian preparedness for rapid response

South Asian countries responded positively to the UN requirements of rapid response and supported the idea of UNSAS. Most of the countries have committed to earmark a certain size of force under this arrangement. Bangladesh and the United Nations had already signed a Memorandum of Understanding on UNSAS in December 1997. It includes the following commitments:

- *Mission headquarters*: to be effective with a strength of 370 in 30 days.
- *Army elements*: to remain prepared to deploy a brigade group within 100 days from the day of notification. It will consist of a headquarters, two mechanized infantry battalions, one motorized infantry battalion, and other support elements.
- *Naval elements*: will consist of a frigate, two patrol craft, two minesweepers and two diving teams.
- *Air force elements*: will consist of a headquarters wing with a helicopter squadron of four helicopters.
- *Other requirements*: Bangladesh is to remain prepared to provide 2 Force Commanders, 4 Deputy Force Commanders, 100 military observers and 100 staff officers.

The Bangladesh army has deployed a sizeable force in UNAMSIL, so at the moment it can provide one mechanized infantry battalion, the support elements and mission headquarters elements only once UNAMSIL has ended. India has an infantry brigade group on stand-by for peacekeeping operations, with one infantry battalion ready to be deployed within 30 days and a brigade group less an infantry battalion group within a period of 8 weeks from the issue of an order (Ray, 1999: 4). In preparation for peacekeeping operations, Indian contingents are put through special training as part of the UN stand-by brigade. Pakistan also attaches great importance to a rapid response to the deployment of UN peacekeeping operations. It fully supports the concept of UNSAS and has committed two brigades for this purpose. Nepal keeps a battalion group on stand-by for any likely deployment.

Requirement for training

Today's international peace support environment is becoming complex, stressful and multidimensional, placing heavy demands on the officers and soldiers participating in UN missions. As a result, the United Nations advocates that peacekeepers are psychologically and militarily trained. Comprehensive training in the field of peace support operations is thus the most important element of preparing effective and efficient peacekeepers. Resolution 44/49, which was adopted in December 1989 by the UN General Assembly, encourages member states to establish national training programmes for military and civilian personnel for peacekeeping operations. The resolution also requests the Secretary-General to prepare training manuals to be used as guidelines by member states. In this connection, the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations has prepared a training manual, which describes in detail the kind of training the troops need to undergo to discharge UN responsibilities effectively.

South Asian preparedness for training

It is evident that peacekeeping is different from other classical military disciplines. Thus prior national training for peacekeeping is very valuable for effective peacekeeping operations. Today, a well-trained, dedicated and well-disciplined soldier is considered to be the backbone of any peacekeeping operation. Therefore, as major troop contributors, South Asian countries have placed special emphasis on peacekeeping training. Many South Asian countries have established peacekeeping training centres. This is a serious step in preparing effective and efficient peacekeepers. South Asian countries also regularly organize various seminars,

including gaming seminars for greater understanding and cooperation in order to improve the level of expertise of the peacekeepers of the region.

Appreciating the new demands of peacekeeping, Bangladesh established the Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operation Training (BIPSOT) in June 1999 with the purpose of training officers and men. The objectives of BIPSOT are to establish an institute of international standard to provide tactical and operational-level training for UN peace support operations (PSOs) and to develop a faculty of research on conflict studies across the globe. BIPSOT is capable of training individuals and groups in the following aspects of PSO:

- it conducts courses for officers and men on pre-mission and regular training in PSO;
- it conducts sub-unit group training exercises on PSO at local/multinational level;
- it organizes and sponsors all types of UN seminars, conferences, etc. in Bangladesh;
- it conducts UN packages at various training institutions and service schools of instruction outside BIPSOT when required, through a Mobile Training Assistance Team;
- it provides training assistance on PSO to police or civilians when requested;
- it facilitates research on conflict studies and awards fellowships and degrees.

BIPSOT has trained a large number of officers and men. It has also been decided to invite foreign students on future courses.

The Bangladesh Defence Services Command and Staff College and the Bangladesh School of Infantry and Tactics provide detailed training on peacekeeping with a well-structured programme. Peacekeeping training has also been incorporated in unit- and formation-level training in the Bangladesh army, where a basic knowledge of peacekeeping is imparted.

Training for peacekeeping operations assumes special significance in the Indian army, comprising an important part of all formal curriculums of the army's training establishments. In India, the training mechanism of peacekeepers is conceptualized and conducted at two levels in a top–down approach. At the apex, Army Training Command (ARTRAC) is responsible for:

- doctrine and concept development;
- defining approaches for interoperability;
- the preparation and refinement of specific training packages;
- the validation and monitoring of peacekeeping training (Ray, 1999: 5).

At the operative level, India has moved towards institutionalizing training for UN peacekeepers. Under the guidance of Headquarters ARTRAC, individuals, units and formations undergo training at the Peacekeeping

Training Centre. India also wishes to share its experience, expertise and training infrastructure for peacekeeping with other countries.

Nepal also places a particular emphasis on peacekeeping training. It established a Peacekeeping Training Centre at Kathmandu some time ago. The centre provides integrated training in peacekeeping roles to individuals and to designated units. Moreover, peacekeeping training has been incorporated at every level of the Nepali training system, from individual to formation level. In order to spread knowledge about peacekeeping to all ranks, the curriculum has been suitably developed and introduced as a separate package in all the army-level training institutions, including the Command and Staff College (Karki and Gurang, 1994: 164). Recently, Nepal conducted a multi-platoon peacekeeping training exercise.

From the above, it is evident that the South Asian countries are now better prepared in the field of training. But the current complexities of operations and their widening dimensions warrant a pragmatic and effective approach in further improving training standards. Training and preparation should be extended outside national boundaries and coordinated on a regional basis. In addition to seminars and conferences, South Asian countries should also organize or conduct regional training exercises, which are extremely effective means of improving common training standards and capabilities.

Requirement for logistics

The violent eruptions of present-day conflicts require large-scale logistical support as well as rapid response. However, the United Nations' inadequate logistical infrastructure and the lack of a common logistics system mean that the United Nations cannot respond quickly as required. Yet, the United Nations requires that troops on the ground should be supplied as per UN-approved scales and as per UN regulations. Although the Field Operations Department is responsible for UN logistical backup, the United Nations normally draws logistical support from either one or a combination of UN-owned assets, logistics units/elements provided by the contributing nations, and contractor support arranged through the United Nations and the member host nation. Smaller troop-contributing nations at times face difficulties in providing troops in accordance with UN-approved scales and regulations because of various limitations. In particular, they lack rapid airlift or sea transportation capabilities.

South Asian preparedness for logistics

Without adequate logistical support, peacekeeping operations cannot be effective. Setting up adequate logistics facilities is a very complex and

tedious job. Preparing a contingent with the required logistical facilities at short notice requires good pre-planning. South Asian logistical preparedness will fall short of their operational preparedness. Most of the countries of this region cannot provide the required equipment to their contingents. Owing to a lack of standing stock, the United Nations also at times cannot fill the gaps for under-equipped national units. Most of the countries follow a complicated procurement process, which delays the rapid deployment and effective functioning of a mission. It is felt that South Asian countries should review their procurement processes in order to facilitate the immediate provisioning of stores in the mission area. It may be mentioned here that, in the field of logistics, India is better prepared than other countries of South Asia.

South Asian countries, with the exception of India and probably Pakistan, do not have strategic lift capabilities. India is capable of supporting large independent formations in underdeveloped areas for a long period. This was proved by India supporting and extracting the brigade group in the second UN Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM-II). Considering logistical preparedness, it is felt by many that logistically more efficient nations should participate in a supportive role and that smaller nations could provide more peacekeepers.

Problems and suggestions

Global change and regional cooperation

The end of the Cold War has brought about a dramatic change in international politics. The demise of the USSR has changed the bipolar world into a unipolar world. This situation has given scope for the rise of many regional powers and small countries are becoming more vulnerable to the military adventures and hegemony of their bigger neighbours. On the positive side, however, it is observed that the world has made a decisive shift away from conflict towards cooperation. Countries are putting greater emphasis on regional economic cooperation for mutual benefit and reducing defence spending.

Although conflicts in some regions are moving towards a solution, in South Asia conflicts are becoming more acute and damaging to regional interests. The arms race and nuclear tests by two antagonistic countries in South Asia is an example of this type. In addition to conventional threats, religious differences, ethnic conflicts and socio-economic problems also threaten the security of South Asia. Unfortunately, South Asian countries are not able to derive any significant benefit from regional cooperation. Owing to the lack of a conducive political atmosphere, economic

cooperation has not flourished under the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The nations are yet to see SAARC function as an effective regional forum in dealing with the rest of the world.

Although SAARC is not a security-oriented organization, it could play a creative role in solving the problems of the region. South Asian countries should take the initiative to halt the prevailing strategic divergence and exploit the great potentialities of SAARC.

The United Nations and South Asia

Equitable distribution of senior appointments

Although South Asia is one of the highest contributors of UN peace-keepers, South Asian countries do not enjoy an equivalent distribution of either headquarters posts or posts at the field level. Senior staff and Force Commanders should be appointed from among the South Asian countries. South Asia is accepted as the major contributor of troops for UN peace support operations, but the United Nations has yet to recognize any regional peacekeeping training centre in this region. Positive efforts should be made to get one of the centres recognized. However, in this regard, a political consensus is required from the countries of South Asia.

Peacekeeping seminars and field exercises

Seminars on peacekeeping provide a forum for greater understanding by all participants of the utility and potential of the mechanism required for successful peacekeeping operations in the field. Therefore, to prepare better for effective peace support operations, the countries of South Asia need to organize more seminars on UN peacekeeping operations. They should also conduct a number of field training exercises to improve common training standards and capabilities. To this end, Bangladesh organized a multinational platoon exercise in September 2002 to narrow the differences in doctrine, tactics and methodology of different countries while operating under the UN banner. This was much appreciated. Countries such as India, Mongolia, Nepal, the United States and Sri Lanka participated in this exercise. Madagascar, the Philippines and Mauritius joined the exercise as minor participants. The United Nations, along with another 11 countries, sent officers to observe the exercise. Similar exercises and training should be frequently held because they enhance understanding through cooperation and increase the interoperability and readiness of participating forces in the areas of planning and executing peace support operations.

Logistical support

South Asian countries are not well prepared to contribute in the field of logistics because of their inherent limitations. Therefore, logistically more efficient nations could participate more in a supportive role and peacekeepers could be drawn more from the smaller nations. At the same time, smaller countries should take serious steps to attain self-sustainability. The countries should also review their procurement processes in order to make them simple and flexible to facilitate immediate provisioning of stores in the mission area.

Brahimi Panel Report

The Brahimi Panel Report covered all the relevant problem areas of doctrine and strategy and various aspects of conflict prevention, peace-keeping and peace-building, and it provided a good set of recommendations. If the Brahimi Panel recommendations are reviewed (taking into consideration the comments and suggestions made by various member states) and then implemented, this will greatly enhance the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.

Conclusion

Apart from classic peacekeeping, the United Nations is also now entrusted with multifunctional second-generation peacekeeping operations that help create a safe and sustainable environment for a country's return to democracy. One example is the UN campaign for the restoration of democracy in Haiti, in which Bangladesh was a proud partner. Second-generation peacekeeping is very complex and challenging. Due attention needs to be given to political, humanitarian and socio-economic aspects. This requires the services of civilian experts and relief and rehabilitation specialists, along with the professional soldiers. The traditional role of soldiers has also changed; the warmongers have now become peace-mongers. In this new role, they have to motivate warring factions to political understanding, democratic stability and national reconciliation and reconstruction. The peacekeepers have to deal with confidence-building and post-conflict rehabilitation work as well. In today's changed security scenario, peacekeeping forces need to be well equipped to face the new and demanding challenges of the day. A well-trained force is a prerequisite for the successful conduct of a peacekeeping operation.

It is undeniable that South Asia has many limitations, which need to be identified and appropriate measures taken. The future may involve new complexities and challenges and South Asian peacekeepers should remain ever ready to face those.

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Part III

Development

10

Pro-poor policies in South Asia

Hafiz A. Pasha

There is a growing recognition of the need to make poverty reduction the central objective of the process of development. It is, therefore, essential to search for a national development strategy that seeks to achieve human development that is secure, sustainable, equitable and empowering for the bulk of the population. Perhaps the most powerful manifestation of a global commitment to poverty reduction is the Millennium Declaration, passed by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2000, where over 160 heads of state or government pledged their commitment to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). First among these goals is the target of reducing the incidence of global poverty by half by the year 2015 (in comparison with the level prevailing in 1990). Other goals, such as the elimination of hunger, universal access to primary education, a reduction in mortality, gender equality, etc., are all essentially supportive of the goal of reducing poverty.

The largest concentration (almost 400 million) of the poor in the world is in South Asia. This represents over one-third of the global poor, whereas the regional share of population is about one-fifth. Therefore, the overall worldwide achievement of the MDGs hinges crucially on success in poverty reduction in South Asia. During the 1990s, the absolute number of the poor in South Asia remained largely unchanged, despite some improvement in the economic growth rate of the region. Although the number of poor declined somewhat in India, it either remained more or less constant or increased significantly in the other countries of the region.

The human poverty statistics reveal conditions in the region that go beyond deprivation of incomes to a denial of rights, of opportunities, of even the very hope for the future. Every year the number of illiterates continues to rise. More than half the children are malnourished, and over one-third of the world's maternal deaths during pregnancy occur in South Asia. Most of the countries in the region occupy low positions among the 162 countries ranked by the UN Development Programme's Development Index in 2001. The rankings range from 77 for Maldives, 81 for Sri Lanka, 115 for India, 127 for Pakistan, 129 for Nepal, 130 for Bhutan to 132 for Bangladesh.

The objective of this chapter is to analyse the role of pro-poor policies in the process of poverty alleviation in South Asia. I first examine the relationship between economic growth and poverty reduction in the South Asian context and highlight why a focus on growth alone to create a "trickle-down" effect on poverty reduction is not adequate. I then describe the key elements of pro-poor policies and analyse different types of policies in terms of their effectiveness in contributing to poverty reduction. After highlighting the political economy of pro-poor policies and identifying conditions under which they are more likely to be adopted, the final section indicates a framework for tackling poverty in South Asia at different levels.

Economic growth and poverty reduction

Analysis of the poverty-related data collected by the Asian Development Bank for the relatively large countries of the region reveals considerable variation in the degree of success in poverty alleviation during the 1990s. Three types of countries can, in fact, be distinguished.

The first category comprises countries where the percentage incidence of poverty has fallen sufficiently that, despite growing population, the absolute number of the poor has also fallen. As noted earlier, the only country in this category is India, where the incidence of poverty is estimated to have declined from 36 per cent to 26 per cent over the 1990s. The second category consists of countries where, although the percentage incidence of poverty has fallen, it has not declined enough to cause the absolute number of the poor to fall. This includes Bangladesh, where the incidence of poverty fell from 48 per cent to 45 per cent, and Sri Lanka, where the decline was from 30 per cent to 27 per cent. The third category consists of countries where the incidence of poverty actually increased and, therefore, the absolute number of poor rose sharply. Pakistan falls into this category: the incidence of poverty went up from 23 per cent to 33 per cent (and, according to some estimates, even higher to 37 per cent).

Based on the overall progress of the South Asian region in terms of poverty reduction since 1990, it is clear that the region is far from reaching the MDG target of reducing the incidence of poverty by half, relative to the 1990 level, by 2015. The magnitude of this task is highlighted by the fact that, as mentioned earlier, there was little change in the absolute number of poor during the 1990s.

The success or failure in poverty alleviation appears to hinge crucially on the pace of economic growth, as reflected in the rate of increase in real per capita income. India, which has had some success in reducing the absolute number of the poor, was, in fact, the fastest-growing country during the 1990s in South Asia, with per capita income growth of almost 4 per cent per annum. Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, which were able modestly to reduce the incidence of poverty, had per capita income growth rates of 3.0 and 3.5 per cent respectively. Pakistan experienced a sharp upsurge in poverty as its growth rate faltered in the 1990s, with per capita income growth down to only 1 per cent per annum.

It appears that for the South Asian region, with a population growth rate of about 2 per cent, the economic growth rate would have to be in excess of 6 per cent with the present pattern of growth for there to be a possibility of coming close to achieving the MDG poverty reduction target. Such a high growth rate has never been achieved before and, in the face of a sluggish world economy, constraints of human and natural resources in the region and the existing quality of governance, it is unlikely that such a high growth rate can first be achieved and then sustained in the future.

Therefore, it is essential that the nature of the growth process in the region becomes more pro-poor. ''Pro-poor'' growth will require the institution of public policies that influence both the process of generation and the distribution of income in such a way as to benefit the poor disproportionately. In other words, the development paradigm will have to shift from growth *per se* to growth with equity.

The importance of growth needs to be emphasized, however. A strategy that focuses primarily on reducing inequality, through redistribution of assets or incomes, but that ignores or sacrifices growth is unlikely to lead to a sustained process of poverty reduction. Also, finding the necessary resources to finance targeted anti-poverty interventions in the absence of growth will be problematic.

The nature of pro-poor policies

The basic question is whether or not growth with equity is possible. There are numerous examples of countries that have achieved this during

certain periods. Perhaps one of the best examples is China. During the earlier part of the 1980s, China's agriculture-led development strategy sparked off a historically unprecedented reduction in poverty. Unlike many countries, China gave favourable treatment to farmers – dividing the land equitably among them, raising the prices of their output and giving them the incentive to benefit directly from harder work. Farmers also benefited from earlier state investment in rural physical infrastructure and basic health and education. The consequence was a surge in ''pro-poor'' growth. The resulting rural prosperity directly propelled the emergence of non-farm township and village enterprises, which further boosted employment and incomes and created a virtuous circle of growth and poverty reduction.

It needs to be noted that, when China shifted gear in the 1980s to a development strategy oriented towards exports and foreign direct investment (mostly located in the richer coastal region), growth became notably less pro-poor and poverty reduction slowed. It has become essential now to launch an anti-poverty programme for the more backward western regions.

In the case of India, the increase in the aggregate growth rate in the 1990s coincided with a major economic reform process involving a degree of external trade liberalization along with convertibility of the rupee, deregulation of industry, including relaxation of past restrictions on domestic and foreign investment, and some financial sector reform. But the rate of decline in poverty associated with the relatively high growth was low, as highlighted earlier.

The process of growth in India was less pro-poor for several reasons. First, India's sectoral composition, especially the relatively poor performance of agriculture, has not helped rural poverty, and much of the poverty is concentrated in rural areas. Second, the spatial pattern of growth has been skewed, so that growth has not occurred in the states where it would have the most impact on poverty nationally. Third is the problem of adverse initial conditions: states that lagged behind in terms of initial rural development and initial human development faced limited prospects not only of overall growth but also of pro-poor growth.

It is of interest to observe that during the 1980s, when the overall rate of growth was somewhat lower, the reduction of poverty in India was more spectacular (from 51 per cent to 36 per cent). This is explained by the agricultural breakthrough during the decade. Similarly, Bangladesh reduced poverty substantially in the 1980s (from 70 per cent to 48 per cent) on the back of improved food production.

The general principle that can be extracted from these examples is that, for growth to be, more or less, immediately poverty reducing, it

should have a pattern that directs resources disproportionately to the following:

- the *sectors* in which the poor work (such as agriculture);
- the *areas* in which they live (such as underdeveloped regions);
- the *factors of production* they possess (such as unskilled labour);
- the *outputs* they consume (such as food).

This implies that a strategy of "pro-poor" growth consists primarily of employment generation combined with relative price stability of goods and services that are essential items in the consumption basket of the poor, such as food.

Based on these general principles, I identify four types of policies that need to be suitably designed and implemented to reflect concerns of poverty: macroeconomic, microeconomic (or sectoral), restructuring and redistributive policies.

Macroeconomic policies

I have suggested above that the key macroeconomic ingredients of "pro-poor" growth are high levels of employment and low rates of inflation. But it can be argued that, in the classic Phillips' curve sense, there is a trade-off between these two objectives. That is, achieving price stability requires restricting the aggregate level of demand, with its adverse implications for the level of output and employment. Alternatively, raising the level of employment necessitates stimulating demand, which can spill over into inflationary pressures. But this trade-off can be mitigated if there is excess capacity in the economy or if efforts are made to augment factor productivity.

The traditional "Washington consensus" interpretation of macroeconomic stabilization propounded by the international financial institutions has led to an overemphasis on low inflation, frequently at the expense of growth and development. In particular, the obsession with eliminating fiscal deficits (and, thereby, current account deficits), if achieved through cutbacks in public expenditure, especially on development and social services, has retarded the process of growth and created more poverty. Contrary to the view that higher fiscal deficits "crowd out" private investment by raising interest rates, there is persuasive empirical evidence that, if higher fiscal deficits are caused by larger public investment outlays, then this may actually "crowd in" private investment on a net basis by removing physical infrastructure bottlenecks and thereby raising the factor productivity of private investment. In addition, larger public outlays on education and health raise the productivity of the poor and equip them better to get out of the poverty trap.

Therefore, the question is: what is the optimal point in the inflation–unemployment trade-off from the viewpoint of poverty reduction? Experience seems to indicate that there is a case for tolerating larger fiscal deficits so as to stimulate the process of investment and growth. As long as inflation can be kept within a moderate range, it need not dampen growth. Moreover, growth stimulated by fiscal expansion can help finance government deficits, as long as they are not excessive, through faster growth in tax revenues. The larger levels of public investment made possible in this strategy should be used for investment that provides a more durable basis for stimulating private investment and for the purposes of human development and poverty reduction.

Pakistan's economic performance in recent years is perhaps a prime example of the process of stabilization gone too far, under the aegis of an ongoing IMF programme that has substantially retarded the process of growth and led to rapid increases in employment and poverty. During the 1990s there were sharp cuts in public sector development expenditures – from almost 10 per cent to less than 3 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). Since 11 September 2001, there has been a degree of stabilization, the current account deficit has been converted into a surplus and foreign exchange reserves have increased sharply. Favourable developments include, first, a resumption of grant assistance by the United States, second, debt rescheduling on favourable terms and, third, larger inflows of home remittances.

However, the growth rate has plummeted to only about 3 per cent. Private investment has declined in recent years because stabilization policies have implied high real rates of interest, a rise in the relative cost of imported capital goods (owing to high real exchange rate depreciation), the presence of significant excess capacity as a result of low levels of aggregate demand, and the absence of complementary public investment in infrastructure. Fiscal stabilization has proved elusive and the budget deficit has remained high (at close to 7 per cent of GDP), owing primarily to the failure of tax revenues to grow in the presence of a stagnant economy.

Micro (sectoral) policies

I have emphasized above that, for growth to be strongly poverty reducing, it has to contribute to employment generation in excess of the increase in the labour force and to stability in the prices of essential items. This implies that growth has to be concentrated in sectors that are major sources of livelihood for the poor and/or produce goods and services that are consumed by them.

As indicated already, the main sector that meets both these criteria is

agriculture. It can be expected that agricultural development (in particular, enhanced food production) and, more broadly speaking, rural development will make the biggest contribution to alleviating poverty, especially since the bulk of the poor live in rural areas. Of course, the extent of the impact depends crucially on how unequal the initial distribution of land is and on the nature of the particular strategy that is followed for achieving agricultural development. The importance of these factors is highlighted by the rise in rural poverty in Pakistan during a period of rapid growth (of over 4 per cent annually) in the 1990s of agriculture and the resulting attainment of food self-sufficiency. The rise in rural poverty is attributable both to a high level of inequality in rural landholdings and to changes in the tenurial system, whereby sharecroppers have been converted into wage labour.

The experience with pro-poor agricultural growth is that this has depended more on appropriate technical progress – for example, the dissemination of high-yielding varieties of seed for increased food, as happened during the Green Revolution in the 1960s – and on larger investments in rural infrastructure – for example, in the secondary and tertiary irrigation network and farm-to-market roads, electricity, etc. – along with the spread of basic social services. Removing farm price repression has helped to stimulate farm employment and production through an improvement in incentives. However, this has to be weighed against the adverse consequences for the urban poor and the fact that in many unequal countries even the rural poor are mostly net food buyers. Greater farm mechanization, facilitated by expanded provision of credit, has contributed to a more unequal distribution of output gains and led to the eviction of small farmers and greater landlessness.

Another sector that comes close to meeting the above criteria is construction, especially if this is focused on the development of shelter for low-income families and the provision of pro-poor infrastructure in urban slums and squatter settlements or in villages in the more backward areas. The big benefit of rapid growth of the construction sector is that it is a labour-intensive sector and can absorb a significant proportion of unskilled labour. Many countries in the region, such as India, have included a public works programme as an important component of their poverty reduction strategy for the purposes of absorbing seasonally unemployed agricultural workers and unskilled migrant workers in the urban areas.

Restructuring policies

In the 1980s and 1990s, policies of economic restructuring increasingly focused on diminishing the state's role as the leading agent of development and of integrating countries more closely with the global economy.

This has involved a standard set of measures, such as privatization and deregulation, financial sector liberalization, trade liberalization and capital account convertibility.

Lessons from recent experience highlight the need for the proper sequencing and pace of reform. The financial crisis that hit the East Asian countries in 1997 demonstrates clearly the need for stronger regulation of the domestic capital market and the banking sector. This crisis, which also triggered a collapse of the real economy, led to dramatic reversals of poverty reduction in countries such as Indonesia and Thailand. Overnight, gains in reducing poverty over decades were wiped out.

The problems of poor sequencing are visible in countries such as Pakistan, where financial sector liberalization, involving a move to market-based interest rates prior to fiscal reforms, has exacerbated the problem of large fiscal deficits owing to the resulting explosive growth in debt servicing liabilities. This has crowded out development expenditures and led to substantial underinvestment in human development.

Privatization has had ambiguous impacts on poverty, depending on the particular situation. Where it has contributed to greater efficiency, it has conferred consumer benefits by either reducing prices or limiting price increases in basic utilities. But in situations where it has led to the formation of quasi-monopolies it has restricted the access of the poor through the removal of cross-subsidies and the phasing-out of loss-making services. In addition, privatization involving substantial downsizing of labour has led to more unemployment and poverty in the absence, first, of buoyant private investment for creating new employment opportunities for the displaced labour and, second, of adequate social safety nets, such as access to credit and retraining mechanisms.

Policies for enhancing private sector participation in the provision of basic social services, such as elementary education and curative health services, have led to a dualistic structure of provision, with the rich gaining access to higher-quality services provided privately whereas standards of service to the poor have fallen. This is due to the retreat from provision by the public sector and the diversion of highly skilled personnel such as doctors and teachers to the more remunerative private facilities. It seems that, although a case can be made for the privatization of industry and trade on the grounds of efficiency, the role of the government remains crucial in terms of enabling access for the poor in the area of basic utilities and services.

Trade liberalization was heralded in the 1990s as the basic strategy for developing countries to benefit from the process of globalization and achieve fast export-led growth. In countries where the initial level of trade repression was high, such as India and Bangladesh, opening up did confer significant gains in the early to mid-1990s. Most countries of South

Asia have continued to bring down their import tariffs and phase out their quantitative restrictions, along with a move towards market-based exchange rate regimes, in an effort to encourage investment in export promotion rather than import substitution. Simultaneously, there has been opening up of more sectors for foreign direct investment, combined with attractive fiscal incentives. But the optimism has gradually faded away in the face of overall recession in the world markets in recent years and developed countries' barriers to labour-intensive exports in the form of export quotas (as in textiles) and enormous subsidies (especially to agriculture) to domestic producers, while foreign direct investment remains largely concentrated in middle-income countries.

Meanwhile, the reduction in import tariffs has had a number of deleterious consequences, especially from the viewpoint of the impact on poverty. A number of industries have died because of the inability to face up to competition from cheaper imports. For example, the indigenous artisan and crafts sector of India, employing large numbers of people in cottage and home-based industry, is facing extinction owing to the availability of mass-produced basic consumer goods from abroad. Sectors that have benefited from trade liberalization and foreign direct investment in India, such as the information technology sector, have essentially emerged as export "enclaves", having few backward or forward linkages with the domestic economy.

The conclusion now from research is that South Asian countries should attempt to engage cautiously with the world economy and on their own terms. Premature opening could lead either to a more or less immediate displacement of economic activity and loss of growth or to an uneven distribution of whatever gains are realized. Globalization can be favourable for the interests of the poor only if there is appropriate sequencing of the process of trade and capital account liberalization. Reliance should be placed on a domestic investment strategy to initiate an indigenous growth process before opening up to the global economy. Simultaneously, efforts must be made to raise levels of human development to face the competitive pressures of globalization and to tackle the institutional constraints that hinder development of the export sector (such as the absence of adequate arrangements for marketing, quality control, transfer of technology and R&D).

One of the implications of trade liberalization that has seldom been highlighted is its adverse effects on human development via the impact on public revenues. South Asian countries rely heavily on taxes on international trade for revenue, owing to their relative ease of collection. The scaling down of import tariffs as part of the process of trade liberalization has meant sizeable revenue losses, because of the inability to substitute customs duties with more effective taxation of domestic incomes, pro-

duction and transactions, which require a more sophisticated tax administration. The shortage of revenues has meant large cut-backs in human development, especially at a time when they are most needed.

Redistributive policies

There is a need to find inequality-reducing policies that can also contribute to growth or at least be neutral with respect to it. One key area of reform in the realm of redistributive policies is altering the allocation of public resources through changing the pattern of expenditure and taxes. In many countries, hidden or perverse subsidies or tax expenditures that benefit the rich are pervasive. For example, in Pakistan, subsidies on services that are largely consumed by the rich add up to as much as 4 per cent of GDP, and the corresponding estimate for India is even larger, at close to 7 per cent of GDP. Under-priced pro-rich services include irrigation, electricity and higher education. If proper pricing policies could be implemented in these services, then the additional revenues generated could be used to cross-subsidize expenditure on basic services for the poor.

Tax expenditures, in the form of exemptions or concessions in the application of tax laws (especially relating to direct taxes), are also rampant in many countries. In Pakistan they are estimated to cost almost 4 per cent of GDP in terms of forgone revenue. They include favoured tax treatment of various forms of unearned income, including income from capital gains or interest income, very low effective rates of taxation of real estate, tax-free privileges to high-level government functionaries, and tax exemption of agricultural income. One effective way of broadening the tax base is the withdrawal of these tax expenditures with a simultaneous reduction in the tax rates of indirect taxes, which are generally regressive in nature and affect the poor more adversely.

Another major area of reform in public expenditure is to change its composition. For example, defence outlays in many South Asian countries substantially exceed social expenditures. Efforts at achieving greater peace and stability in the region could yield a substantial dividend in terms of creating the fiscal space for larger spending on health and education.

An area in which redistributive policies could be effective is in the allocation of bank credit. This would involve orienting the banking sector towards micro-credit to low-income households and loans for small and medium enterprises. The emphasis should be on increasing access rather than on subsidized credit. The experience of financial institutions such as the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh is that intermediation costs can be kept low through group-based lending and repayment performance can

be sustained at high levels, even at near-market rates of interest, through peer group pressures and the prospect of repeat borrowing. In contrast, large borrowers are more likely to be prone to "wilful default" owing to the system of political patronage and "crony capitalism", especially in state-run banks. In addition, credit made available to small borrowers can contribute to substantially larger income and employment multipliers and, thereby, help more in poverty reduction.

Finally, the case for land reform is strong in countries where the distribution of land is highly uneven. In Pakistan and Nepal, for example, the top 2 to 3 per cent of farmers own over one-third of the land. The issue of land reform is, however, considered contentious from the viewpoint of the impact on agricultural productivity. Yet much of the empirical evidence highlights the absence of a positive relationship between farm size and productivity. It appears that, whereas larger farms can use capital and non-factor inputs more intensively, small farms are likely to be characterized by higher land-use, cropping and labour intensities. Altogether, land reform coupled with expanded credit and better marketing arrangements can fundamentally alter the position of the rural poor.

The political economy of "pro-poor" policies

I now take up the question of the feasibility of adopting pro-poor policies and the conditions under which they are more likely to be resorted to. It is perhaps surprising that even in supposedly democratic societies we see evidence of state capture by the élites, whereby public policy and the allocation of public resources are biased in favour of the rich and powerful. The experience is that pro-poor economic policies are not likely unless politics and the process of governance are more pro-poor. For economic policies to be focused on poverty reduction, governance structures need to be effective in achieving this objective. And, to make such structures effective, broad pro-poor coalitions are necessary.

The choice and implementation of pro-poor policies clearly depend on the political economy implications of the process. Who are the gainers and losers? The basic question is whether effective coalitions can be organized to thwart attempts by powerful vested interests to block the change and preserve the status quo.

If the change is seen as a zero-sum game, with well-defined gainers and losers, then strong resistance is more likely. This is why attempts at once-and-for-all inequality reduction, such as progressive land reform, are extremely difficult to implement. Opposition to such reform is intense not only because of potential economic losses but also because of the funda-

mental impact on the rural power structure. Therefore, land reform has usually come in the aftermath of a cataclysmic event (following the Partition of India) or when the problem of poverty and the resulting social breakdown have become so serious that radical governments have emerged with an agenda involving major structural change. The recent experience of Nepal reveals that, in the face of a Maoist insurgency, the government has been compelled to announce major land reforms (although these have remained largely unimplemented to date).

It has been argued that pro-poor policies are more likely to be adopted in the context of a positive-sum game. This is the case when incomes are generally increasing rapidly and it becomes possible at the margin to distribute a disproportionate part of the income gains in favour of the poor. For example, Malaysia was able successfully to pursue a strong affirmative action programme in favour of the indigenous Malays, who were poorer than the Chinese or Indian residents, on the back of strong growth performance. This is why it is important to demonstrate that pro-poor policies are also pro-growth and the development strategy is such that much of the poverty is tackled not upfront but during the process of growth.

I turn now to the identification of the key elements of governance that are likely to be supportive of the adoption of more pro-poor policies. These are essentially systemic and institutional changes that enable the poor to have a stronger voice in the formulation and conduct of public policy.

The rule of law

The interests of the poor can be subverted either by the presence of inherently inequitable laws (such as those relating to property rights or to the discriminatory treatment of minorities and women) or by the inequitable application and enforcement of laws. More broadly speaking, a proper and judicial system is required that promotes stable and higher economic growth while respecting property rights, guaranteeing the sanctity of contracts and lowering transactions costs.

Transparency and accountability

Serious problems with economic governance include the overcentralization of decision-making and the non-involvement of stakeholders. This has enabled patronage of powerful special interests and high levels of corruption. Clearly, the process of policy-making will have to be made more transparent and accountable. Information systems will need to be more closely linked to realities on the ground and the bureaucracy made more responsive. Elected parliaments should be given a stronger oversight function to monitor the allocation and utilization of public expen-

diture. Independent accountability institutions will also have to be set up to detect and punish the worst examples of corruption.

The development of an appropriate legal and fiscal framework will be essential for providing a suitable enabling environment for the emergence of a strong movement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Civil society can play a major role in articulating the concerns of the poor and NGOs can be effective in targeting and delivering services to the unreached segments of the population. Simultaneously, a free and vibrant press can contribute to greater transparency and accountability in the system.

Decentralization

Decentralization and devolution have been considered to be among the most powerful ways of increasing people's participation and empowering the poor. There is currently a wave of decentralization in the South Asian region, with major efforts at strengthening local governments in countries such as India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh.

However, for this reform to lead in particular to a more pro-poor allocation of resources, the process will have to strengthened, first, by mechanisms to avert local élite capture by giving special representation to particular disenfranchised groups such as peasants, workers, women and minorities, second, by political education that organizes the poor, creates awareness of issues, fosters local leadership and promotes higher voter turnout, third, by genuine fiscal decentralization that transfers significant resources to the lower tiers of government on the basis of objective and transparent criteria and permits the exercise of true fiscal autonomy and, fourth, by capacity-building of local governments.

The real challenge in most countries of South Asia is to improve the process of governance in such a way that public policy fundamentally protects the general public interest rather than being a hostage to vested interests. This will enable the formulation and implementation of more pro-poor policies.

A framework for poverty reduction

Altogether, to achieve the ambitious targets for poverty reduction in the South Asian region, pro-poor policies will have to be implemented at various levels:
- *Global*. Policies for the allocation of Official Development Assistance will have to more effectively target countries of South Asia that have large pockets of poverty and also demonstrate a strong commitment to the process of poverty reduction. In addition, trade restrictions will

need to be relaxed to enable access for the countries of the region to markets for agricultural commodities and labour-intensive manufactures, along with expanded inflows of foreign direct investment.

- *Regional.* Recognition of the need to reduce war tensions and move towards peace and stability in the region, which will enable the diversion of defence expenditure to fight the real war against poverty, will have to be combined with the emergence of effective regional trading arrangements that lead to more intraregional trade diversion and creation and that better equip countries to face the challenge of globalization collectively. Also, special institutional arrangements will have to be evolved that facilitate and organize the development of regional trunk infrastructure for transport, gas, hydroelectricity, etc., and tackle the problem of cross-boundary spillovers such as trafficking and environmental hazards. This, of course, presupposes a stronger and more effective South Asian Association for Regional Cooperartion.
- *National.* Stronger attempts at reducing conflict through reconciliation processes (for example, in Sri Lanka and Nepal), improvements in the investment climate and reforms in governance within countries that enable the adoption of the appropriate mix of pro-poor macroeconomic policies, sectoral policies, restructuring policies and redistributive policies will have to be accompanied by well-designed and well-managed social safety nets for the chronically poor.
- *Local.* Governance reforms and social mobilization will be necessary to stimulate greater participation of people and their empowerment. Efforts will have to be made to strengthen local governments and community-based organizations.

It is clear that poverty will have to be tackled at all levels through pro-poor policies if the 400 million poor people of South Asia are to be given a real chance to escape the vicious poverty trap and lead lives with a semblance of human dignity and security.

11

Trade and investment in South Asia

Farooq Sobhan and Riffat Zaman

Introduction

South Asia – consisting of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka – is home to about a quarter of the world's population (1.5 billion people in 2001), but it remains an economically poor region. It accounts for 43 per cent of the world's poor and only 2 per cent of the world's GDP. The region is severely constrained by its lack of access to finance for investment, not to mention huge debt burdens to international lending institutions and current account deficits. In the context of declining Official Development Assistance (ODA) flows, developing countries have fewer and fewer ways to gain access to external sources of financing. The benefits of foreign direct investment (FDI) are many and worth harnessing, but the risks must not be lost sight of. Growing repayment obligations present the prospects of net negative transfers in the future and pose major challenges, requiring countries to search for new avenues of earning (or saving) additional foreign exchange. None the less, an immense opportunity exists in this vast region for taking a leap towards higher growth and welfare through an expansion in trade and investment. Therefore, increasing the level of investment in this area is of crucial importance. The trade horizon within this region and with the rest of the world needs to be broadened as well.

This chapter will attempt to shed some light on trade and investment in South Asia on the basis of regional cooperation.

Trade

Intraregional trade

South Asian countries do not trade much with the rest of the world or among themselves either. Kemal et al. (2002: Tables 6.11 and 6.12) report that, in 1997, India and Pakistan imported only 0.45 per cent and 1.96 per cent, respectively, of their total imports from the rest of South Asia, and exported only 4.18 per cent and 2.63 per cent, respectively, of their total exports to the rest of South Asia. The three smaller economies, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, imported 10 per cent or more of their total imports from the rest of South Asia. Only Nepal exported more than 10 per cent of its total exports to the rest of South Asia, but only in certain years. However, these figures are for trade through official channels; there is thriving cross-border trade through informal channels – mostly smuggled goods and illegal trade. The proportion of informal intra-regional trade in total trade will be much higher than that for recorded trade data.

South Asian exports increased from US$28.3 billion in 1991 to US$51.0 billion in 1997, a growth rate of 10.3 per cent, whereas imports increased by 10.5 per cent (from US$34.9 billion to US$63.6 billion). Consequently, the trade deficit widened further from US$6.6 billion to US$12.6 billion, resulting in an even greater dependence on external resources to finance the trade deficit. Regional exports consist largely of raw materials and traditional products, such as textiles and garments, and some regional countries are direct competitors in the world export market for these products. On the other hand, the import requirements of the region consist mainly of capital goods and high-tech products. In this scenario, the South Asian region can hardly be characterized as self-dependent and, therefore, the trade pattern of its countries is naturally tied to trade with the developed countries.

The low complementarity of products of the region's economies as well as the trade policy regimes followed by South Asian countries have acted as inhibiting factors. As indicated in Table 11.1, trade within the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) accounted for less than 4.0 per cent of trade in South Asia for much of the 1980s, but gradually increased to 4.4 per cent by 1999. Intra-SAARC exports accounted for 4.6 per cent of SAARC's exports to the world, and the corresponding share of intra-SAARC imports was even lower, at 4.1 per cent in 1999 (see Table 11.2). The share of imports from South Asia for the two largest economies in the region – India and Pakistan – remains disappointingly low, at approximately 0.8 per cent and 1.9 per cent of their total imports respectively. Bilateral trade imbalances in the region

Table 11.1 Trade within the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

Year	Intra-SAARC trade (US$ million)	World trade of SAARC countries (US$ million)	Share of SAARC trade in world trade of SAARC (%)
1980	1,210	37,885	3.2
1985	1,054	44,041	2.4
1990	1,584	65,041	2.4
1995	4,228	104,159	4.1
1999	5,640	129,738	4.4

Source: IMF (2000).

Table 11.2 Intraregional trade in SAARC, 1999 (%)

Country	Share of intra-SAARC exports in total exports	Share of intra-SAARC imports in total imports	Share of intra-SAARC trade in total trade
Bangladesh	1.9	13.6	9.5
India	5.0	0.8	2.8
Maldives	5.2	2.5	3.3
Nepal	28.5	31.7	30.8
Pakistan	3.6	1.9	2.7
Sri Lanka	2.8	12.3	8.6
SAARC	4.6	4.1	4.4

Source: IMF (2000).

are, therefore, a contentious issue. With the exception of Pakistan, all South Asian economies are running significant trade deficits with India. The low volume of intra-SAARC trade is a reflection of the fact that much of the trade of South Asian economies is with developed countries. In 1998, the industrial economies of the European Union, the United States and Japan together accounted for the following shares of trade: Bangladesh 86.5 per cent; India 56.5 per cent; Maldives 68.2 per cent; Nepal 61.2 per cent; Pakistan 60.1 per cent; and Sri Lanka 76.0 per cent (Weerakoon and Wijayasiri, 2002).

SAARC's intraregional trade as a share of its total trade with the rest of the world is probably one of the lowest among regional groupings in the world. In 1995, intra-SAARC trade was 4.4 per cent, which compared poorly with 63.0 per cent for intra-European trade, 37.0 per cent for North America and 38.0 per cent for East Asia (IDCJ, 1996). Given that trade within the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a share of its trade with the rest of the world was 7.0 per cent at the time of

its establishment in the 1960s, the low level of trade amongst the South Asian countries is a cause for concern in attempts to push ahead an agenda for regional economic integration.

Restrictive trade policies are also responsible for the low level of intraregional trade. The South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) became operational in December 1995, and in 1997 all the partner countries decided to transform the agreement into the South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) by 2001. However, it has still not materialized, largely because of long-standing conflict between India and Pakistan. Under SAPTA, 5,000 products from all SAARC member countries are entitled to preferential duty treatment. In the case of Indo-Bangladesh trade, the cumulative deficit during the past 10 years is in excess of US$12 billion officially, and possibly in excess of US$25 billion if smuggling is taken into account. In spite of commitments by the present Indian government at the highest level, Bangladesh's request for duty-free access to the Indian market has still not been granted. India has entered into bilateral free trade agreements only with Nepal and Sri Lanka. In terms of value, the total regional imports of products covered by regional preferences accounted for US$480 million in 1998, of which Pakistan accounted for 46 per cent, India 26 per cent, Sri Lanka 16 per cent and Bangladesh 10 per cent.

SAPTA has thus not had any significant impact on intraregional trade in South Asia. There are several reasons for this. First, tariff concessions alone are unlikely to enhance intraregional trade in an environment in which other structural constraints continue to prevail. Second, it is generally believed that tariff concessions under the SAPTA regime are offered mostly on items that are of little export interest to the member countries. Third, the stringency of the SAPTA rules of origin prevents member countries from taking advantage of the tariff concessions offered under this regime. A study by Mukherjee (2002) shows that the effect of regional trade integration through SAPTA is modest and that South Asia would reap more benefits from unilateral liberalization on a most favoured nation basis.

Intraregional trade within the SAARC countries is affected by many economic and non-economic factors. One is that the products and processes of the countries of South Asia are similar. Because most of the economies are based on agriculture and their technological advances as regards production processes are not very different, they produce very similar items. Thus the preferential trade agreement may not necessarily lead to higher volumes of intra-SAARC trade. There is also a mismatch between the supply of and consumer demand for the products of South Asia. Some of the goods produced on a large scale in certain SAARC countries do not appear to meet consumer demand in importing SAARC

countries. For example, Pakistan is not a tea producer and it could be a large market for the tea exports of Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh. However, a large part of Pakistan's tea requirement is imported from outside the SAARC region (for example, from Kenya) because the kind of tea required by Pakistan is not produced in adequate quantities in the SAARC region. Sometimes it is the lower quality of products produced within the region that leads some countries to import goods from outside the region, even though prices outside the region may be higher. In addition, market limitations arise in South Asia owing to political and/or geographical considerations. For example, Nepal and Bhutan are landlocked, which explains why they trade mostly with India. On the other hand, political differences between India and Pakistan have kept trade between these two countries at a very low level.

However, if all trade in South Asia were fully liberalized and tariff levels were lowered, then preferential trade agreements under SAPTA would become less meaningful and would not particularly help in enhancing intraregional trade. In this context, it is important to note that preferences granted from a low tariff regime are less significant than those from a high tariff regime. For example, a 50 per cent preference on a 60 per cent tariff level will bring the preferential tariff level down to 30 per cent, whereas a 50 per cent preference on a 12 per cent tariff level will bring the tariff level down to 6 per cent. Clearly the effect on prices of the latter preference is less than the former. Similarly, if imports have few restrictions, the question of preference does not arise (Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, 2002). There is scope for intraregional trade in the following products: meat and fish products; fruits and vegetables; rice; sugar; coffee, tea and spices; animal feed; tobacco; oilseeds; synthetic rubber; cotton, jute, and textile fibres; stone, sand and gravel; iron and basic metal ores and concentrates; crude vegetable materials; residual petroleum products; vegetable oil; chemicals; medicinal and pharmaceutical products; fertilizers; insecticides and herbicides; leather and leather manufactures; rubber articles and tyres; wood manufactures; textile yarn and fabrics; floor coverings; lime, cement and fabricated construction materials; pottery; pearls and precious stones; iron and steel products or machine tools; household equipment of base metal; electric power machinery and parts; cycles and motor cycles; clothing and footwear; instruments for medical sciences.

Policy issues of SAPTA

Some of the policy issues of SAPTA need to be highlighted at this point. In any preferential trade agreement, if tariff concessions are combined with non-tariff concessions, it will be more effective in facilitating mutual

trade. However, even under such a framework two conditions need to be met: first, tariff cuts should be significant, so as to make a marked impact on the imported price; and, second, trade preferences should encompass a large number of items of current and potential trade value in order to cover a reasonably large area of trade.

Preferential trading arrangements could be stimulated by applying two strategies. One strategy would be to work bilaterally within a regional framework on a selected group of commodities and then extend the system to the entire region (the gradualist approach). The second strategy could be adopted by a region that could attract external funding and investment. In ASEAN, for example, despite slow progress in trade under the preferential trading arrangement, the stimulant that enhanced regional trade was extraregional investment and support from Japan.

There are many economic reasons for advancing intraregional trade and cooperation in South Asia. The 2001 Human Development Report (Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, 2002) shows that trade in such products as steel and aluminium, textile machinery, chemical products and dry fruit is currently being diverted through third countries. Direct trade in these would benefit all countries quite substantially in terms of price, quality and time. Besides, many goods that are being imported at high cost from other countries can be made available from within the SAARC region. Specific trade complementarities need to be created in order to foster greater intraregional trade in South Asia. Promising prospects for immediate intra-SAARC trade expansion exist in such products as tea and coffee, cotton and textiles, natural rubber, light engineering goods, iron and steel, medical equipment, pharmaceuticals and agro-chemicals.

Multilateral trade with the rest of the world – liberalization policies

Since the early 1990s South Asia has embarked on a more liberal trade regime through economic reforms and greater integration with the world economy as a part of the globalization process. The World Trade Organization (WTO) provides a framework for further integration of the world economy, and member countries have to ease protection levels. Although not all the SAARC countries are signatories to the WTO, liberalization of trade in South Asia started much earlier as a result of the structural adjustment programmes of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The dismantling of tariffs and non-tariff barriers (NTBs) can shift production towards labour-intensive activities and lead to a rising share of labour in GDP in the long run. Unless this is done in an orderly way, the production process can be disrupted and unemployment and poverty will then rise. Liberal trade policies have already led to the closure of a large number of firms, especially in the manufacturing sector.

Almost all the countries in the region have pursued import-substituting industrialization policies and, over the past decade, serious attempts have been made to reduce the anti-export bias. Quantitative restrictions (QRs) have been removed and negative and restricted lists have virtually been eliminated, with the possible exception of India, where these still exist.

Summary of trade policy

Liberalization attempts in five of the South Asian countries are summarized in Tables 11.3 and 11.4 with respect to their import and export policies.

Foreign direct investment

Overview

There is an enormous literature on the benefits that FDI confers on the recipient country. In brief, FDI enables the flow of much-needed capital and financial resources, the transfer of managerial skill and advanced technical know-how, and the advancement of research and development, and provides access to international markets for exportable goods and services of comparative advantage in developing countries by taking advantage of economies of scale. Fan and Dickie (2000) report that FDI flows were stabilizing factors during the Asian financial crisis. Systematic analysis undertaken by the World Bank (2000) also indicates that the impact of FDI is, broadly speaking, positive. FDI to developing countries is either neutral (i.e. one dollar of FDI leads to investment growth of one dollar) or of the "crowding-in" variety (i.e. total investment increases by more than the additional dollar of FDI). However, the downside must not be lost sight of. Growing repayment obligations present the prospect of net negative transfers in the future and pose major challenges. The foreign debt burden stood at US$149 billion in 1997 for the region as a whole. Relative to Africa and Latin America, most countries in South Asia had a manageable debt problem, and commercial private debt was negligible. Pakistan, which had been facing a serious economic crisis, is today in a better position. Its reserves have increased and it has been able to reschedule its loans.

The shift from ODA to FDI and the synergies between ODA and FDI

Developing countries have long been heavily dependent on ODA to build public sector infrastructure. Against the backdrop of declining

Table 11.3 Summary of import policy in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka

Measures	Import policy				
	Bangladesh	India	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
Policy objective	Reduction of tariffs. Elimination of quantitative restrictions (QRs).	Maximizing benefits from expanding global trade.	Enhancing contribution of trade sector to the national economy by promoting international trade.	Rationalization of tariff structure. Reduction of non-tariff barriers. Simplification of import procedures.	Tariff reduction. Harmonization of tariff structure. Tariffication of QRs.
Tariffs	Customs duty rate range (1997): 7.5–45.0% No. of customs duty brackets: 1992/93: 15 1999–2001: 4 Maximum tariff reduced from 300% to 37.5%	Peak tariff rate: 35% Four non-zero tariff rates: 5%, 15%, 25% and 35% Import-weighted average tariff rates: 1997/98: 20.3% 1990/91: 87.0%	Unweighted average tariff rate: 1981/82: 15.4% 1994/95: 8.2% Basic tariff rates: 5%, 10%, 20%, 30% and 80%	Maximum tariff: 1986/87: 225% 1994/95: 70% 1999/2000: 35% Four tariff slabs: 10%, 15%, 25% and 35%	Three-pronged tariff structure. Tariff rates: 10%, 20% and 35%
Import licensing		Licensing requirements dismantled for about one-third of consumer goods; 340 items have been removed from the negative list.	A few quantitatively restricted products are subject to import licensing.	Restricted list has been abolished. Licensing requirements for items outside the negative list have been removed.	Licensing required only for some agricultural products; a few items require a licence for health or religious reasons.

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Banned items	11.7% of items subject to import ban or restrictions.	As of April 1998: import of 58 items completely prohibited; 2,714 items were on the restricted list; and 168 importables were canalized.	QRs removed on a wide range of products.	As of 1999, 28 items banned for religious, health and security reasons.	Import of reserved items restricted to government or state corporations.
Quantitative restrictions	QRs have been progressively removed. At eight-digit HS level only 2% of items are subject to QRs.	QRs removed on 714 tariff lines.	QRs removed on a wide range of products. Products subject to QRs: firearms, wireless transmitters and precious metals and jewellery.	In 1999, only 32 products on the negative list.	

Source: Kemal et al. (2002: 277–278).

Table 11.4 Summary of export policy in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka

	Export policy				
	Bangladesh	India	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
Export processing zones (EPZs)	Export processing zones set up in Dhaka, Chitta-gong, Mongla, Comilla, Ishwardi, Syedpur. Private export processing zones allowed in 1996.	Industrial units located in Special Economic Zones and treated outside customs territory of the country, not subject to any pre-determined conditions on value addition, export performance or local content. Foreign investment on full ownership basis permitted in units set up in Special Economic Zones.		EPZs established in Karachi and Lahore. These zones offer better infrastructure facilities as well as various other incentives, including tax holidays and unrestricted repatriation of capital and profits.	Six EPZs established to offer a full range of incentives, including exemptions from tax and customs duty, quality infrastructure and simplified administrative procedures.
Duty drawback		The facility re-imburses exporters for tariff paid on imported raw materials and inter-mediaries and for central excise duties paid on domestically produced inputs.	Exports are entitled to duty drawback facilities.	Exports are allowed rebates on customs duty, sales tax and surcharge. Rates are standardized as percentage of f.o.b. values of export or specific amount per unit of good exports.	

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| Duty-free exports | Free export of all goods allowed, except for some items subject to certain restrictions. Replenishment licences allow exporters to import certain raw materials that are normally banned or restricted. | All products other than banned ones or those under QRs can be exported freely. | No export controls except on producers in the categories of coral chunk and shells, wood, ivory and antiques. |

Source: Kemal et al. (2002: 278).

ODA, there is a visible shift to attract FDI, which is more directed to the private sector. Foreign investment is expected to supplement domestic private investment through foreign capital flows, the transfer of technology, improvement in management skills and productivity, and providing access to international markets. There is evidence that carefully targeted development assistance may assist in leveraging FDI flows and creating a virtuous circle of increasing savings and investment. Such a situation can be created when ODA is used to develop institutions and policies in developing countries. This helps to create a favourable environment for (domestic) savings, domestic and foreign investment, and growth.

More specifically, ODA funds can be used to support those areas considered important to investors in determining investment decisions. Another approach being pioneered by some donors and, in particular, the World Bank is the concept of *output-based aid*. Donor countries and developing countries are increasingly interested in using this mechanism whereby, *inter alia*, ''quasi-contracts'' are established between government agencies and the private sector to deliver specific services. The responsibility for the delivery of such services is thus transferred to private investors/providers. In contrast with the more traditional approaches to ODA delivery, this mechanism begins at the outset with a definition of objectives and specifies expected performance in terms of very clear outputs (or outcomes), rather than focusing on inputs. The relatively recent experience with such schemes has provided important insights into output-based approaches as a way of improving the delivery of services while at the same time better targeting government and donor funds. More generally, schemes for private participation in infrastructure, aimed at mobilizing private incentives for innovation and efficiency in the delivery of services, have expanded considerably with positive results. Research undertaken recently, for instance, suggests that this approach has yielded significant welfare effects. At the same time, however, the benefits of leveraging private investment and its effects on distribution are sensitive to the way in which contracts are conceived and to the pace and extent of market structure and policy reforms.

The impediments to FDI in host countries need to be accounted for. These are corruption and a lack of transparency in corporate governance and in the administrative strata, lack of social and economic stability, problems in taxation and competition policies. Internationally, there is increased understanding that good framework conditions can help attract and retain FDI flows. At the same time, there is also evidence that the use of ODA in a consciously targeted manner to attract and retain such flows may improve the efficiency and effectiveness of such forms of assistance. From the developing countries' perspective, improvement in the synergies between ODA and FDI is of crucial importance.

FDI in South Asia

FDI flows tend to be relatively more stable, typically based on a long-term view of the market and growth potential of recipient countries, and relatively difficult to disinvest, reducing the risks of sharp reversals during adverse situations. Most countries of the South Asian region have reformed their investment regimes to encourage these inflows by reducing foreign ownership restrictions and domestic equity and licensing requirements, and introducing fiscal and financial incentives.

In response to these measures and owing to improving macroeconomic fundamentals more generally, the flow of foreign direct investment to South Asian countries increased over the 1990s. Most of these flows have originated from either the developed countries or the newly industrialized countries of East and South-East Asia. The United States and Europe were the main providers of FDI to India and Pakistan during the 1990s, whereas Japan, Hong Kong, Korea and Malaysia were important for Bangladesh and Sri Lanka (World Bank, 1997; ESCAP, 1998). Their average value increased 10-fold from US$256 million per year during the 1980s to US$2.1 billion per year during the 1990s (Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, 2002: 29). Annual average growth rates were also among the fastest in the developing world, increasing from 25 per cent per year to 31 per cent over the past two decades, attesting to increasing and rapid financial integration. In relative terms, however, the increase in FDI to South Asia has been more modest, accounting for less than 0.5 per cent of regional GDP during the 1990s, compared with 2.7 per cent for East Asia, 1.9 per cent for Latin America and 1.4 per cent for Sub-Saharan Africa. South Asia has also had the lowest ratio of FDI to gross domestic investment, roughly four times less than the ratios found in East Asia, Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Cross-regional comparisons, moreover, point to South Asia's stagnating share of total FDI to developing countries. During the 1990s, South Asia's share of these flows remained less than 2 per cent of the developing countries' total, the lowest among developing regions. In contrast, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa all managed to increase their shares over the same period. The distribution of FDI within South Asia has also become more concentrated over time. Whereas India received roughly 40 per cent of total FDI to the region in 1980s, this share has expanded to more than three-quarters of the total, with the share of other countries dropping accordingly. Pakistan's reduction has been particularly acute, dropping from 34 per cent in 1980 to 14 per cent in 1999.

In 1999, FDI in South Asia was US$3,070 million. Of this, Bangladesh accounted for US$179 million, India US$2,169 million, Nepal US$4 mil-

lion, Pakistan US$530 million, Sri Lanka US$177 million and Maldives US$7 million (World Bank, 2002).

The sustainability and usefulness of FDI for a country relate not only to its aggregate levels, but also to its uses. Given South Asia's labour surplus and comparative wage advantage, the kind of FDI most likely to bring the strongest benefits to long-term growth is that associated with manufacturing. Although the majority of foreign investment funds have in fact been directed to manufacturing sectors in most South Asian countries, their shares have been declining.

What is important in assessing the potential benefits of FDI for host countries is the degree to which investment is being allocated to export sectors. The available information indicates that a relatively small portion of FDI has gone to export-oriented sectors in South Asian countries; most FDI is targeted to industries producing for domestic markets. In India, for example, textiles, an important source of exports as well as employment, attracted less than 4 per cent of total FDI in the mid-1990s, and in Sri Lanka the share of textiles has lost ground to agricultural products and beverages (World Bank, 1997). In Pakistan, by the mid-1990s less than US$100 million had been invested in the Karachi Export Processing Zone since its inception in the early 1980s (World Bank, 1997). These trends are in strong contrast to the pattern of FDI use in other regions (e.g. East Asia), and suggest that South Asia may be benefiting proportionately less from the trend toward the globalization of production. The only exception is Bangladesh, which has been fairly successful in attracting FDI to its export processing zones, particularly in the ready-made garment sector (ESCAP, 1998). The amount of FDI in the Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority was US$531 million in 2001/2002.

The other major component of private non-debt flows to South Asia has been portfolio equity investments. Even though it is widely accepted that developing nations have benefited from inflows of FDI, the verdict is less clear regarding portfolio flows. There are obvious benefits from portfolio flows and from opening stock markets to foreign investors, including wider access to international capital at lower cost, risk-sharing and pricing, and greater efficiency in the allocation of capital. Portfolio investments are more volatile than FDI, representing short-term assets that can be withdrawn quickly from the economy. As the liquidity crises in Mexico (1995) and East Asia (1997) have shown, countries with high levels of portfolio investment are vulnerable to massive outflows of capital when investor sentiments quickly change, leading to possible currency and financial crises. Moreover, the volatility associated with portfolio equity flows also renders countries more exposed to shocks in the international economy, such as changes in interest rates and stock market

Table 11.5 FDI inflows in SAARC countries

Period	World (US$ million)	Asia (US$ million)	SAARC (US$ million)	Share in world (%)	Share in Asia (%)
1980–1985	49,813	5,043	199	0.36	3.55
1998	643,879	84,880	3,433	0.53	4.04

Source: Lama (1999: 2).

returns, particularly where capital markets are small and inflexible and institutional frameworks are incomplete or inadequate.

The FDI flow to South Asia started picking up only in the mid-1990s. Compared with the 1980–1985 cumulative inflows, the 1998 inflow of FDI had increased almost 20-fold from US$199 million to US$3,433 million as against a 13-fold increase in global total foreign investment flows (see Table 11.5). As a result, the share of South Asia in global FDI flows gradually reached over 0.5 per cent in 1998. Similarly, its share in the total FDI inflows to developing countries and Asian countries recorded an increase from 1.4 per cent to almost 2.1 per cent and from 3.5 per cent to 4.0 per cent, respectively, during the 18-year period of 1980–1998 (Lama, 1999).

The FDI regime

The FDI policy regimes of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are summarized in Table 11.6 (Lama, 1999). Country-specific information is provided with regard to policy areas such as protection and guarantees, foreign equity participation and fiscal incentives.

One critical policy issue is the pricing of energy for common purposes. Because the importance of commercial energy is fast gaining ground in the region, pricing has already become critical in many of the South Asian countries. Private sector participation in energy generation has changed the entire landscape of the debate on subsidies and pricing. In the name of commercial viability, the private power producers have invariably been offered purchase prices much higher than the state monopoly's own costs of generation. The impact on the price of electricity will be increasingly severe as and when the share of energy purchased by the state monopolies from such private projects increases. However, consumer resistance to any major price hike will be both enormous and politically sensitive, and the only option for these state monopolies will be to bear the difference themselves. This may lead to more inefficient operation of these state monopolies and may send them packing. This is where a crit-

Table 11.6 South Asia: Foreign direct investment policy regimes

Policy areas	Bangladesh	India
FDI institutions	Board of Investment	Foreign Investment Promotion Board and Council
Protection and guarantees	Guarantees against nationalization and expropriation, and equitable treatment with local investors under the Foreign Private Investment (Promotion and Protection) Act; bilateral guarantees; the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency; commitment to protection of intellectual property rights; International Convention for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID).	Settlement of disputes is governed by the Indian Arbitration Act, 1940; the UN Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards; the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)
Foreign equity participation	100%, including the social sector (education, technical and vocational training), on repatriable basis	1. Up to 51% in most industries. 2. Up to 24% in industries reserved for the small-scale sector. 3. 100% in export-oriented sectors such as power, electronics and software technology parks.
Fiscal incentives	Tax holidays for industries located in Dhaka and Chittagong Division (for five years) and in Rajshahi, Khulna, Sylhet, Barisal, and three districts of Chittagong (for seven years). Import duty at 5% *ad valorem* on capital, machinery and spare parts for initial installations. Tax exemption on royalties, interest on foreign loans, capital gains from the transfer of shares.	100% export-oriented units exempted from payment of corporate income tax for a block of five years during the first eight years of operation. Tax relief under avoidance of double taxation agreements. Income tax holiday for 100% export-oriented units and units in export processing zones for 10 years.

Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
Board of Investment	Board of Investment	Board of Investment
Clear ''no nationalization'' provision. Dispute settlement through mutual consultations and in accordance with arbitration rules of the UN Commission on International Law.	Guaranteed ''no nationalization''. Settlement of disputes through ICSID.	Protection against nationalization under bilateral investment agreements and constitutional guarantee. Settlement of disputes under ICSID and MIGA.
100% foreign owned or as joint venture investments with different level of equity participation.	100% without any permission from the government. No Objection Certificate not required from the provincial governments.	100%
Income tax exemption on interest income earned from foreign loans; national priority industries for five years from the date of commercial production in manufacturing, energy-, agro- and forest-based industries and mining industries.	No customs duty on import of plant, machinery & equipment for A&B category industries such as value-added or export industries and the hi-tech industry. First-year allowance at 75% and reinvestment allowance at 50% for C&D category industries (engineering/capital goods, petro-chemicals, chemicals, agro-based industry, production of quality or hybrid seeds, milk processing, etc). Zero import tariffs on plant and machinery (not manufactured locally) used for agriculture.	Exempted from income tax on capital gains due to transfer of shares. Exempted from the provisions in the Import and Export Control Act.

Table 11.6 (cont.)

Policy areas	Bangladesh	India
Repatriation and expatriates	Repatriation of capital and dividends allowed.	Repatriation of foreign capital invested, profits and dividends earned after payment of taxes allowed. Units operating in a limited list of consumer goods industries are subjected to dividend balancing with matching export earnings for a period of seven years.
Infrastructural incentives	Export processing zones. Relatively lower price of land in industrial estates/ areas with electricity, gas, water, sewerage, etc.	Export processing zones. A foreign company can acquire or hold immovable property in India for carrying on its activity. Foreign citizens of Indian origin may also acquire any immovable property in India, except for agricultural land, farmhouses and plantations.

Source: Lama (1999: 5–7).

ical intervention such as a regulatory framework to manage the private power projects would be very much needed.

A relevant aspect of all these investment-related activities is the presence in the region of a large number of transnational companies (TNCs) and other foreign companies with literally a free rein over regional natural resources, technology and the repatriation of profits. Prevention of the abuse of monopoly power and predation by the TNCs and a reasonably long period for creating a level playing field to ensure the survival of national firms are vital issues in the region today.

One of the areas that could generate employment is small and medium enterprises (SMEs). FDI in these enterprises in countries such as Japan, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan has been able to contribute significantly to output and has also played a dynamic role in the growth process. In South Asia, because of the restrictive regime in the SMEs, particularly in

Table 11.6 (cont.)

Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
Repatriation of foreign dividends and capital allowed with certain restrictions.	Full repatriation of capital, capital gains, dividends and profits allowed.	Repatriation of profits and dividends allowed; expatriates' income taxed at a concessionary rate of 15% for the first five years.
Export processing zones. 11 Industrial Districts provide developed land to rent and other utility facilities at reasonable rates. Self-arrangement of land and other utility facilities. No individual foreign national can own land and buildings. Purchase of land and buildings in company's name permitted.	Export processing zones. No upper ceiling on land for registered agricultural companies involved in the production, processing and marketing of agricultural products on a commercial basis.	Export processing zones.

terms of ceilings on investment in plant and machinery and the reservation of products exclusively for this sector, FDI in these sectors has not been very encouraging. One reason for protecting these sectors is that they are still lagging technologically, are outdated and have limited exposure to market forces.

The business arena for investment is becoming more selective owing to merger and acquisition activities triggered by the presence of TNCs in South Asia. This trend, if not supported by an adequate regulatory framework, may have unhealthy anti-competitive effects, thereby seriously undermining the contestability of markets. However, a possible scenario could be that the relatively smaller players in South Asia will find it increasingly difficult to sustain their industrial activities in the face of a massive and sudden onslaught by TNCs. This might create unmanageable dislocations of industrial activities and adversely affect forward

and backward linkages. This would be very serious because most Asian countries do not have adequate competition laws to regulate market power and the conduct of dominant firms.

On the other hand, it might encourage these relatively smaller industrial players to move their industries from a country such as India to neighbouring countries such as Bangladesh, Bhutan or Nepal where not many TNCs operate at present. This would certainly enhance the level of foreign direct investment in Nepal.

The South Asian countries have their own views on their technology needs and sources, leading to specific technology policies. Within the FDI policies of these countries, a distinct emphasis has been on the importation of ''advanced'' technology. There is a lot of variation in the supply, absorption and transfer of technology both across sectors and regionally. The introduction of varying technologies across South Asia is likely to change the scale of operation and the nature of industrial output, and the economies of scale of some bigger operations may have lopsided effects on the smaller operations.

The monitoring of technology flows both within and from outside the region calls for vital coordination among the organizations dealing with the development and transfer of technologies. Institutional networking among the premier scientific and technical research organizations, at both the private and the public level, should be prioritized as a key activity that would facilitate monitoring and research in emerging technologies and their adaptation, adoption and utilization to complement socio-economic development strategies.

The arena of appropriate technology, which maximizes social welfare, has not been really explored and identified by the SAARC member countries on a regional basis. These appropriate technologies are relatively less sophisticated, easier to transfer and implement, more labour intensive, suitable for indigenous skills and raw materials, and cost effective. Specifically identified technologies of this nature are available in various national technology research institutions. They include areas such as agro-based industries, biotechnology, advanced materials, energy conservation and renewable energy, and waste management.

Foreign investment has been a major source of technology transfer and adaptation. In the 1980s the controls on technology licensing were relaxed, and in the 1990s equity participation by foreign firms was encouraged to a greater extent. The sources of technology have proliferated, and as a result the bargaining position of the purchasing entities has strengthened. There is now a multiplicity of technology transfer channels: joint ventures, production sharing, subcontracting, franchising, and build, operate and transfer (BOT).

Despite so many incentives and a serious long-term need, the infrastructure sector has not attracted much investment. This is attributed to

the fact that this sector continues to be highly regulated and involves complex procedures and multilevel interactions between investors and governmental agencies. Over-regulation has also caused problems in the marketing of end products (such as power or gas in Bangladesh). This is a serious concern because the South Asian governments have not been able to do much on the infrastructure front themselves.

In an underdeveloped market such as that of South Asia, FDI can contribute to the growth process only if it leads to significant expansion in both the export basket and export capability. The increasing demolition of trade barriers has made it more attractive to locate foreign industries in South Asia. As labour costs have risen in many of the relatively better-off developing countries, many of the export-oriented units in these countries have been relocated in South Asia. The creation of exclusive export processing zones (EPZs) with very attractive financial and other packages has certainly attracted at least some of these units.

Some countries have already started showing signs of progress. For example, Bangladesh had a total of 174 industrial units in 2002: 113 in Chittagong EPZ, 58 in Dhaka EPZ, 1 in Mongla (Khulna) EPZ, 1 in Ishwardi (Pabna) EPZ and 1 in Uttara (Nilfamari, Rajshahi) EPZ. These have the potential to generate much employment. Exports from industrial units in EPZs in Bangladesh stood at US$531 million in 2002, which represented 9.6 per cent of national exports.

Policy suggestions for immediate effect

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation has failed to address some of the core economic areas such as trade, investment and technology with consistent vigour and regional strategies. SAARC as a regional institution needs to deal with the critical issues of generating complementarities to stimulate and sustainably speed up the process of liberalization in intraregional trade. Because trade has become increasingly investment led, this has to be done by strengthening activities under the Integrated Programme of Action (IPA), promoting regional investments and harmonizing financial and monetary policies.

The scope and opportunities are far greater than is generally perceived, particularly in the context of the ongoing economic reforms in almost all the countries in South Asia. The hitherto closed and largely underdeveloped tertiary sector has suddenly changed in such a way that this region could soon offer a very attractive version of trade in the services sector.

The following suggestions need some attention at this point:
• Top priority should be given to the establishment of a Business Council on Investment Flows with the private sectors of each country, basically to analyse the role of multinational corporations (MNCs), to de-

velop MNCs based in South Asia, to explore the possibilities of trade-creating joint ventures, to maintain inventories of investment laws and accounting and legal regimes and to harmonize them across the region.

- A comprehensive regional convention encompassing the details, potentials and implications of investment both within and from outside the region needs to be put in place. The SAARC Secretariat has already initiated this process, which needs to be debated and deliberated by all stakeholders. This could eventually lead to a Common Investment Area. Many regional blocs, including the Economic Community of West African States, the ANDEAN Group and the Southern Common Market, have such an arrangement (UNCTAD, 1996; de la Torre and Kelly, 1999).
- To encourage investment within the region, a green channel for investments, technology transfer, joint ventures, etc. should be set up, thereby according regional investors the same status as domestic investors (recommended by the Progress, Harmony and Development Chamber of Commerce and Industry, New Delhi, September 1999).
- According to the Group of Eminent Persons (GEP, 1998), the relatively more developed countries of South Asia should permit partial convertibility of their respective currencies on the capital account for the limited purpose of investment in the least developed and small economies of the region.
- Direct incentives should be given to regional projects that fulfil the criteria of regional investment. A mechanism should be evolved that allows these investing companies to enjoy the benefits of the free trade environment immediately, without having to wait until SAFTA is realized. This would be the single most important move to both encourage and consolidate regional projects.

Future prospects

What South Asia needs is a regional identity and rationale. SAARC cannot be an efficient organization unless and until all its members pull together in the same direction. A consensus needs to be reached by all SAARC member countries about the place of South Asia within Asia and also internationally.

Trade expansion in the SAARC region through trade liberalization alone under SAPTA/SAFTA will not be possible if the region does not undertake measures to promote investment flows. Increasingly, trade flows have become the corollary to investment flows, and the trade–investment nexus is of utmost importance in the region owing to the limited produc-

tion and export capabilities of the member countries. Intraregional trade as well as extraregional trade could be expanded by encouraging trade-creating joint ventures in the region. The flow of investment in the SAARC region could be facilitated by establishing a SAARC Investment Area similar to the ASEAN Investment Area. A SAARC Investment Area could help generate intraregional investment flows as well as attract foreign direct investment from outside the region. SAARC member countries have recognized the need to promote regional investment to complement the trade liberalization process. A draft regional agreement on the promotion and protection of investment within the SAARC region is under consideration by the member states and is meant to create conditions favourable for promoting and protecting investments in member states by investors from other member states of the region. The objective is to finalize the agreement before SAFTA is implemented. One area where progress had been made is in the formulation of a draft investment treaty for SAARC, which seeks to harmonize the investment incentives offered by the SAARC countries to foreign investors (Sobhan, in SACEPS, 2002: 10).

However, investment cooperation requires financial integration too. This needs to ensure that the banking systems are interconnected and exchange rates are harmonized. Trade cooperation can be taken forward if macroeconomic policies are harmonized through interaction among the central banks and related agencies. The issue of investment cooperation should, therefore, include competition policy, financial integration issues and macroeconomic harmonization. The other important aspect for the preparatory phase is the issue of standards, which remain very significant for NTBs. However, the harmonization of standards is better done at the international level rather than at the regional level (Bhattacharya, in SACEPS, 2002).

In 1996, SAARC member countries agreed in principle to go a step further and attempt to enact a South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) by no later than 2005. Subsequently, the date for establishing SAFTA was inexplicably brought forward to 2001. However, reflecting the concerns of some of the smaller economies in the region, a more gradual phase-in of SAFTA, with a target date of 2008, has been envisaged by the Group of Eminent Persons. For less developed country (LDC) members, the date of completion was extended to 2010. All NTBs are to be identified in the first year and gradually phased out by 2008 for non-LDC members. The second stage is a South Asian Customs Union (SACU), to be created by 2015. The third stage is a South Asian Economic Union (SAEU), to be established by 2020.

The South Asia Centre for Policy Studies (SACEPS) has emerged out of the recognized need to build an institution that would give a distinct

shape to the realization of a shared future for South Asia. In order to sustain the commitment of policymakers towards South Asian cooperation, a series of task forces, bringing together eminent South Asians, were set up by SACEPS. These task forces are expected to deal with issues of immediate importance for cooperation, such as SAFTA, the WTO, investment cooperation, cooperation in the energy sector, South Asian macroeconomic policies and a South Asia social charter. SACEPS is also exploring the possibility of establishing a South Asian Economic Forum to bring together national, business and civil society leaders to meet informally to discuss the future of the region and explore avenues of cooperation.

The SACEPS task force on SAFTA will identify the issues that need to be taken into account in preparing the SAFTA Treaty. The task force on the WTO may help South Asian countries to participate collectively in the next round of WTO negotiations, which will have far-reaching implications for all the countries of the region. The task force on investment cooperation will explore opportunities for ensuring that investment can flow more freely within the region, the scope for joint venture initiatives and how SAARC members can jointly enhance external capital transfers into the region. The task force on energy cooperation will address the issue of building up opportunities for cooperation by way of an interactive energy grid throughout South Asia and will explore how the region could make fuller use of its collective potential by planning energy supply and demand on a regional basis. The task force on the macroeconomy will focus on the macroeconomic situation in general and explore particular initiatives to harmonize macroeconomic policies within the region.

Energy cooperation in South Asia is of pivotal importance because South Asia has the lowest per capita consumption of energy in Asia and if this situation is not changed in the near future then it will seriously and adversely affect the capacity for economic growth. The opportunities for cooperation in these sectors are perhaps second to none – the issue is how to realize this potential. There is evidence of enormous hydroelectric potential in Nepal, Bhutan and north-east India; gas resources in Bangladesh present significant opportunities; and surplus energy is available in Pakistan. Energy could be traded across the region by integrating the existing grids. However, the positive-sum game to be derived from energy cooperation remains frustrated in South Asia owing to political factors; so many issues relating to cooperation have been bedevilled by politics. The latest reports are that the Pakistan government has not only given its approval for a gas pipeline from Iran to India but also offered to give India the necessary assurances to ensure an uninterrupted supply of gas from Iran. Know-how and the capability to conduct and transact complex negotiations are important requisites for promoting energy cooperation.

South Asia lacks the governmental expertise to carry out such negotiations. Another complicating factor in this area is the lack of a legal regime to underwrite such cooperation (Sobhan, in SACEPS, 2002).

Sobhan has emphasized the need for the design as well as the institutional architecture and the broad political economy of the relationship to be put in place. The distribution systems for energy in any one country will basically be fed from multiple sources of supply from a variety of energy resources. This will involve shared patterns of production, consumption and distribution. These will extend all the way from Central Asia and possibly link up with the surplus energy area of Yunnan province in south-west China, as well as the enormous untapped energy reserves of Central Asia. This would, basically, be the reference point for defining areas of supply, demand and trade in the energy sector in South Asia.

Thus, in order to have vibrant South Asian cooperation, a development mechanism needs to be in operation with effective regulatory bodies, a well-functioning infrastructure and the determination of governments and civil society to carry forward a coordinated development strategy. In this context, energy and water resources, transport and communications, highways and ports, capital markets and financial intermediaries can all promote trade and investment for development in South Asia.

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Part IV

Governance

12

Democratic governance in South Asia: Problems and prospects

Gautam Adhikari

Introduction

South Asia today is at a critical juncture. From Afghanistan to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, inhabitants of this region look nervously to the future. Will the turmoil in so many parts of the region turn into widespread chaos? Or are there real prospects for sustainable liberty and prosperity? Is more democracy the answer to people's aspirations or is it, as some suggest, irrelevant and unhelpful for stability and growth?

Arguments against the efficacy of democracy as a vehicle for sustainable growth within a framework of good governance in impoverished nations have been made for decades. In the South Asian context, two strands of that school of thought stand out. One is a regional or Asian variety, which says that democracy, as understood in its liberal sense, is inappropriate for the countries of the region, given their unique cultural, social and historical circumstances. What is needed instead is a qualified mutant, such as "basic" or "true" or "guided" democracy, which has been advocated time and again by authoritarian rulers in Pakistan, Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia, and which forms a core belief of those who proclaim a common set of "Asian" values as a bond for Asian societies.

The other strand of the argument usually emanates from the West. It is linked to perceptions of national interest in the pursuit of global great power objectives. But it also reflects a lurking suspicion among many in the West about the viability of democracy in societies outside

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the Western cultural zone. On this view, democracy, although laudable as an overarching goal in foreign policy, is a luxury for unstable societies and need not be set as a precondition for external support at the cost of destabilizing compliant, authoritarian regimes that might be serving a current strategic or tactical purpose; and, in any case, these societies are culturally and socially ill prepared to sustain liberal democracy. Of course, this view is stated less bluntly in the public arena.

Thus, for example, Nicholas D. Kristof advises the United States against insisting on genuine electoral democracy for Pakistan when that country – at the moment a key regional ally of the United States in its war against terrorism – ''may be better off under him [General Pervez Musharraf] – if only he will use his power to build credible democratic institutions, starting with parliamentary elections in October'' (*New York Times*, 3 May 2002). That the promised parliamentary elections have become almost irrelevant for Pakistan's political power structure in view of Musharraf's claim of resounding popular support in the so-called referendum of 30 April 2002 is of little concern for Kristof, because ''elections are only one element of a democracy''. Other important elements, he points out correctly, are ''a free press, an independent judiciary and respect for minorities''. But why such institutions or attitudes should be expected to develop and flourish better under a military dictator than under the trial and error practices of electoral democracy is not fully explained by Kristof. Democracy, he writes, has worked badly in Pakistan, though he concedes that ''military rulers ... have been even worse''.

Regional highlights

In order to weigh the relative merits of democracy for South Asia, it might be useful to take a brief look at how democracy has functioned in the region, whether there are reasonable prospects for sustainable democratic governance, and whether democracy is to blame for the various ills afflicting the countries of the region. What follows is an overview highlighting certain key features of the experience of four countries with democracy, or the lack thereof. For reasons of time and space, I shall restrict the scope of this review to the situation in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India, which together account for 1.3 billion people or 94 per cent of the region's population.

Afghanistan

To start with the weakest case, Afghanistan has never been a democratic nation. Some assert that it has never even been a nation. It is more an

agglomeration of tribal societies and groups, which once lived together nominally under a monarchy whose actual writ did not travel far from the capital, Kabul. Following the Soviet intervention in its politics in the 1970s, the country rapidly lost whatever semblance it had of nationhood. It is now engaged, under external scrutiny and guidance, in building the foundation blocks of a society and nation that might become a functioning democracy some time in the future, if it survives at all as a recognizable country.

Cutting a long and well-known story down to its current basics, after the fall of the Soviet-backed government of Kabul in 1992, internal conflict and external pressure continued to tear away at the country's already weak social and political fabric. The United States more or less lost interest in Afghanistan, though Pakistan remained deeply involved. In 1994, the Taliban (Pakistani backed, trained and financed) assumed power and soon established control over 80–90 per cent of Afghanistan's territory. By the end of the decade, the country was a sanctuary for terrorists, with Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida group becoming a prominent presence.

The toppling of the Taliban in 2001, following the US-led war against it and al-Qaida, created another power vacuum. An agreement signed in Bonn among involved parties drew up a timetable for Afghanistan for ''promoting national reconciliation, lasting peace, stability and respect for human rights''. An interim government, under the leadership of Hamid Karzai, was put in power in Kabul to govern for six months and to prepare for the calling of a council of tribal elders, known as the Loya Jirga. The Loya Jirga met in June 2002 with the former king, Zahir Shah, presiding. It created another transitional authority, which will remain in power until a representative government can be elected. That transitional authority is further expected to start a process, to be completed by 11 December 2003, to set up a commission for creating a constitution for Afghanistan.

The goal, in short, is to establish a democratic governance system where none ever existed. The reality so far is that the interim government is barely functioning, and has very little influence outside of Kabul. Tribal rivalries are still raging, the government has no effective police force or military to depend on for bringing about a semblance of stability, and the treasury is virtually empty apart from the aid that trickles in from outside.

In the circumstances, the most the world could hope for would be a transitional authority that in turn would be able – with more powers mandated to it than the interim government's – to restrain most local rivalries and create a legal framework and judicial system until a constitution is drawn up. Kabul, however, will continue to depend on massive foreign aid for reconstruction as well as current expenditure, and on a

meaningful international security presence that would be effective enough to manage internal conflict and ward off harmful external interference.

Bangladesh

Nearly 75 per cent of registered voters turned out on 1 October 2001 in Bangladesh to express their political preferences in the country's eighth parliamentary election. That was about the same percentage as in the previous general election in 1996. These are remarkable figures of popular involvement in the democratic process. Add the fact that Bangladeshis have, in three parliaments since 1991, chosen a woman to be their prime minister, and a bright picture emerges of a functioning democracy in this impoverished nation. In fact, the picture is more blurred than it appears at first sight. Although Bangladesh has many obvious features associated with an electoral, parliamentary democracy, its political functioning and state of governance have for some years been passing through a period of crisis and trial.

There are a number of positive aspects to the functioning of democracy in Bangladesh, which is one of very few predominantly Islamic nations in the world (it is almost 90 per cent Muslim, and the rest of the population is largely Hindu) that are administered by freely elected governments working within the framework of a written, liberal constitution. It is not just that elections are supervised by a non-partisan election commission; the Bangladeshi parliament amended the constitution in 1996 to mandate that a non-party caretaker government would take over the administration from the time elections were announced till the end of counting and the swearing in of a new government.

Bangladesh has a free and feisty press. Its process of political competition has evolved broadly into a two-party system, in which the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party have alternated in power, with support from minor coalition partners, in the three parliaments since 1991. That was also the time when, after a popular uprising, the politicians managed to push the military back into their barracks and place the country's security apparatus under civilian control. It is also a relatively homogeneous country, with few linguistic or cultural issues dividing the people, although occasional conflicts have disrupted the otherwise harmonious coexistence of the two main religious groups.

The problems begin with Bangladesh's confrontational style of politics. The tendency is for the party elected to power to consider itself literally as the ruling party and not to see much of a consultative role in governance for its own coalition partners, let alone the opposition; and the

opposition, more often than not, prefers to boycott parliament. Although elections now are more or less free and fair, as testified by international observers, the losing parties never seem to accept the results. Eight months after the 2001 elections were held, the opposition had yet to enter parliament. It was the same after the previous elections, when today's ruling party was the opposition (the opposition has since rejoined parliament).

As a result, democracy has been crippled in Bangladesh. Governance suffers. Corruption thrives. Law and order deteriorate. The observance of human rights is clouded by allegations and counter-allegations. With the opposition not attending parliament, the ruling party, whichever it might be, has a relatively unaccountable run, and the press strives hard in its role as sole watchdog to raise questions or investigate suspected official misdeeds, to little avail. Moreover, with its self-imposed blockage of a legitimate outlet in parliament, the party in opposition takes to the streets to further its political agenda, such as it is. This leads to a spate of general strikes, mass demonstrations, frequent obstruction of routine public activity and, every now and then, violent clashes.

If we add the influence of illegitimate money and muscle power in political campaigning and a recent trend for businessmen and traders to enter government for personal profit, it is possible that Bangladesh will one day again witness popular disenchantment with democracy and a hankering after the supposed stability of authoritarian regimes, as happened in Pakistan. But, as of 2002, the country was firmly on the democratic path and struggling hard, with meagre resources, to develop its own set of best practices for good governance. It should be supported and assisted in its efforts by external agencies.

Pakistan

From its inception in 1947 to the present day, Pakistan has been struggling with its identity as well as its political form. Its founding father, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, saw Pakistan as a homeland for Muslims but one that would be a democracy, not an Islamic state or an authoritarian state. Others saw it differently, notably the military dictator General Zia ul-Haq, who, after assuming power in 1977, said: ''Pakistan, which was created in the name of Islam, will continue to survive only if it sticks to Islam. That is why I consider the introduction of [an] Islamic system as an essential prerequisite for this country'' (*Pakistan Times*, 7 July 1977; cited in Richter, 1979: 555). He also, like other military rulers before and after him, saw the armed forces as the only institution capable of guaranteeing Pakistan's stability and future, and was ready to allow limited democratic

freedoms, such as closely supervised elections, only as long as he could ensure that the military would remain in overall command of the nation's destiny.

Pakistan's military leaders have long abhorred democratic politics and civilian politicians. The military sees itself as the pre-eminent guardian of Pakistan's nationhood and society, not just its external security. But neither Field Marshal Ayub Khan, who assumed power in 1958, nor General Yahya Khan, who did so in 1969, steered the country as decisively towards an Islamist ideology as did Zia. In the process, he also confirmed the trend begun by Ayub Khan of making the army the centre of a centralized state structure, in which it would be a key factor influencing decisions even during periods when it might be out of direct power. Military rulers have governed Pakistan for nearly half the country's independent existence. They took over the government four times, in 1958, 1969, 1977 and 1999. Each time, they did so ostensibly because they felt that political institutions were faltering and policy-making was adrift, and the army chief feared decisions that might hurt the military's – and, therefore, the country's – interests.

The army, even before Zia took overall command in 1977, had always regarded Islam as a unifying force for both itself and Pakistan. But it had regarded internal cohesion, discipline and professionalism as core values rather than any religious ideology. Zia, after displacing Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government (and later executing him), needed political support. So he allied himself with conservative Islamic groups in society and encouraged religiosity in the army's ranks. Officers and soldiers were asked actively to participate in religious discussions. And, during the 1980s, when Pakistani soldiers fought alongside and directed the Afghan mujahidin against the Soviet forces, jihad became a unifying and rallying cry and feelings of pan-Islamic solidarity strengthened in the Pakistani army, particularly in the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), which later, in the 1990s, helped create and nurture the fiercely Islamic Taliban regime of Afghanistan.

Zia simultaneously did his best to consolidate further the army's position as key arbiter in the power hierarchy and took steps to debase civilian political life by weakening political parties and institutions. Thus, for instance, in the name of promoting Islamic democracy, he created a hierarchy of Islamic courts enjoying higher powers to legislate than parliament, vested extraordinary powers in the president by insisting that the post of the prime minister under the constitution had become too powerful, banned the role of political parties in the only election that was held during his 11-year reign, spawned political corruption by allocating cash resources to legislators so that they could turn their constituencies into personal fiefs, selected his own prime minister and later arbitrarily

dismissed the same person, thereby reaffirming the power of the army in political life.

Today, another military ruler, General Musharraf, is trying to reverse one tendency that Zia encouraged while reconfirming the other. He is trying to slow down and possibly turn back the tide of Islamic radicalism in the army, society and politics. At the same time, in the name of taking steps towards "true democracy", he seems to be continuing the military's efforts to consolidate its supremacy in the power hierarchy and reasserting its steadfast refusal to subjugate its authority or autonomy to civilian control. The question is: Can he pursue both goals together? In other words, would it not be better, for more lasting results, to pacify and stabilize Pakistan's radicalized, bitterly divided society by rapidly widening and deepening democratic participation among its citizens and then revitalizing its perilously weakened civilian institutions to facilitate better governance?

The fact is that Pakistan's citizenry has never had a sustained opportunity to develop democracy. To attempt to understand why, it may be necessary to read the military's mentality. Ever since it had its first taste of power with Ayub Khan's coup in 1958, the military has been feeding like a vampire on Pakistan's moribund body politic. At the same time, global circumstances, along with the imperatives of superpower interests in the region, have often helped the army strengthen its stranglehold on society by citing international support and the pursuit of national interests that override all other concerns. This happened, for example, during Zia's reign, when he could cite US support and the strategic objectives of the Afghan war to steer Pakistan's destiny the way he wanted. It is happening again with Musharraf, who is a crucial ally of the United States in the war against terrorism and can expect international pressure for democratization to be soft at best.

The army sees itself as crucial for Pakistan's external as well as domestic stability, as the only institution that can be depended upon to deliver. Its officers share a widespread conviction that they can do any job that the nation might require them to do, including political management. However, the army sees its security interests and those of the nation in predominantly military terms. Its own interests are, *inter alia*, maintaining total control over its internal management as well as having a decisive say in national security policy, including foreign policy, in the formulation of which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs plays second fiddle to the military and intelligence leadership in Pakistan. It wants to retain its huge share of Pakistan's national budget – currently shown as 24 per cent but in fact closer to 34 per cent, including military pensions – and it would like to protect its economic interests in organizations run by retired officers as well as in government and business. Current estimates show, for ex-

ample, as many as 76 retired or serving generals, admirals and air marshals occupying important positions in the present government.

On top of these and other vested interests is an ethnic factor. In Pakistan today, Punjabis make up 56.5 per cent of the population and Pushtuns another 14 per cent. In the army, the Punjabi strength is 65–70 per cent and the Pushtun representation is 22–25 per cent, both disproportionately high compared with other groups in this nation of multiple ethnicities. This helps the Punjabi business, civil service and military élites to sustain a high degree of influence, which they are generally loath to relinquish in any gamble on democracy. Musharraf himself is an Urdu-speaking Mohajir, but in the otherwise united and monolithic structure that he heads the bulk of his support comes from Punjabis.

In the circumstances, the best that could be hoped for is for Musharraf to realize – possibly under quiet but firm external pressure – that allowing Pakistan to develop and deepen its democratic experience is the answer to doubts over its stability and future. He might be persuaded to understand that multi-ethnic societies are better managed and far more viable in the long run under a democratic system than under any centralized, authoritarian one. He might then agree to hasten the country's progress towards real democracy, lower the profile of the army and, for a while, even be ready to stand watchfully on the sidelines to ensure that civilian governments follow democratic norms and practices and do not end up subverting the process, as has happened in the past. But that might be too much to expect.

India

Like Pakistan, India from its inception – and even before, from the early days of the freedom movement against British rule – has had an ongoing debate about its identity. Some asserted that it should be a Hindu nation, giving due recognition to the wishes of the majority (82 per cent) of its population. Others, notably the first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and the framers of the Indian constitution, felt it would be a mistake and contrary to the reality of India's diverse cultural make-up to turn it into a nation based on Hindu nationalism; instead, they thought, it should be a secular, liberal democracy tolerant of all faiths and ethnic groups. As it happened, the secular democrats won the round, though the debate was never fully settled and continues to this day, with lingering consequences for India's daring experiment with democratic governance.

Contrary to those who say that liberal democracy is not appropriate for a developing nation looking for stability and growth – for example, champions of Asian values such as Singaporean Lee Kuan Yew and sundry military leaders in the region – India demonstrates in a number of

ways how democracy can work for the long-term sustainability of social, political and economic development. In fact, it can be argued that India's problems are a result not of a surfeit of democracy but of too little when and where it was needed or of a malfunctioning of it in key areas of development.

A half-century ago, many sages, including Winston Churchill, had given India little chance of surviving. Merely by existing, and that within a democratic framework of governance, India has defied such predictions. It has survived not despite democracy but because of it. An independent and universally respected election commission organizes regular elections to parliament and state assemblies and has begun supervising elections at grass-roots levels in many states, and a watchful if slow-moving judiciary punishes the powerful and protects fundamental rights enshrined in a written constitution. These rights include freedom of expression, thanks to which a bold and powerful press operates independently. Democracy has survived in a country that recognizes 17 languages, where over a quarter of the population of 1 billion live in poverty, where 39 per cent still cannot read or write, and where people are still killed in religious, ethnic and inter-caste strife.

India's founding fathers were prudent. They realized that a tradition of pluralism had existed for centuries in Indian culture. India's early political élite as well as its military had, during the course of the freedom struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, developed a liberal commitment to democracy that they did not lose after independence. Remarkably, the military has never in the past 55 years questioned its control by civilian authorities. The founding fathers, all liberal secularists, had understood that, given the extreme ethnic, religious, linguistic and other socio-economic diversities of this large country, it might be difficult for a single group to control the state for long. What happened was that contending groups rapidly began to appreciate the usefulness of a democratic process that allowed multiple veto powers as well as checks and balances that could keep rival partners working in a loose coalition. True, political management in such circumstances is more difficult. Consensus-building calls for great political skill and good legislative and executive management, so that deals, once negotiated, are implemented efficiently. But, over time and with experience, the achieved consensus becomes durable.

Nobel laureate Amartya Sen has often pointed out how India, unlike China, has not had a famine in the past half-century thanks to its relatively unfettered flow of information. It has endured severe droughts and near-famine conditions, but news from the affected areas has invariably spread quickly through the press and an open reporting system to enable the authorities to avert disaster. In Mao's China, by contrast, famines

occurred because local officials rarely had the nerve to report signs of an impending crisis and there was no free press to fill the information gap. Clearly, here again democracy has helped India.

Nevertheless, critics of democracy's viability as a vehicle for development would point to India's relative failures in achieving sufficient economic growth and social development to abolish poverty and in providing better overall living conditions – comparable, say, to East Asian standards – for its citizens. The complaint can, however, be examined from a different angle. The fault may lie in the relatively weak liberal democratic content of India's initial developmental preferences, especially in its choice of economic policy.

Nehru showed a marked preference for a socialist model of growth. That was the choice made for the nation at the time of the second five-year plan, after a weak debate on other, more market-friendly paths. Those were the years of consensual public policy-making presided over by the Congress Party, which in the first two decades of independent India faced only nominal political challenge. Command politics and planned economics steered the country's development objectives, the execution of which was supervised by a central civil service within a framework of public administration that was hardly different from the preceding imperial model. Consensus on development issues was easy to achieve for the largely English-speaking élite that ruled the country.

But it was a limited democracy. Although political democracy was legislated from day one of the republic, the case for making greater economic democracy possible through allowing open markets, encouraging enterprise, enabling the Indian masses to participate in a market economy with increased purchasing power, and spreading growth widely did not begin to come into play until late into the experiment. As a result, corruption ballooned, the state's power became formidable and, despite democratic constitutional provisions, the average citizen's ability to make choices remained constricted within a paternalistic political–bureaucratic administration. It was only in 1991 that the licence-permit *raj*, as it had come to be dubbed, began to be dismantled, when liberalizing reforms were undertaken to stave off a dire economic crisis.

For the first 40 years on India's road to development, therefore, an excessively strong state basically decided what was good for the people while its bureaucracy wielded enormous power in the economic sphere. It is only now that the situation is changing.

It was centralized planning, bureaucratic arbitrariness, a lack of transparency in both public and private sector decision-making and other features of a command economy that created the economic mess that India found itself in after 40 years of development and from which it has been trying, with great difficulty, to extricate itself over the past decade. In

other words, one-person one-vote was not enough to meet the challenges of economic growth and the abolition of poverty. More democracy, especially greater transparency and accountability in public policy-making and implementation in the economic field, would almost certainly have led to more positive outcomes. If there had not been an undue emphasis on building capital-intensive and eventually loss-making heavy industries in the public sector, more resources could have been allocated, for example, to the starved sectors of primary education and public health, both of which are areas that empower poor people and create opportunities for their participation in the economy.

As has become obvious today, the past decade of higher growth and steadily diminishing power of the state has indeed led to a lowering of the number of people living below the poverty line – from 40 per cent to around 27 per cent – while the Indian middle class, rural as well as urban, has grown exponentially. Much more needs to be done, but less democracy is not the answer to the problems India faces in further liberalizing its state structure and economic regulatory framework. A consensus on the need for economic reform now exists across the political spectrum, with even the Marxist left calling for new thinking. But there still are many vested interests created during four decades of restricted economic democracy that are slowing the process. It is likely that popular pressure from the burgeoning middle class and increasingly empowered poorer castes and classes will force the pace of change through a pattern of demand politics that is rapidly supplanting the élite-directed and administered command variety.

Conclusion

In sum, democracy should not be blamed for the myriad problems of governance that the region faces. On the contrary, many of the same problems can be traced to a lack of democratic experience or to the quality of its scope, spread and depth. In Afghanistan, for example, the only way out of the current morass would be a firm, and adequately funded, commitment on the part of the international community to democratic nation-building. Without a clear path of progress towards incremental democracy, initially created and practised under international supervision (as happened in Japan after the last world war), Afghanistan's plight can only become worse. The country will then remain a threat to regional and global peace as it has been in the past two decades. The same holds true for Pakistan, where steady external pressure may be necessary to convince the country's military rulers that a transition to democracy would not be against their interests and that the nation, given

its multi-ethnic character, would be far better off as a decentralized democracy than a centrally ruled, authoritarian entity, provided it takes determined steps, perhaps under the guidance of multilateral agencies, to strengthen its public institutions.

India and Bangladesh, on the other hand, present a wholly different set of problems and prospects. The question is not whether they should have democracy – it is there, it has taken root and any attempt to reverse it would lead to explosive chaos – but how to make democracy work for better governance. Happily, each country is advancing towards a more liberalized economy and decentralized polity, with India considerably further down the road than Bangladesh, given its much longer experience with democratic politics and stronger institutional framework. During periods of transition to open market economies, however, a new set of regulatory mechanisms for the rule of law has to be developed and implemented. In the absence of the rule of law to ensure transparency and accountability, runaway freedoms can degenerate into a licence to maximize personal gain. Burgeoning corruption, financial frauds involving banks and stock exchanges, the emergence of mafias and growing lawlessness can result, thus threatening democracy itself. Once again, international opinion should help support such transitions instead of casually dismissing democracy as irrelevant for stability with growth.

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Pluralism, democracy and governance and South Asia: The case of Sri Lanka

Paikiasothy Saravanamuttu

Introduction

At the outset it must be stressed that any discussion of governance, and especially of governance in plural societies such as those of South Asia, is by definition an ideological one. Certain key assumptions are invariably read into the discussion and condition the diagnosis of the problem as well as the proposed solutions. The discussion is inherently political in that the subject matter is political. It is about the structure of power and authority in society and the relationships between groups based upon it. Therefore a clarification of the ideological perspective of this chapter is in order.

This chapter is located in a liberal democratic perspective imbued with the values of individual liberty, democratic pluralism and faith in the belief that diversity in society must be cherished as a source of strength rather than weakness. Although fully acknowledging the pivotal role of the state in society, I argue that this role must be seen in terms of a facilitating framework for welfare and well-being – for the pursuit and enjoyment of the good life by all. Furthermore, the notion of governance that informs this perspective is about both the processes of mediating societal needs and tension as well as, most importantly, the substantive content of that mediation and the values that underpin it. It is fundamentally about what should be done and why, as well as how it is to be done. Governance is not in this conception a matter of technique and

technicality alone; it is first and foremost a way of looking at society stemming from a vision of the organization of society.

Although this perspective on governance is decisively conditioned by political developments in Sri Lanka over the past four decades, it is also relevant to the other states in South Asia, where, despite differences of degree and emphasis and indeed exceptions in respect of some factors, the essential elements of the political culture are common, together with institutional decay and inertia.

The problem of governance in South Asia stems in large measure from the failure to acknowledge the pluralism inherent in society through political and constitutional structures and through the propagation of this value in the political culture. This gives rise to and sustains a crisis of legitimacy of the state. This is underpinned by defensive self-perceptions by the state and societal perceptions of the state that range from the authoritarian and discriminatory to the corrupt and inefficient. These perceptions are mutually reinforcing and societal insecurity is thereby compounded. A reformulation of the social contract between the state and the citizen is long overdue in South Asia. More critically, it is vitally necessary. What follows is an attempt to identify the sources of this problem.

For a region in the throes of prolonged nation- and state-building processes underpinned by both inter- and intra-state violence as well as global balance of power concerns, the need for an overarching political culture facilitating political pluralism assumes particular significance in respect of governance. It is allied to the question of whether ''nation-state'' or ''state-nation'' is the better characterization of the highest unit of collective political organization in South Asia. Accordingly, this problem needs general statement as it is central to the challenge of governance in South Asia.

The nation-state/state-nation problem

In South Asia in general, governmental structures still bear the hallmarks of the colonial legacy and social relations that of pre-colonial influences. Consequently, although the dominant Eurocentric paradigm for collective political organization and economic development is the nation-state and modern capitalism, in South Asia the political formation is better characterized as the state-centric nation, and economic development has been uneven.[1] Unlike the European experience of the symbiotic development of state, nation and market, here the state, essentially the colonial state, preceded nation and has become the principal institutional agency

in the creation of the nation through strategies of assimilation, integration and coercion. Development of the market has lagged behind both.

These centralizing tendencies of the state have bedevilled the objectives of developing socio-political harmony and one overarching national consciousness. Rather, the inability and/or unwillingness of the state to accommodate social diversity and provide democratic "space" to a variety of groups has in turn nurtured and intensified centrifugal tendencies. Moreover, the compulsion of the state to forge a nation in its thrall invariably involves the pre-eminence of coercive strategies and the gradual erosion of democratic rights and freedoms. The institutionalization of hegemony through the insistence on linguistic conformity, with its repercussions on educational and employment opportunities, and, to a lesser extent, the elevation of the majority religion to "foremost" position have struck at the fundamental tenets of minority identity in a representative secular democracy and have gone far in entrenching perceptions of discrimination.

Another related factor is contributing to this as well. It pertains to the political–civil society relationship on the one hand and to economic development on the other. It also accounts for the rise of populism and the consequent erosion of the early parliamentary democratic ethos that accompanied the initial transfer of power in the late 1940s.

Populism rises in proportion to the widening disjunction between the pretensions and the performance of the state, as seen in its ability to deliver the goods to its people. And, as the state expands its role and reveals incompetence, it becomes more authoritarian and feeds the crisis of its legitimacy. The failure of the state to deliver on its promises with regard to the good life of its citizens and its tendency to camouflage its limited capabilities with coercion and authoritarianism invariably give rise to anti-establishment and anti-systemic forces, not all of which seek to define identity in ethnic terms. The system of governance is viewed by them as corrupt, exclusive and bankrupt, and economic development is denied democratic legitimacy.

In a context in which all power and authority are jealously guarded at the centre and concentrated in a class, a community, a party and then in the office of a single individual, as Sri Lankan constitutional development bears out, the *raison d'être* of those who believe that the system is not working for them is to capture the system itself through armed insurrection. This course of action serves only to replicate the problem because it is, by its very nature, a thoroughly statist response.

The development of a strong liberal rights consciousness, which can temper the costs and consequences of populism, has been mitigated by the overwhelming politicization of society imposed by the nation- and

state-building imperative. When power, authority and opportunity stem from ethnic identity and partisan affiliation, the development of flourishing institutions of civil society that would serve as independent guardians of democratic rights is stymied. Secular, democratic civil society is seen not as the measure of the democratic health of society but as a potential threat to the ''state-nation'' bent on becoming the ''nation-state''.

Independence is seen as the regaining of sovereignty by the ''imagined community'' of the nation, therefore rights are initially conceived and later canvassed with an external orientation or *vis-à-vis* the international system. The multiplicity of threats that constituted the Cold War compounded this. Within the political unit, the corresponding duties of citizens are stressed along with the assertion of the rights of the majority. At the international level, notions of justice have priority; at the domestic level, they are superseded by arguments positing order as the higher goal. In both instances, rights and duties are collective and selective. They are not an end in themselves, but a means toward the end of forging a viable and secure collective entity – the nation-state – in the image of the majority community.

The suppressing of civil society and the emphasis on allegiance from citizens to an overarching authority uphold a particular version of collective good that is further buttressed by the model of economic development. The traditional notion of the state as the primary, if not exclusive, provider of the welfare and well-being of the collectivity has been enthusiastically pursued. Again, the dominant ideology was collective and selective. The state enters the economy to control it. Consequently, the modernizing effects of economic development, especially as far as social mobility is concerned, are limited by the preponderant role of the state in controlling and distributing economic largess under its political patronage and according to discriminatory criteria. Like civil society, private enterprise is not encouraged and is therefore unable to play its role in opening up alternative routes to social mobility and, most importantly, to the related function of facilitating the articulation of individual rights. The stultifying role of the state with regard to social mobility also has had the effect of allowing, by default, the persistence of feudal, caste and class considerations.

In this situation, minorities are doubly disadvantaged – as citizens and as persons. They have responded in various ways and with mixed results, depending on their particular circumstances. Some who have acquired material prosperity and social advancement have done so on the tenuous basis of political patronage or a particular power configuration, rather than on or through solid institutional foundations. Individuals have succeeded by virtue of social class. As a group though, minorities are disproportionately vulnerable to the vicissitudes of politics.

It is important to stress in this context, though, that the ultimate political expression of minority demands – national liberation or self-determination – is in effect a reaffirmation of the majoritarian principle and illustrative of the political culture. This anti-liberal-democratic feature is also shared by other anti-systemic political forces whose leitmotif can be best described as the "hijacking" of the state. In this sense, post-independence politics has entrenched the monolithic nation-state bias of collective political organization without fostering the mediating attractions of meaningful constitutional and political experimentation to accommodate social diversity. The emphasis on "meaningful" is apposite, in that such experimentation as there has been has maintained the state-centric bias and at most has been perceived by the minorities and the anti-systemic forces as a tactical manoeuvre – marginal tinkering with form as a smokescreen for the denial of substantive change.

The consistent denial of meaningful redress through political accommodation by the state merely reinforces the belief that the system works only for some and is not intended to work for others. Therefore it has to be abandoned, captured, destroyed or replaced. At the margins, the belief that underpins political action is that the state so designed cannot reform itself. It will always oscillate between provider and predator, and will never be a partner. Is there a way out in South Asia to create and sustain a political culture of partnership in the basic social contract between government and governed?

Although there have been changes from the description provided in the general statement above, it should be stressed that these changes have yet to produce a political culture and institutions for democratic governance and conflict resolution that will endure into the future. My contention is that we in South Asia are in a state of "becoming", as opposed to in a state of "being", with regard to the question of nation and state and the answer to it in terms of democratic governance.

However, many interests and sections of society stubbornly, and at times even viciously, cling to the immediate past and beyond. As their insurance policy against alienation and anomie in a situation of change, they have fallen back on certainties culled from the situation that is being transformed. Fear of the future leads them to go back. Governance becomes a balancing act, a series of ad hoc quid pro quos and fatal quick fixes.

The case of Sri Lanka

The current situation in Sri Lanka is one in which a South Asian country has the opportunity to redefine the state, the polity and society with it, in

full appreciation of past mistakes. After two decades of armed conflict arising from the factors outlined above, the government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam are embarked on a formal negotiating process with Norwegian facilitation. Whatever agreements are reached in this process, even interim ones that will bring into being temporary structures and processes of decision-making and implementation, the state will be transformed. And at the heart of the transformation will be power-sharing as the founding idea of the new political architecture. Complementing the reforms that will arise from the peace process will have to be reforms unrelated to the specific issue of ethnic grievance but of general pertinence to addressing the issues of political patronage and partisan interference in the institutional checks and balances necessary for the functioning of a healthy democracy. Moves have been made to address these challenges; more needs to be done.

A social contract based on the federal idea

In the reformulation of the social contract, there is of course no panacea or formula that can be employed. However, there are ideas, which can serve as the conceptual and normative compass in the exercise, that go to the heart of the problem and as such contain the promise of attenuating it, even if it cannot be resolved in full, easily or quickly. Meaningful federalism is one such idea (see Edrisinha, 1999, 2000, 2001; Welikala and Loganathan, 2002; and Saravanamuttu, 2002). It encapsulates empowerment and power-sharing, responsibility and accountability, and it captures the essence of plural, democratic governance. Federalism is no stranger to the political discourse and arrangements of South Asia – India is quasi-federal and Pakistan has at various points in its turbulent constitutional evolution considered it. However, the stress and emphasis are on ''meaningful'', in so far as the application of the federal idea in South Asia has always been negated by the countervailing influence of the paradigm of majoritarianism and the consolidation of power in the centralized state.

Federalism is an idea that is expressed in political structures that reconcile the desire of political actors to be apart from a larger unit and yet a part of it. It combines the notions of ''self-rule'' and ''shared rule'' in one unifying idea. It entails a clear-cut division of powers between the centre and the federating units and, as much as self-rule connotes autonomy and self-determination for the federating units, shared rule entails a stake for them at the centre and the ultimate responsibility of the centre for the preservation and protection of the democratic rights of all citizens, throughout the polity.

Federalism cannot take root or endure unless the very culture and

mind-set that give life to the political structures established are imbued with a commitment to pluralism and a celebration of diversity as a source of strength. Ostensibly federal states that have failed are those that, in fact, negated the federal idea by entrenching power and authority in a single source and interpreted federalism to be a mere mechanism for administration. A culture of rights, respect and the honourable accommodation of difference is crucial to the federal idea and to its realization. Indeed, it constitutes the source of its coherence and the seminal elements of its success.

Accordingly, the espousal of federalism in Sri Lanka will in effect entail a new social contract, a covenant – from the Latin word for which the term "federalism" is derived – if it is to have the legitimacy necessary for liberation and longevity. As one authority on the subject – the Forum of Federations (2002) – has elaborated:

A covenant signifies a binding partnership among co-equals in which the parties to the covenant retain their individual identity and integrity while creating a new entity, such as a family or a body politic, that has its own identity and integrity as well. A covenant also signifies a morally binding commitment in which the partners behave toward each other in accord with the spirit of the law rather than merely the letter of the law. Thus the binding agreement is more than a contract. A covenant commits the parties to an enduring, even perpetual relationship and to an obligation to cooperate to achieve the ends of the agreement and to resolve peacefully the conflicts that invariably arise in every relationship.

Such a task in the Sri Lankan context has hitherto been inconceivable. It is now more within the realms of possibility as a consequence of a peace process incorporating direct talks between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) born out of a coincidental yet common recognition by both sides that armed hostilities in pursuit of absolute political goals are unsustainable. However, the required "paradigm shift" has to deal with the arguments against power-sharing and pluralism that remain as the residue of the "old paradigm" of majoritarianism and centralized power.

The arguments against federalism in the Sri Lankan context can be summarized as follows:

- federalism will be a stepping stone to secession by the Tamils in the north-east and encourage it amongst other communities on the island;
- it is too expensive for a developing country such as Sri Lanka;
- Sri Lanka is too small a country for federalism.

The argument about federalism as a stepping stone to secession is buttressed by the perception of the LTTE as avowedly secessionist and the firm belief that any LTTE modifications of their cherished goal

are for tactical advantage and therefore not to be taken at face value. In the context of the peace process, Anton Balasingham, the chief LTTE negotiator, stated that, although the LTTE dealt with categories of ''self-determination'' and ''homeland'', these were not synonymous with secession and a separate state. He further stated that secession was not a ''first option'' but a ''last option'' to be pursued in the event that a settlement addressing the aspirations of the Tamils was not possible. He emphasized the notions of ''internal self-determination'' and ''substantial autonomy'' (*The Island*, 23 September 2002).

Although the LTTE have not formally and categorically renounced the goal of a separate state, these statements and the LTTE's participation in the peace talks demonstrate their willingness to at least engage in the exploration of a political settlement within a united Sri Lanka. Moreover, the formal and categorical renunciation of secession and separatism demanded by opponents and critics will realistically have to wait upon agreement on a final constitutional settlement. The challenge, irrespective of opinions regarding the LTTE's bona fides, is to yoke both parties into a process that will result in a constitutional settlement preserving the unity of the country and facilitating the self-determination of the people within it. All indications at present are that the principal protagonists are committed to the process.

The argument about federalism as a stepping stone to secession does fly in the face of post-independence history. The current situation is one in which the writ of the government of Sri Lanka does not run throughout the island. Parts of the north-east are under the control of the LTTE. This has not come about because governments have shared power but rather because they have not. As far back as the 1950s the Federal Party, the principal political party of the Tamil community, advocated, as its name indicates, a federal constitution for Sri Lanka. In the communal tensions that have erupted at various points since then, all agreements to alleviate these tensions reflected the need to move toward greater devolution of power at the least.

Unfortunately, in the face of political opposition, none of them was implemented until external intervention, in the form of the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987, paved the way for a system of provincial councils, which nevertheless weighted the balance of power between the centre and the provinces in the favour of the former. Consequently, in the five decades of independence, the centralization of power institutionalized in particular by the two autochthonous constitutions of 1972 and 1978 nurtured the rise of Tamil militancy, the demand for secession and the marginalization of the mainstream Tamil political representation (see Loganathan, 1996; see also Swamy, 1994).

The issue of pluralism is at the heart of the attempts within the peace

process to devise appropriate political structures in the short, medium and long term. It is highlighted in the relationship between the majority Sinhala community and the Tamil community, as well as in the relationship between the Tamil community of the north-east, who are in a majority there, and the Sinhalese and especially the Muslim community, who are in a minority. Illustrating that, in the Sri Lankan context, the majoritarian ideology is not the monopoly of the political representation of the majority Sinhala community, the LTTE evicted the Muslim community in the north in 1990 and have been charged with harassment and extortion with respect to the Muslim community in the east after the February 2002 cease-fire agreement between the LTTE and the government.

Consequently, the meeting between the leader of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), the main political party of the eastern Muslims, and the LTTE leader was seen as a significant event within the context of the peace process. Following on from the meeting, the Memorandum of Understanding signed by them and the inclusion of the SLMC leader in the government delegation to the talks, as well as the recognition of separate Muslim representation at the talks when issues pertaining to the community are to be discussed, exemplify the issue of plural governance and the acknowledgement of it as pivotal to the resolution of the conflict (see Rupesinghe, 2002).

The LTTE have moved away from an earlier stand focusing on the Tamil-speaking people of the north-east, thus including the Muslims there as well, to a recognition of the special status and distinct identity of the Muslims. This, however, does not translate into acceptance of the demand by sections of the eastern Muslim polity for a separate political unit or Southeastern Council as part of a final settlement. The current LTTE stand appears to be one of recognizing the right of Muslims to separate arrangements within the overall context of a settlement that meets the aspirations of the Tamils.

Were the Muslim community in the east also agreeable to a final settlement along these lines, the federal structure that could emerge will be both territorially based in respect of the Tamils of the north-east and non-territorially based in the case of the Muslims there. The latter community is not concentrated in territorially contiguous lands and any federal settlement will have to contain arrangements for the community that reflect this.

An allied criticism of the argument that federalism will be a precursor to the division of the country is the argument that it will invariably divide the country into ''ethnic enclaves''. (The arguments for federalism as a mechanism for governance *per se*, irrespective of its utility in the resolution of ethnic conflict, have not been advanced in Sri Lanka, indicating

the hold of the paradigm of centralized power and that the ethnic conflict is in effect a product of that paradigm.) That the peace negotiations are primarily between the government and the LTTE and that they will have to address the demands of the Tamil polity presented as the Thimpu Principles – named after an earlier attempt at negotiations in the Bhutanese capital – relating to self-determination and to a ''homeland'' indicate that there will be asymmetrical arrangements for the Tamils in the north-east as well. This in turn could be used to augment the ''ethnic enclaves'' thesis (see Edrisinha, 1999, 2000, 2001; Loganathan, 1996; and Rajasingham-Senanayake, 2002).

The negation of ethnicity in the settlement of a conflict that has kept ethnicity at the forefront of a community's political consciousness is extremely difficult. However, the settlement does not have to be obsessed with it and unduly privilege it. Vital to the settlement must also be the element of federalism that secures pluralist democracy through a robust human rights regime underpinning a common notion of citizenship and a stake for the regions or provinces in the centre through a bicameral legislature. Thus, both the space for the political expression of collective identity within the norms of a pluralist democracy, as well as the stake of those identities in governance at the centre, can be provided through federalism – and both in turn buttressed by a common notion of democratic citizenship. Unfortunately, the central role of a second chamber in conflict resolution through realization of the federal idea has not been appreciated or acknowledged in the Sri Lankan context. This also stems from the criticism of federalism as being too expensive.

The criticism of federalism being too expensive has been fed by the introduction of another layer of government in the form of provincial councils following the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987. The argument is based on the observation that additional tiers of government do not advance governance but provide further opportunities for patronage politics. It cannot be denied that the opportunity is presented for further patronage politics. However, the point needs to be stressed that this stems from a political culture that upholds zero-sum political power as an article of faith. As a result of the centralization of power, the devolution that exists is not and cannot be ''meaningful''. In fact, the devolution granted was never intended to be meaningful (Edrisinha, 1999, 2000, 2001; Loganathan, 1996; also Wanasinghe, 1999).

The unitary state is an entrenched provision of the constitution, and the provincial council system was allowed only because it could be contained within the bounds of a unitary state. Through the Concurrent List of Subjects on which these councils and the centre both have competence, the centre in effect holds sway over the councils. As a result, the system of provincial councils has been an expensive disappointment; they

are nevertheless used by, and useful to, local politicians as a training ground and stepping stone to the central legislature.

The "costs" argument must also be set against the "costs of war", since conflict is the outcome of the failure to share power in a new constitutional dispensation. And the argument that the country is too small has not taken into account the examples of Switzerland and Belgium.

The wider agenda

In addition to the reforms related specifically to the resolution of the ethnic conflict and its profound ramifications for the polity, other areas of reform need to be addressed. These relate to the protection and strengthening of the electoral process, the media, party democracy and the role and responsibility of civil society.

Elections, internal party democracy and independent commissions

Elections as the principal mechanism of choice and change in a functioning democracy go to the heart of pluralist governance. Unfortunately, the electoral process too has been a casualty of zero-sum politics, turning elections into matters of life and death, metaphorically and literally. Violence and electoral malpractice, including ballot stuffing, have marred Sri Lankan elections in recent years as parties and candidates have fought to cling on to or acquire electoral office as the bedrock of power, influence and wealth in society.[2] Public legitimacy has suffered as a consequence, although public faith in the electoral process has fortunately not been fatally diminished despite the violence that has been witnessed in elections conducted both within the context of emergency rule and civil war and without.

Sri Lankans have enjoyed universal adult franchise since 1931 and, in the first two decades of independence, governments were regularly changed through the ballot. The slide into electoral violence and malpractice coincides with the decade of the 1970s, in which the cumulative tensions of failed nation- and state-building erupted into insurgencies in the south and north of the country – insurgencies arising out of grievances that two autochthonous constitutions in that decade (1972 and 1978) could not resolve: the southern insurgency by the People's Liberation Front (the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna) and the ethnic conflict in the north. The former erupted again in the late 1980s and was ended through force; resolution of the latter is currently being attempted through negotiations.

Continued electoral violence and malpractice fuelled the public demand for the creation of truly independent institutions involved in the conduct of elections. Although electoral violence and malpractice served

as the catalyst for this, the institutions identified also have a role and wider significance outside the electoral process. These institutions were the commissions for elections, the public service, the police, the media and the judiciary. Finally, in September 2001, the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution was passed. It established a Constitutional Council comprising *ex officio* members as well as nominees of political parties. The Council is to choose the members of four independent commissions: for elections, the judiciary, public service and the police. A commission for the media is yet to be established.

It is too early yet to comment on the impact the Seventeenth Amendment will have on governance – the commissions are yet to be established and there was considerable debate over the independence of the commissions if the Council was to be made up of politicians and their nominees. That this was the basis on which parliament could muster the necessary majority of two-thirds of its members for a constitutional amendment does attest to the centrality of political parties and their hold on appointments. The paradox notwithstanding of an institution set up to rid the checks and balances on the exercise of executive power of political patronage being nevertheless constituted on this basis, the expectation is that the Council will in practice assert its independence. By no means perfect in its structure and functions, there is room for it to evolve in close conformity to its *raison d'être*.

Independent commissions function as part of the armoury of checks and balances on the exercise of executive power. They have to be complemented in terms of the overarching objective of governance by internal democracy within political parties as the formative breeding ground and school for politicians.

The argument here is a basic one. Can politicians expect to practise democratic governance in government when they have had no preparation for it and have not practised it in their own party? The issues here are candidate selection and its bearing on political patronage, in particular the leader-centric organizational structure that is a product of and reinforces the paradigm of centralized power and party financing. Those accused of violence and malpractice are rarely disciplined and have in the past been promoted instead! The absence of good practices in all these respects has favoured the local populist with access to funds and thugs.

Two other factors need to be mentioned as well. The first is that populist politics is also fed by middle-class apathy and alienation. Elections are important to those who still depend upon the state as the primary provider of welfare and well-being. The state is the source of the public health and education systems and is the largest employer. Especially in the context of privatization, which Sri Lanka has been undergoing since the late 1970s, this has meant that, as the state has shrunk in terms of the

largess at its disposal, the options of the middle class have spread to the private sector. The poor still depend on the state, and therefore who is in control of the state is of central concern to them. The state carries out poverty alleviation programmes, and the use of these programmes as instruments of political patronage has gravely undermined them. This has been the case with the Janasaviya programme initiated by the United National Party (UNP) government in the early 1990s and the Samurdhi programme of its People's Alliance (PA) successor. The latter dispensed funds to more than those entitled to them and yet did not provide for those who most needed funds (World Bank, 2000).

The other factor is that violence has come to be seen as the most effective arbiter of societal grievance in a situation of institutional decay. Political interference in the police and judiciary, as well as delays in the dispensation of justice, encourages the use of violent dispute resolution.

The media and civil society

The media in Sri Lanka have not been an instrument for protecting and advancing pluralist governance and democracy in a multi-ethnic society. Although the change of government in December 2001 and the onset of the peace process in February 2002 have brought about some changes in media law reform – criminal defamation was removed from the statute books for example – and reportage of the situation in the war-torn northeast, there is a lot of ground to cover in orienting the media towards greater appreciation and acknowledgement of their responsibilities in respect of the challenges and opportunities of a multi-ethnic, pluralist Sri Lanka.[3]

The media are divided into the state owned and the privately owned. The former are at the service of the government of the day and operate largely as propaganda tools of the party in power; the latter are seen as favouring the traditional capitalist party, the United National Party, now in government. Yet the private media's support for the UNP government is also critical of as well as opposed to, in certain quarters, its initiation and handling of the peace process, attesting to the enduring influence of stereotypes relating to terrorism and ethnicity.

The attitude of the private media to the previous People's Alliance regime ranged from the uneasy to the adversarial, and this invariably compounded the private media's position on the ethnic conflict. The relationship between the PA government and the media was a complex one that steadily deteriorated and in its latter stages was characterized by charges of violence and intimidation on the one hand, and blatant partisanship and lack of professionalism on the other. However, the fact that the private media criticized the PA government's management of the conflict on partisan grounds does not obscure the entrenched stereo-

types and bias to which the private media, and indeed the state media too, subscribed in their coverage of the conflict and the attempts to resolve it.

Popular prejudices about terrorism and ethnic grievance as well as ethnic stereotypes abounded. Coverage fell within the confines of the prevailing dominant paradigm and little attempt was made to pursue stories not incorporated in official accounts. There was a discernible willingness to cover the conflict from Colombo and to accept the version of events handed down by the publicity organs of the principal protagonists. Independent accounts were rare. Indeed, as a result of the availability of international networks, the average Sri Lankan continues to have a better idea of what war has done to Bosnia and Rwanda, for example, than of what it has done to the Jaffna peninsula. The failure of the media in this respect is a key factor in the absence of a critical mass of opinion being mobilized into an effective peace constituency.

In defence of the media and from the perspective of governance, the relationship that has evolved between the state and the media must be mentioned. In the 17 years of UNP rule (1977–1994), in which many human rights abuses took place and in which the crisis of democratic governance was brought to a head, the alternative media acted as a source of criticism of the regime. As a consequence, there was harassment of media institutions and journalists were abducted and murdered. The fear of a return to this climate of fear and repression has been cited as a factor inhibiting the media from violating censorship regulations covering war reporting and from desisting from self-censorship in the absence of such regulations during the PA regime (1994–2001). Although these fears cannot be totally discounted, they did not hold equally for all media organizations, and the extent to which the media are the repository of public prejudice and stereotyping as far as the ethnic conflict is concerned should not be underestimated.

An improvement in the government–media relationship and its elevation to a constructive interaction based on mutual respect are necessary for governance. There is a danger that arguments for greater media sensitivity in reporting on the transformation of the conflict and the peace process will meet stiff resistance from the media on the grounds that this too entails a particular ideological media bias and an agenda for aligning the media in uncritical support of government policy. Underlying this is the central question, which media institutions and people do not contest but have yet to do something concrete about. This relates to shortcomings in basic training and professionalism. Some hope is held out in the recognition by media organizations of the need for voluntary self-regulation and attendance to professional standards, codes of ethics and conduct. This was initially flagged in the media organizations' Colombo Declaration of Media Freedom and Social Responsibility issued in April

1998, which lays the foundation for a self-regulatory organization. The latter is expected to be convened in the near future.

The dangers of co-option or of confrontation hold for the rest of organized civil society as well, especially those civil society organizations working in the field of democratization and human rights. Were such organizations to find themselves either in a situation of indefinite confrontation with the government or in one of co-option and subservience, democratic governance would be affected adversely. This is an issue that arises in particular with regard to the resolution of the ethnic conflict and the propagation of devolution and meaningful power-sharing as indispensable to its resolution.

Although there are organizations openly hostile to this, there are also those that, in their association with the government in this campaign, have laid themselves open to the charge that they are acting as its agents as opposed to independent actors supportive of the government on this issue. For instance, a conviction about the indispensability of devolution to conflict resolution is not synonymous with exclusive support of the government's devolution package. There is a danger here that, on governance and human rights issues, these organizations could take on the role of ''service providers'' on behalf of the government in these areas – a situation that occurred in the area of poverty alleviation in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as indicated above.

An issue-based democratic, secular civil society agenda may be difficult to realize in practice when the issues are hotly contested in political life and define party positions. Moreover, the relationship between government and civil society organizations is invariably an asymmetrical one in favour of the government. Both the UNP and the PA governments (1977–1994 and 1994–2001, respectively) attempted legislation to control non-governmental organizations, on the grounds that it is the government's responsibility to ensure financial probity in this sector. The effect of such legislation is to obliterate the distinction between the governmental and non-governmental sectors and thereby to weaken the prospects for democratic governance. Yet the carving out of a separate and distinct space for civil society organizations in the face of such challenges is indispensable for the vital contribution they make to plural and democratic governance. These challenges persist and need to be seen as integral to relations between the state and civil society in a transitional democracy.

Conclusion

It is clear from the foregoing that there are profound challenges to the creation and consolidation of democratic and pluralist polities in South

Asia, and in Sri Lanka, the case-study presented here. At the same time, however, there are opportunities to make the paradigm shift or indeed leap necessary to redefine the state, and with it the polity, to accommodate and celebrate the intrinsic pluralism of society.

Fundamental change in the power relationships between and within groups that have to be reflected in political institutions and processes will invariably encounter resistance, exact a price from entrenched interests and not be free of tension and anxiety. This will tax the patience, tolerance, courage and imagination of all. Evading the challenge, forsaking the opportunities, will compound the predicament and make peace and prosperity more elusive than they have hitherto appeared.

Notes

1. This argument is largely taken from Saravanamuttu (2001). See also Saravanamuttu (2000).
2. See http://www.cpalanka.org for reports of the Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) on all recent local, provincial and national elections. CMEV is made up of the Centre for Policy Alternatives, the Free Media Movement and the Coalition Against Political Violence.
3. See http://www.cpalanka.org/publications_media.html for *Media Monitor*, a journal highlighting problems with media reportage in Sri Lanka; also see Kandiah (2001).

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Part V

Environment

14

Critical links between environment and development in South Asia

Zafar Adeel and Awais L. Piracha

The debate on the linkages between environmental conservation and sustainable development has deepened in recent years, particularly in the context of the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (August–September 2002). This chapter reviews the situation in the context of South Asia. The underlying thesis is that human and economic development in the region are critically linked to the stresses on and depletion of environmental resources.

South Asia comprises about one-quarter of the world's population but accounts for only about 3.5 per cent of the land surface area. In terms of surface area, the South Asian region (including Afghanistan) is about half the size of the People's Republic of China and one-third the size of the Russian Federation. The population density in places such as the Central Punjab Region in Pakistan or in Bangladesh is in the range of 400–1,000 persons per square kilometre; the regional average is about 300 persons per square kilometre. Such high population density translates into a corresponding low natural resource base per capita. The challenge of appropriately using natural resources in this region is perhaps much more difficult to overcome than in other parts of the world.

This chapter summarizes the available policy perspectives and sets the stage for looking at environmental security issues, which are discussed in Chapters 15 and 16. The general overview of environmental problems and challenges is further reinforced through a case-study of Punjab Province, Pakistan. This case-study indicates that high population density

and a low natural resource base per capita are the dominant factors in deteriorating water quality, indirectly leading to environmental degradation and a lack of overall development.

Sustainability seen through the South Asian lens

What is sustainable development?

Much has been written on sustainable development since the World Commission on Environment and Development released its report in 1987 (Bruntland, 1987). However, the concept still remains elusive and perhaps has different connotations depending on the setting. The definition also varies with the geographical context. It is, therefore, instructive to explore the general concept of sustainable development through the South Asian lens.

Two broad principles define the general concept of sustainable development (United Nations, 1992):

1. "The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations" (Principle 3);
2. "In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it" (Principle 4).

These two principles broadly relate to the notions of inter- and intra-generational equity, respectively.

The real challenge, however, is to translate the principles into concrete policies for national development. As an example, none of the countries in South Asia has been able to develop an apex national council or mechanism focused on sustainable development. And only a few Asian countries have done so, including China, the Philippines, Mongolia and Japan (Boyer, 2000). This indicates the importance and relevance (or lack thereof) of the notion of sustainable development on the South Asian political scene. The misperceptions that economic and industrial development should take precedence and that incorporating environmental concerns would have an adverse impact on development are quite prevalent throughout the region.

At the moment the South Asian nations are caught in a vicious cycle of poverty, environmental resource depletion and lack of development. As shown in Figure 14.1, all of these processes are closely interlinked and interdependent. In communities that are afflicted with poverty (whether urban or rural), overexploitation of natural resources is a common practice and one that may be essential for survival in the current circum-

Poverty

Over-
exploitation

Loss of
livelihood

Environmental
degradation

Lack of
development

Resource
depletion
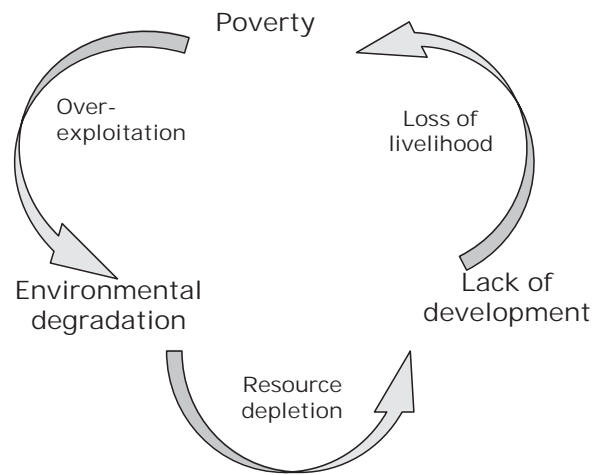
Figure 14.1 The existing cycle of poverty, environmental degradation and lack of development in South Asia.

stances. For example, coastal communities are typically driven to over-harvest fisheries – often relying on destructive fishing practices (Hidayati, 2000). At the same time, mangrove forests in the region have been heavily depleted through harvesting fuel wood and timber, and using the land space for more lucrative shrimp farming (Qureshi, 2002; Kathiresan, 2002; Subramanian, 2003). The result is the depletion of fish stocks beyond possible recovery in the near future and the near-complete destruction of mangrove habitats in the region.

Ironically, the depletion of natural resources as a result of the high population density and general degradation of environmental quality has direct and adverse consequences for the livelihoods of people dependent on these very resources. The near-collapse of fishery industries in many South Asian countries is an indicator of this. Indirectly, the shortage of resources also leads to fewer and non-sustainable options for development, further perpetuating the destructive cycle.

How to change the development paradigm?

The existing development paradigm should receive careful consideration and perhaps requires some rethinking, given the prevailing conditions in the region. The primary target of such efforts must be the reduction of poverty in the region, particularly when the number of people living below the poverty line currently stands in excess of half a billion (World
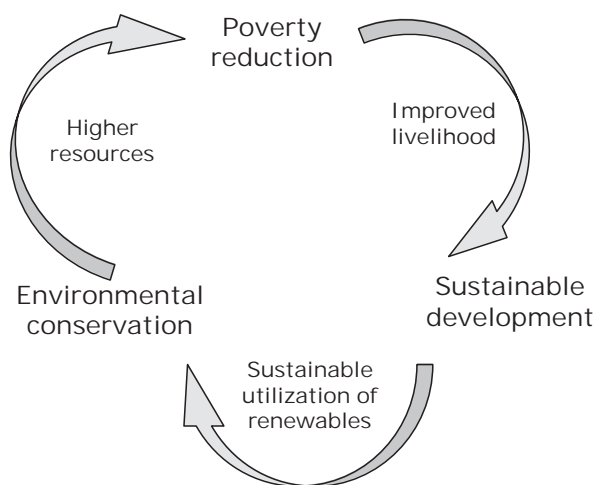
Figure 14.2 A different approach to sustainability.

Bank, 2001). A number of factors contribute to this situation, including weak incentives for improved service delivery to the poor, rampant corruption, imperfect monitoring and administrative obstacles (World Bank, 2001). Excessive depletion of natural resources, as discussed in subsequent sections, does not provide easy choices in reshaping the development paradigm. Schematically, one may conceptualize an ideal development paradigm as shown in Figure 14.2.

In a general sense, poverty reduction must be undertaken through the provision of livelihoods that are sustainable and match the ecological carrying capacity. This is quite difficult to achieve in practice, however; the key to success lies in the involvement and participation of local communities. Success stories in South Asia repeatedly demonstrate that a fundamental requirement is that the local people are involved in conceptualizing, developing and implementing alternative livelihoods. Only locally acceptable and beneficial solutions lead to the positive and productive stewardship of natural resources.

Sustainable development in South Asia

Let us look more closely at the existing situation in the South Asian region. As a region, South Asia has fallen to the bottom of most human development indicator rankings. Table 14.1 shows the Human Development Index (HDI) for selected countries, together with their gross national income (GNI) per capita expressed in international dollars

Table 14.1 Summary of development indicators in South Asia

Country	Human Development Index, 2000		Gross national income per capita	
	Rank	Value	Rank	Value (US$, PPP)[a]
Bangladesh	145	0.478	167	1,530
India	124	0.577	153	2,230
Nepal	142	0.490	176	1,280
Pakistan	138	0.499	159	1,860
Sri Lanka	89	0.741	138	3,230

Sources: HDI – UNDP (2002); GNI/capita – World Bank (2001).
a. PPP = purchasing power parity.

(purchasing power parity method). The HDI takes into account GDP per capita but also other factors, including life expectancy at birth, the level of school attendance and functional literacy (as a percentage of people who can read and write). It is eye-opening to find the countries of the region falling into the lowest one-third for both HDI (with the exception of Sri Lanka) and GNI per capita. Even more astonishing is the fact that South Asia falls behind significantly when compared with other countries in Asia (UNDP, 2002). The low HDI clearly indicates that the people in South Asia are less educated and literate, and are more afflicted by poverty than elsewhere in the world. The net result is a low quality of life.

The rampant poverty and low quality of life (expressed as HDI) have other indirect consequences, such as increased vulnerability to natural disasters. A glance at some of the major climatic disasters shows staggering numbers: 140,000 people perished in the 1990 Bangladesh cyclone; and 10,000 people perished and 13 million were affected in Orissa, India, during the October 1999 super cyclone. These large numbers of casualties highlight many shortcomings in the region: the poor condition of the infrastructure (roads, bridges, railways, etc.), a lack of public health facilities and a lack of appropriate national-level mechanisms for disaster management. The overall result is that the poor and disadvantaged segments of South Asia have a much higher level of vulnerability to these impacts.

Poverty can also be linked to a number of "environmental" health problems, including a lack of sufficient and clean water, food, appropriate shelter and fuel, and access to healthy air. The most poignant example of this is arsenic poisoning through drinking water in South Asia, which affects huge numbers of people – over 35 million in Bangladesh, 2 million in India and 100,000 in Nepal (Adeel, 2002). Once again, the lack of

proper water delivery infrastructure is the main underlying problem, and one that is not being addressed in a systematic manner even now.

The state of the environment – Key issues in South Asia

It is instructive to review the state of the environment in South Asia, focusing particularly on the natural resources that are under stress. Similar, and in-depth, studies of the state of the environment have been carried out by many institutions, most notably the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (United Nations, 2000), the World Bank, and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP, 2002). In this chapter, we specifically focus on South Asia with an overview of the drivers behind the state of the environment, although an in-depth discussion is beyond the scope of this chapter. The very low resource availability per capita emerges as a common theme in the description of natural resources.

Of the many drivers of environmental degradation, urbanization is perhaps the most significant because of the major trend of increasing urbanization (3.4 per cent annual growth in South Asia's urban population), a lack of proper planning, the exploitation of natural resources under the urban footprint and the generation of vast quantities of waste. Some of the largest and fastest-growing cities in the world are located in South Asia. An in-depth evaluation of the urban problems and their impacts on the regional state of the environment is beyond the scope of this chapter.

Industrial growth also poses a challenge, primarily through the production of waste but also through exploitation of the limited natural resource base. Legislation governing industries' environmental behaviour has been slow in coming. For example, an environmental impact assessment (EIA) is still not fully established as a requirement for the establishment and operation of industries. More importantly, the development of industrial estates and regions typically is not subject to a strategic EIA. The implementation of laws governing industrial emissions still falls far short of what is required.

Stresses on water resources

Water is perhaps the most crucial of natural resources for development and is, not surprisingly, the one under greatest stress in South Asia. Water availability per capita falls far short of the global average of more than 7,000 m^3 per year (see Table 14.2), with the exception of Nepal. The national figures mask considerable variation both within the region and

Table 14.2 Overview of water resources in South Asia, 2000

Country	Renewable water resources (m³/year/person)	Water availability[a]
Bangladesh	764	Very low
India	1,249	Very low
Nepal	8,601	Medium
Pakistan	1,756	Very low
Sri Lanka	2,642	Low
Global average	7,077	–

Source: UNEP (2002).

a. Water availability scale based on 1,000 m³/year/person, using UNEP criteria: 1–2 very low; >2–5 low; >5–10 medium; >10–20 high.

within countries; there are areas where water availability is indeed precarious. A region-wide trend assessment, shown in Figure 14.3, clearly indicates that water availability per capita is getting worse and that the trend will continue during the next two decades (Shiklomanov, 1997). The situation is more pronounced in India and Pakistan, where population density and growth are putting greater pressure on available freshwater resources. It is also important to consider the situation of groundwater resources – depletion of aquifers has become an acute problem in India, Nepal, Maldives and Sri Lanka (United Nations, 2000).
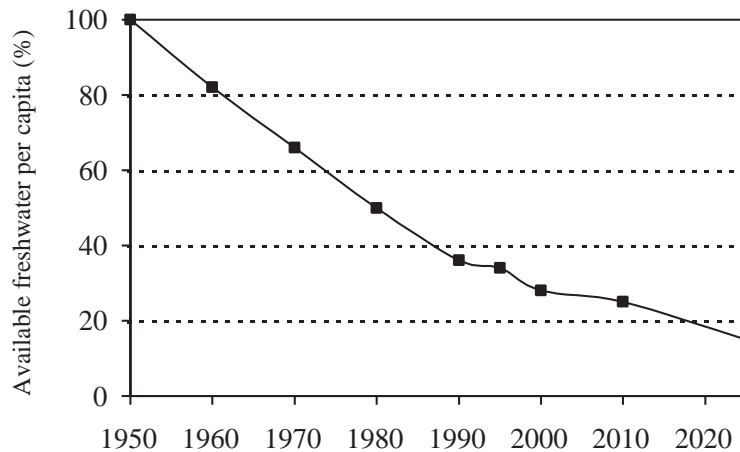
Figure 14.3 Decline in average water resources per capita in South Asia. (*Source*: Shiklomanov, 1997)

Table 14.3 Assessment of land degradation in India

Type of land degradation	Area (million hectares)	Per cent of total area
Erosion by water	57.15	17.42
Degraded forest area	24.89	7.58
Erosion by wind	10.46	3.18
Salinization	6.32	1.92
Waterlogging	3.19	0.97
Ravine formation	2.67	0.81
Shifting cultivation	2.37	0.72
Mining and industrial wastes	0.25	0.08
National total	107.30	32.68

Source: United Nations (2000).

Land degradation

A major proportion of the land surface in the South Asia region is becoming degraded, leading to a decrease in land productivity and, even more importantly, threatening the food security of the countries in the region. A poignant example is India, which has the largest share (more than 70 per cent) of the land area in the region. As shown in Table 14.3, nearly one-third of the surface area in India is affected by various forms of land degradation. The causes of this degradation are many and varied, including declining forest cover, inappropriate agricultural practices, destruction of natural vegetative cover for development, inadequate maintenance and management of the vast canal-based irrigation system, and industrial and mining waste. Once again, a more generic stressor is population increase, which in turn leads to the negative practices listed above.

Deforestation

The destruction of forest cover is a serious problem throughout the region, as shown in Table 14.4. Such deforestation leads to the loss of precious biodiversity resources and exposes soils to various forms of erosion. The case can be made by looking at mangrove forests in the region, which have been under a high level of threat and destruction. Typically, these coastal forests are misclassified by governments as ''waste land'' or ''swamps'', having no economic value. This makes it easy to acquire land tenure and exploit these resource-rich ecosystems to the verge of extinction. The use of mangrove areas for shrimp aquaculture by clear-cutting the forests has become the most destructive practice; it is also quite

Table 14.4 Deforestation statistics for South Asia

Country	Annual rate of deforestation (%)	Area deforested annually (hectares)
Bangladesh	0.8	8,800
Pakistan	3.0	55,000
Nepal	1.1	55,000
Sri Lanka	1.1	21,000

Source: United Nations (2000).

lucrative to a very few people in the very short term. The Sunderban forest, which is the largest and richest mangrove forest in South Asia, is shared between India (38 per cent) and Bangladesh (62 per cent). A significant part of the Sunderbans has disappeared in recent years. Since the early 1980s, Pakistan and Bangladesh have lost more than 70 per cent of their mangrove forests (Adeel and Pomeroy, 2002).

However, one does need to look more closely at the reasons for this destruction, which range from wilful destructive logging for profit to overexploitation by poor people for fuelwood. In the absence of strict enforcement of forestry laws and improved supply of energy to rural areas, the situation is unlikely to change significantly in the near future.

Degraded air quality

The level of air pollution in the South Asia region has also increased considerably, with urban areas faring much worse. The main drivers behind poor urban air quality are emissions from the transportation sector, the inefficient burning of various types of fuels, including wood and poor-quality coal, and emissions from various industries. A lack of appropriate legislation governing air pollution or its lax implementation mean the situation will improve very slowly. As an example of existing air quality, three major Indian cities are compared with Tokyo in Figure 14.4. In Calcutta, Delhi and Mumbai the concentration of total suspended particles exceeds the guidelines set by the World Health Organization by a factor of two to four, whereas Tokyo air quality remains within the guidelines. The major contributors are two-stroke petrol vehicles (e.g. rickshaws and motorcycles) and diesel vehicles (e.g. buses and trucks) with poor emission control used as public transport. The emissions include particulates as well as noxious gases such as carbon dioxide (CO_2), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and sulphur oxides (SO_x).
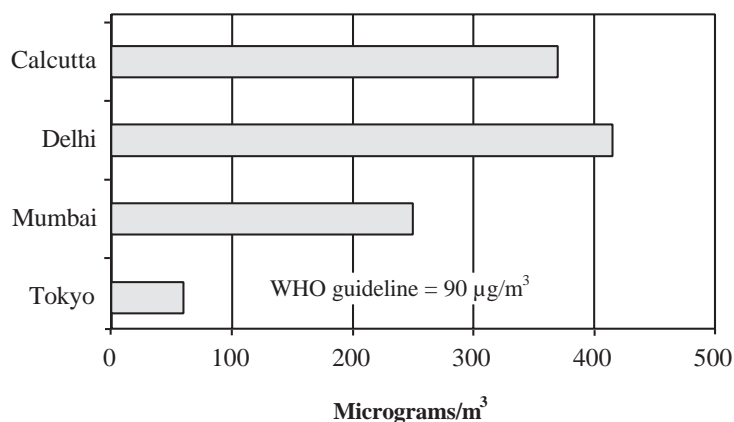
Figure 14.4 Total suspended particles in South Asian cities in comparison with Tokyo.
(*Source*: United Nations, 2000)

Solid wastes

The management of solid or urban waste in South Asia suffers from serious problems. A small fraction of the urban population has access to proper solid waste disposal facilities. By and large, open dumping remains the method of choice for the vast majority of the population (see Table 14.5). This also leads to a number of health concerns, particularly for the slum areas thriving around these open dumps and generally for the entire urban population (through impacts on the water supply and air quality). On the positive side, average waste production in the South Asia region (at 0.45–0.89 kg/capita/day) is still considerably lower than that for more developed nations (over 2 kg/capita/day for the United States) (United Nations, 2000).

Table 14.5 Municipal solid waste disposal practices in South Asia (%)

Country	Composting	Open dumping	Land fill	Incineration	Other
Bangladesh	–	95	–	–	5
India	10	60	15	5	10
Nepal	5	70	10	–	15
Pakistan	5	80	5	–	10
Sri Lanka	5	85	–	–	10

Source: United Nations (2000).

Case study: Water pollution in Punjab Province, Pakistan

In this section, we present a case-study from Pakistan that demonstrates that domestic waste is the leading cause of water pollution and the consequent damage to human health. These impacts, in turn, are correlated with the high population density in the region and the lack of proper pollution management approaches. The findings of this case-study are relevant to many other areas in the region that have similar population densities and types of industries.

The state of the environment in Punjab Province

The eastern part of Pakistan is flat and lies in the Indus river basin, comprising the Indus and its five major tributary rivers. This region (called the Indus Plain) generally constitutes Punjab Province to the north and Sind Province to the south. These provinces together contain most of the productive agricultural land, many major urban areas and a vast network of irrigation canals.

About 79 million people live in Punjab Province, which has an area of about 200,000 km^2, giving an average population density of about 400 persons per km^2. Figure 14.5 shows a map of Punjab Province with its administrative divisions. Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad and Multan form the core of the province. These divisions cover only one-third of the land but contain two-thirds of the population. Most of the industry is also situated in these divisions. The remaining four divisions – Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Sargodha and Rawalpindi – are less densely populated and have less industry.

Punjab has a continental climate, which is very hot in the summer (up to 46°C) and very cold in winter (near 0°C). It is semi-arid, with very little rainfall (200–700 mm rain per year). The province has five rivers: Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Sutlej (the word *Punjab* means five rivers). These rivers originate from mountains in Kashmir and are mainly fed by snowmelt. They provide substantial surface water and groundwater resources and fertility. About 50 per cent of Punjab's land is cultivated using water from these rivers and groundwater (EUAD, 1993). These water resources are also the source of potable water for people within the densely inhabited province.

Punjab's urban and industrial areas have experienced rapid growth, often without adequate planning and forethought. As a general practice, raw sewage and urban solid waste are dumped into drainage channels, local streams and rivers. Inadequate or poorly enforced controls allow factories to release emissions and dispose of their waste products without regard for their effects on air, water or soil resources (EPA Punjab, 1989;
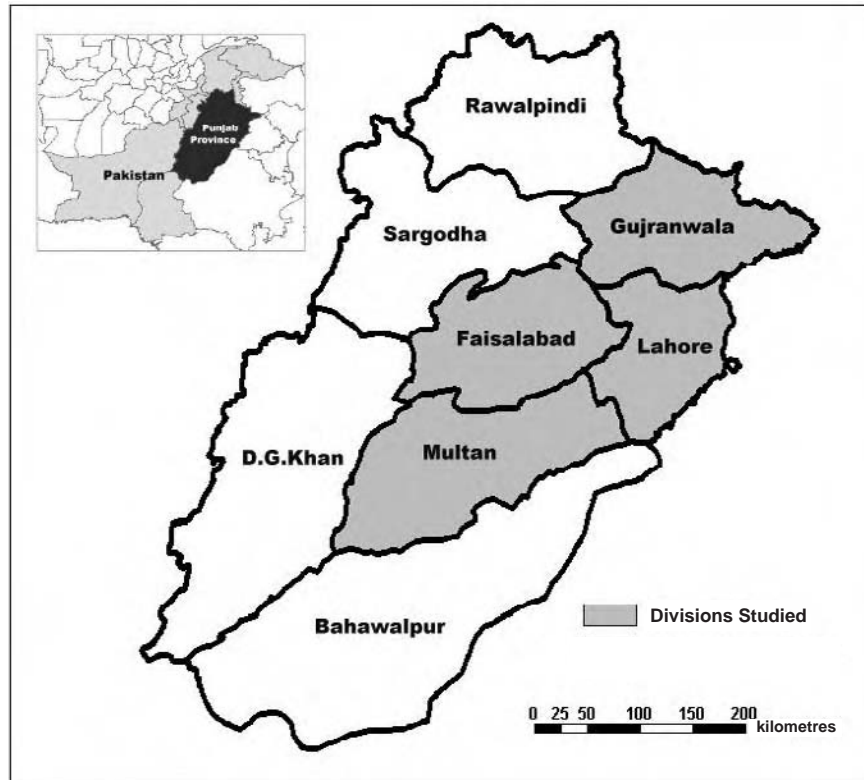
Figure 14.5 A map of Punjab Province, Pakistan.

Tariq, 1990). The degree of pollution of surface water bodies is becoming critical. For example, the River Ravi has become so polluted near the city of Lahore that the water is nearly depleted of oxygen, leading to the disappearance of all aquatic life (Maqsood, 1996; ADB, 1997).

Estimation of industrial pollution

Most industries in Punjab are related to the processing of agricultural commodities or the production of agro-chemicals. These industries are not major sources of air pollution and their effluents are mostly organic in nature (EUAD, 1993).

In this case-study, as a surrogate indicator for water pollution, we estimate the biological oxygen demand (BOD) imposed on freshwater

bodies. Industrial production capacities (a proxy for industrial production) were calculated for the industries listed in the industrial directory of the province (DIMD, 1988). The Rapid Inventory Technique (RIT) of the World Health Organization (WHO, 1993) was then used to transform the production figures into pollution quantities. The RIT methodology provides an effective way of assessing the air, water and solid wastes generated by each source, or groups of similar sources, within a study area.

Table 14.6 shows details of effluent BOD estimates for the Gujranwala Division, subdivided into three districts, using the RIT methodology. The industrial production capacities for each district were taken from the industrial directory (DIMD, 1988), using its categories and units of measurement. The conversion factors for the various industrial production types were taken from the RIT manual (WHO, 1993). The quantities of industrial production are converted into RIT units in order to apply the conversion factors to production to find the organic pollution discharge, measured as the BOD. The pollution estimates are presented as industrial production in RIT units and BOD estimates of industrial discharges.

In Table 14.6 the BOD estimates are totalled for each of the districts and then projected from 1988[1] to 1998, using a 3.3 per cent annual growth rate of industrial production (according to the United Nations, 1998, industrial manufacturing in Pakistan grew at 3.3 per cent per annum from 1989 to 1997). The year 1998 was used as a reference, since a population census was conducted in that year (Population Census Organization, 1998).

The same process was repeated for the entire province, and Table 14.7 summarizes the industrial BOD from the four core divisions. The population figures are taken from 1998 census data (Population Census Organization, 1998). BOD generation from domestic sources was estimated using the population estimates and a figure of 70g BOD per person per day (Arizona Secretary of State, 2000; California State University, Sacramento, 2000).[2]

The data and estimates presented in Table 14.7 indicate that the share of BOD generated by industries is quite low. For most districts it ranges from 1 to 3 per cent; however, for two industrialized districts it is about 5 and 8 per cent, respectively. The average for all districts is 3 per cent. This clearly indicates that industrial effluents play a relatively minor role in water pollution and oxygen depletion in the receiving water bodies. However, it is also perceived that industries are responsible for localized and severe environmental damage at a limited number of locations. The extensive water pollution in the region stems primarily from the extremely dense and fast-growing population, bearing in mind that water is the most critical natural resource.

Table 14.6 Industrial water pollution (as BOD) in the Gujranwala Division, 1988

District	Industry	Industrial production			Conversion factors		Pollution estimation	
		Unit	Production	RIT Ref.	Units	BOD (kg/unit)	Production (RIT units)	Pollution (tons BOD)
Gujranwala	Bakery	Tons/year	103	3117	Tons	0.11	103.00	0.01
	Beverages	Crates/year	660,000	3134	m³	3.1	3,960.00	12.28
	Confectionery	Tons/year	307	3117	Tons	9.0	307.00	2.76
	Corn oil	Expellers	2	3115	Tons	0.3	2,000.00	0.60
	Cycle tyres & tubes	Numbers/year	512,000	3551	Tons	0.4	512.00	0.20
	Dying & finishing	Rs/year	46,545,000	3210	Tons	155.0	930.90	144.29
	Ice cream	Rs/year	710,000	3112	Tons	10.9	35.50	0.39
	Molasses	Tons/year	2,500	3117	Tons	2.9	2,500.00	7.25
	Oil mills	Expellers	34	3115	Tons	24.9	3,400.00	84.66
	Poultry farms	Birds/year	833,000	3111	1,000 birds	17.0	833.00	14.16
	Soap	Tons/year	11,725	3523	Tons	6.0	11,725.00	70.35
	Starch	Tons/year	1,200	3121	Tons	13.4	1,200.00	16.08
	Sugar	Tons cane/day	550	3118	Tons	2.9	9,900.00	28.71
	Tanneries	Tons/year	1,048	3231	Tons	63.5	2,289.77	145.40
		m²/year	620,885					
	Total for 1988							527.14
	Projected total for 1998							**729.34**
Gujrat	Confectionery	Tons/year	69	3117	Tons	9.0	69.00	0.62
	Cycle tyres & tubes	Numbers/year	3,050,000	3551	Tons	9.0	3,050.00	27.45
	Ice cream	Bars/year	65,000	3112	Tons	10.9	6.50	0.07
	Juices & squashes	Bottles/year	18,000	3113	Tons raw fruit	9.4	18.00	0.17
	Oil mills	Expellers	15	3115	Tons	24.9	1,500.00	37.35

Location	Item	Unit	Quantity	Code	Unit	Rate	Value	Total
	Poultry farms	Birds/year	202,000	3111	1,000 birds	17.0	202.00	3.43
	Soap	Tons/year	1,770	3523	Tons	6.0	1,770.00	10.62
	Sugar	Tons cane/day	3,000	3118	Tons	2.9	54,000.00	156.60
	Tanneries	Tons/year	5	3231	Tons	63.5	1,491.00	94.68
		m²/year	743,000					
	Vegetable ghee	Tons/year	9,000	3115	Tons	24.9	9,000.00	224.10
	Total for 1988							555.09
	Projected total for 1998							**768.01**
Sailkot	Bakery	Tons/year	9	3117	Tons	0.11	103.00	0.01
	Confectionery	Tons/year	16	3117	Tons	9.0	16.00	0.14
	Cycle tyres & tubes	Numbers/year	366,000	3551	Tons	9.0	366.00	3.29
	Chemicals	Rs/year	800,000	3511	Tons	6.0	4,000.00	24.00
	Ice cream	Rs/year	980,000	3112	Tons	10.9	49.00	0.53
	Oil mills	Expellers	18	3115	Tons	24.9	1,800.00	44.82
	Poultry farms	Birds/year	57,000	3111	1,000 birds	17.0	57.00	0.97
	Sugar	Tons cane/day	15,000	3118	Tons	2.9	270,000.00	783.00
	Soap	Tons/year	11,130	3523	Tons	6.0	3,523.00	21.14
	Tanneries	Hides/year	62,100	3231	Tons	63.5	67.76	4.30
		m²/year	5,655					
	Total for 1988							882.21
	Projected total for 1998							**1,220.61**
Overall projected total for 1998								2,717.97

Notes: RIT = Rapid Inventory Technique; Rs = Pakistan rupees.

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Table 14.7 Waste generation in four divisions of Punjab Province

Division	District	Population, 1998	Pollution (BOD)		
			Domestic (tons/year)	Industrial (tons/year)	Industrial (%)
Gujranwala	Gujranwala	4,196,414	107,218	729	0.7
	Gujrat	2,981,614	76,180	768	1.0
	Sailkot	3,937,181	100,595	1,221	1.2
Multan	Khanewal	2,040,441	52,133	569	1.1
	Multan	4,244,547	108,448	3,504	3.1
	Sahiwal	3,095,396	79,087	2,177	2.7
	Vehari	2,047,771	52,321	572	1.1
Lahore	Kasur	2,347,020	59,966	2,267	3.6
	Lahore	6,212,715	158,735	5,374	3.3
	Okara	2,195,698	56,100	454	0.8
	Sheikhupura	3,229,998	82,526	7,283	8.1
Faisalabad	Faisalabad	5,340,771	136,457	8,139	5.6
	Jhang	2,804,397	71,652	778	1.1
	Tobateksingh	1,589,740	40,618	829	2.0
Total			1,069,767	33,058	3.0

The following facts offer further support to the findings:

- In general, the industries that pollute the most are (in descending order) those that produce fabricated metal machinery, chemicals, petroleum and rubber, and non-metals. Textile and food-processing industries are considered to pollute less than all others (Hong, 1999). The vast majority of industries in Punjab are of the least polluting type.
- Environmental awareness among the general public is low because only about one-third of the population are literate (*The Globe*, 2000). People also have very limited ability to pay for pollution-treatment measures; consequently, most sewage is discharged to water bodies without any treatment.
- A number of health studies have indicated that a high proportion of deaths and illnesses stem from infectious diseases (Ministry of Health, 1998). The very high child mortality rate (over 100 per 1,000 live births) is attributed to diarrhoea and other water-borne infectious ailments.

Policy approaches to link environment and development

A broad range of policy initiatives is available to the South Asian nations, but these must be considered in the local context – social, economic and cultural. First, and most importantly, governance needs to be im-

proved to incorporate participatory approaches rather than top–down ones (the command-and-control paradigm). Second, to ensure the sustainability of policy approaches, these must be integrated into the national economic and policy formulation mechanisms. Third, reduction of poverty and the provision of alternative, sustainable livelihoods must be at the centre of policy approaches. Fourth, assuring food security within the region is a must, which in turn reinforces the need for the sustainable management of natural resources.

The following are the key elements of policies linking environmental conservation and sustainable development:

- *Awareness raising*. It is crucial to inform the general public, policy makers, industry, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders of the importance of key issues and to describe successes and failures. Both policy makers and the general public need to be made aware that most environmental damage and its human consequences are largely due to very large populations relying on a small resource base.
- *Empowerment of local communities*. Experience has clearly shown that involving and, more importantly, empowering local communities to manage and solve their own problems pay rich dividends in the long run.
- *Capacity development to manage and conserve natural resources*. As part of the empowerment process, local communities must be given the capacity and tools necessary for managing and conserving their resources.
- *Legislation and implementation*. Development of appropriate environmental legislation that includes explicit implementation mechanisms is essential to improving the current situation.
- *"Internationalization" of environmental problems and issues*. By tackling problems on a regional scale, relatively scarce resources and information can be pooled.

Conclusions: What lies ahead?

The road ahead for improving the situation in terms of poverty reduction, environmental conservation and sustainable development is not an easy one for this region. There is very little availability of natural resources in South Asia, especially on a per capita basis. Population control, human resource development and conflict resolution are the measures that South Asia needs the most. Of course, when per capita natural resources are so scarce, prudent use of those resources and protection of the environment are also of utmost importance.

Broadly speaking, the environmental challenges faced by the region can be divided into two categories: environmental challenges and institutional challenges.

Environmental challenges

Climate change and global warming are the most serious environmental threat to the region in many ways. They mean reduced availability of water resources and a likely increase in climate-related extreme events. Prolonged drought in south and central Asia over the past few years is a concrete example of such impacts. Conversely, extreme flooding events in Bangladesh and southern India have also become more frequent. Another indirect threat from global warming is sea-level rise, particularly for countries such as Maldives (which could be completely submerged) and Bangladesh (which could lose up to one-third of its surface area) as a result of even a 0.5 metre rise in sea level.

Another critical environmental challenge for the region will be to meet the growing requirements for water. This has to be done in the face of reducing water resources (from a hydrological perspective), increasing population, greater water demand from industries and agriculture, and diminishing water quality due to pollution. More novel approaches to the utilization of water, particularly for agricultural applications, must be found. This could include re-use of waste water for various uses, including agricultural applications.

Institutional challenges

Numerous institutional challenges must be overcome. The most critical one is improvement of governance mechanisms in the region – this is discussed in considerable depth in other chapters of this book. This institutional reform must also incorporate mechanisms for improved management and stewardship of South Asia's natural resources. Apex institutions, such as national councils for sustainable development, must be initiated if the poverty–environment–development paradigm is to be changed for the better. Examples of such institutional reform can be found in other Asian countries and could be emulated in South Asia.

Notes

1. The industrial directory for Punjab was published only in 1988.
2. Population-equivalent figures of 55-90g BOD per person per day are quoted by different sources.

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15

The environmental challenge to human security in South Asia

Adil Najam

In the past half-century the term "security" was primarily a matter of states and their military alliances, principally applied to the "security" of borders and institutions from outside threats (see Dalby, 1992). This definition was generally accepted because military threats to security are easily identifiable and carry clear and often extreme consequences. In contrast, non-military threats within nations – such as poverty, social vulnerability or ecological resiliency – are generally not perceived as concrete and tangible. A key conceptual difference between the two approaches is that the traditional definition of security presupposes that threats arising from outside the state are more dangerous to the state than threats arising within it.

Recent debates on whether and how the concept of security might be expanded beyond issues of geo-polity, the international power balance, military strategy and statecraft have been both intense and rich (Galtung, 1982; Ullman, 1983; Mathews, 1989; Walt, 1991; Dalby, 1992). One strand of this debate on non-traditional security issues relates to the increase in attention paid to the connection between environment and security. Scholarly discourse in this area has been prolific, though not always conclusive (Westing, 1988; Gleick, 1991; Libiszewski, 1992; Myers, 1993; Homer-Dixon, 1999; Deudney and Matthew, 1999; Dabelko, Lonergan and Matthew, 2000; Diehl and Gleditsch, 2001a). It is argued that environmental issues require new ways of thinking about policy, including security policy, because the environmental problématique is distinct by

its very nature and must be kept separate from many other "traditional" issues (Thomas, 1992; Najam, 1995; Elliott, 1998). The means of international environmental policy-making tend to be more consensual and co-operative than in other arenas (Stone, 1993; Susskind, 1994; Porter, Brown and Chasek, 2000; Najam, 2000b), and these issues involve a very different set of actors, especially non-governmental organizations (Princen, Finger and Manno, 1995; Najam, 1996, 2000a; Mathews, 1997; Fisher, 1998; Banuri and Najam, 2002).

This chapter presents the key lessons that emerge from a South Asia-wide study that explores environment and security links in the context of South Asia.[1] South Asia (and the nations within it) has already been the subject of earlier research on environment and security (Myers, 1989, 1993; Hassan, 1991, 1992; Islam, 1994; Gizewski and Homer-Dixon, 1998). My focus here is on what this South Asian experience can contribute to the larger conceptual literature on environment and security; or, to be more precise, on sustainable development and human security. I begin with a quick review of the literature on environment and security, which leads to the development of a framework for organizing this discussion.

Environment and security

It has been argued that the environment is among the earliest and most pervasive sources of human conflict – and therefore of security concerns. Water, for example, has been – and remains – one of the most persistent sources of conflict at every level: international, national, community and even individual. Energy is similarly one of the most potent motifs of environmental as well as security issues at every relevant level, from supranational to individual. Looking at environment and security links from a different perspective highlights the deep relationship between the deterioration of environmental quality – whether it is in the form of urban pollution, water contamination, soil degradation, deforestation or biodiversity loss – and human well-being. Ultimately, a threat to human well-being can be seen as a threat to human security. Indeed, one could argue that the wrong end of a smoke stack can be as much of a security concern to humans as the barrel of a gun.

For many, the linkage is patently obvious and beyond debate. As Mark Halle points out in his foreword to a literature review on the subject, "the relationship between environment and security feels right. It seems intuitively correct to assume a direct correlation between environmental degradation on the one hand and social disruption and conflict on the

other'' (2000: 1). Although this intuitive feeling is widely shared, it is not universally accepted. On the one hand, there is now a sizeable literature that seeks to broaden the definition of the word ''security'' in order to position environmental concerns as a central issue on the security agenda. Characteristic of this school are the views of Johan Galtung (1982: 99): ''Wars are often over resources [and] destruction of the environment may lead to more wars over resources ... [E]nvironmental effects make a country more offensive because it is more vulnerable to attack and because it may wish to make up for the deficit by extending the eco-cycles abroad, diluting and hiding the pollution, getting access to new resources.'' On the other hand, many are not entirely convinced by the passion or the conviction with which such views are articulated. At the charitable end of this scale, Diehl and Gleditsch (2001b: 2) criticize the literature on environment and security for offering ''insights without evidence''; at the less sympathetic end, Daniel Deudney (1991) considers the zeal to establish a connection between environment and security an example of ''muddled thinking''.

In his review of the subject, Marvin Soroos (1994: 318–319) identifies four arguments that are commonly put forward by those who envision a strong link between environment and security:

- The *conceptual* argument is that ''security implies freedom or protection from serious threats to human well-being ... [Therefore] whatever poses such a threat, be it in military, economic, resource, food, or environmental realms, becomes a security problem.'' The works of Ullman (1983), Mathews (1989) and Myers (1993), for example, tilt heavily towards such arguments.

- The *theoretical* argument focuses principally on ''empirical cause-and-effect relationships, in particular the potential of major environmental changes to generate and intensify [violent] conflict between and within states''. This argument most identifies with the work of Thomas Homer-Dixon and his colleagues (see Homer-Dixon, 1994, 1999; Homer-Dixon and Blitt, 1998) but also with the research of Arthur Westing (1988), Peter Gleick (1991) and others.

- The *political* argument for linking environment and security seeks to ''advance the environmental cause by taking advantage of the potency of the term security [and] bestow the [environmental] problematique with a greater sense of urgency that elevates it to the realm of 'high politics'''. Overtones of such a rationale are apparent in the writings of many who write on the subject from an environment-centric perspective.

- Finally, the *normative* case ''presumes the primacy of environmental values and the threat that modern civilization poses to them'' and seeks

to place "societal values in a more appropriate hierarchy". One might cite authors such as Ehrlich and Ehrlich (1970), Brock (1991) and McMichael (1993) as exemplars of this argument.

Although this characterization of the key facets of the argument remains quite valid, the discourse on environment and security has matured quite rapidly in recent years. Marc Levy (1995) labelled the first wave of research on environment and security as being preoccupied with re-writing the security agenda. Characteristic of this wave of research was Ullman's attempt to redefine security as follows:

A threat to national security is an action or sequence of events that: 1) threatens drastically and over a relatively brief period of time to degrade the quality of life for the inhabitants of a state, or 2) threatens significantly to narrow the range of policy choices available to the government of a state or to private, non-governmental entities (persons, groups, corporations) within the state. (1983: 133)

Others, such as Marvin Soroos (1997: 236), have also defined "security" very broadly, as "the assurance people have that they will continue to enjoy those things that are most important to their survival and well-being". The attempts to "play" with the definition of security so as to insert environmental concerns were resented by a number of scholars of international affairs. They therefore found it necessary to call attention to the ambiguous nature of the link between environment and security (Deudney, 1990; Levy, 1995; Gleditsch, 2001).

The more recent literature on the subject, what Levy (1995) calls the "second wave", has shifted away from this thrust in two important ways. The first is a move away from the notion of security and towards the term "conflict". This has a number of important implications, including (a) bypassing the conceptual debates about the definition of "security", (b) getting a relatively more easily testable variable for analysis, and (c) moving from an inter-state to an intra-state focus. The second conscious shift made by the literature is toward more empirical research based on case-studies in order to understand exactly *how* environment and conflict are linked. Although there are multiple concentrations on this type of research in Europe and America, the most prominent work in this direction comes from the Peace and Conflict Studies Program at the University of Toronto. Eight key findings of this stream of research were highlighted in the Program's book *Ecoviolence* (Homer-Dixon and Blitt, 1998: 223–228):

- In certain circumstances, scarcities of renewable resources produce civil violence and instability. The role of this environmental scarcity is often obscure, although it generates intermediate social effects that analysts often interpret as immediate causes of conflict.

- Environmental scarcity is caused by the degradation and depletion of renewable resources in addition to the increased demand for these resources and/or their unequal distribution. These causes often reinforce and interact with one another.
- Environmental scarcity often encourages powerful groups to capture valuable resources and prompts marginal groups to migrate to areas that are already ecologically sensitive.
- If social and economic adaptation is unsuccessful, environmental scarcity constrains economic development and contributes to migrations.
- In the absence of adaptation, environmental scarcity sharpens existing distinctions among social groups.
- In the absence of adaptation, environmental scarcity weakens governmental institutions and states.
- The above intermediate social effects of environmental scarcity can, in turn, cause ethnic conflicts, insurgencies and *coups d'état*.
- Conflict generated in part by environmental scarcity can have significant indirect effects on the international community.

Such conclusions are characteristic of the second wave of research on "environment and conflict". Although these results exemplify the ways in which this research has distanced itself from traditional "security" debates, it has not been without its own problems. On the one hand, by shunning the language of security (except in the restricted terms of violent conflict) it stands open to the charge of retreating from the strong conceptual arguments an earlier generation of scholarship had made on why security *should* be redefined. On the other hand, many still fault it for lessening the importance of the issues owing to an imprecise methodology and an ambiguous conceptualization.

In a particularly incisive review of this scholarship, Nils Petter Gleditsch (2001) identifies nine persistent problems with this new wave of research on environment and security: tendencies toward confusing resource scarcity with environmental degradation; polemically exaggerating the security aspect; overlooking important political, economic and cultural variables; devising complex and untestable models; using a biased selection of cases; reversing causality by inordinately focusing on environmental stress as a cause of conflict; using the future, rather than the past, as evidence; inappropriately generalizing between civil and interstate war; and muddling up different levels of analysis. In essence, such criticism constitutes a conceptual as well as a methodological challenge. In their response, Schwartz, Deligiannis and Homer-Dixon (2001) contend that Gleditsch seeks to impose a "methodological straitjacket" (p. 274) of "conventional, quasi-experimental methodology" (p. 273), which is inappropriate for research in this area because of its inherent complexity. They defend both their methodology and their conceptual

framework and stress that ''methodological pluralism'' is necessary to make sense of a subject as complex as this (2001: 291), as opposed to the traditional, unilateral approach that Gleditsch would have them take.

The point to be made is that this area of research is still evolving; more importantly, it is an area characterized by rich and lively debate. There is certainly merit to the conceptual and methodological arguments of the critics (Deudney, 1990, 1991; Levy, 1995; Gleditsch, 2001). Even as the debate continues to rage, however, there is none the less an emerging unison of interest between those coming from the security side of the question and those arriving from the environmental side. Indeed, the debate has now also begun to capture popular attention via the works of authors such as Robert Kaplan (1994).

Moreover, the debate has now earned both scholarly and policy salience. From the scholarly perspective, there is (at the very least) the acknowledgement that this is an area worth studying in order to understand and explicate the *extent* of the linkage (implying that it does exist and the debate is about its strength rather than its validity). From the policy perspective, the language of environment and security has begun to seep into the documents of international organizations such as the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), signifying a growing acceptance of the broader interpretation of the term.

To summarize, there is now a growing consensus that the link between environment and security actually does exist. However, even though we have an improving understanding of the nature and extent of this link, it remains contested on both conceptual and methodological grounds. Moving forward from this, there is an emerging interest in looking at the issue from the perspective of human security and embedding it within the concept of sustainable development. This has the potential to develop into the ''third wave'' of research on the subject.

The third wave: Environment and human security

The literature on environment and security has evolved over the years from its early focus on trying to expand the definition of ''security'', to the incorporation of environmental and related concerns, to its more recent preoccupation with understanding how environmental change can be a cause or amplifier of violent conflict. An emerging trend within this evolution has been a move toward greater emphasis on the concept of *human* security (Dabelko, Lonergan and Matthew, 2000; Elliott, 2001).

This broadening of the base is not in opposition to the earlier trends of redefining security or of mapping the environmental roots of violent

conflict. In fact, it is an outgrowth of these trends. Many of the early at-
tempts to broaden the definition of "security" used very similar language
to that in the debate on "human security" today. For example, Norman
Myers (1993: 31) points out that security "amounts to human well-being:
not only protection from harm and injury but access to water, food, shel-
ter, health, employment, and other basic requisites that are the due of
every person on Earth".

By a similar token, those who have focused on explicating the envi-
ronmental causes of violent conflict have also brought the debate closer
to the notion of human security, most noticeably by focusing on intra-
state, and often local, insecurities. They have each pushed the debate
towards "the concept of 'human security' [which] offers a third perspec-
tive that allows us to move beyond conventional security thinking,
appreciates both the local and global dimensions of the many insecurities
experienced by real individuals and groups, and identifies useful ways of
linking security and development policies" (Dabelko, Lonergan and
Matthew, 2000: 48).

Although the concept of human security has earlier roots, its recent
prominence comes from the 1994 *Human Development Report* of the
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1994). Suhrke (1999:
269) points out that, "while offering an imprecise and controversial defi-
nition, the starting point for the UNDP was poverty rather than war – but
'security' suggested an escape from both". The currency of the concept
was further advanced by the importance given to it in the report of the
Commission on Global Governance (CGG, 1995). Both reports tried
to shift the direction of the security discussion by focusing on issues of
"human life and human dignity" rather than on weapons and territory.

Lorraine Elliott (2001: 449) points out two dimensions of the human
security paradigm that are of particular relevance:

The first is that the concept of "human security" provides an antidote to the more
conventional focus on states, borders and territorial integrity. The answer to the
question, "security for whom" is not the state but the individual and communi-
ties, which suggests that even when a state is secure from external threats or in-
ternal instabilities, security for its people is not guaranteed. Protecting individuals
and communities from the consequences of environmental decline (in this case) is
therefore a security issue. The second dimension is that human insecurity (which
includes equity, gender, human rights and identity concerns) is a central factor
in social tensions and political instabilities and conflicts that can ... become a
feature of state insecurity.... If peoples and communities are insecure (eco-
nomically, socially, politically, environmentally), state security can be fragile or
uncertain. Environmental scarcity becomes a distributive equity problem rather
than one simply of market failure, externalities or zero-sum calculations about
access to resources and environmental services.

Sources of insecurity

	Violent conflict	*Social disruptions*
State-centred	Inter-state war	Institutional failure
Society-centred	Civil strife	Human insecurity

Focus of analysis

Figure 15.1 Organizing the environment and security discussion.

Dabelko, Lonergan and Matthew (2000: 48–49) add that the concept also "helps understand the complex interactions that determine the relative distribution of security and insecurity". They point out that "under certain conditions, such as war, the distribution and composition of force may be the most important determinant of security and insecurity". However, "in many other situations, security and insecurity will be most closely related to poverty or resource scarcity or social discrimination". Importantly, this leads to the conclusion that "in these cases, traditional security institutions may have only a minor contribution to make, or none at all".

In trying to place this emerging interest in human security within the context of the evolution of the environment and security debate, one might propose a simple heuristic. In simplifying, for the purpose of exposition, Figure 15.1 conceives of an environment and security "space" that is defined on one axis by the focus of analysis (ranging from state-centred to society-centred analysis) and on the other by sources of insecurity (ranging from violent conflict to social disruptions).

As I have already discussed, the early literature on the subject was concerned predominantly with state-centred discussions. Although it did flirt with expanding the discussion of insecurity beyond traditional confines to include social disruptions, it was mostly focused on inter-state conflict (since the audience of this literature was mostly restricted to the "traditional security community"). Hence, the emphasis of the environ-

ment and security analysis very often turned to discussions of whether or not *inter-state war* was a likely outcome. The "second wave" of the literature homed in on the emphasis on violent conflict but made the focus of analysis more society centred. The emphasis of the discussion, therefore, moved to whether and to what extent environmental change was a trigger for *civil strife*. The new focus on *human insecurity* is also society centred, but is more concerned with social disruptions (rather than violent conflict) as the principal source of insecurity. One of the key benefits of using such a heuristic is that it begins to point us towards other formalizations of the problématique that are not yet dominant in the available literature. In this case, Figure 15.1 points out the insecurity that emerges from social disruptions at the level of the state rather than the level of society. It is proposed that such insecurity is most likely to manifest itself as *institutional failure* and to be best understood through a focus on the mechanisms of societal governance.

Although this heuristic is still exploratory, it provides us with one way to organize and understand the discussion. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, the conclusions emerging from country-focused as well as issue-focused studies from South Asia (see the case-studies in Najam, 2003) lie very much in the right-hand half of Figure 15.1, and predominantly in the bottom-right quarter. The emphasis is very much on environment-related insecurities as manifest in social disruption rather than in outright conflict. In order to begin understanding how, and why, issues of institutional failure and human insecurity are more immediate to the concerns of South Asians let us quickly review what this region looks like.

South Asia in context

Home to nearly a quarter of all humanity, the South Asian subcontinent is a region where histories, geographies and politics are truly intertwined. Although the region is defined by membership in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) – which was formed in 1987 and includes Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka – the roots of the region's distinct identity pre-date the histories of any of the countries that now constitute it. The region has been home to great empires of its own as well as prey to the lust of others. It is a region that has been familiar with insecurities of all kinds throughout its rich and tortured history; this still holds true today. The 1997 *Human Development in South Asia* report (Mahbub ul Haq, 1997) described South Asia as "the most deprived region" in the world. Certain elements of the rather depressing picture of the region that the report painted are worth repeating here:

- South Asia is the world's poorest region: it has a per capita GNP below even that of Sub-Saharan Africa, and is home to 40 per cent of the world's poor and to over 500 million people below the absolute poverty line.
- South Asia is the world's most illiterate region: it is home to nearly half of all the illiterates in the world; there are more children out of school in this region than in the rest of the world combined; two-thirds of this wasted generation are female.
- South Asia is the region with the highest human deprivation: 260 million people lack access to basic health facilities, 337 million are without safe drinking water, 830 million are without rudimentary sanitation, and 400 million people go hungry every day.

South Asia may also be among the most militarized regions in the world. India and Pakistan have both declared themselves nuclear powers. They have fought three full-scale wars with one another and continue to have near-constant skirmishes on their borders, especially over the disputed region of Kashmir. Neither India nor Pakistan can afford their massive military expenditures – US$15 billion and US$3.5 billion, respectively. Indeed, as the *Human Development in South Asia* report (Mahbub ul Haq, 1997: 80) pointed out, ''India was ranked by the World Bank at 142 in terms of real per capita income (PPP dollars) between 1988 and 1992, yet it ranks first in the world in total arms imports. Pakistan's position is marginally better, at 119 in per capita income and tenth in arms imports. When most basic social services are missing in both India and Pakistan … the rising defense burdens in these countries continue to impose prohibitive social and economic costs on their people.'' The other countries of the region, although nowhere near as committed to large militaries, are also burdened by military expenditures greater than they can afford, often because of internal threats.

Table 15.1 presents a brief profile of the five largest countries of the region. It is clear from the table that, on all the variables presented, South Asian countries are not only significantly behind the world as a whole but also well behind developing countries as a group (measured here as the average of all low- and medium-income countries). These are the roots of human insecurity in the region and they have significant implications for the environment. Table 15.1 also highlights the fact that, although there are important differences within the region (for example, in terms of education), there is a certain uniformity in the development profiles of the region.

This table helps us make three important points about South Asia. First, this is very much a region that *can* be studied as a region, not only in terms of its historical legacy, but also in terms of its current developmental predicament. Second, this is a region that *should* be studied;

Table 15.1 South Asia's many roots of insecurity

	Bangladesh	India	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	Developing countries	World
Area, 1999 ('000 km^2)	144	3,288	147	796	66	101,487	133,572
Population, 1999 (million)	128	998	23	135	19	5,084	5,975
Population growth rate, annual, 1990–1999 (%)	1.6	1.8	2.4	2.5	1.2	1.9	1.7
GNP per capita, 1999 (US$)	370	450	220	470	820	1,240	4,890
GNP per capita, 1999 (PPP dollars)	1,475	2,144	1,219	1,757	3,056	3,410	6,490
Under-5 mortality, 1998 (per 1,000 live births)	96	83	107	120	18	79	75
Life expectancy, 1998 (male/female)	58/59	62/64	58/58	61/63	71/76	63/67	65/69
Adult illiteracy, 1998 (% population 15+, male/female)	49/71	33/57	43/78	42/71	6/12	18/33	18/32
Urban sanitation, 1990–1996 (% with access)	77	46	34	53	33	–	–
Children aged 10–14 in labour force, 1999 (% of age group)	29	13	43	16	2	13	12
Gini Index, 1995–1997	33.6	37.8	36.7	31.2	34.4	–	–
Public spending on education, 1997 (% of GNP)	2.2	3.2	3.2	2.7	3.4	4.1	4.8
Public spending on health, 1990–1998 (% of GDP)	1.6	0.6	1.3	0.9	1.4	1.9	2.5
External debt, 1998 (% of GNP)	22	20	31	41	41	–	–

Source: World Bank (2000).

the region's acute developmental depravations point towards the potential for equally acute, even violent, human insecurity in the future. Third, given this context, it is not surprising that the predominant South Asian concerns about environment and security are really about "sustainable development" and "human security", and lie in the right-hand half of the heuristic presented in Figure 15.1 and predominantly in its bottom-right corner. This becomes clearer by reviewing the key conclusions from the various country and issue results in Najam (2003):

- In focusing on India, Asthana and Shukla find that environmental stress can and does translate to human insecurity, but it does not necessarily take the form of violent conflict.
- Khan, in focusing on Pakistan, comes to a similar conclusion but reverses the logic of the argument. His concern is more about how the absence of sustainable human development can lead to environmental degradation, thereby triggering social inequity and injustice.
- Presenting the view from Bangladesh, Rahman, Chowdhury and Ahmad conclude that poverty is, and is likely to remain, the most important source of environmental vulnerability and insecurity in Bangladesh.
- Dixit and Gyawali apply a risk-based, cultural theory perspective to look at Nepal and conclude that an atmosphere of insecurity can be created when environmental stresses interact with societal vulnerability, disruptive development and perverse markets; it is this volatile mix, rather than the environmental stress alone, that can become a trigger for insecurity or violence.
- In looking at Sri Lanka, Kotagama echoes the findings from elsewhere in South Asia, particularly in relation to his claim that the environment–security nexus is integrally tied to the cultural and institutional robustness of societies.
- In concentrating on energy issues across areas via the environment and security lens, Gunasekera and Najam find that structures of governance and policy – rather than natural endowments alone – are the key to enhanced energy security.
- A similar conclusion is reached by Saeed, who uses a system analytic model to review the food security profile of selected countries in the Asia-Pacific region, with a particular focus on South Asian countries. In particular, his research shows that institutional design is the most critical determinant of land-related environmental insecurity, particularly in terms of food security.
- Finally, in reviewing the history of inter-state water relations in South Asia, Iyer concludes that there is little likelihood of inter-state conflict in South Asia on issues related to water and much room for improved regional cooperation in this area.

Contrary to the thrust of the mainstream literature, which struggles, often unconvincingly, to express the environmental problématique in the language of state-centric "national" security (for example, Mathews, 1989; Deudney, 1990; Homer-Dixon, 1991; Myers, 1993; Conca, 2001; Gleditsch, 2001), the research from South Asia summarized in Najam (2003) makes it clear that in the context of South Asia (and arguably of most developing countries) it is the language of people-centric "human" security that dominates the discussion of what might be considered simple environmental concerns elsewhere. More than that, poverty – rather than simple environmental stress or violent conflict alone – emerges as the defining link between environment and security.

Importantly, the research from South Asia validates two key findings from the larger literature. The first relates to the models proposed by Thomas Homer-Dixon and his colleagues (see Homer-Dixon, 1991, 1999; Homer-Dixon, Boutwell and Rathjens, 1993; Homer-Dixon and Blitt, 1998). An abridged version of the argument of this body of literature is presented in the introduction to the book *Ecoviolence*:

[S]evere environmental scarcities often contribute to major civil violence. Poor countries are more vulnerable to this violence, because large fractions of their populations depend for their day-to-day livelihoods on local renewable resources.... Moreover, poor countries are often unable to adapt effectively to environmental scarcity because their states are weak, markets inefficient and corrupt, and human capital inadequate. (Homer-Dixon and Blitt, 1998: 15)

Related to the above is one of the key findings that Geoffrey Dabelko, Steve Lonergan and Richard Matthew (2000: 56) come to in their major literature review of the subject: "research on environment and security often strengthens the conclusion that poverty is a key factor in causing tension, unrest and, eventually, conflict." This finding is borne out quite strikingly. All across South Asia, poverty emerges as the key variable in terms of both defining environmental degradation and outlining human insecurity. Importantly, poverty is both the causal motivator of environmental stress as well as the most important manifestation of human insecurity. Not only is poverty one of the key elements that exacerbate the causal chain that can lead from environmental degradation to violence and insecurity, research from South Asia suggests that it may well play a more central role in this chain of causality.

Linking these two arguments, one might argue that it is chronic and structural impoverishment, more than anything else, that forges the connection between environmental degradation and violent conflict. Such a conception leads to a focus on social disruptions at the level of the society

(rather than the state). As posited above, this lends itself to conceptualizations related to human insecurity. It should be noted that others who have looked at the myriad security threats faced by South Asians have come to similar conclusions. Most notably, in launching the *Human Development in South Asia* reports, Mahbub ul Haq (1997: 84) identified the shift:

Security is increasingly interpreted as: security of people, not just of territory; security of individuals, not just of nations; security through development, not through arms; security of all people everywhere – in their homes, on their jobs, in their streets, in their communities, and in the environment.

In summary, it is not simply that environmental degradation is *more likely* to lead to violent conflict in poor countries; it is that poverty – in terms of economic, social or political disenfranchisement and vulnerability – may be a *required* condition for this connection to be made. This is an area that requires more empirical research and may, in fact, have the potential to untie many of the convoluted knots that the debate on the subject tends to find itself tied in.

Five lessons for South Asia

Beyond the potential contribution to our conceptual understanding of the links between environment and security, the research from South Asia reported upon here also highlights a handful of broad lessons that are more specific to the region and its constituent countries. The following five broad lessons are of particular importance because they have the potential to add to the learning on environment and security. These, of course, are to be understood within the context of the overarching conclusion already laid out above: a need to focus on poverty as a primary, but not sole, motor of human insecurity.

Lesson 1: For South Asia in particular, and developing countries in general, environment and security are best conceptualized within the context of sustainable development.

Not only does it make sense to broaden the notion of ''security'' into one of ''human security'', it makes sense to understand the human security framework within a sustainable development context. Indeed, human security can be viewed as a fundamental requirement for the achievement of sustainable development. This is not entirely a surprise since the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987)

had itself made that connection explicit. However, it is noteworthy because so much of the literature on environment and security fails to highlight this connection.

Placing the environment and human security problématique within the sustainable development complex has at least two important implications. First, such a conceptualization allows for issues related to environment and security to be articulated at the level of, and in the language of, policy and practice. Second, it contributes towards a better understanding of what sustainable development means in practice. This broadens the scope of the enquiry from whether and how environmental degradation might lead to societal and state insecurities, to include how human insecurities influence, or are influenced by, accelerated environmental degradation. Imperfect as it might be, sustainable development policy becomes a potential means of addressing the twin challenges of environmental degradation and human insecurity.

Research from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh is most explicit on drawing out the links between the environmental dimensions of human security and the broader policy goal of sustainable development (see Najam, 2003). A key point to be made is that the notion of security is intricately related to the issue of livelihood and, therefore, cannot be de-linked from concerns about the content and context of the development experiment. Taken together, it should be pointed out that debates regarding human and environmental security are, in themselves, attempts to understand and operationalize the concept of sustainable development better.

On a related note, it is noteworthy that the South Asian research being reported on has often ignored, and sometimes rejected, debates about whether environmental degradation should or should not be an element of "traditional" military- and state-related security concerns (see, for example, Mathews, 1989; Homer-Dixon, 1991; Myers 1993; Levy 1995; Deudney and Matthew, 1999). This is a departure from the norm of the broader literature. Clearly, and for rather compelling reasons given South Asia's (lack of) development predicament, the region's scholars seem more comfortable defining environmental security as a component of sustainable development than as a dimension of "traditional" national security.

Lesson 2: The challenge of environment and security in South Asia is principally a challenge at the domestic, even local, level; but it is a challenge common to the region.

One of the conclusions reached by Dabelko, Lonergan and Matthew (2000: 56) in their review of the literature is that "the most severe chal-

lenges for individual well-being in many parts of the world may not be external (to the country of residence), but internal; although internal problems are likely to be affected in some way by external forces". This lesson is echoed and amplified by the experience from South Asia. Indeed, there is a distinct tendency to bring the problem "*down*" to the ground level rather than raise it "*up*" to national, let alone regional, levels. This is not to suggest that the regional dimensions are unimportant; however, it is to underscore the view that the local challenges are more numerous as well as more profound.

This, of course, is a surprise given the intensity of regional tensions in South Asia. Paradoxically, it is that very intensity that makes it unlikely that environmental issues will become significant international security concerns in the region. The argument is that the countries in the region have so many other and more pressing disputes to keep them busy that environmental issues slip down the list of potential flare-up points. At the same time, one must recognize the possibility that such issues can easily become embroiled in existing and unrelated disputes within the region. (More on this below.)

Having said that, taking a regional perspective is also valid for another reason. The local environmental and human security stresses that afflict the various countries of the region are so pressing in each case and so similar to each other that the countries of the region can learn much from each other. The lesson to highlight here, however, is not that the regional is not important, rather that what is most important is the local.

Lesson 3: The challenge of environment and security in South Asia is, at its core, not just a problem of resource endowments or geography but, quite distinctly, a problem of institutions and governance – if only because it is the latter rather than the former that we have the ability to change.

Possibly the most significant lesson relates to the centrality of institutions and governance to our understanding of how environment and security are linked in the South Asian context. At one level, the conclusions are not particularly surprising; it is quite well known, after all, that environmental crises in many developing regions, including South Asia, are not just crises of resources scarcity or degradation but are fundamentally tied to fragile institutions for environmental governance. This is none the less an important insight because so much of the literature on environment and security underplays, if not ignores, the governance dimensions.

Although the literature tends to concentrate on resource scarcity and environmental degradation as the key defining variables, the research from South Asia being reported here tends to highlight weaknesses in

institutions and governance as the key causal determinant. In many cases, a lack of appropriate institutions and governance can help explain not only the levels of human insecurity but also the scarcity and degradation of environmental resources. Institutional and governance weaknesses can lead to significant human insecurity even in the absence of severe environmental scarcity or degradation. The latter only worsens the former.

The implication of this point – and this is a critical point – is that the solutions to issues of environment and security will not come from techno-fixes and mega projects that might somehow "overrule" the forces of geography and nature; the solutions are more likely to come from institutional and governance reform. This implies that democracy counts, transparency counts, culture counts, decentralization counts and, most importantly, participation counts.

Broadening the focus beyond resource scarcity and degradation raises some conceptual issues for the literature on environment and security. An earlier generation of scholars had been preoccupied with the effects of security issues (particularly war and preparation for war) on the environment, or more precisely on natural resources (Galtung, 1982; Westing, 1984, 1988; Renner, 1989). The current phase of interest in the subject has moved in the opposite direction and focuses on how environmental degradation can lead to insecurity and violence (Deudney and Matthew, 1999; Homer-Dixon, 1999; Diehl and Gleditsch, 2001a). Both arguments have environmental conservation, rather than human security, as their core interest. In focusing on sustainable development as the metric of analysis and placing human security more centrally in the discussion, we highlight the importance of looking at both linkages together: how does insecurity, at any level, affect the environment *and* how do environmental scarcity and degradation affect insecurity, at any level.

Such a formulation also allows us to move away from the more restrictive notion of "acute violence" to the more encompassing concept of insecurity, particularly human insecurity. The finding from across South Asia is that, even where environmental variables do not directly cause conflict, they can increase insecurity by accentuating the variables that can precipitate conflict (Libiszewski, 1992; Dabelko, Lonergan and Matthew, 2000). Importantly, other forms of insecurity can accentuate the conditions conducive to environmental degradation, thereby increasing eventual environmental insecurity. The implication, of course, is that the key to understanding the link between environment and security in any given context may not lie in variables directly related to either (such as scarcity or war). It may lie, instead, in issues that affect but are not directly related to either, such as failure of institutions and governance.

Lesson 4: The prospect in South Asia of inter-state violence over environmental issues is slim; however, given the region's history of distrust and dispute, environmental differences can add to existing tensions and apprehensions and perpetuate the general sense of insecurity that pervades inter-state relations in the region.

Unlike others who have studied environment and security in South Asia and who tend to consider the region as a prime "action theatre" for environmental conflicts (Myers, 1989, 1993; Hassan, 1991, 1992), the set of studies from all over South Asia in Najam (2003) are far more careful about painting doom scenarios. Indeed, there is unanimity amongst the authors on the belief that the prospects of outright war in South Asia over environmental concerns are very slim.

Indeed, there is also a tone of caution that suggests that, given existing regional security tensions and apprehensions, the broader sense of insecurity that defines the region's inter-state relations can be exacerbated by environmental concerns. Arguably, there are far more immediate causes of inter-state tension in the region. Environmental issues, even though they are important, are likely to be overwhelmed by these other more "traditional" security concerns. Moreover, despite fractious relations, even India and Pakistan have demonstrated a remarkable degree of co-operation (and even occasional goodwill) in the shared management of a precious resource such as water. The Indus Waters Treaty remains one of the few areas of sustained cooperation between the two countries. (This cooperation has been severely tested in recent months but, fragile as it is and despite much sabre-rattling, it remains intact.)

This should not negate the importance of environmental degradation as a factor in regional security. Given the deep and strong security fault-lines in the region, it is not at all inconceivable that cross-boundary environmental problems could *add* to an already volatile situation and exacerbate existing apprehensions and distrust. In his study of environment and security in South Asia, Norman Myers posits a fundamental question: "How can we realistically suppose that environmental problems will not exert a substantial and adverse influence over the prospects for the region's security throughout the foreseeable future?" (1993: 117). It is also quite clear that the ultimate effect of human insecurity and environmental degradation tends to be political instability. As Shaukat Hassan puts it, "in South Asia environmental deterioration has a very direct and immediate impact on the economy of the states, which in turn affects social relations in ways detrimental to political stability" (1991: 65).

Environmental deterioration, then, can be a source of *additional stress* that is likely to deepen existing lines of conflict (rather than create new ones). Although the main challenge is domestic, the regional context

cannot be ignored, largely because regional environmental disputes, even when they may be relatively minor in and of themselves, can flare into larger conflicts when they are played out in a context of general distrust and dispute.

Lesson 5: There is a small potential for a new generation of security relations in the region emerging around the nexus of environment and security that is based on the principles of mutual trust, harmony and cooperation rather than on legacies of distrust and dispute.

Even though security (in the international context) is generally seen as an adversarial concept, the environment demands a politics of consensus and cooperation. This points towards the potential for a new approach to security – one that stresses the need for cooperative management of shared environments rather than adversarial contest over scarce resources. However, a cautionary note needs to be sounded about the potential for moving to a new generation of security relations that start from the necessity of cooperation rather than from a history of confrontations. Given the "traditional" security profile of the region, it is unlikely that such cooperation would emerge on its own in the natural evolution of things. Indeed, even where the need for such cooperation is self-evident, the hurdles to its establishment are profound. One must note with some concern that the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation has made little or no effort to foster regional environmental cooperation. Given the persistent regional tensions in South Asia, establishing meaningful cooperation on the environment will be an uphill challenge and requires more than declaratory intent.

Yet some initial steps could begin creating an atmosphere of cooperation. An important first step could be the institutionalization of some level of region-wide information-sharing and joint planning for common concerns such as water, climate change and biodiversity. The sharing of best practices, particularly in the areas of technological and institutional innovations for environmental enhancement, is another obvious step. A third step relates to the need to strengthen and deepen expert dialogue and communication at the regional level. Finally, the increasing prominence of global environmental politics and the North–South dimension within it are one more reason for the developing countries as a whole, and regions such as South Asia within it, to think in terms of coalitional rather than individual politics related to the international environment (Najam, 1995, 2000c; Najam and Sagar, 1998; Agarwal, Narain and Sharma, 1999). SAARC is, indeed, well placed to take such steps and should be urged to continue its efforts in this direction.

To end on a positive note, one might suggest that the environment has

the potential to become an "entry point" for wider regional cooperation. On the one hand, the very nature of the environmental problématique points to the urgency of adopting a cooperative mind-set. On the other hand, the language of human security at least allows for the potential of focusing on regional security without necessarily regurgitating stylized debates about traditional hurdles to cooperation. This, of course, is the most optimistic of my conclusions. But when one is dealing with the future of a billion and a half people, including the poorest and most vulnerable populations in the world, one simply cannot afford to give up on optimism.

Meaningful regional cooperation for improved environmental and human security in South Asia may well be too much to hope for. But hope we must.

Note

1. The 10 chapters of the study – all written by authors from South Asia (three authors each from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and two each from Nepal and Sri Lanka) – explored environment and security links in specific countries of the region (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) as well as looking at cross-country trends in key policy areas (land and agriculture, energy, and water). The writing team included scholars with expertise in varied disciplines including political science, environmental engineering, resource economics, geography, wildlife ecology, system dynamics, hydrology, urban planning and anthropology. This disciplinary and experiential diversity has allowed us to view the environment and security problématique through multiple lenses, all from a shared South Asian perspective. This chapter is based on the introductory and concluding chapters of the study. The full study has been published as a book (Najam, 2003).

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16

Diffusion of environmental peace? International rivers and bilateral relations in South Asia

Ashok Swain

Environmental stress and cooperation

A substantial amount of research over the past decade has been devoted to establishing the environment–conflict linkage: environmental destruction leads to violent conflict. As a result of human-induced environmental destruction, the world is witnessing a sharp reduction in the availability of arable land, forests, fresh water, clean air and fisheries. The adverse effect of pollution on these scarce resources is worsened by the growing demand for them. The unequal distribution of these resources further complicates the situation. The outcome can be conflict, in the form of civil strife within the nation-state or even "resource war" with other nation-states (Swain, 1996a; Homer-Dixon, 1999; Baechler, 1999). These claims have raised scholarly controversies. New research points out that, in some cases, environmental scarcity might result in cooperation (Conca and Dabelko, 2002).

As Rogers (1998) argues, conflict and cooperation are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Thus, they should not be separated in research. Axelrod (1984), with the help of game theory, has forcefully shown why actors driven by self-interest can cooperate after all. The environmental issues can pave the way for cooperation based on the principle of reciprocity among countries to protect declining natural renewable resources. Such collaboration can have positive spin-offs for peace. As Conca (1998) argues, if environmental degradation can trigger broader forms of violent

conflict among or between groups, then it is just as plausible that environmental cooperation can trigger peace. Peace may vary from an absence of violent conflict to the absence of the possibility of violent conflict. This ''environmental peace-making'' can take place on the foundation of environmentally induced cooperation. Environmental cooperation may transform the mistrust and suspicion among the groups to bring opportunities for shared gains and establish a pattern of reciprocity. It can also pave the way for greater interaction, interdependence and societal linkages.

Does environmental cooperation always provide peace-enhancing effects? It is possible that national sovereignty and self-interest-maximizing actors may obstruct the appropriate evolution of environmental cooperation. However, if the stakes are so high, which is the case with environmental problems, then the logic of cooperation might alter the existing relations. The diffusion to other areas of bilateral cooperation over land and water resources is regularly cited in the literature, which supports the environmentally induced peace approach. Establishing a bilateral commitment to share or protect the environment can help to overcome the existing mistrust or suspicion between two disputing countries, and create a milieu of reciprocal gains and estimation of national interest on a long-term basis. Cooperation on environmental issues may also bring people together, resulting in trans-border civil society linkages, and build a norm of joint responsibility and bilateral cooperation.

The establishment of trans-frontier protected areas in many parts of the world not only brings bilateral cooperation over land or forest issues; it also has other positive contributions. These protected areas reduce hostile situations between warring neighbours by facilitating the withdrawal of a military presence. For instance, the SIAPAZ Park between Nicaragua and Costa Rica has helped solve their boundary dispute and improve overall bilateral relations. In the past, a large number of trans-frontier protected areas along the former ''Iron Curtain'' have contributed to peaceful relations between European countries. Since the fall of communism, they have provided many opportunities for other forms of cooperation. The collaboration since the 1940s between the Big Bend National Park in the United States and the Madera del Carmen Protected Area across the border in Mexico has moved beyond the park issues to address regional economic development. The creation of the Karelia Friendship Park of old-growth forest between Finland and Russia has brought further cooperation between the two countries.

The ''spin-off'' advantages of environmental cooperation have also been quite common from cooperative arrangements on the sharing of river water. Cooperation over the Rhine River most likely paved the way for the establishment of the present European Union. Cooperation

over the Mekong and Zambezi rivers set the stage for other forms of co-operation between their basin states. In the Nile basin, where nothing flows between the countries of the region except the Nile, the World Bank hopes to promote regional cooperation with the help of a support-ing cooperative arrangement over Nile water. The positive contribution of a cooperative arrangement over the Colorado, Columbia, Limpopo and Mahakali rivers to the bilateral relations of their basin states is significant.

Cooperation to establish protected areas or share international rivers may help to bridge the divide between neighbouring countries and pave the way for bilateral and regional cooperation. However, such environ-mental cooperation does not necessarily have peace-enhancing power. India and Pakistan have cooperated for more than 40 years over Indus River water, but this has not contributed to peace-making in that region. Israel and the Palestinian National Authority have cooperated over their common water resource for years now, but this has not improved their relations. Similarly, cooperation over the Inguri River has failed to mend the relationship between Georgia and Abkhazia, a *de facto* independent territory. As Brock (1991) asks, is environmental cooperation still a de-pendent variable that reflects the state of overall relations more than it influences these relations? Or is it possible for environmental coopera-tion to reduce the strictly territorial notion of state sovereignty and create a political and social climate that can prod governments in the direction of generalized peace? Conca cautiously argues that environmental coop-eration can theoretically promote and enhance peace: ''In the short run, environmental cooperation could create positive externalities for inter-national peace and human security by improving the climate of strategic interaction and political bargaining. In the long run, it could be an im-portant way to strengthen the institutionalization of post-Westphalian forms of governance, by creating new norms, deepening and broadening positive transnational linkages, deepening the development of interna-tional civil society, and transforming institutions of the security state'' (2001: 245).

Environmental cooperation in South Asia

In order to test the positive impact of two important examples of envi-ronmental cooperation in South Asia, agreements over two international rivers have been chosen: the Indus River agreement of 1960 between India and Pakistan and the Ganges River agreement of 1996 between India and Bangladesh. India and Pakistan have been sharing the Indus River system for more than four decades with the help of a bilateral ar-

rangement. So far at least, two major wars, ongoing low-intensity conflicts and nuclear tests have not affected the working of the Indus River sharing agreement. The Ganges, which is the other major international river system in the region, was a matter of serious dispute between India and Bangladesh from the latter's inception in 1971. However, both countries signed a long-term water-sharing agreement for the Ganges River in 1996, in spite of the extreme politicization of the issue.

A single country, India, dominates South Asia. Its population is three times greater than the combined populations of the six other South Asian countries. India occupies 73 per cent of the total area of the region and its gross national product is three-quarters of the total in the region (Ahamed, 1985). Not only is India largest and strongest, but it also constitutes the core of the region (Pillai, 1989). Fear of India by its smaller neighbours leads them to seek extraregional connections to blunt the edge of Indian domination. In the two cases selected here for investigation, India is the common actor.

Moreover, the South Asia region features two main religious communities, Hindus and Muslims, which have long been antagonistic towards each other. This religion-based confrontation has been a major source of longstanding tension and periodic hostilities between Hindu-majority India and two Islamic countries, Pakistan and Bangladesh. These three countries comprise 94 per cent of the region's area and 96 per cent of its population. They experience massive population growth and rampant poverty, in both economic and human development terms, and are already suffering from large-scale environmental degradation in the form of deforestation, soil erosion, desertification and depletion of water resources. The scarcity of renewable resources has affected agricultural production, and the natural environment is losing its capacity to support growing human communities. Thus, these two case-studies cover the South Asia region while providing a good comparative framework within which the impact of environmental cooperation can be scientifically investigated.

Agreement on the Indus River

The Indus River originates at 17,000 feet above sea level in Tibet. This 1,800 mile long river flows out of Tibet through the Himalayas, crosses Jammu and Kashmir in India, and then flows into Pakistan before emptying into the Arabian Sea. The drainage area of the river is 450,000 square miles, with an annual average inflow of 168 million acre feet. The Indus River Basin in British India constituted one of oldest and largest irrigation systems in the world. Irrigation along the Indus River is as old as its civilization. It is now the largest contiguous irrigation system in the

world, with a basin area of about 20 million hectares and an annual irrigation capacity of over 12 million hectares. A large investment was made by the colonial administration between 1860 and 1947 towards creation of the Indus Basin irrigation system (Gillani and Azam, 1996). The Partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 put the headwater of the basin in India and the lower part of the basin in Pakistan. Two important irrigation head works, one at Madhopur on the Ravi River and the other at Ferozepur on the Sutlej River, which were the source of supply to irrigation canals in Pakistan, were left in Indian territory. Although the Punjab Partition Committee had negotiated an agreement between East and West Punjab not to change the existing water use, a serious dispute started in 1948 when India cut off the water supply to some Pakistani canals at the start of the summer irrigation season (Pitman, 1998). A temporary agreement, known as the Inter-Dominion Accord, was reached in 1948, which required India to release sufficient water to Pakistani regions in return for annual payments from the Pakistani government.

Both countries started negotiating unsuccessfully to resolve the water-sharing problem. The water stoppage by India in 1948 affected 5.5 per cent of Pakistan's irrigated area and put tremendous strain on this new country. The US magazine *Collier's* sponsored David Lilienthal, former chief of the Tennessee Valley Authority, to undertake a fact-finding tour in order to propose a solution to the problem. Lilienthal visited the subcontinent and concluded that, while the two nations quarrelled over how much water each got, 80 per cent of the Indus flowed unused to the sea (Caponera, 1985). Lilienthal's 1951 article in *Collier's* magazine, "Another 'Korea' in the Making", argued for an early solution of the Indus water problem and urged that an extensive canal system should be "designed, built and operated as a unit" jointly financed by India, Pakistan and the World Bank. The then president of the World Bank, Eugene Black, welcomed the idea and offered his good offices.

It was only when the World Bank, backed by its financial muscle, took on the negotiator role that India and Pakistan agreed on this important issue for the first time. However, it took nine long years for the World Bank to bring both the riparian countries to agreement. The treaty was signed on 19 September 1960 at the Pakistani port city of Karachi by India's prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Pakistan's president, Mohammad Ayub Khan. The two countries were persuaded to share the flow and agree to the following settlement: the Indus Basin waters were partitioned by allocating the three eastern rivers – the Ravi, Beas and Sutlej – to India, and the three western rivers – the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab – to Pakistan. The average annual flow of the eastern rivers is 33 million acre feet and of the western rivers is 135 million acre feet. India

was asked to pay £62 million for the cost of replacement works. The World Bank and other international agencies (Australia, Canada, West Germany, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States) set up the Indus Basin Development Fund with India and Pakistan in 1960 and provided US$870 million to Pakistan and US$200 million to India to support their infrastructure costs.

Detailed provisions were made in the treaty to allow Pakistan to construct a system of irrigation works on the western rivers to compensate for the loss of supply from the eastern rivers. The treaty also provided for an elaborate system of mutual obligation. The treaty permitted India limited aggregate storage capacity of all single-purpose and multi-purpose reservoirs to be constructed on the western rivers. In accordance with the provisions of the treaty, a Permanent Indus Commission was established, comprising two Commissioners for Indus Waters, one from India and the other from Pakistan. This Commission is entrusted with maintaining cooperative arrangements for the implementation of the treaty. It undertakes periodic inspection of the river and meets regularly at least once a year, alternately in India and Pakistan, before the first of June and reports to the riparian governments.

Data on water projects and flood flows are regularly communicated between India and Pakistan. The Indus Treaty had provisions for the construction of two major dams in Pakistan: the Mangla Dam on the Jhelum River and the Tarbela Dam on the Indus. Besides these two dams, Pakistan has also constructed several projects to divert water from its western rivers to replace reduced flows in the Sutlej Valley Project Region. Pakistan is presently constructing another dam on the Indus at Kalabagh, at the confluence with the Soan River. With the help of the Bhakra Nangal and Beas project and the partially completed Indira Gandhi Canal Project, India has been able to use 30 million acre feet of water from the eastern rivers. The Thein Dam on the Ravi River, parts of the Indira Gandhi Canal Project and the Sutlej–Yamuna Link Canal are under construction to harness the rest of the allocated water. India claims that it has not built any conservation storage facilities on the western rivers. However, there have been disputes between India and Pakistan over several projects on the western rivers. One of them is the Tulbul Navigation Project (which Pakistan calls the Wular Barrage) being constructed by India on the Jhelum River to make the river navigable during the dry period.[1] Pakistan is opposed to this project on the grounds that it has storage utility. Similarly, Pakistan has expressed reservations about India's construction of the Kishenganga hydropower project on the Neelam–Jhelum River and the proposed Baglihar hydroelectric dam on the Chenab River.

The Baglihar project has become a source of tension between India and Pakistan. Pakistan has even threatened to go to the International Court of Justice on this matter.[2] Both India and Pakistan are in search of more water to meet their own demands. In Pakistan, Sind and Punjab have been in dispute over their share of Indus water for years. In spite of an agreement in 1991, the issue is still simmering between these two powerful provinces in Pakistan. The Indus water has also been a source of conflict between Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan on the Indian side. So neither country is in a position to compromise over the waters allocated under the 1960 treaty.

However, the ongoing confrontation between India and Pakistan over Kashmir has brought serious doubts about the continuation of the Indus Waters Treaty. Since December 2001, India has been seriously considering pulling out of the treaty as one way to hit back at Pakistan for its alleged support of terrorist outfits targeting India. The Jammu and Kashmir chief minister has already publicly demanded a review of the treaty. Apart from India's legal obligations, the lack of storage facilities, the threat of Pakistani attacks on its irrigation facilities and its disadvantageous natural hydraulic position have deterred India from taking a declared position. But, at the same time, the office of the Indian Commissioner of the Indus Basin has reduced its contacts with its Pakistani counterpart to an absolute minimum since December 2001.

Agreement over the Ganges River

The Ganges River is about 1,560 miles long, rising on the southern slopes of the Himalayas and flowing through India in a south-easterly direction to Bangladesh. Before entering Bangladesh, the main stream of the Ganges bifurcates into two channels, the Bhagirathi-Hooghly, which is the name of the Ganges in West Bengal, and the Padma, as the Ganges is called in Bangladesh. The Padma becomes the border between India and Bangladesh for about 70 miles and then flows south-east to join the Brahmaputra in the heart of Bangladesh. The combined flow runs south to empty into the Bay of Bengal. The major tributaries of the Ganges are the Son, Gandak and Kosi, which originate in Nepal.

The dispute between India and Pakistan over sharing the dry-season flow of the Ganges originated in 1951, when India started planning construction of a barrage at Farakka, 11 miles upstream from the East Pakistan (later Bangladesh) border. The plan included a 24 mile canal of 40,000 cubic feet per second (ft^3/sec) capacity to carry water to supplement the Bhagirathi-Hooghly at the lower point. This scheme to divert water from the Ganges River to the Bhagirathi-Hooghly distributary came up in order to flush out the silt and to keep the Calcutta port navi-

gable. In spite of Pakistani objections, India took a unilateral decision to start construction of the barrage in 1962.

After the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, various rounds of high-level official talks, the formation of the Joint River Commission and visits of heads of state failed to bring about a permanent solution to this issue. The Farakka Barrage became operational in 1975, but only for a 40-day trial period. The assassination of Mujibur Rehman in an army coup in August 1975 led to a significant deterioration in Indo-Bangladesh relations. From January 1976, India started to divert water unilaterally at Farakka, which prompted Bangladesh to raise the issue in various international forums. After the change of regime in India in 1977, both countries came to a five-year agreement to share the water at Farakka during the dry season.

After the 1977 agreement expired, there were two more short-term agreements between India and Bangladesh, in 1982 and 1985, to share the Ganges in the dry season. Since 1988, they have not been able to reach agreement owing to the decreasing availability of water at Farakka because of upstream withdrawals. After years of unsuccessful bilateral negotiations, Bangladesh again brought up the issue in several international forums in 1993, which worsened bilateral relations still further (Swain, 1993). In the dry season, the average minimum run-off at Farakka was estimated in 1975 at only 55,000 ft^3/sec. From this, India intends to divert 40,000 ft^3/sec with the help of the diversion canal at Farakka, and Bangladesh is demanding all the 55,000 ft^3/sec for its own use. Increasing upstream withdrawal for irrigation in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar has further reduced the dry-season flow at Farakka. In 1994, Bangladesh complained of getting only 9,000 ft^3/sec in the acutest dry-season periods, which implies that water availability at Farakka has declined to at most 49,000 ft^3/sec in the dry season. This new figure created a further obstacle to an agreement for the negotiators (Swain, 1996a).

The change of government in both India and Bangladesh in the summer of 1996 brought new hopes of getting a Ganges water-sharing agreement. The new prime minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, and her Awami League party favoured a pro-Indian foreign policy and therefore a strengthening of the bilateral relationship with India. Co-inciding with the change of government in Bangladesh, the new United Front government in India and its then foreign minister, I. K. Gujral, were interested in living up to their image of friendly policies towards neighbours. In December 1996, the prime ministers of India and Bangladesh signed the Ganges River water-sharing agreement again after a gap of eight years. Instead of the usual short-term agreement to share the dry-season flow at Farakka, both countries opted for a 30-year arrangement. To reach this agreement, they inflated the figure for the availability

of water at Farakka (Swain, 1998), but this also shows the willingness among the political élites of both riparian countries to share the Ganges water peacefully.

The treaty stipulates that, below a certain flow rate, India and Bangladesh will each have half of the water. Above a certain limit, Bangladesh is guaranteed a minimum level and, if the water flow increases to a given limit, India will receive a stipulated amount and the balance will be given to Bangladesh, which will be more than 50 per cent of the flow. The 1996 agreement was based on the average flow between 1949 and 1988, but the real flow at Farakka in the 1990s was much less than that. To get a reliable figure, the water experts should have taken the average flow during the 10 years prior to the agreement. Unfortunately, the very first year of the treaty witnessed extremely low dry-season run-off in the Ganges River. With political support, the 1996 agreement withstood the dramatic decrease in the 1997 upstream rainfall. However, the rainfall situation has improved since then. The fluctuations in the water flow have now forced both the Indian and the Bangladeshi authorities to engage in serious negotiations about augmenting the dry-season run-off of the Ganges River.

The most important outcome of the 1996 treaty is that it has created an atmosphere conducive to discussing and deliberating on a number of water-related issues between the two countries. This treaty also refers to some other water-related issues such as flood management, irrigation, river basin development and hydropower generation for the mutual benefit of the two countries. The signing of this treaty has certainly provided both the riparian countries with an opportunity for meaningful cooperation.

Bilateral relations in South Asia

The leadership of both India and Pakistan realize the importance of the Indus water for their own agricultural production. Thus both countries have a strong mutual interest in the appropriate and peaceful use of the Indus water. The geographical setting of the Indus River system has also facilitated the partition of the six rivers equally between the two riparian countries. The mountainous terrain and ethnic conflicts in Kashmir have restricted India's desire to exploit the waters of the western rivers. The Indus Waters Treaty has been able to withstand periods of bad relationships between the two neighbours.

India and Pakistan have been in a state of virtual war over Kashmir ever since their independence in 1947. Their first war was fought in 1947–1948. Pakistan, which is in possession of one-third of Kashmir, is demanding the entire state on the grounds that the majority of the popu-

lation are Muslim. Secular India is determined to hold on to its part of Kashmir by insisting on the unity and integrity of the Indian Union. Although this conflict was still simmering, it did not prevent the Indus agreement in 1960. However, after the Sino-Indian war in November 1962, India and Pakistan came under increasing international pressure, particularly from the United States and the United Kingdom, to find a solution to the Kashmir issue and to improve their relations. Six rounds of unsuccessful bilateral meetings took place in the early 1960s, but the dispute over the Rann of Kutch on the Sind–Gujarat border flared up in 1965, and this triggered the second war over Kashmir. Although the Rann of Kutch issue was settled by the International Court of Justice in 1968, the Kashmir issue remained unresolved. India's decision to get involved in Pakistan's civil war between East and West, owing to the massive influx of refugees to its own territory, led to the third war between these two South Asian rivals. This war was not confined to East Pakistan; it was also fought in the Kashmir Valley. India managed to get an emphatic win in the 1971 war, East Pakistan became Bangladesh and India and Pakistan signed the Simla Agreement in 1972. Despite all this, the Kashmir issue persisted and continued to affect bilateral relations.

In the early 1980s, the Siachen Glacier in Kashmir became the area of direct confrontation between Indian and Pakistani troops. Thanks to the insurgency in the Indian state of Punjab, India–Pakistan relations continued to deteriorate further as India accused Pakistan of supporting the Khalistanis. In 1987, Indian military forces undertook their largest peacetime exercise, "Brasstacks", which almost brought the two countries to war. The peaceful resolution of the Brasstacks episode and the end of the insurgency in Punjab did not improve the relationship between India and Pakistan. In 1989, the Kashmir issue again came to the forefront as insurgency activities increased dramatically in the Valley.[3] Since then, the Kashmir issue has been in the forefront of the Indo-Pakistan dispute, except for a couple of weeks in 1998, the time of India's second nuclear test and Pakistan's response. In April to June 1999, India and Pakistan again almost got involved in another full-scale war in the Kashmir Valley. This was the result of the response of Indian forces to infiltration by regular Pakistani troops and Kashmiri insurgents into the Batalik, Dras and Kargil sectors of the Valley. Since the December 2001 attacks on India's Parliament House by alleged Pakistani terrorists, the armed forces of both countries have been in battle-ready positions.

The above discussion explains the considerable deterioration in Indo-Pakistan relations in recent years. This prompted US President Clinton to refer to South Asia in 2000 as "the most dangerous place on earth" (quoted in Bearak, 2000). Since 1947, Kashmir has remained the core contentious issue between these two South Asian neighbours. There

were several other areas of disagreement: sharing the Indus water, refugee compensation, the transfer of official assets, the position of minority communities, the accession of Junagarh and Hyderabad, the territory of the Rann of Kutch, Pakistani prisoners of war (the 1971 war), Islamabad's recognition of Bangladesh, and Pakistan's support for Sikh militants. Apart from Kashmir, India and Pakistan have been able to settle most of these issues one way or another.

Sharing of the Indus water was resolved in 1960 thanks to a World Bank initiative. However, this agreement on the Indus River system has failed to have a positive influence on the overall bilateral relationship between India and Pakistan. Rather, the Kashmir imbroglio has shown its ability to throw the continuation of this longstanding water-sharing arrangement into doubt.

India's relations with its other major South Asian neighbour, Bangladesh, have experienced a number of vicissitudes in the past 30 years. Beginning with great cordiality, relations began to wane, particularly after the assassination of Mujibur Rehman in 1975, paving the way for mistrust. According to a Bangladeshi scholar, the initial cordiality in the relationship overlooked the geographical potential for conflict in the context of the struggle for Bangladeshi independence in 1971 (Khan, 1976). It emerged only afterwards as a source of friction and misunderstanding. Several specific problems have emerged in relations between India and Bangladesh, but perhaps the most prominent is over the sharing of the Ganges water. Between 1976 and 1996, Bangladesh made several attempts to raise the Ganges issue in various international forums including the United Nations.

The resurgence of Islamic ideology, the growing insecurity of the Hindu minority in post-Mujib Bangladesh and Hindu migration to India adversely affected Indo-Bangladesh relations. Another issue that strained bilateral relations was the Chakma insurgency problem in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. Resettlement of Bengali Muslims in the Hill Tracts had brought ethnic tension and led to insurgency activities. Retaliation by the Bangladeshi army resulted in the migration of the Chakma insurgents to the Indian state of Tripura. India's alleged support for the Chakmas was one cause of the tensions between the two countries. Bangladesh eventually achieved a settlement of the Chittagong Hill Tract problem in December 1997, when the government signed an accord with the insurgents.

Another area of tension between India and Bangladesh is the alleged infiltration of Bangladeshi nationals into India in search of a better livelihood. However, it is not easy for the Bangladeshi government to accept the migration of Muslims from "Islamic" Bangladesh to a perceived "Hindu" India, because this negates the very foundation of their nation-

state. At the same time, Hindu political parties in India are strongly opposed to this influx (Swain, 1996b).

India and Bangladesh have some serious differences over their land boundary as well as the sea boundary. One contentious issue is the adverse location of enclaves: there are 111 Indian enclaves in Bangladeshi territory and 51 Bangladeshi enclaves in Indian territory.[4] Besides these disputed enclaves, river shifts lead to regular disputes over the boundary line between the two countries. In addition, India and Bangladesh are in dispute over two newly formed small deltaic islands in the Bay of Bengal, which India calls New Moore and Bangladesh calls South Talpatty. Both countries have a problem over transit rights. India has granted transit rights for Bangladesh across Indian territory to Bhutan and Nepal. However, Bangladesh refuses to grant the same for India to reach its north-eastern states. India also alleges that Bangladesh is supporting insurgencies in India's north-eastern part.

The 1996 Ganges River water-sharing agreement has certainly helped bilateral relations between India and Bangladesh to take a turn for the better. The successful signing of the Ganges River Treaty encouraged Bangladesh to propose a comprehensive agreement with India on the other rivers that flow between the two countries. In 1997, Bangladesh and India formed a joint committee on sharing the water of another important river, the Teesta. In December 1996, after the signing of the Ganges treaty, Bangladesh also promised India that it would take action against insurgents from the north-eastern states who had bases in Bangladesh. In April 1999, the Joint River Commission discussed the embankment of 54 common rivers, the sharing of the Teesta waters and improving flood forecasting and warning. India–Bangladesh relations gained significant momentum while Sheikh Hasina was in power.

The Khaleda Zia government came to power in the second half of 2001. Her party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), projects an anti-India position. But she appears eager for positive relations with India and not to spoil the stage that was set by the 1996 Ganges water-sharing treaty. The border security forces of both countries regularly maintain high-level interaction. At the beginning of 2002, they even decided to conduct joint patrolling, which is particularly significant after the major shoot-out between Indian border security forces and the Bangladeshi Rifles in April 2001. After a long stalemate, the border issue between the two countries is now under the purview of the Joint Boundary Working Group, which was formed in 2001. The two countries have also agreed to restore the multimodal communication link, in spite of Bangladeshi opposition to the transit issue.[5] Moreover, the Khaleda Zia government has made positive indications about selling gas to India. On the other hand, India has been reducing tariffs on Bangladeshi goods. And some press

reports suggest that India released more water to Bangladesh than its share in the 2002 dry season. The fencing of the boundary, which is expected to be completed by 2008, may help to address the issue of illegal migration in the long run.

The Ganges treaty of 1996 has helped India and Bangladesh to build mutual trust, which has enabled them to address other traditional areas of dispute. Since the agreement, both countries are trying to sort out their differences over territory, trade and transit. However, this positive contribution is missing in the arrangement over the other inter-state river, the Indus. India and Pakistan have had a permanent agreement over the Indus for over 40 years, but that has not led to an environment like that of the Ganges arrangement, in which the two countries can settle their other outstanding issues in a cooperative framework.

Environmental cooperation and its diffusion

Given the above discussion, it is evident that environmental agreements have made very different contributions to other areas of bilateral relations in South Asia. The Indus treaty has had minimal positive spin-off effects on the relationship between its two riparian countries. Although India and Pakistan have been sharing the Indus in a cooperative framework for a very long time, they have not adopted a similar strategy for other contentious issues. Instead, dangerous and deadly conflicts have characterized their interactions. In contrast, the contribution of the Ganges treaty has been quite positive and that has provided the foundation for other forms of cooperation between India and Bangladesh. As these two cases unfold, it is becoming clear that in some cases environmental cooperation can influence governments in the direction of generalized peace whereas in other cases it is still a dependent variable that is influenced by the state of overall relations rather than able to influence it.

Why has the impact of environmental cooperation, even in the short run, been so different in the Indus case than Conca has predicted? The signing of the Indus agreement failed to improve the climate of strategic interaction and political bargaining, and within five years India and Pakistan went to war over the Rann of Kutch and then over Kashmir. In the absence of a short-run effect, it is quite a challenge to claim positive long-term effects of environmental cooperation. The long-run effect of the Indus agreement is also quite disappointing. It has failed to reduce suspicion, mistrust and uncertainty. Rather, it is now a victim of them and its continuation is in serious danger. In the case of the Ganges agreement, in contrast, the spin-off effects in the short run have been quite positive and unambiguous. The future will decide what happens in the

long run, but the prospects look bright because the trend has been maintained in spite of changes in the political climate in both countries.

If it is true that cooperation on environmental issues may reduce both strategic and analytic uncertainty surrounding inter-state relations; if it is true that environmental cooperation may provide the opportunity for diffuse reciprocity in both time and space and enlarge the number of situations in which sustained cooperation can take place; if it is true that environmental cooperation may shift the focus from disconnected short-term interactions to a continuous relationship with the scope for future routine gains – then why did the Indus cooperation fail to be associated with these proximate spillover gains, whereas the Ganges cooperation succeeded? Both India and Pakistan have benefited tremendously from opting to cooperate on the Indus water since the 1960s but, as in the short run, there have been no spillover gains in the long run either. The 1960 treaty on Indus water-sharing has all the properties for delivering these associated gains. Indeed, it can be argued that it was better equipped than the Ganges treaty of 1996 to provide positive spin-offs. The Indus treaty was not bound by a time limit and its signing had brought substantial foreign assistance and support. Why, then, did it fail?

Environmental cooperation may offer opportunities, but states and their institutions have to make use of these opportunities. The ruling élites of Pakistan thrive in an atmosphere of extreme bitterness between their country and India.[6] The power establishment of non-democratic Pakistan is certainly not enthusiastic about strengthening the ties of bilateral cooperation. As regime legitimacy remains internally disputed, they prefer to use the "India threat" factor to advance their internal goals. Hostile posturing towards India is constant and the Kashmir issue continues to tower above other agendas because that serves the political interests of the military rulers. Even in the short periods of democratic transition, the military keep external relations policies under their domain (Ahmed, 1998). Thus, Pakistani foreign and security policy has been and remains defined primarily in terms of the assumed threat from India and the unfinished agenda of Partition (Thornton, 1999).

Since the 1950s, Pakistan's political institutions have been subordinated to the military establishment. The absolute control by the military has destroyed the political parties and other political institutions. In the periods of transition, some political parties emerge and then disappear from the political arena. It can be argued that political parties in Pakistan lack grass-roots organizations, popular support and effective leadership. But political parties are also not allowed by the military to flourish. The Pakistan military consider themselves to be the protectors of the nation and invent security threats to protect their dominance (Chadda, 2000). Whenever there has been any effort by a democratic re-

gime to address bilateral relations in a cooperative framework, the military make a point of spoiling it.[7] In April 2003, the prime minister of Pakistan, who was elected in a partially democratic manner, responded positively to the Indian prime minister's offer of negotiations to improve bilateral relations. However, the real power in Pakistan still lies with the military and that raises serious doubts about the prospects for a negotiated peace.

Although Bangladesh has experienced military rule for almost half of its existence, its armed forces do not have a similar domination over the administrative institutions of the country. The country has enjoyed uninterrupted democratic rule since 1991. When the Ganges agreement was agreed by the Bangladesh authorities, it was very different from the case of the Indus agreement, where Pakistan was represented by a military ruler who had come to the negotiating table as a result of the pressure and influence of international funding agencies. A democratic Bangladesh negotiated with India and managed to reach a long-term agreement over a highly complex issue. This agreement was opposed by the opposition parties of both countries – the Bharatiya Janata party in India and the BNP in Bangladesh. But, now that these opposition groups have come to power, they are adhering to this agreement and working for cooperation in other areas. The BNP maintains an anti-India profile but, being democratically elected to power, it does not depend on that one platform to attain or retain legitimacy. The Ganges agreement has helped the Khaleda Zia administration to improve Bangladesh's relationship with India and to gain from the mutual benefits.

The responses of the Indian democracy to Pakistan and Bangladesh were also different. In April 2001, when 16 Indian border security forces were killed in an unexpected attack by Bangladeshi forces, in spite of severe internal pressure, India opted to sort out the issue with the Bangladesh government diplomatically. In contrast, after its parliament was allegedly targeted by Pakistani militants in December 2001, India preferred to mobilize armed forces of 1 million on its western border. This Indian action is exactly in line with what democratic peace theorists contend. When two democracies come into conflict, democratic norms prevent them from threatening or using military power. Similar democratic understanding of each other's concerns was also witnessed between India and Bangladesh in January 2003. A stand-off between Indian and Bangladeshi border security forces over 213 illegal migrants was resolved in a peaceful manner, and the Bangladesh foreign minister visited India immediately after the incident to normalize bilateral relations. When a democracy comes into conflicting interaction with a non-democracy, however, it may take a harsher stand, because it does not expect its adversary to be restrained by democratic norms (Russett, 1993).

Democratic norms also influence people-to-people interactions. People in Pakistan and Bangladesh sincerely favour friendly ties with India and greater government attention to their pressing domestic problems. The end of the Cold War has helped the emergence of people-to-people dialogue and exchanges in many parts of the world. These non-official dialogues cover broad-ranging issues, at times supplementing official inter-state relations and at others even becoming an alternative approach. However, these track-two processes face a number of serious hurdles at the inter-state level between India and Pakistan. Thanks to governmental obstruction, the communication and information gap between the people of India and Pakistan is enormous. Keeping people separate from each other suits the non-democratic establishment in Pakistan. India falls into the same trap, and takes more repressive steps in retaliation. The people-to-people interaction between India and Bangladesh has never been as adversely affected as that between India and Pakistan. Most of the people visiting India come from Bangladesh, and vice versa. This trend has taken a positive turn since the return of a democratic regime in Bangladesh. In recent years, communication has been improved and the information gap is narrowing. These people-to-people contacts are significantly important in creating an atmosphere conducive to bilateral co-operation because the state institutions in the region are not strong enough to lead the way by themselves (Behera, Evans and Rizvi, 1997).

The positive spillover effects of environmental cooperation are possible only if the state institutions are prepared and willing to take advantage of them. A democratically elected legitimate political authority will be more likely to provide a conducive atmosphere for the spread and sustenance of cooperation originating from environmental issues. The Ganges agreement originated in a democratic environment, which provided a setting in which it could gain strength and influence other bilateral issues. The Indus treaty of 1960 failed to deliver in the same way. There is nothing wrong with the treaty. The blame falls entirely on the structure of the state institutions, which failed to take advantage of it. And they continue to do so.

Notes

1. India refers to this project as the Tulbul Navigation Project, whereas Pakistan calls it the Wular Barrage.
2. After the Wular Barrage, this is the second time Pakistan has brought up this issue at the diplomatic level instead of dealing with it through the Permanent Indus Commission.
3. India even came up with a contingency plan to attack Pakistan in 1990 in order to stop the infiltration of insurgents; thanks to US intervention that did not take place (Hagerty, 1995/1996).

4. These enclaves are the legacy of the dissolute lifestyle of the rulers of two former princely states, Cooch Behar and Rongpur. These rulers regularly staked parts of their estates in a game of cards, and thus acquired the ownership of pockets of land in each other's territory. After independence, Cooch Behar went to India, and Rongpur became part of East Pakistan and then of Bangladesh.

5. Realizing the strength of Bangladeshi sentiment against transit facilities, India is trying to develop a joint port at Sittwe in Myanmar. If this project materializes, India will be able to send goods easily to its north-eastern states from its Calcutta port.

6. India did show some flexibility in the 1950s about solving the Kashmir issue through negotiation and compromise, but gradually moved away from it (Bajpai, 1997). The Indian political establishment now faces strong internal opposition to any concessions on Kashmir. The conflict with Pakistan also helps India's ruling élites to divert public criticism of their failure on the internal security front in particular and on overall development in general.

7. The Kargil infiltration in May 1999 following the Lahore Declaration is a case in point.

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Part VI

Regional cooperation

17

A Security Organization for South Asia: Mechanism for conflict resolution in South Asia

Niaz A. Naik

Conflict resolution as a specific area of study was developed in the 1950s and 1960s as a response to the Cold War phenomenon. The word "conflict" has been broadly defined as the pursuit of incompatible goals by different parties or groups. The comprehensive term "conflict resolution" is defined as addressing and resolving deep-rooted sources of conflict so that behaviour is no longer violent, attitudes are no longer hostile and the structure of conflicts has been changed. In fact, many academics prefer the more specific and commonly used terms "conflict settlement" – reaching an agreement between two groups, enabling them to end armed conflict – or "conflict management" – which refers to the limitation, mitigation and containment of violent conflict. Nowhere is the need for conflict resolution greater than in South Asia.

The region remains mired in conflicts and tension. The two principal actors – India and Pakistan – have fought three wars without resolving the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir. The nuclear tests in May 1998 by India and Pakistan evoked global concern about Kashmir becoming a "nuclear flash-point". The horrendous terrorists attacks of 11 September 2001 in New York and Washington were a watershed in international security, redefining the concept of terrorism and possibly sparking future armed conflict. The current stand-off between India and Pakistan and the deployment of nearly 1 million troops by both countries on the Line of Control in Kashmir and the international border have brought India and Pakistan perilously close to yet another devastating conflict.

At the same time, other conflicts in South Asia are equally explosive. In Nepal, the Maoist rebellion has already shaken the peace and stability of this Himalayan kingdom. The Maoists are determined to overthrow the monarchy and establish a communist regime in Nepal. The unresolved issue of over 100,000 refugees of Bhutanese origin has the potential of destabilizing Bhutan and Nepal. The separatist insurgencies in north-east India and similar separatist movements in other parts of India pose constant threats to stability in South Asia. The Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh also tend to flare up at regular intervals.

Sri Lanka has suffered bloodshed and instability owing to the long unresolved separatist struggle of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). This has resulted in hundreds of casualties and, according to the latest estimates, the conflict has cost nearly 1,443 billion Sri Lankan rupees, including the increase in defence expenditure, the cost of damage and reconstruction, and the loss of economic output and of tourism. There is currently a ray of hope that, with active diplomatic efforts by Norway, the violent situation may end, ushering in an era of reconciliation among the warring segments of the Sri Lankan population.

Maldives is confronted with serious challenges to its survival as a result of global warming. Several islands have already been submerged under the rising oceans and the remaining islands face the same predicament in coming years.

In contrast to other regions, South Asia is beset with multidimensional threats. Terrorism, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, rising illegal immigration, including trafficking in women and children, and the spread of HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases are eroding the social and moral fabric of South Asian societies. Moreover, the region has failed to reap the peace dividends of the end of the Cold War. Comprising over one-fifth of the world's population, South Asia is one of the poorest, most illiterate and most malnourished regions of the world. Yet it is heavily and lethally armed with nuclear missiles and other weapons of mass destruction. The stark reality is that South Asia stands marginalized in a highly competitive and efficient globalized world.

In fact, a new pattern of conflicts has emerged, calling for a different response. The focus used to be on international wars; now it is on asymmetrical conflicts, especially in South Asia, given its size, its massive population, its huge resources and one of the largest military machines in the contemporary era. South Asia has yet to find a solution to this problem.

A process of informal political consultation

South Asia has a greater need as well as justification for regional integration than almost any other part of the world. But this can be realized

only by fostering mutual trust, resolving conflicts, promoting good-neighbourly relations and building confidence. The leaders of the seven countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) recognized this fundamental requirement at the ninth SAARC summit held in Male in 1997. They agreed that a process of informal political consultations would prove useful in this regard. There is, of course, no formal institutionalized process for the discussion of bilateral political disputes among member states within the existing framework of SAARC. The SAARC Charter very clearly precludes discussion of what the Charter describes as bilateral and contentious issues. However, political discussions do take place, including on some bilateral issues, but this is between the countries directly concerned, informally and on the fringes of summits and council meetings. These discussions are, of course, not part of the agenda of SAARC meetings, and collective debate on these issues by all member states do not take place. For example, the understanding reached at the tenth SAARC summit between the prime ministers of India and Pakistan to resume official-level dialogue greatly reduced tensions between the two countries. This process resulted in further promoting goodwill and trust and facilitated the signing of the Lahore Declaration in February 1999.

The Male Summit established a Group of Eminent Persons (GEP) with the mandate to undertake a comprehensive appraisal of SAARC and to identify measures that could further vitalize and enhance the effectiveness of the association in achieving its objectives. In addition the GEP was mandated to define a long-term vision for SAARC and to identify the elements of a plan of action, including a SAARC Agenda for 2000 and beyond. The GEP submitted its report, including a set of recommended actions, to the tenth SAARC summit in Colombo in 1998. Due to lack of time the GEP Report could not be considered by the 1998 Colombo Summit and its consideration was deferred to the next summit, which did not take place until 2002. None the less, it is relevant that the GEP Report welcomed the practice of holding informal political consultations initiated at the ninth SAARC summit and unanimously recommended that the process should be continued and operationalized so as to achieve the Charter objectives of fostering mutual trust, understanding and friendly relations among the member states.

A redefinition of peace, security and development

In the wake of the rapidly changing global strategic and economic environment, the concepts of peace, security and development have been radically redefined. Peace no longer means peace on the battlefield. It means peace where we live, where we work and where we worship;

in other words, peace in the entire civil society. Security is no longer measured only in military terms. It includes economic security, human security and, indeed, comprehensive security. The 1994 United Nations Conference on Human Rights in Vienna proclaimed the right to development as a fundamental human right. The object of development is the individual and not the government. The right to development includes political, economic, social and cultural rights. These rights are interrelated, indivisible and universal. They are best exercised by an individual in a participatory democracy in which all segments of civil society – men, women, young people and minorities – have a role to play.

Some models of existing security mechanisms

The globalization of security issues has enhanced the importance of multilateral cooperation. Many of these issues can be tackled more intensively on a regional scale, because regional actors have political interests in common and because there is economic interdependence, close neighbourhood interaction and cultural affinities among the partners. Over time, various frameworks of regional cooperation have emerged worldwide, more or less comprehensive, more or less binding.

In the changed post–Cold War era, the content of regional and international security has changed and expanded. As a result of the rapid development of globalization, members of the international community are now more interdependent. The security of a country is not confined to its own, but is related with others and indispensable from others. Cooperative security must be based on the equality of members and the security mechanisms must fully respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all partners. It should give full play to the United Nations and other international organizations. It must promise mutual benefits and common prosperity.

South Asia can learn from the experience of existing and emerging models. I shall describe some of the models that have proved their vitality and usefulness in evolving security mechanisms.

CSCE/OSCE

The idea for creating a comprehensive pan-European security system was initiated by the Finnish government in 1972. Invited by the Finnish government to draft a conceptual framework, all European states except Albania participated in the meeting, along with the United States and Canada. The setting-up phase ended with the signing of the final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) in Helsinki in August 1975.

The final Act of Helsinki comprised 10 founding principles, which formed the normative basis for promoting cooperation among the participating states of the CSCE. These principles were:

- sovereign equality, respect for the rights inherent in sovereignty;
- refraining from the threat or use of force;
- inviolability of frontiers;
- territorial integrity of states;
- peaceful settlement of disputes;
- non-intervention in internal affairs;
- respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief;
- equal rights and self-determination of peoples;
- cooperation among states; and
- fulfilment in good faith of obligations under international law.

The CSCE was characterized by remarkable innovations. First, it had a wide and inclusive membership – all the states of a region were involved. Each participating state took part in its sovereign and independent capacity. Secondly, in contrast to a piecemeal, mainly military, approach to security, the CSCE endorsed a comprehensive perspective. Security was explicitly understood in an extended way, thereby including not only military but also political, economic, social, cultural and humanitarian issues. Thirdly, decisions were taken by consensus, thus often making the decision-making as important as the decision itself. Fourthly, the CSCE had no institutional structures until 1994; as a result, the very impetus needed to keep the process going was an end in itself. The CSCE being comprehensive and inclusive was based on equality and flexibility, on political will and consensus of all participating states. The comprehensive CSCE agenda was prospective. It not only provided a wide range of fields for cooperation, but created a long-term vision for this cooperation.

More than 20 years passed by before the CSCE took stock of the profound changes ushered in by the end of the Cold War and the opening of a new era. It was realized that, to acquire more operational capability, the CSCE had to transform itself from a low-level institutionalized conference into a proactive organization. This realization was reflected in the Charter of Paris of August 1991 and materialized at the Budapest Summit meeting on 5 and 6 December 1994. Though neither the character of commitments and the principles nor the status of institutions became altered significantly, by renaming the major decision-making bodies, the participating states expressed their political will to provide a new impetus and dynamic to the CSCE as the primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention and crisis management. The CSCE was renamed Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). At the Istanbul Summit in November 1999, the participating states agreed

to elaborate a model for the common and comprehensive security of a Europe of the twenty-first century.

The OSCE has become a pan-European organization, whose 55 participating states span the geographical area from Vancouver to Vladivostock, and it has been recognized as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. The OSCE has established several bodies for decision-making and operational activities, the most important of which are summits, review conferences, the Ministerial Council, the Permanent Council, the Senior Council and the Forum for Security Co-operation. The operational activities of the OSCE are controlled by the Chairman-in-Office, the Secretary General and the OSCE Secretariat. The OSCE has other important institutions such as the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in Warsaw, the High Commissioner on National Minorities in The Hague, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in Copenhagen, the Court of Conciliation and Arbitration and the Representative on Freedom of the Media in Berlin. Among its operational activities, the most important have been OSCE's field missions as an instrument for supporting the translation of principles into reality.

Regional Forum of the Association of South East Asian Nations

In 1994 the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) was instituted with the aim of evolving a broad security framework. The concept of cooperative security and comprehensive security was used for designing the basic objectives of this forum. These objectives were to foster constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interest and concern, and to make a significant contribution to efforts towards confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the region.

The ARF's activities are based on several fundamental principles, including:
- mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity and national identity of all participating nations;
- the right of every state to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion or coercion;
- non-interference in the internal affairs of one another;
- settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful means;
- renunciation of the threat or use of force.

The ARF developed certain criteria for participation by its dialogue partners, stressing that all new participants must be committed to the ARF goals and its three-stage process for creating an environment conductive to peace and stability in the region. The three-stage process consists of confidence-building measures, preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution.

These principles were translated into specific agreements such as the Declaration on the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality. This Declaration committed all ASEAN members to making an effort to secure the recognition of and respect for South-East Asia as a Zone of Peace free from any interference by outside powers. The Declaration called on all members to broaden the area of cooperation, which would contribute to their strength, solidarity and closer relationship.

The Bali Summit (1976) changed ASEAN's vision and future course. Some important agreements were signed, including the forward-looking Declaration of ASEAN Concord and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation. At the Bangkok Summit (1995), the ASEAN leaders signed the Treaty on the South East Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone, stressing their determination to contribute towards general and complete disarmament and the promotion of international peace and security. The Treaty also aimed at protecting the region from environmental pollution and the hazards caused by radioactive waste and other toxic materials.

The ARF has made steady progress over the years and enjoys a high reputation as an effective mechanism for safeguarding peace and stability in the area.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization

In 1996, five states – China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyztan, Tajikistan and Russia – signed the Treaty of Deepening Military Trust in Border Regions in Shanghai. The "Shanghai Five" evolved over a number of years. The signing of the Treaty on Reduction of Military Forces in Border Regions followed in Moscow in 1997. Subsequent summit meetings in Almaty (Kazakhstan) in 1998, Bishkek (Kyrgyztan) in 1999 and Dushanbe (Tajikistan) in 2000 made significant contributions to regional peace, security and cooperation.

Against the backdrop of political multi-polarization and economic and information globalization in the twenty-first century, the five countries agreed to transform the "Shanghai Five" mechanism into a higher level of cooperation to share opportunities and deal with new challenges and threats more effectively. They invited Uzbekistan to join and the group was officially named the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in June 2001, with the aim of strengthening mutual trust and good-neighbourly and friendly relations among the member states, thus jointly ensuring regional peace, security and stability.

The SCO agreed to abide strictly by the principles of the UN Charter: to respect each other's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity; not to interfere in each other's internal affairs; not to use force or threaten to use force; to achieve equality and mutual benefit; to solve all

issues through consultation; and never to try to gain military superiority over neighbouring countries. The SCO attaches special importance to making every effort to ensure regional security. All member states are to cooperate closely with each other in implementing the Shanghai Treaty on the Crackdown on Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism, including the establishment of the SCO anti-terrorism centre in Bishkek, Kyrgyztan. The member states will also work out instruments to curb illegal arms smuggling, drug trafficking, illegal migration and other criminal activities.

The SCO has established a Council of Coordinators to coordinate comprehensive cooperation among the member states. The Council has been charged with the task of drafting an SCO Charter on the basis of the declarations and other documents signed by the heads of state of the "Shanghai Five". The Charter will expound the principles, purposes and tasks of the SCO's future cooperation, the principles and procedures for accepting new members, the legal effect of the organization's decisions, and means of cooperation between the SCO and other international organizations.

Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia

A 16-member Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) was held on 4–5 June 2002 in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The participating states were Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyztan, Mongolia, Pakistan, the Palestinian National Authority, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

The first significant aspect of CICA is its membership. The 16 members are together home to nearly half of the world's population, i.e. 3.5 billion people. They account for 55 per cent of the world's GNP and 40 per cent of world trade. Moreover, six of its members – China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyztan – are also members of the SCO. The composition of CICA is interesting in another way. Two major trouble spots of the world find representation in CICA through the presence of the protagonists. As well as India and Pakistan, which are the key actors in the war drama being played out in South Asia, Palestine and Israel have also been brought in. CICA intends to take its role seriously as a forum for dialogue envisaged for the Conference by its founding members.

This was evident from the important Almaty Declaration issued at the conclusion of the conference on 5 June 2002. Recognizing that profound changes were taking place in Asia and the world, the summit leaders set out their vision of security in Asia and their resolve to enhance their ca-

pabilities for cooperation on issues of peace, security and stability in Asia and the rest of the world. They declared their determination to form in Asia a common and indivisible area of security where all states peacefully coexist and their peoples live in conditions of peace, freedom and prosperity. They also expressed their confidence that full, equal and comprehensive implementation and observance of the principles, provisions and commitments enshrined in the Almaty Act would create the conditions for cooperation among the CICA members.

The Almaty Declaration identified measures concerning security and cooperation through multilateral approaches to promoting peace, security and stability in Asia. These include the pacific settlement of disputes in conformity with the principles of the UN Charter, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; humanitarian issues, natural disasters and refugees flows; arms control, disarmament and nuclear-free zones; the right to self-determination of peoples under foreign occupation; and the global coalition against terrorism. CICA will be developed as a forum for dialogue, consultation and the adoption of decisions and measures on the basis of consensus on security issues in Asia. CICA will evolve a variety of confidence-building measures.

Asian Cooperation Dialogue

In June 2002, Asian politicians from 17 countries met in Thailand to form a new forum called the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD). The initiative was taken by the prime minister of Thailand, Thaksin Shinawatra. Foreign ministers from 13 Asian countries and other ministers from the remaining 4 countries attended the ministerial-level meeting. The ACD will be exclusively Asian and will discuss social and economic issues against the backdrop of a security environment profoundly changed by the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in the United States. The ACD is still in its preliminary stages but it does represent a promising step towards evolving a comprehensive set of principles and objectives to strengthen peace and development through cooperative security in Asia.

Security Organization for South Asia (SOSA)

From the foregoing, it is clear that the absence of an institutionalized security mechanism in South Asia has severely hindered progress towards building the trust and confidence that are so essential for accelerating regional integration and stability. The rapidly changing global security and strategic environment warrants the early establishment of a formal security mechanism in South Asia. The seeds of such a mechanism were

sown with the initiation of the process of informal political consultations held on the fringes of SAARC summits and the unanimous recommendation by the Group of Eminent Persons that this process be operationalized. This security mechanism could be called the ''Security Organization for South Asia'' (SOSA).

The proposed South Asian Peace and Security Forum could conduct its activities on the basis of universally accepted principles of inter-state relations as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which are fully consistent with the UN Charter and have been observed by Asian countries, could also provide a useful framework.

To respond to multidimensional security challenges and threats, the SOSA may evolve its own functional instruments. These might include fact-finding missions, special envoys, monitors to deter human rights violations, problem-solving workshops for disputants, efforts at capacity-building for mediation, community-based peace initiatives, and media mobilization.

Conclusion

Without a doubt, South Asia is at a crossroads today. Whereas the rest of the world is moving rapidly in the direction of peace, stability and development, the region continues to be gravely threatened by conflicts and multiple security threats. Poverty, terrorism, the flow of arms, drug trafficking, the smuggling of people, and the spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS are threats that are not solvable by individual governments; they require collective and cooperative action by all countries of the region.

The choice for South Asia is simple: either it can pursue a path of purposeful cooperation based on peace, development and reconciliation; or it can sink deeper into the abyss of hopeless poverty, deprivation, disease and illiteracy, resulting in the gradual erosion of the very core of its ancient societies. By getting together, moving together and acting together through the proposed security organization, South Asia has much to gain.

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SAARC as an institutional framework for cooperation in South Asia

Nihal Rodrigo

There are two extreme views on the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The first is the sarcastic view, which maintains that the regional association is ineffectual and incapable of responding to the challenges facing South Asia. The second view is that, as the only functioning intergovernmental institutional mechanism in South Asia, SAARC should and could contribute in large measure to ensure peace and stability in the region and provide the means for cooperation among its member states.

A balanced realistic assessment between these extremes would be helped by an appreciation of the cautious evolution of SAARC since its formal inception in 1985, as well as an examination of decisions taken at the eleventh SAARC summit held in Kathmandu in January 2002 and the prospects for their implementation.

SAARC is a teenager compared with the middle-aged Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). The respective conceptual and historical contexts in which the two associations emerged differ widely. The first official encounter of the seven South Asian countries, initially mooted by Bangladesh about the end of 1980, took place in Colombo in April 1981 at the level of foreign secretaries. Five broad, relatively non-controversial technical areas were cautiously and consciously identified for regional cooperation: agriculture, rural development, telecommunications, meteorology and health. In 1983, a meeting of national planning

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organizations took place in New Delhi to consider national planning models, poverty alleviation and the international economic situation.

The same year, the seven foreign ministers met in New Delhi to define basic concepts for a Declaration on South Asian Regional Cooperation and to launch an Integrated Programme of Action (IPA) encompassing the five areas identified in Colombo. The IPA remains a central mechanism for regional interaction through a number of technical committees. Technical committees, which have increased and decreased in number, are an indicator of the successes and shortcomings of the institutional mechanisms in SAARC, some of which have become mechanical institutions.

The first summit, which convened in 1985 in Dhaka, formally adopted the Charter of SAARC. The SAARC Charter has remained fundamentally unchanged and is quite comprehensive in its scope. There is recognition that the objectives of peace, freedom, social justice and economic prosperity are best achieved by fostering mutual understanding, good-neighbourly relations and meaningful cooperation among South Asian states. Beyond the purely intraregional equation, the Charter also acknowledges (a little before globalization became fashionable) the context of ''an inter-dependent world'' in which the association must pursue such meaningful cooperation. The Charter calls for cooperation with other developing countries and promotion of collective SAARC positions in international forums. It also calls for cooperation between SAARC and international and regional associations with similar aims. SAARC's outward vision has not been constant. It has in certain situations tended to blur concerning the state of relations among its member states and in ratio to the level of apprehensions about the extent of intrusiveness that an organization seeking cooperation with SAARC appears to offer.

Reflecting the regional political ambience of the mid-1980s, two general provisions in the Charter have had a major impact on SAARC activities:

Decisions at all levels in SAARC shall be taken on the basis of unanimity;
Bilateral and contentious issues shall be excluded from the deliberations of the Association.

These were conceived not as obstacles but as safeguards to protect the young organization from entanglement in issues extraneous to regional cooperation. The provisions have been invoked on many occasions and their applicability in different situations has been debated at length, both within as well as outside SAARC. The taboo on the discussion of bilateral issues has helped SAARC to avoid being diverted from its primary Charter objectives. Yet the spirit of the injunction has not always been heeded and, when combined with the unanimity provision, this has led to

delays and postponements of ministerial and summit meetings. The una-
nimity provision in effect renders to each member of SAARC the power
of a veto.

SAARC operates at four levels. The Standing Committee (comprising
the foreign secretaries of member states), the Council of Ministers (com-
prising the foreign ministers) and the summit are all Charter bodies. The
fourth, the Programming Committee of senior officials, operates as a sort
of bureaucratic clearing house for the Standing Committee. Specialized
meetings at ministerial level have also been held on themes such as trade,
children, women's issues, the environment, housing, poverty alleviation
and tourism.

The early summits perhaps wisely avoided controversial areas, hoping
to allow the association slowly to build confidence in itself and gradually
to expand its functions. Thus, although a SAARC ministerial meeting on
international economic issues took place in Islamabad as early as March
1986, it was relatively late that core issues of economic and social coor-
dination were taken up, testing the association's ability to influence the
domestic policies of the individual member states and to bring a regional
paradigm to bear on them. A study on trade manufactures and services
called for in 1987 was completed in 1991. It led, *inter alia*, to the establish-
ment of the Committee on Economic Cooperation, comprising commerce
secretaries of SAARC, to formulate and monitor implementation of re-
gional plans and programmes to develop trade and economic relations.
The first SAARC commerce ministers meeting took place only in 1996.

The sixth summit, held in Colombo in 1991, set up an intergovern-
mental group to draft an Agreement for Regional Preferential Trading
Arrangements with a generous time-frame of six years for completion.
Ahead of schedule, a formal institutional framework for trade liberaliza-
tion through the SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA)
entered into force in 1995, following its signature at the seventh summit
in Dhaka.

At the time of writing, three rounds of negotiations on tariff reductions
under SAPTA have since been completed and have led to concessions on
over 5,500 items of regional trade. However, many concessions are part
of what has been cynically called the "snow-plough syndrome" – Sri
Lanka, for example, being granted generous concessions to export snow-
ploughs, which the country does not unfortunately manufacture. The
fourth round, which took place in March 2002, was, in accordance with
standing injunctions, expected to be conducted on a sector-wise, chapter-
wise or across-the-board basis and to cover items that are actually
actively traded or likely to be traded.

The tenth summit in Colombo in 1998 yielded two other important in-
stitutional measures on the economic front. A decision was taken to draft

a comprehensive treaty regime to create a free trade area in South Asia (SAFTA). A draft text prepared by the SAARC Secretariat is currently under negotiation. Because of inadequate opportunities for serious policy-level discussions on the draft, the deadline of 2001 set in Colombo for its completion was not met and the new deadline of 2002 also looks unlikely to be met. The domestic political ramifications of free trade, compounded by some bilateral difficulties, have hampered finality on SAFTA. There is now a more realistic appreciation of the complexities of a free trade area. These need to be addressed at a high political level.

Given this context, there have been bilateral initiatives to develop free trade areas. Apart from the trading arrangements that India has had with Nepal and Bhutan, Sri Lanka has signed free trade agreements with India and Pakistan, respectively, and is expected to initiate negotiations with Bangladesh for one as well.

The Colombo Summit had also recognized the need to enhance the institutional capacity and surveillance mechanisms of SAARC on financial issues. This has since helped SAARC to enhance its collective capacity in respect of policy analysis not only on financial and monetary issues, but also on trade and investment issues. A Network of Researchers on global financial and economic issues has been set up to identify, analyse and help SAARC face up to the challenges of globalization. The Network brings together the views of the private sector, central banks, planning ministries and research institutes of the region to identify areas of common concern and to develop collective means to respond to them with greater cogency, clarity and credibility.

Realistic rather than rhetorical approaches to economic issues at the multilateral level are emerging. This approach has been particularly followed in developing collective positions for projection by SAARC at ministerial meetings of the World Trade Organization (WTO). A Declaration of Broad Principles was drafted on the eve of the second ministerial conference of the WTO in Geneva in 1998. The Joint Statement of SAARC Commerce Ministers prepared in Male (1999) prior to the second WTO ministerial meeting at Seattle and, more so, the one worked out by commerce ministers in New Delhi in August 2001 prior to the WTO meeting in Doha are sharper and more issue specific. They were developed following extensive consultations at official and ministerial level, which also involved frequent, focused interaction among Permanent Representatives of SAARC countries to the WTO in Geneva. The commerce ministers' meeting in New Delhi took place against the background of the hiatus in ministerial/political SAARC meetings and, as a confidence-building measure, helped facilitate the eventual convening of the eleventh summit in Kathmandu in January 2002. The collective eco-

nomic imperative has thus been a compelling influence in SAARC even when bilateral complexities have stalled political-level meetings.

The private corporate sector has also played an active role in the promotion of regional trade. In 1992, the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) was established and has since helped forge closer commercial contacts between member states' national chambers of commerce and industry. The SCCI has also provided practical inputs to the SAPTA and SAFTA processes. Annual economic conferences organized by the SCCI in association with SAARC governments in different capitals – Dhaka, 1999; Male, 2000; and Kathmandu, 2001 – have helped to facilitate and institutionalize collaboration between government and industry. Apart from national chambers, some Indian state chambers, like that of Karnataka, have promoted commercial linkages through SAARC with chambers outside South Asia as well. In addition, trade fairs have been held regularly in South Asia since 1986, including when political differences have precluded ministerial meetings.

Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos on 28 January 2001, the United Nations Secretary-General hoped that big business would help build social and economic infrastructure. He warned that the fragility of globalization was a direct threat to the self-interest of the corporate sector. For South Asia, rapid social upliftment and enlarging the circle of opportunity require a sustained effort that neither government nor big business can achieve alone. The corporate sector, to ensure continuity and health in economic activity as well as to prevent disruption in times of unrest and confusion, has intervened with governments and at the level of the people, including in Sri Lanka. This is a question not of what the state can do for the private sector or what the private sector can do for the state, but of what they together can do in the interest of those to whom they owe their power – the consumer, the voter and the shareholder. The business of governance and the governance of business are directly related.

Virtually all South Asian governments have declared that the private sector is the engine of economic growth – the dynamo for development. More efficient management techniques are being introduced into government bureaucracies. Exchanges of experience and other forms of bilateral interaction have taken place. Within the SAARC context, the Association of Management Development Institutes of South Asia has sought to promote wider regional cooperation in the field.

''The vision of a phased and planned process'' leading to the eventual goal of a South Asian Economic Union (SAEU) has been accepted at the summit level. Its attainment is of course contingent on the success of the preferential trading arrangements, the establishment of a South Asian

free trade area, a customs union, a common market and progress in a series of other trade facilitation measures that are now slowly being put into operation. These include regional arrangements for investment, commercial arbitration, avoidance of double taxation, harmonization of customs rules and regulations, standardization of documentation, standards measurements and quality control. The SAEU was fleshed out by a Group of Eminent Persons who presented their report to the tenth summit in Colombo in 1998.

Although social issues, including gender issues and measures for the welfare and protection of children, have been part of the Integrated Programme of Action since the early days of SAARC, it was as late as the ninth summit in April 1997 in Male that a decision was taken to formulate a Convention on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia. The tenth summit the following year in Colombo finalized the text of the Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution.

At the summit in Kathmandu in 2002, heads of state witnessed the signing of the two Conventions. As the prime minister of Bangladesh, Begum Khaleda Zia, noted at the opening ceremony, women and children are the most vulnerable segments in South Asian society, whether it be to domestic violence, malnutrition, sexual exploitation or HIV/AIDS, or, as I commented on the occasion, deadly apathy. Shortcomings of the Convention on Trafficking have been acknowledged. Representatives of civil society and women's groups have made valid suggestions to governments and to the SAARC Secretariat on how the scope and practical effect of the Convention can be expanded and enhanced. Even when the text was cleared at the Colombo Summit in 1998, the need for a review of the Convention was conceded. The Kathmandu Summit took steps to establish an "autonomous advocacy group of prominent women personalities" from South Asia to make recommendations on a broad spectrum of gender-related issues. Alive to the fact that many decisions on social issues were languishing for want of implementation, the summit also directed that the Council of Ministers constitute a Task Force to review the status of past decisions in the social sector and to propose mechanisms for their expeditious implementation. Specific measures for improving the status of children, for polio eradication, for protection from HIV/AIDS and for basic education for children have also been put forward.

At the Kathmandu Summit, "the region's common enemy" was identified by Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee, the prime minister of India, and General Pervez Musharraf, the president of Pakistan, as poverty. As far back as 1991, the sixth summit in Colombo had set up an Independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation, which provided a radical conceptual framework for poverty alleviation through social mobili-

zation, empowerment and devolved decision-making in which the poor participated. These approaches were frowned on by some officials of the World Bank at that time as placebos of neo-welfarism. As the Group of Eminent Persons nominated by the Male Summit in 1997 to review the SAARC process noted, poverty alleviation programmes in South Asia are primarily driven by national preoccupations, priorities and policies. Given the disparities in the nature, intensity and spread of poverty, both within as well as between countries, a common practical plan applicable to the entire region has not been feasible. The Kathmandu Summit reconstituted the Commission on Poverty Alleviation, and a Regional Poverty Profile is being prepared. A ministerial summit in Islamabad (April 2002) undertook a review and evaluation of the successes and failures of poverty alleviation programmes in practice.

The Kathmandu Summit felt ''a new sense of urgency'' to combat the problem of poverty and resolved to promote ''the synergetic partnership among national Governments, international agencies, the private sector and civil society''. The formal acknowledgement of the need for synergetic partnerships involving the non-state sector is important, mitigating a sometimes evident reluctance to go too far beyond the governmental pale. This would also help in framing the SAARC Social Charter.

The tenth summit determined that, in order to enhance social development, it was necessary to develop, beyond purely national plans of action, a regional dimension of action on social issues with a specific role for SAARC. A SAARC Social Charter is accordingly being developed to draw up targets across the region in respect of the empowerment of women, youth mobilization, the protection of children, the promotion of health, poverty alleviation and population stabilization. An open inclusive participatory approach is being encouraged in the process of drafting the Charter. Questions remain as to whether the rights to be eventually enshrined in the Charter would be justiciable.

In Sri Lanka, a National Consultation has been organized involving over 100 stakeholders from government and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academics and others to formulate the country's views on the draft text of the Charter prepared by the SAARC Secretariat. The task will be complex, first at national levels where this open process is being attempted, and thereafter at the regional level as well. At the United Nations University (UNU) Conference on the United Nations and South Asia, the statements by former Indian Prime Minister Shri I. K. Gujral and by former Pakistan Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz pointed to South Asia as being on the lowest rungs of the Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Hafiz Pasha of the UNDP indicated some of the complexities that have made generalizations about social achievements difficult. In-

deed, asymmetries abound in the region. Two of the smaller countries, Maldives and Sri Lanka, have the highest ratings on the Human Development Index. They also enjoy the highest literacy rates and the highest per capita income, and Sri Lanka boasts of the highest life expectancy figure in the region. In adopting a SAARC Social Charter these asymmetries would need to be taken into account, because there are reservations among some member states about ''rating'' countries on social indices.

Whereas the Social Charter looks to the future, in South Asia the past is always with us. South Asia's rich history can be inspiring, but some of the legacies of the recent past hold South Asia back. The region was not entirely at peace when the summit in Kathmandu convened in 2002. The region would need to overcome these difficulties in the same spirit that brought the seven SAARC leaders to Kathmandu to a summit after a three-and-a-half-year hiatus, which the Maldivian president at the summit described as ''a traumatic phase in regional cooperation''. The three and a half years, the longest spell between summits (which are meant to be annual), had seen far-reaching developments within SAARC as well as beyond. Yet the seven leaders, by their very presence on the same platform, demonstrated a vital commitment – a commitment to the SAARC Charter precept that regional cooperation is ''mutually beneficial, desirable and necessary for promoting the welfare and improving the quality of life of the people of South Asia''.

As the preceding Colombo Summit recognized, the people of South Asia are heir to a profound common civilizational continuum of great antiquity, embracing a rich and complex plurality of cultural, linguistic and religious traditions. Religion has always been an undeniable influence shaping the South Asian culture and way of life. This is an aspect of South Asia's strength, not a weakness. Concord not clash among the various religions and cultures must motivate the people of South Asia.

Although SAARC remains primarily an intergovernmental organization, successive summits have called for closer interaction among the people of the region. Since 1998, close encounters of the regional kind among professionals, the corporate sector, academics, members of civil society, the media and artists have increased. We must not be blind to the reality that there is more to bind South Asia than to divide it. At the UNU Conference, the statement read on behalf of Mr. Gujral commented that civil society in South Asia had woken up.

Much of this interaction and cooperation is of course focused on the promotion of the very specialized agenda of each particular group. Yet all this has also served as confidence-building measures. SAARC accords official ''recognition'' to professional and other organizations that enjoy region-wide membership and institutional linkages. The process of ob-

taining "recognition" is complex and often tortuous, as many profes-
sional groups will no doubt complain. However, their persistence also
indicates that these professionals and other groups not only see the value
of cross-border linkages in South Asia but also have some faith in
SAARC as an institution that can help. By the time of the Kathmandu
Summit, recognition had been given over the years to the chambers of
commerce and industry of the various South Asian countries, parlia-
mentarians and speakers, the legal profession, accountants, architects,
management development institutions, town planners, cardiologists, in-
surance organizations, engineers, teachers, and writers and poets. These
groups have engaged South Asian issues that are often not on the official
agenda of SAARC meetings. Yet the summit in Kathmandu recognized
the need to promote "a sense of regional identity among the peoples of
the region" and "instructed" the Secretary-General to make available
the results of the meetings of such groups to member governments. Ear-
lier, it had required a necessarily subjective judgement on the part of the
Secretary-General – not always to the liking of member states and
therefore not risk free – to disseminate the conclusions of these groups.
Among the diverse areas these groups have focused on at regional level
are the documentary film, the garment industry, women workers in the
informal sector, defence technology and security, urban governance, cor-
porate responsibility, poetry, ophthalmology, psycho-social services for
sexually exploited children, and sports journalism. A meeting of some of
the election commissioners of South Asia held shortly after the Colombo
Summit in 1999 also presented guidelines for the conduct of fair and free
elections in South Asia, which the Kathmandu Summit "appreciated".

There is also South Asian interaction on what is called the "second
track". There are several groups of concerned South Asians, among
whom are former political leaders, who meet frequently on the very issues
that are concurrently being considered at the state level. Governments
may not always acknowledge this, but they do benefit from these en-
counters. Many of the personalities concerned have in the past held
ministerial and other high public political office and have been deeply
involved in the conduct of South Asian affairs. With the constraints their
erstwhile office had imposed on them now lifted, they have been able to
proffer more radical, far-reaching and in-depth ideas than those that
usually emanate from official quarters.

Clearly a point that needs to be made is that SAARC has reached out
away from the introverted, statist, cautious position it felt constrained to
follow in the earlier days of its existence. There are in SAARC no ob-
servers or dialogue partners, as there are in ASEAN. SAARC has, how-
ever, built up close cooperative institutional links with Japan, the venue
of the UNU Conference on the United Nations and South Asia. The

SAARC/Japan Special Fund supports many of SAARC's technical activities. A similar working relationship with Canada has provided support particularly to the SAARC Tuberculosis Centre in Kathmandu. SAARC has an annual dialogue at ministerial level with ASEAN and the European Union during the UN General Assembly, although the meeting with the European Union was not able to take place in 2002. Following discussions, benefits under the European Union's Generalized System of Preferences scheme, including through cumulative rules of origin, have been available to SAARC products.

SAARC has signed Memoranda of Understanding with a number of UN agencies, including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Development Fund for Women. Following discussions initiated in the twentieth century, agreements with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank are also likely. The support of the UN agencies has been useful not only *per se* but also when ministerial- or political-level meetings of SAARC were limited. It was possible for SAARC to work in close association with UN agencies to organize ministerial meetings of a specialized kind. For example, with UNICEF, a South Asian (rather than a SAARC) Ministerial Meeting on Children was organized in Kathmandu in 2001 to prepare the region's approach to the UN Special Session on Children. Similarly, South Asian ministerial meetings were organized to develop common positions on poverty alleviation and sustainable development, respectively, with the UNDP and with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Mr. Gujral's statement read at the UNU Conference described South Asia as being "in the eye of the storm of terrorism". Terrorism has affected virtually all the countries of South Asia, and the summit in Kathmandu was clear that terrorism "cannot be justified on ideological, political, religious or any other grounds". Nevertheless, a common definition of terrorism eludes South Asia, as it does the international community. But the diverse and perverse manifestations of terrorism are easy to identify. UN Security Council Resolution 1373 adopted on 28 September 2001, after the horrendous 11 September terrorist attacks in the United States, identified, collated and brought to wider international attention what many South Asians – Sri Lankans perhaps more than most – have for too long struggled against: illegal and forced funding to fuel terrorism, arms smuggling and drug trafficking, money laundering, attacks on religious sites and economic and democratic institutions, and the cynical abuse of refugee and asylum status. A meeting in Sri Lanka, mandated by the Council of Ministers in Kathmandu in August 2002, will

draft an additional Protocol to the South Asian Regional Convention for the Suppression of Terrorism. The Protocol will update the Convention *inter alia* to meet the obligations devolving on member states in respect of the Security Council Resolution and the International Convention for the Suppression of Financing of Terrorism.

At the UN General Assembly session in September 2002, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe of Sri Lanka spoke of ''the tragedies that conflict and terrorism create''. Sri Lanka, he said, ''has been ravaged by a twenty year conflict. It has caused 65,000 deaths. 800,000 are internally displaced.'' Following a cease-fire with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, he reported that ''in Sri Lanka, dialogue and negotiations are turning around a long-drawn out conflict''.[1]

The prime minister explained the internal dynamics of the Sri Lankan peace process as well as its international dimension, including the significant development role of the United Nations in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the country. He referred also to the Israel–Palestine conflict: ''while seeking a negotiated solution to our own conflict, Sri Lanka strongly supports the negotiation of a settlement of the Israel-Palestine conflict ... we urge the resumption of a serious dialogue between Israel and Palestine as a prelude to sustained negotiations.''

Significantly, one of the few international political issues touched upon in the Kathmandu Declaration is the ''continued violence and blood shed in the Middle-East and the set backs suffered in the peace process''.[2] In respect of political issues, apart from the Middle East and, of course, the major emphasis on terrorism, the Kathmandu Declaration has references only to disarmament issues, including nuclear proliferation and the security of small states. Overall, it relates, however briefly, the South Asian situation to the international context: ''the Heads of State of Government were of the view that stability, peace and security in South Asia should be promoted together with the efforts to improve the global security environment.''

SAARC as an association has retained its primary focus on socio-economic matters and has also resisted intervention and intercession from outside the region on political issues. Primarily, this is related to the SAARC Charter taboo referred to earlier – the general provision of excluding ''bilateral and contentious issues'' from the deliberations of the association. It is, of course, well known that at all SAARC gatherings, whether at the level of foreign secretaries, foreign ministers or heads of state or government, informal discussions do take place on bilateral issues. However, they take place well outside the formal conference meetings. These informal meetings have helped to ease thorny bilateral questions precisely because they are closed encounters of the bilateral kind. These are an essential and vital part of the SAARC process and

were gently acknowledged and encouraged in the Declaration adopted at the fifth summit in Male in the 1990s. Almost ritually thereafter, summit declarations have reaffirmed a commitment "to the promotion of mutual trust and understanding". The carefully drafted paragraph 47 of the Kathmandu Declaration, a decade later, bears quoting in full:

The Heads of State or Government reaffirmed their commitment to the promotion of mutual trust and understanding and, recognizing that the aims of promoting peace, stability and amity and accelerated socio-economic cooperation may best be achieved by fostering good neighbourly relations, relieving tensions and building confidence, agreed that a process of informal consultations would prove useful in this regard. The Leaders further recognized that this process would contribute to the appreciation of each other's problems and perceptions as well as for decisive action in agreed areas of regional cooperation. They underlined the importance of informal political consultations in promoting mutual understanding and reinforcing the confidence building process among the Member States.

Specific bilateral situations have not, however, been covered in SAARC declarations or communiqués, with the exception of a positive reference welcoming the Lahore Declaration between India and Pakistan at the twenty-first session of the Council of Ministers held in Nuwara Eliya, Sri Lanka, in 1999 following what was reported as literally a walk in the woods by the then foreign ministers of the two countries, who joined the consensus on the paragraph.

As perhaps with all regional organizations, it has been the summits and the ministerial meetings of SAARC that have naturally tended to attract the headlines – good news, bad news or no news at all. The long gap between the Colombo Summit in mid-1998 and the Kathmandu Summit in early 2002 has been viewed as a negative development. There is no doubt that the summits are the high point in SAARC and give policy direction and leadership, review progress and initiate action. There is also no doubt that, had the Kathmandu Summit convened earlier, in accordance with the Charter, many blocked decisions could have been unblocked to help SAARC move forward. It is obvious that the closer the relations among the South Asian seven, the stronger the prospects for effective regional cooperation. It is perhaps less obvious that the more beneficial the South Asian interaction, the closer it will bring the seven countries together. The collective economic imperatives are one example that strengthens the latter argument. If SAARC's achievements *per se* in the three years preceding the Kathmandu Summit were not spectacular, it is clear also that SAARC's institutional framework has facilitated and provided space for closer South Asian interaction in a number of areas of governmental as well as non-governmental activity, both regional and international, some of which have been briefly sketched in this chapter.

Paradoxically, the criticism levelled at SAARC has revealed the extent to which the concept of South Asia – its special identity and its uniqueness – has been firmly established. SAARC, as I said before, can be important or impotent in this region. The cynics would point to the negative aspect of the collective South Asian identity: for example, US President Clinton's comment about South Asia being the most dangerous place on earth. Yet the corporate sector, civil society, a host of professional groups and leaders in different fields of activity, indeed a constituency much wider than that of the states, have asserted a deep sense of South Asia. The political constraints that stood in the way of the eleventh summit have not yet melted away, but the summit could and did take place, significantly despite those constraints. One recalls the gloomy editorials on ''The Situation in South Asia'' and ''The Plight of SAARC'' towards the end of 2001 at a time when the government of Nepal was finalizing the logistics and other arrangements for a January summit. It was not the best of times. In meetings the then Secretary-General had with President Musharraf and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, and in consultation with the governments of Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka, clear commitments to attend the summit were stressed. In a meeting the Secretary-General later had on 19 December 2001 with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee in New Delhi on the very evening he addressed the Indian parliament on the terrorist attack on that institution, the prime minister's commitment to SAARC was unequivocally reaffirmed: his presence at the summit on the due dates was assured. At the summit, the valedictory plea of the outgoing Secretary-General was that, if on the whole the pace of regional cooperation had slackened, SAARC looks to its leaders to give it fresh impetus, to give direction where there has been drift, to urge action where there has been apathy or bureaucratic atrophy. The people of South Asia will not hesitate to follow.

Notes

1. Ranil Wickremesinghe, Statement at the 57th session of the United Nations General Assembly, 18 September 2002; http://www.regainingsrilanka.org/stat.htm.
2. South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, Declaration of the Eleventh SAARC Summit, Kathmandu, 4–6 January 2002; http://www.saarc-sec.org/publication/11summitdec.pdf.

Part VII

Human security

19

Human security: The perspective of children and women in South Asia

Manzoor Ahmed

This chapter is divided into four parts: a brief explanation of the unifying concept of human security and the importance of attention to issues of children and women to promote human security; the condition of children and women in South Asia; what has been learned from development experience; and what needs to be done regarding the situation of children and women and human security and what the United Nations system can do.

Human security and children and women

The concept of human security

Mahbub ul Haq, in the United Nations Development Programme's *Human Development Report* of 1994, explicitly presented the concept of human security. Anticipating the World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen in the following year and hoping to influence its agenda, the report attempted to draw attention to people's security and well-being as the ultimate end of all security concerns of nations and states. "In the final analysis, human security is a child who did not die, a disease that did not spread, job that was not cut, an ethnic tension that did not explode in violence, a dissident who was not silenced. Human security is not a concern with weapons, it is a concern with human life and dignity" (UNDP, 1994: 22).

The 1994 *Human Development Report* defined human security as: (a) safety from chronic threats to humans such as hunger, disease and repression, and (b) protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in people's lives – whether in jobs, homes or communities. In other words, the key premises of human security are freedom from fear and want. The report also identified four essential characteristics of human security:

- Human security is a universal concern. It is relevant to people everywhere.
- The components of human security are interdependent. When the security of people is endangered anywhere in the world, all nations are likely to be involved or affected.
- Human security is easier to ensure through early prevention than later intervention. It is less costly to meet the threats upstream than downstream.
- Human security is people centred. It is concerned with how people live in a society, how they freely exercise their many choices, how much access they have to market and social opportunities – and whether they live in conflict or in peace.

The concept as presented by the *Human Development Report* has been the basis for discussion and elaboration of the theme of human security. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his report to the Millennium Assembly of the United Nations in 2000 (United Nations, 2000a), spoke about human security as embracing ''far more than the absence of violent conflict''. In his words, ''Freedom from want, freedom from fear and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment – these are the interrelated building blocks of human and, therefore, national security'' (United Nations, 2000b).

Why attention to children and women?

A young population inhabits South Asia: the share of the population under 18 years is 42 per cent, compared with 33 per cent globally. About 36 million children are born every year in South Asia – more than in any other region in absolute numbers. The 560 million young people under 18 in South Asia constitute a larger number than the total population of each of the regions of Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa, or the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States combined, and they rival that of Sub-Saharan Africa.

The status of children (girls and boys up to age 18 as defined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child), their well-being and how their rights and needs are being fulfilled must be the paramount concern of the nations of South Asia, individually and collectively, for at least two rea-

sons. First, it is a legal and moral obligation of states to enforce, protect and promote the rights of children recognized in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been ratified by all the states in South Asia. The national constitution of each of the countries – in varying languages but essentially in the same spirit – recognizes the rights of children.

The second important reason for attention to children, indeed for putting children at the top of the national agenda, is the pragmatic self-interest of nations. Close to half of the population in the nations of South Asia are children under 18, who will be the adult citizens in the next decade and the next generation. As workers, they will turn the wheels of the economy; as citizens, they will have their say in large and small decisions of the nation; and as members of the community and the family, they will be the actors in civil society and will decisively influence the future of the following generation – their own children. Two-thirds of the citizens in the year 2020 in South Asia have already been born and many of the prospective leaders of the second half of the twenty-first century are now in their early formative years. The most productive investment that countries in South Asia can make is in their children.

The condition of children and women in South Asia

Despite the progress made in the past two decades on various indicators of children's survival, health and development in South Asia, the region has not met most of the goals set for children for the year 2000 at the World Summit for Children in 1990. The region is in competition for the dubious distinction of being the most laggardly among all developing regions on many of the indicators. Some basic statistics for 2000 will bring the point home (see Table 19.1).

The situation of women in South Asia is most poignantly illustrated by the story of ''100 million missing women'' publicized by Amartya Sen (1990). Worldwide, women generally have a longer life expectancy than men and the sex ratio for the general population favours women. In South Asia (Bangladesh, India and Pakistan in particular) the ratio is as low as 93 or 94 females for every 100 males, compared with a ratio of 106 to 100 in Europe, North America and Japan. Precise information does not exist and the causes of the deviation from the global pattern have not been fully analysed. In India, the female–male ratio has been declining since 1901, when the census showed a ratio of 97:100. The 1951 census indicated a ratio of 94:100, which declined further to 93:100 by the time of the 1991 census. On current trends, analysts predict that some 120 million women may be ''missing'' in another 10 years (UNICEF, Re-

Table 19.1 Some indicators of the situation of children in South Asia

Indicators	South Asia	Developing countries	World
Under-fives mortality rate, 2000 (per '000 live births)	100	91	83
Under-fives under-weight, 1995–2000 (%)	46	28	–
Children enrolled in primary school (%)	71	80	82
Households using iodized salt, 1997–2000 (%)	55	70	69
Children receiving vitamin A supplement, 1999 (%)	35	50	80[a]
Children with low birthweight, 2000 (%)	25	15	14
Children immunized, 2000 (%)	58	–	70+

Source: UNICEF (2001a).
a. Less developed countries.

gional Office for South Asia, 2001; Hunger Project website; Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, 2000).

In the rest of this section I describe the features and characteristics of the situation of deprivation of children and women in respect to education, health care, access to clean water and sanitation, and basic protection from threats to human existence.

The educational challenge

Very substantial progress can be reported in basic education in South Asia since the 1970s. The adult literacy rate has jumped from 38 per cent in 1980 to an average of 56 per cent over the period 1955–1999 (UNICEF, 2001b). Primary education enrolment has almost doubled since the 1970s to a gross rate of 90 per cent and a net rate of 71 per cent. In absolute numbers, these gains are huge, and in terms of percentages too the progress is impressive.

However, the facts remain that:
- almost half of all adults (some 400 million) are still illiterate; of these, nearly two-thirds are women;
- on a net basis, taking account of those attending and not attending school in the prescribed primary school age group, nearly one-third (or 50 million children) are not in school;
- close to half of those who enter primary school (44 per cent) drop out before reaching grade five – thus failing to acquire a functional and sustainable level of literacy and numeracy.

The problems in respect of access, participation and achievement

Table 19.2 Multiple layers of disadvantage: The illiteracy gap in India

	% literate
Rich urban male	90
Poor urban male	59
Poor rural male	47
Poor rural female	24
Poor rural scheduled caste female	17

Source: Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre (1998: 4).

manifest themselves in multiple disparities for the groups deprived of education. Despite progress in the past decade in narrowing the gender gap in primary school enrolment, especially in Bangladesh, South Asia retains the dubious distinction of having the largest gap in primary school gross enrolment rates between boys and girls. This gap varies in percentage points from around 10–12 in Bhutan, India and Pakistan to over 30 in Nepal. Only Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives have achieved gender parity in primary school enrolment (Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, 1998: 38).

Gender inequality, expectedly enough, is bound up with overlapping layers of disadvantage related to being poor, members of linguistic and ethnic minorities, nomads, refugees, rural residents, slum dwellers, and working children (see Table 19.2).

Poverty and other disadvantages arising from social exclusion that impede children's participation in education are inextricably linked with the phenomenon of working children. It is a catch-all category that includes a large proportion of South Asian children. The children may be engaged in relatively benign work, which may even facilitate school attendance by helping to defray the direct and indirect costs of schooling. The category also includes children engaged in work in extremely harmful, hazardous and slavery-like situations, which are threats to children's life and limbs, not to speak of being impediments to their education.

Because of the wide array of situations that constitute child labour, quantification of the problem has been difficult. Surveys that include recognized categories of children's paid labour underestimate children's work, including some extremely harmful and hazardous forms of work in the informal economy such as children employed as domestic help and children subjected to commercial sexual exploitation. The estimate of child labourers in India often cited is around 44 million in the mid-1990s, in the age range 5–15 years. The number in Pakistan is about 19 million, and a survey in Bangladesh provides a figure of 6.3 million (Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, 1998: 7). In Nepal, 57 per cent of the

population in the 10–14 age group are considered to be economically active (Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, 1998).

The 50 million children who have not enrolled in or who have dropped out from primary school largely overlap the category described as child workers. Clearly, in order to address the problem of child labour as well as to expand the coverage of primary education, prominence has to be given to a strategy of a ''second chance'' for basic education as a key element of the universal primary education effort.

The main challenges in education in South Asia are:

- bringing some 50 million children to school by ensuring their access to schools and removing barriers of distance, costs to families and lack of facilities; with the majority of children already enrolled, access has now become more an issue of equity – in other words, it is a problem of reaching the victims of layers of discrimination and disparity;
- improving the efficiency of schools by eliminating drop-out, significantly reducing student and teacher absenteeism, and ensuring that children complete the primary cycle;
- improving the quality of teaching and learning so that students acquire the basic competencies expected to be taught by primary school; and
- attending to the neglected area of early childhood development and implementation of large-scale programmes, especially for the children of disadvantaged socio-economic groups, so that all children are assured of a fair start in life.

The health of children and women

Major achievements have been recorded in South Asia in respect of children's health, illustrated by the decline in the under-5 mortality rate and by immunization coverage. The child mortality rate of 100 per 1,000 live births in 2000 is, however, substantially higher than the average of 91 for all developing countries and higher than that for all developing regions except Sub-Saharan Africa. It ranges from 19 in Sri Lanka to 110 in Pakistan. The worldwide campaign to eradicate polio has recorded impressive progress. The national polio immunization days in the South Asian nations reach out to millions of children in every neighbourhood and are an impressive illustration of social mobilization and organization. Yet South Asia, along with conflict-torn African countries, remains the last hurdle to reaching the goal of global eradication.

Half of all child deaths in South Asia are caused by diarrhoea and pneumonia – usually helped by malnutrition. Besides these two common diseases, the other major health problems in South Asia are malaria and the looming danger of HIV/AIDS. Effective control and management of programmes for acute respiratory infections, another serious child health

problem that can lead to pneumonia, are in place only in parts of the South Asian countries.

The incidence of reproductive tract infection and sexually transmitted diseases is high among women in South Asia. Maternal mortality rates in South Asian countries are among the highest in the world, with an average of 430 deaths per 100,000 live births.

The special health needs of women and adolescents are beginning to receive some attention, but effective programmes serving substantial numbers are yet to be established. The major health challenges for children and women in South Asia are:

- maintaining immunization coverage at a high level;
- establishing an effective system of controlling and managing the major health problems of children and women;
- ensuring that the special needs of pregnant women, the reproductive health care of women, and the health needs of adolescent girls and boys, so far given sparse attention, are met effectively;
- improving the capacity of the primary health-care system and its structure of technical support and referral – establishing and enforcing performance standards, introducing participatory and accountable management – so that the health needs of all the people, especially the poor and those outside the mainstream of society, are served.

Children's and women's nutrition

Half the children under 5 in South Asia are under-weight for their age (see Table 19.1). A similar proportion suffer from stunted growth. Almost a quarter of these children are categorized as severely under-weight and stunted (below two standard deviations from the median reference point). A quarter of children are born with low birthweight – a significant predictor of child survival and adult health status. Half the children and two-thirds of women suffer from iron deficiency anaemia.

The poor nutritional status of children and women in South Asia is the worst of all developing regions. Sub-Saharan Africa, as a region, is arguably less developed than South Asia in education, technology and economic status (in terms of purchasing power parity). Yet Sub-Saharan Africa surpasses South Asia in the nutrition of children and women.

Specific nutritional interventions to control deficiencies of iodine, vitamin A and iron have been undertaken with some success in South Asia. Two-thirds of South Asian households consume iodized salt. A little over one-third of children under 5 are covered by vitamin A distribution. To achieve an overall impact on children's nutrition in terms of low weight for height, stunting, wasting and low birthweight requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach that effectively reaches the vulnerable

population. The triad of food, health and care of young children has to be the guide to nutritional action. A synergistic approach is needed to ensure family food security, build a system of health checks for young children and young mothers, monitor the growth of children, and improve the knowledge and understanding of parents and care-givers about children's growth and development.

Water and sanitation

Substantial progress has been made in improving access to safe drinking water in South Asia. With 87 per cent of the population using improved drinking water sources, the situation compares favourably with that in other developing regions and with the average for developing countries. It is significantly better than that in the least developed countries. The picture is not so favourable in respect of the proportion of the population having adequate sanitation facilities. At only 37 per cent, this figure is the worst among all developing regions and substantially below the average for developing countries (52 per cent) or even the least developed countries (43 per cent). There is also a gap of almost 40 percentage points in this respect between urban and rural areas (UNICEF, 2001b: Table 3).

There is no standard definition of access to clean water and adequate sanitation facilities. Each country applies varying definitions for different urban and rural areas. "Access to water" may mean piped water in each home or a well within an hour's walk. "Adequate sanitation" may vary from a ventilated improved pit (VIP) or flush toilets connected to a septic tank or a sewerage system in the household to just an ordinary pit latrine at a convenient distance shared by several households. Applying a stricter definition – a standpipe at home for clean water and a flush toilet connected to a septic facility, not an unduly demanding standard – would substantially reduce the statistics for access now being reported in South Asia.

As in respect of other social services, the poor are more deprived and often pay more for water, sometimes of questionable quality, than the privileged groups receiving subsidized supplies in cities (apart from urban slum residents). In addition, the poor pay a "health tax" for their lack of clean water and sanitation. A study in Karachi showed that people living in areas without sanitation or hygiene education spend six times more on medical bills than do people in areas with sanitation and hygiene knowledge (UNICEF, 1995: 7).

Rapid urbanization in South Asia and the growth of "floating populations" and of informal settlements of migrants in cities present another manifestation of the deprivation of the poor and a widening "sanitation

gap''. Informal settlements usually remain unserved by public utilities because governments are unwilling to acknowledge the existence of these settlements.

Protection of children in special need

The progress being made in protecting the rights and meeting the needs of children in the mainstream of society brings into sharper relief the plight of the large numbers of children who are marginalized and excluded in one or another way from the care and services that are their right. The total numbers in these excluded groups in South Asia, who could claim their rights to normal growth and development only with special protection and support, comprise a substantial proportion of the total child population.

It is difficult to establish precise numbers because of uncertain definitions of situations that call for special protection measures for children, overlapping categories, and simply the lack of adequate data. The overlapping categories of especially difficult situations for children include:

- the worst forms of child labour, in which perhaps 100 million children in South Asia find themselves;
- the trafficking of children across borders and within countries for sexual and economic exploitation;
- the absence of care and protection by families owing to abandonment by or death of parents;
- the displacement of children as a result of civil conflicts and violence;
- the use of children in combatant and non-combatant roles in war;
- physical and mental disabilities that impede the normal growth and development of children or their participation in educational and other services (if the standard ratio of 1 in 10 with a degree of disability is applied, this category comprises over 50 million children, at least a quarter of whom will require specialized services beyond what can be offered by regular social services) – ''inclusiveness'' in standard services is a major concern, only cursorily addressed so far in South Asia.

These situations of extreme deprivation and hardship are present in all the countries of South Asia and trap millions of children. Juan Somavia, Director General of the International Labour Organization, calls them the lost children. As he put it, ''The lost children are the most exploited, the poorest of the poor: child soldiers, girls in brothels, young bonded workers in the factories, sweatshops, fields and homes of our seemingly prosperous globe. They are robbed of their health, their growth, their education –and often even their lives'' (2000: 27).

Intersectoral and synergistic strategies are needed to address the pro-

tection of children in extremely difficult situations. The main components of such strategies would include:

- special efforts to include children with special needs in the mainstream social services such as education, health, nutrition and other forms of social support;
- special programmes designed to serve children in difficulties who cannot be served adequately by mainstream social services, such as the need for counselling, shelter, special training, mentoring and economic support;
- international and bilateral cooperation among countries where the problem cuts across national boundaries, as in the case of trafficking.

No single programme, agency or strategy can deal with the multifaceted and complex problems of children in need of special protection of their rights. The first requirement in South Asia is to recognize the dimensions of the problem before strategies and capacities are developed and resources are mobilized commensurate with the size of the task.

What has been learned

The need for effective and accountable governance

Governance can be defined as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources. Three key aspects of governance are (a) the form of the political regime, (b) the process by which authority is exercised in the management of resources, and (c) the capacity of governments to design, formulate and implement policies and discharge functions (World Bank, 1994).

It also comprises mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences (UNDP, 1997). Governance is the sum of the many ways in which individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs (Commission on Global Governance, 1995).

In this broad sense, governance must enable the state, the civil society and the private sector, working together, to advance the priorities for children and help achieve the goals of human development.

As will be seen below, the institutions of governance in South Asia generally bypass the voiceless – who suffer multiple deprivations on account of their income, ethnicity, gender or religion or where they live.

Economic growth, which has been accelerating in the region in recent years, has not helped the poor. The gap between the rich and the poor continues to widen, and the trickle-down effect is still to be seen for the 520 million people in a state of acute income poverty (see Table 19.3).

Table 19.3 The income gap in selected South Asian countries, 1990–1996

Country	Ratio of highest 10% to lowest 10%
Bangladesh	5.8
India	6.1
Nepal	9.3
Pakistan	7.4
Sri Lanka	6.6

Source: World Bank (1997).

The burden of the excluded

Religious, ethnic and cultural minorities disproportionately bear the burden of deprivation from social services (Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, 1998):

- the adult literacy rate of Indian Muslims is 10 percentage points lower than that of the majority Hindus (49 per cent vs. 59 per cent).
- five years after the signing of an agreement in 1997 between the tribal communities of the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh and the government, which ended an insurgency movement by the tribal inhabitants, the government is claiming success in implementing the agreement to recognize tribal autonomy and remedy past injustice, but the tribal leaders are accusing the government of bad faith (press reports);
- Sri Lanka has lost 60,000 lives in its 17 years of ethnic war arising from grievances about discrimination and insufficient recognition of the identity of the minorities;
- a quarter of the population of India falls into the categories of scheduled castes, *adivasis*, *dalits* and backward classes, and are subject to a wide array of discrimination and exclusion in relation to mainstream national development, participation in social services and a voice in the governance structure.

The larger question of how minorities of various kinds are given full participation in social services and governance structures in the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies of South Asia has remained largely unaddressed. Respect for diversity is an essential aspect of human rights. Similarly, respect for ethnic, linguistic, cultural, national, gender and hybrid identities is a prerequisite for a democratic society. Despite being a region with great diversity, a majoritarian political culture holds sway, contradicting the fundamental principles of inclusive democracy.

According to Radhika Coomaraswamy of the International Centre for Ethnic Studies (2000), no South Asian nation has successfully developed a strategy that preserves and promotes diversity to foster peace and prosperity. Existing structures that support diversity face ever more strenuous

tests, and the region seems more fragmented and factional – and tragically more violent – with each passing year.

The need for decentralization

The South Asian countries have a highly centralized structure of governance, in spite of a federal structure in the larger countries of India and Pakistan. The geographically smaller Bangladesh is the eighth most populous country of the world. Each of its 64 districts, on average, has a higher population than that of at least 40 member countries of the United Nations. Yet the administrative structure of Bangladesh is totally centralized in the capital, with large and small decisions about primary schools and rural health centres affecting people in the remotest village taken in the central capital. The feeble efforts at decentralization, accompanied by considerable rhetoric, in the South Asian countries have not made the government accessible to citizens.

The remoteness of the seat of power and the paraphernalia of authority from ordinary citizens helps a small élite to wield great power and use the machinery of government and the state for its own advantage. This overwhelming trend of monopolizing power and authority in the hands of a few has thwarted efforts for genuine decentralization of governance in spite of the general recognition of its need. Some moves towards devolution of authority have rarely resulted in a real transfer of authority, including over resources, which are guarded closely by the central bureaucracy (Aziz and Arnold, 1996).

The unresponsiveness and remoteness of governments have contributed to and compounded efforts to deal with ethnic tension, local insurgencies and movements for secession. The bureaucracy in a centralized structure of government wields enormous power without sufficient internal or external control and accountability. Unstable political regimes, a weak institutional capacity of the political structures and long tenure of bureaucrats tend to give them undue influence and power over elected officials at all levels of governance. Enormous power concentrated in the hands of non-professional senior civil servants and a disregard for the professional and specialized knowledge and experience of technical personnel in education, health and other social sectors are a legacy of the colonial administration and in many ways have become more entrenched.

Participation and partnership: The role of civil society

Highly centralized state institutions, aided and abetted by a control-oriented bureaucratic culture and weak political institutions in South Asia, have not encouraged the participation of civil society and a partnership between the government and non-governmental entities in governance. A "statist" approach originating in colonial history relies upon

the state authorities dominated by an élite to take the responsibility for
"organizing", "controlling" and "guiding" society.

With a new emphasis worldwide on participatory democracy, greater
openness and accountability in governance and the need to build part-
nerships among all stakeholders in society, the role of civil society is be-
ing looked at from a new perspective. The variety, reach and number of
civil society actors have grown dramatically in recent years. South Asia
has a lively and strong sector of development non-governmental organ-
izations (NGOs), social movements, community-based organizations,
consumer groups, cultural groups, professional bodies and religion-based
service and development organizations. Social groups such as the poor,
minorities of various categories and women, who are excluded from gov-
ernance and public services, have sometimes sought to assert their iden-
tity and their claims through their own organizations.

South Asia perhaps has the most vibrant collection of non-govern-
mental development organizations, numbering over 100,000 in total.
Some are very small and local but others, such as the Grameen Bank and
BRAC in Bangladesh and the Sharvodaya movement in Sri Lanka, work
nationwide and have earned international acclaim for their work.

The relationship between the state and civil society organizations, es-
pecially the development NGOs in South Asia, has moved, on the whole,
from an adversarial position to mutual tolerance and ambivalence. The
"statist" mind-set, the power of bureaucracy and the centralized admin-
istrative structure have impeded the development of a relationship of
partnership, cooperation, complementarity and mutual trust.

The vehicle of law and the system of justice

The basic elements of the modern system of civil and criminal justice
have been in existence in most of South Asia for over a century; in Nepal
the system has been in operation in its present form since the promulga-
tion of the 1951 Interim Constitution. A basic deficiency of the judicial
system in the region is the lack of effective access to justice for the ma-
jority of the people owing to its high cost compared with people's
income. This is aggravated by corruption and inefficiency of the agencies
associated with the administration of justice, such as the police and the
prosecutors. The lower courts, in particular, where most people would
seek redress against injustice, are largely inaccessible to the poor, have
huge backlogs and are subject to manipulation by people with influence.
The separation of the judiciary from the executive branch of the govern-
ment, reversing the legacy of colonial times, has been a persistent de-
mand in the countries of the region, but effective steps have not been
taken in any country. The higher courts – the Supreme Court and the
high courts in each country – enjoy greater public confidence than the

lower courts, and have occasionally taken a proactive role in their rulings on human rights and public interest litigation.

Judicial activism has been described by Indian jurists as "social action litigation", which is broader than the concept of "public interest litigation" familiar to North American jurisprudence. The former is not merely a strategy to advance group rights and interests but also a strategy for civil society monitoring and involvement in the realization of social and economic rights. The "activism" of the Indian judiciary has been justified in the courts as an effort to make them "the last resort for the oppressed and the bewildered" (Goonesekere, 1998: 234). The Indian Supreme Court's admission of social action suits makes it worth while for non-governmental social action groups to take the legal route to promote rights – to undertake research into a problem, to work together with the media and other partners and to bring a well-documented brief before the court. This approach can be effective in a judicial environment, as in India, where the superior courts have wide power of judicial review under the national constitution. Similar authority is given to the high courts by the constitution in Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. In Sri Lanka, such powers are more limited, but the precedents from the Indian courts have been a strong influence on Sri Lankan courts.

Synergy of efforts is critical

Apart from the plain absence of services and the exclusion of groups of people from services caused by structures of social and economic discrimination, the most serious and common deficiency in the essential social services for children and women is the mismatch between what is offered and the intended beneficiaries' needs and circumstances. As governments attempt to respond to the demand for an expansion of services and to make them more inclusive, the inappropriateness and unresponsiveness of services become an even greater impediment to effective services.

For example, the health and nutritional needs of children, adolescents and women, including expectant and young mothers, could be effectively met by a coordinated effort that brings together activities in the health clinic, water and sanitation projects, nutrition interventions and education in life-skills, health and hygiene, and nutrition for young people and their parents.

Early childhood development programmes can give the young child "a fair start" in life if the child's needs in terms of health, nutrition, education and parental care and love can be met at the right place and time and with due attention to the specific needs and circumstances of the child. The multiple and complex circumstances that place children in

various categories of protection needs invariably call for sensitive and responsive provisions for education, counselling, social and financial support, and sometimes specialized services in a coordinated way. It is impossible to provide these by conventional, sectorally divided social services.

All these point to the need to move towards a synergistic approach that makes social services responsive, flexible and accountable to the intended beneficiaries. The essential features of a synergistic approach would include:

- decentralization to bring decision-making close to the loci of action;
- meaningful, as opposed to token, participation by the major stakeholders, especially the intended beneficiaries; participatory planning and management, including a strong role for community organizations; partnerships, whenever appropriate, between public, private, NGO and community actors;
- accountability at the community level, especially to the principal stakeholders;
- transparency and openness in the decision-making process;
- encouragement from the central authorities for greater synergy and appropriate changes in legal, administrative and procedural provisions.

A move towards a synergistic approach is certain to evoke strong resistance from various vested interests who benefit from the present pattern or who are just insecure about change. These may include politicians who do not want to give up their control of patronage, unions of civil servants, and business and commercial groups who find it convenient to deal with a central organization. Sustained and determined efforts will be needed by civil society ''activists'' and committed professionals to overcome this resistance.

Resources are a matter of political choice

Governments in South Asia are getting bigger, without necessarily getting better. Per capita government expenditure increased from US$25 in 1975 to US$56 in 1995; the number of people in poverty also doubled in South Asia during this period. Central government expenditures increased as a percentage of GDP from 14 per cent to 17 per cent in the 25 years up to 1995 (Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, 1999: Chap. 4).

At the same time, South Asia does not collect enough taxes. By international standards, a very low share of GDP (around 10 per cent) is collected as tax, compared with 15–20 per cent in other developing regions and 24 per cent in high-income countries. Although the pace of economic growth has picked up, the tax ratio has stagnated or even declined in

South Asia. The taxes are also regressive: three-quarters of revenues come from indirect taxes.

The low tax ratio, a narrow tax base and the regressive tax structure indicate that there are actually choices on the fiscal side of the resource equation regarding increasing the level of resources and targeting resources better from the point of view of equity and human development objectives.

A greater concern from a human development point of view than the level of revenues and expenditures is the composition and effectiveness of the expenditures. The important questions are: Where do the resources actually go? Who benefits from them? Do they complement private spending?

Expenditures on social services, human development and children's priorities are clearly inadequate in South Asia. A large proportion of public expenditures in South Asia is devoted neither to economic growth nor to essential social services. For example (based on Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre, 1999):

- Pakistan spent more than four times as much on defence and on debt servicing than on public expenditure in the social sector; India spent 70 per cent more and Sri Lanka 50 per cent more on defence and on debt servicing than on social services;
- out of every rupee of state government revenues in India, 60 *paisa* were spent on the wages of state employees;
- subsidies, devoted largely to agriculture but also to keep afloat loss-making public enterprises, accounted for 1.5 per cent of GDP in India and 0.5 per cent of GDP in Pakistan;
- the combined deficit of just seven large public sector companies equalled 1.7 per cent of GDP in Pakistan; such losses were 2 per cent of GDP in Bangladesh in 1993.

Clearly, South Asia could remedy underinvestment in human priorities if it managed its public resources better. However, although the essential social services are under-resourced, the limited resources put into them are misdirected and wasted.

The logical choices to make room for essential social priorities are not difficult to list:

- decide that the most urgent task of the government is to ensure the provision of essential social services – basic education, primary health care, basic nutrition, family planning, and drinking water and sanitation;
- re-examine priorities within the social sectors in order to meet the requirements of essential social services first;
- reduce public investment in productive enterprises and major physical infrastructure where private sector investments can be attracted and greater efficiency promoted by involving the private sector;

- rethink how the burden of defence expenditure could be reduced, loss-making enterprises privatized and subsidies cut and targeted better – thus releasing resources for essential services;
- apply economic reforms and use the possibilities of debt swap and debt forgiveness with a thorough assessment of the social consequences and a clear commitment to protect essential services spending.

A framework for action and how the United Nations can help

A seven-point agenda for action

1. *Make the situation of children and women count politically*. A strategy for taking an ''activist'' stance needs to be developed. The elements of such a strategy would include: wide dissemination of the issues, conclusions and action points raised in this chapter and in similar discourses in national languages; bringing together activists, organizations providing services, researchers and academics concerned with children and women in each country; cooperation with and formation of a broader alliance with others such as groups working on human rights, children's and women's issues, the environment and minorities; working with parliamentary groups, political parties, the media and professional bodies in social sectors; and promoting national and regional ''child watch'' and ''gender watch'' reports.
2. *Build partnerships for efficient, effective and synergistic delivery of social and development services*. Stakeholders, including the government, community organizations, NGOs, the private sector and civil society in general, need to be brought together.
3. *Decentralize*. This involves more accountable, participatory and transparent governance, decision-making closer to where the action is, and a greater synergy of actions.
4. *Find enough resources*. This is a matter of political choice; governments and politicians must be held accountable and answerable for the use of the resources.
5. *Promote the use of the legal system to claim the rights of the disadvantaged and the excluded*. Social litigation could be a powerful instrument.
6. *Look afresh at education as the anchor for a synergistic approach to services for children and women*. Education is the means by which people become more autonomous, more capable of assessing circumstances and making informed choices, and more adept at taking advantage of available opportunities. A widespread network of edu-

cational programmes and institutions is potentially capable of reaching the whole population. Education, therefore, can become an important vehicle for promoting a synergistic approach to serving the multi-dimensional needs of growth, development and personal fulfilment of children and youth. Educational programmes and institutions can be the anchor to which various activities can be tied and implemented in an integrated way, responding to the specific conditions and needs of the beneficiaries.

7. *Develop a regional perspective to share, to learn, to challenge, to inspire each other and to address issues that require regional cooperation.* By working with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation on a regional focus and regional norms and standards, alliances and networks can be built of the advocates for human security and human development in the region.

What can the UN system do to help?

The priority given to human security and development, the goals adopted for enhancing the status of and prospects for children and women, and the strategies and programmes implemented are ultimately choices each country has to make. Regional cooperation and emulation can encourage and promote movement in this direction to the extent each country is so inclined. Similarly, international assistance and cooperation by countries with the United Nations system can support positive forces in each country but cannot substitute for a national sense of direction and purpose.

The UN system has four important roles it should play in advancing the cause of children and women, and thus laying the foundations for human security:

1. *Continue to serve as the forum for building international consensus and solidarity in respect of goals for children and women.* The adoption and ratification of the regime of human rights treaties, including the Convention to End All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, are a towering achievement of the United Nations. The international follow-up efforts, including the World Conferences on Women and the recent UN General Assembly Special Session on Children, testify both to the work still to be done and to the importance of the role of the UN system in this regard.

2. *Work with countries to raise awareness, help set moral and legal norms, and encourage people to claim the rights of children and women.* The UN system should, by assessing situations and publicizing international successes, help to raise expectations about what can be achieved.

3. *Cooperate with countries in identifying actions, developing plans and strategies, and helping implement these.* The UN system has to con-

tinue to provide technical support and bring an international perspective to bear on national efforts to achieve the goals for children and women.

4. *Promote the role of civil society in advancing human security and achieving the goals for children and women*. The UN system has a special role, in the spirit of "we the people" (the opening words of the UN Charter), to encourage partnerships between the government and civil society in each country and among civil society organizations across countries in support of human security and the goals for children and women.

Admittedly, what the United Nations can achieve depends largely on the position taken by its members, especially those with economic and political clout and the five permanent members with their veto power in the Security Council. Yet the items listed above indicate an agenda for human security and human development that the United Nations has pursued with some success so far and must continue to pursue in the future.

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20

Child malnutrition and gender discrimination in South Asia: Is the worst malnutrition linked to the worst gender discrimination in the world?

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Half of the world's malnourished children are to be found in just three countries – Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. There could be no greater irony than the fact that, of the seven declared nuclear states in the world, two – India and Pakistan – account for more undernourished children than any other country in the world in absolute terms. In fact, the child malnutrition rates in India and Pakistan are also much higher than those in Sub-Saharan Africa on average, although the latter has higher rates of infant mortality. I explore these paradoxes in this chapter.

The chapter begins with a conceptual framework for understanding the phenomenon of child malnutrition. The following section presents the nutritional status of children in a cross-regional perspective, and finds that South Asia has the worst child malnutrition rates in the world. I then discuss the determinants of these malnutrition rates in South Asia in the light of the conceptual discussion. I focus especially on India because the country has the world's largest number of malnourished children. The final section draws some brief policy implications.

The conceptual framework

Child malnutrition cannot be reversed as the child grows into adolescence and adulthood; in other words, lay policy makers should think twice before dismissing the phenomenon of child malnutrition as some-

thing confined to childhood. Malnutrition is both a symptom as well as a cause of poverty. Hence, policy makers who merely worry about the incidence of income poverty have much less reason to be complacent. Moreover, poverty incidence can in fact be lower than the incidence of child malnutrition – as, for example, in India, where child malnutrition runs at 46 per cent of the child population, whereas the government of India claims poverty incidence is only 29 per cent (Planning Commission, 2002).

Child malnutrition has life-long implications. Malnutrition often starts *in utero* and extends well into adolescent and adult life. It also spans generations.

First, low-birthweight (LBW) infants who have suffered intra-uterine growth retardation as foetuses are born undernourished and are at a far higher risk of dying in the neonatal period or later infancy. If they survive, they are unlikely to catch up on this lost growth later and have a higher probability of suffering a variety of developmental deficits.

Second, during infancy and early childhood, infections and insufficient intake of nutrients exacerbate the effects of foetal growth retardation. Most growth faltering, resulting in under-weight and stunting, occurs from before birth until about 2 years of age – the effects of which continue. Under-weight children tend to have more severe illnesses, including diarrhoea and pneumonia.

Third, in adolescence a second period of rapid growth may serve as a window of opportunity for compensating for early childhood growth failure. However, the potential for significant catch-up at this time is limited. Also, even if the adolescent catches up on some lost growth, the effects of early childhood malnutrition on cognitive development and behaviour may not be fully corrected. ''A stunted girl is thus most likely to become a stunted adolescent and later a stunted woman. Apart from direct effects on health and productivity, adult stunting and underweight increase the chance that her children will be born with low birthweight. And so the cycle continues'' (ACC/SCN, 2000: 2).

Other than *in utero* growth, child nutritional status is mainly the result of the child's food intake and health status – at an immediate level. However, each of these variables itself has underlying determinants.[1] The child's health status is determined by environmental conditions, health services and the mother's caring capacity. The child's food intake is determined by food availability and the mother's caring capacity – making caring capacity common to both main determinants of child nutritional status.

Caring capacity and caring practices are overwhelmingly influenced by the status of women in the society, since they are the principal care-givers in all societies. Caring practices comprise child feeding, health-seeking

behaviours, cognitive stimulation of children, and care and support for mothers during pregnancy and lactation. Conceptually one can see that the woman's own health, her physical ability to breastfeed for an extended period (especially the first six months), her knowledge and beliefs, her control of economic resources, her autonomy in decision-making – all these determine her caring capacity. In other words, her status relative to other household members and her general status in society are crucial determinants of her capacity to provide the care that her children need for them to realize the potential of their physical and mental growth.

Food availability is affected by the production and distribution of food – distribution not just within the country, but also within the household (the latter being a critical area where girls and women may be disadvantaged). Women's status even affects the availability of food and household food security. In many countries, women are highly involved in food production and acquisition.[2] Yet their lack of control over how food is distributed within the household is of critical significance to their own health and well-being and that of their children. In addition, women's knowledge of the nutritional benefits of different foods and their ability to direct household resources toward food for home consumption can also crucially affect the child's well-being. Moreover, even if health services are available, whether the mother or the child is able to access the services at times of need may or may not be a decision in the mother's hands. In other words, the proximate determinants of the child's nutritional status – the child's food intake and the child's health status – are likely to be affected by the mother's status.

The child's health and nutritional status will also be determined, as mentioned above, by the quality of *environmental conditions* – safe drinking water, sanitary means of excreta disposal, hygiene practices – and the *quality of health services*. The ability of children to absorb nutrients will be affected by the vulnerability to diarrhoeal diseases, which can be limited by safe water and sanitation and good hygiene. If a child is afflicted with disease, the availability, quality and affordability of health services (whether in the private or the public sector) will crucially affect the duration and intensity of disease, and may make all the difference between life and death.

South Asian child malnutrition in cross-regional perspective

There are three indices of undernutrition – under-weight, stunting and wasting – which are expressed in standard deviation units from the median for the reference population. Children who are more than two standard deviation units below the reference median are considered to be

undernourished, and those more than three standard deviations below the reference population are deemed severely malnourished. If children have low weight-for-age, they are said to be under-weight. This is a composite measure that takes into account chronic and acute malnutrition. Stunted children are those who are short for their age; the height-for-age measures the prevalence of chronic undernutrition, which could result from inadequate nutrition over a period of time or from chronic or recurrent diarrhoea. Height-for-age is not affected by the season in which data are collected. Wasted or thin children (who are suffering acute malnutrition) are those whose weight-for-height – i.e. body mass in relation to body length – is lower than that of the reference population. Wasting levels can vary with the seasons, since they show inadequate nutrition in the period just before the survey.

Among all regions, South Asia has the worst record on malnutrition by all three measures. In developing countries, on average, 29 per cent of children are under-weight; in South Asia the figure is 49 per cent. In developing countries, 33 per cent of children are stunted; in South Asia 48 per cent are. In developing countries, 10 per cent of children are wasted; in South Asia the share is 17 per cent (see Table 20.1). For all three indicators of malnutrition, South Asian children are worse off than children in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

In each region there are countries/states that have achieved social indicators that are well above those for other countries in their region at

Table 20.1 Child malnutrition, 1995–2000

| | % of under-fives suffering from | | | |
| | Under-weight | | Wasting | Stunting |
Region	Moderate and severe	Severe	Moderate and severe	Moderate and severe
Sub-Saharan Africa	31	10	10	37
Middle East and North Africa	17	5	8	24
South Asia	49	21	17	48
East Asia and Pacific	19	–	6	24
Latin America and Caribbean	9	1	2	17
CEE/CIS[a] and Baltic States	7	2	6	16
Industrialized countries	–	–	–	–
Developing countries	29	12	10	33
Least developed countries	40	13	12	45
World	28	11	10	32

Source: UNICEF (2001).
Note: Data refer to the most recent year available during the period.
a. Central and East European countries/Commonwealth of Independent States.
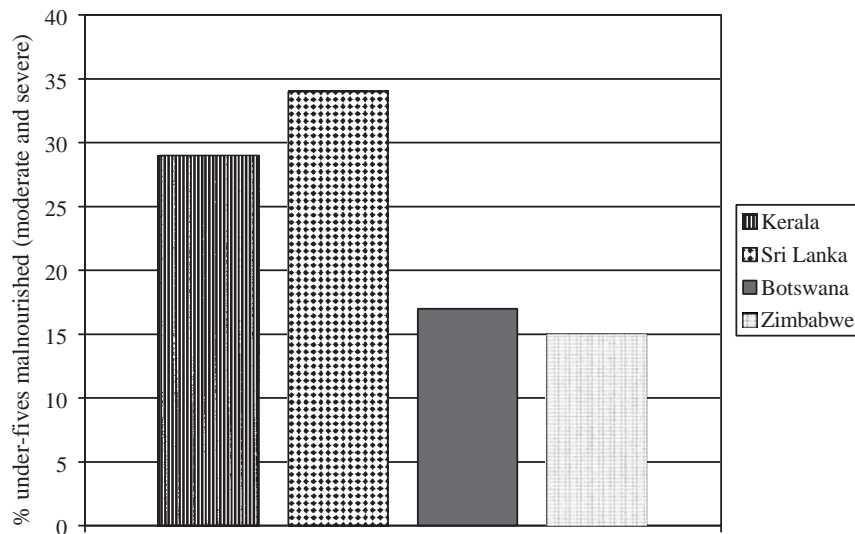
Figure 20.1 Malnutrition rates in high-achieving countries/states in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.
Source: UNICEF (2001).

the same income level. Thus, in Sub-Saharan Africa, Zimbabwe (in the 1980s) and Botswana could be regarded as high-achievers, just as, in South Asia, Sri Lanka and the state of Kerala (India) were distinct high-achievers in respect of health and education indicators (Mehrotra and Jolly, 2000).[3] What is remarkable is that the African high-achievers in the 1980s (Botswana and Zimbabwe) still have much lower under-weight rates than do the South Asian high-achievers (Sri Lanka and Kerala state) (see Figure 20.1).

Ramalingaswami, Jonsson and Rohde (1996) appropriately asked the question: if child malnutrition rates are so strongly associated with child deaths, and child malnutrition rates in South Asia are much worse than in SSA, then why are child survival rates in South Asia so much better (and under-five mortality rates so much higher) than in SSA?[4] Thus, the under-five mortality rate (U5MR) in Sub-Saharan Africa is 107, whereas in South Asia it is only 74 on average; yet child malnutrition afflicts half of South Asian children, but only one-third of African ones. Their answer was that the South Asian child usually has better access to modern medical care, especially antibiotics – available from the myriad of private doctors in rural and urban areas who are also interested in selling medicines. The child in SSA is more likely to have access only to government health services, which may be more oriented to providing preventive

services than life-saving ones. If this is the explanation for the lower mortality of children in South Asia (compared with SSA), then what explains the much higher child malnutrition rates in South Asia – in fact the highest rates in the world?

The determinants of malnutrition rates in South Asia

The nutritional status of mothers

If malnutrition begins *in utero*, then the first evidence we get that the child will be born undernourished is from the birthweight of the infant. The first cause of the high rates of malnutrition in South Asia is the high proportion of infants who are born with low birthweight. In fact, as Figure 20.2 shows, the incidence of low birthweight is higher in South Asia than in any other region in the world. Half of Bangladeshi children, one-third of Indian children and one-quarter of Pakistani children are born with low birthweight.

Why is the incidence of low birthweight so high for babies born in South Asia? Low birthweight is essentially an indicator of the nutritional status of mothers. Simply put, small mothers give birth to small babies. In addition, the weight that mothers are supposed to put on during pregnancy in South Asia is lower than is required for the healthy growth of the child. Thus, during pregnancy, the average woman should gain about 10 kg of weight. Whereas in Africa most women do gain nearly that much weight, in South Asia most women gain around only 5 kg (WHO, 1996). In other words, the baby's nutritional status at birth is a direct outcome of the woman's nutritional status.[5]

In poor households, the mother will feed the husband and the sons first, and eat last herself, along with the daughters. In poor households, there may be inadequate food left over for the females, or the poorest-quality food. Combined with the work requirements for a woman in a patriarchal society, the limited food or poor-quality food may translate into poor health status. In India, the fact that in the 1990s half of all children continued to suffer from malnutrition is particularly ironic, given that the food reserves (buffer stocks maintained for meeting the needs of drought-affected areas or areas hit by natural disasters) rose from 20 million tonnes to 64 million tonnes, and the country has actually been exporting food.

The second *National Family Health Survey* (IIPS and ORC Macro, 2000) gives us an insight into the nutritional status of women in India. As discussed in the first section, the height of an adult is an outcome of several factors, including nutrition during childhood and adolescence. A
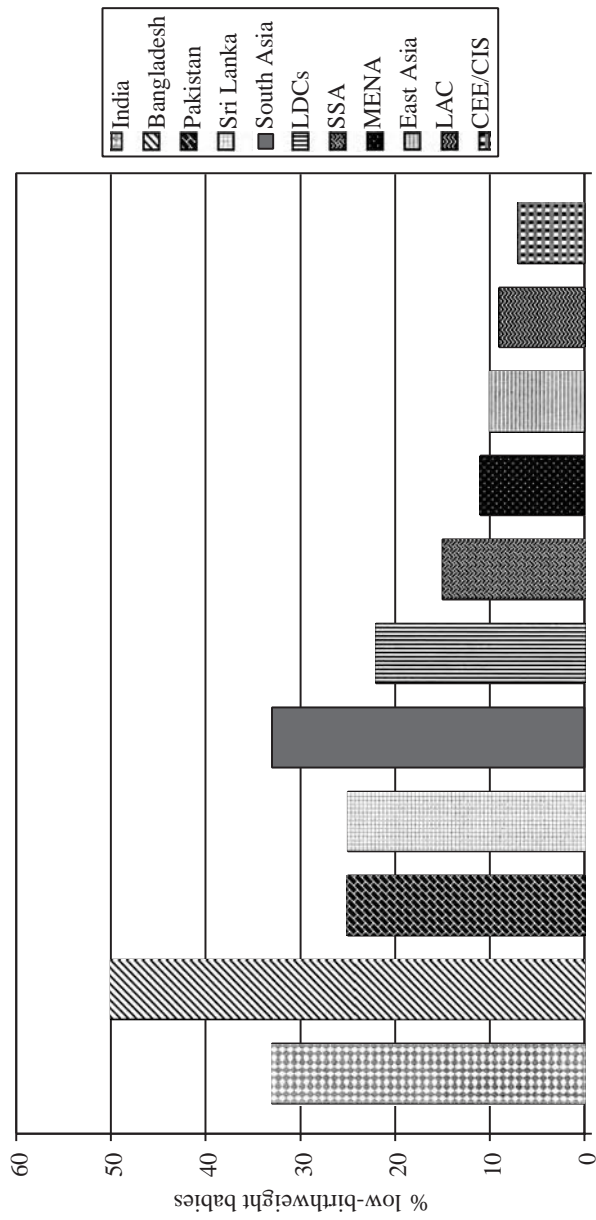
Figure 20.2 The incidence of low birthweight in South Asia, compared with other regions.
Source: UNICEF (2001).

woman's height can be used to identify women at risk of having a difficult delivery, since small stature is often related to small pelvic size. The risk of having a baby with a low birthweight is also higher for mothers who are short. Women who can be identified as nutritionally at risk, in terms of height, are those below the range of 140–150 cm. In India, 13 per cent of women are below 145 cm in height. The percentage of women below 145 cm is highest for illiterate women, and tends to decline with increasing education: over 15 per cent of illiterate women are below 145 cm in height, compared with only 7.7 per cent of those who have completed high school or above in terms of education. Moreover, 17 per cent of scheduled caste women are below 145 cm; 13.5 per cent of scheduled tribe and other backward caste women are similarly short, whereas for other (i.e. upper caste) women that share drops to 11 per cent.

The body mass index (BMI, relating a woman's weight to her height) is used to evaluate thinness (and obesity). Chronic energy deficiency is indicated by a BMI of less than 18.5. As much as 36 per cent of Indian women have a BMI below 18.5. However, nutritional problems as indicated by BMI levels are especially pronounced for rural women (41 per cent), illiterate women (43 per cent) and scheduled caste and scheduled tribe women (nearly 20 per cent).

Although BMI and shortness are indicators of protein-energy malnutrition, there is also a ''hidden hunger'', as reflected in micro-nutrient deficiency (iron, vitamin A or iodine). Thus, one indicator of the nutritional status of women is the prevalence of iron-deficiency anaemia. Anaemia is the status of having a low haemoglobin level in the blood.[6] Anaemia may become an underlying cause of maternal mortality and perinatal mortality. In addition, it results in an increased risk of premature delivery and low birthweight. In other words, it is an important determinant of child malnutrition in South Asia, quite apart from blighting the lives of millions of women. Whereas in Sub-Saharan Africa 40 per cent of women suffer from anaemia, in South Asia the figure is 60 per cent (Ramalingaswami, Jonsson and Rohde, 1996).

Precisely half of pregnant women in India suffer from some form of anaemia. Those with a height below 145 cm are more likely to suffer anaemia than those who are taller. Those with a BMI of less than 18.5 are also more likely to suffer from anaemia than are those with a higher BMI. Anaemia is higher for rural women than for urban women. It decreases steadily with increases in the level of education, from 56 per cent among illiterate women to 40 per cent among women who have completed at least high school. Whereas on average 52 per cent of Indian women suffer from any form of anaemia (mild, moderate or severe), scheduled tribe women have the highest level of anaemia (65 per cent), followed by scheduled caste women (56 per cent) and women from other

backward castes (51 per cent); for women not in these three groups the figure is 48 per cent.

Systematic gender discrimination

Although the caste of a girl cannot be changed, her educational level can be. What is interesting is that women in South Asia have the worst educational indicators relative to men of all regions. Table 20.2 shows that gender discrimination in education (at least for the indicators selected here) exists in all regions of the world except Latin America. However, the adult literacy rates for women as a percentage of those for men are lowest in South Asia – 62 per cent, compared with 72 per cent in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and in SSA. Primary enrolment rates are also the lowest, just as secondary enrolment rates are.

Why should the literacy and educational levels of the mother matter for the health and nutritional status of the child?[7] They matter because the mother is the principal care-giver. Figure 20.3 graphically illustrates the synergy between interventions within the social sectors by presenting the social impact of educating a girl in the form of the life cycle of an educated girl (Cochrane, 1979, 1988; World Bank, 1996). An educated girl is likely to marry later than a girl who has no education; this is especially true if the girl's education extends to at least junior secondary level and she engages in economic activity outside the home. Early marriage and childbirth, before the girl's own body has fully formed, will adversely affect the baby's and the mother's health. Independent research has also established that an educated girl will have fewer children, will seek medical attention sooner for herself and her children, and is likely to provide better care and nutrition for herself and her children. This would reduce the probability of morbidity through disease and hence increase the probability of survival of her children beyond the age of 5. Over time, the survival of her children will change the behavioural pattern of the family in respect of fertility and contraception – thus lowering the overall fertility rate. Smaller household size improves the care of children, and lower fertility reduces the size of the school-age population.

These benefits of girls' education accrue from generation to generation. In other words, in order to maximize the complementarities among basic social services, it is crucial to focus on universal primary education early on, particularly for girls – but this also assumes that health, family planning, and water and sanitation services are available. Above all else, it implies that one of the most important interventions for the child's health and nutritional status is the mother's educational level. Even more importantly, it reinforces the argument that the nutritional status of the child is the outcome of a process that continues over the whole life

Table 20.2 Education indicators: Females compared with males, 1995–1999

| Region | Adult literacy rate | | | Primary school enrolment ratio | | | | | |
| | | | | Gross | | | Net | | |
	Male	Female	Female as % of male	Male	Female	Female as % of male	Male	Female	Female as % of male
Sub-Saharan Africa	64	46	71.90	80	67	83.75	60	51	85.00
Middle East and North Africa	74	53	71.60	98	88	89.8	88	80	90.90
South Asia	69	43	62.30	99	81	81.8	78	64	82.00
East Asia and Pacific	91	79	86.80	107	105	98.1	98	96	97.95
Latin America and Caribbean	89	87	97.75	104	104	100.0	92	92	100.00
CEE/CIS*a* and Baltic States	99	95	95.95	100	97	97.0	92	90	97.80
Industrialized countries	–	–	–	104	103	99.0	96	96	100.00
Developing countries	81	66	81.50	99	89	89.9	84	77	91.60
Least developed countries	63	44	69.80	84	69	82.1	63	54	85.70
World	83	69	83.10	99	91	91.9	85	79	92.90

Source: UNICEF (2001).
Note: Data refer to the most recent year available during the period.
a. Central and East European countries/Commonwealth of Independent States.

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                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │   EDUCATED      │◄─────────────────┐
                    │   GIRL CHILD    │                  │
                    └─────────────────┘                  │
                         │                               │
                    ┌─────────────────┐                  │
                    │  Marries later  │                  │
                    └─────────────────┘                  │
           ┌──────────────┼───────────────┐              │
   ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐  ┌────────────────────┐
   │ Child spacing│  │ Seeks medical    │  │ Better care &      │
   │              │  │ attention        │  │ nutrition          │
   └──────────────┘  └──────────────────┘  └────────────────────┘
           └──────────────┬───────────────┘              │
                  ┌────────────────────────┐             │
                  │ Higher survival        │             │
                  │ probability -          │             │
                  │ health transition      │             │
                  └────────────────────────┘             │
                    │                 │                   │
   ┌────────────────────────┐   ┌────────────────────┐   │
   │ Lower total fertility -│   │ Better             │───┘
   │ demographic transition │───│ learning/education │
   └────────────────────────┘   └────────────────────┘
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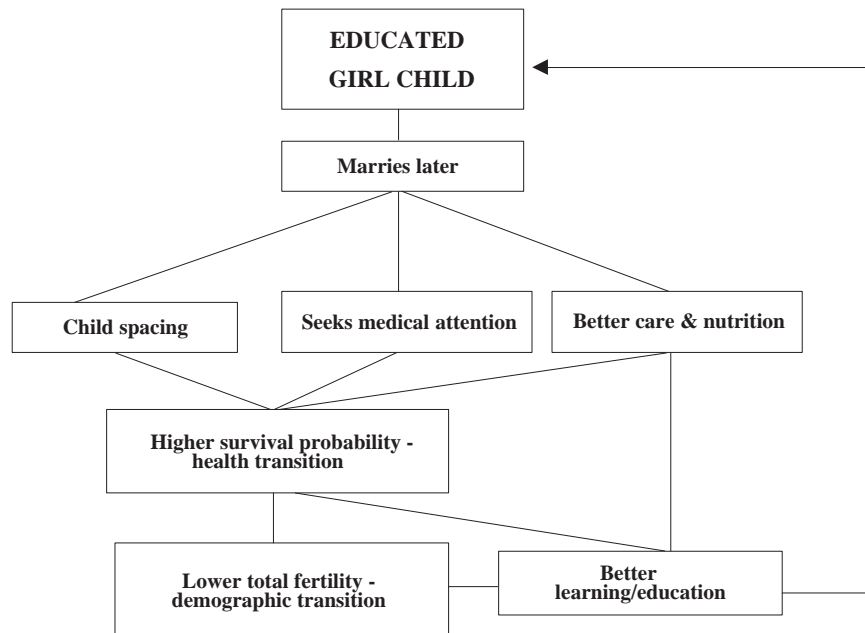
Figure 20.3 The social impact of educating a girl.

cycle, and, without the right interventions, leads to an intergenerational transfer of ill-being from women to children, irrespective of the latter's gender.

By far the most important evidence of *systematic* gender discrimination over a lifetime is provided by the fact that the life expectancy of women is higher than that of men by a smaller margin in South Asia than anywhere else in the world (see Figure 20.4). It is well known that, for biological reasons, women tend to have a longer life expectancy than men. Thus, as Figure 20.4 shows, in all regions women live longer than men. Women's life expectancy most exceeds that of men in Central and East European countries and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS).[8] That shows the potential for women's life expectancy to exceed that of men. Although in all regions life expectancy for women relative to that of men is lower than in CEE/CIS, it is by far the lowest in South Asia. This can only happen as a result of systematic discrimination that is perpetuated over generations. It is precisely this phenomenon that Sen (1990) referred to in his analysis of the "missing millions" of women, because lower life expectancy translates into a lower female-to-male ratio in the total population of a country.
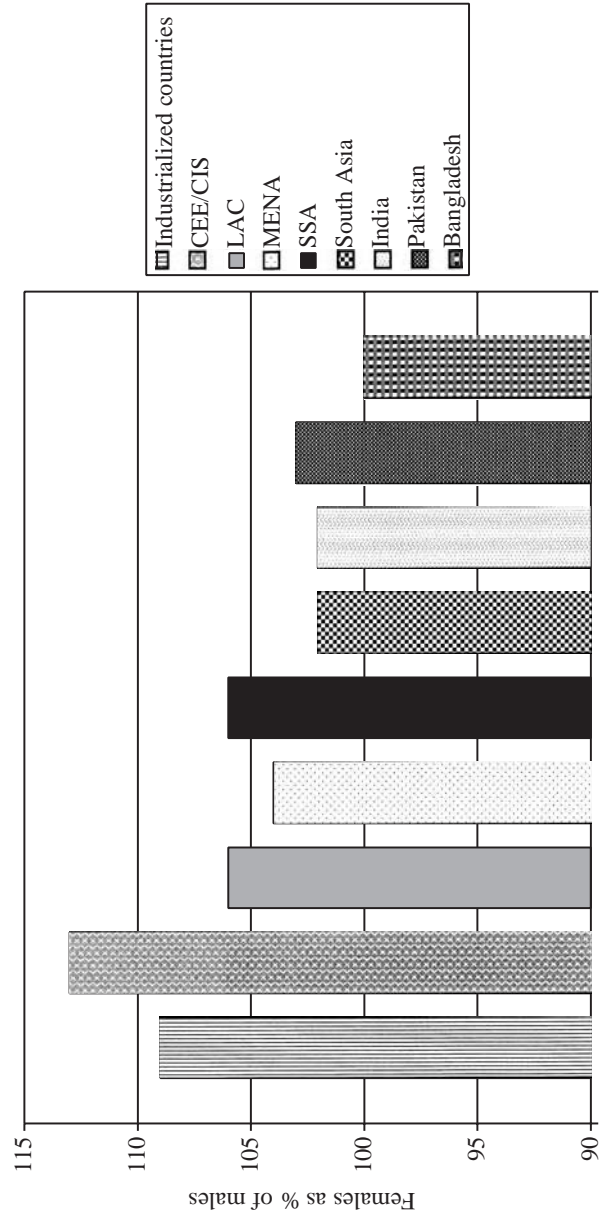
Figure 20.4 Life expectancy of females compared with males, by region, 1995–1999.
Source: UNICEF (2001).

It is not only women's capabilities but their agency too that has been severely restricted in South Asia. Sen (1995) comments on women's agency being an instrument of not only their own well-being but also that of the entire family. The notion of agency refers to the freedom women have to engage in work outside the home, to earn an independent income, to have ownership rights and, of course, to receive education. Wherever these freedoms and rights prevail, the well-being of women is positively affected. However, women in India face impediments even to their leaving the home, let alone seeking opportunities for paid employment. Thus, the second *National Family Health Survey* (NFHS-2) reports that freedom of movement is limited for the majority of women who have ever been married in India: only 32 per cent of women say that they do not need permission to go to the market, and only 24 per cent say that they do not need permission to visit friends or relatives (IIPS and ORC Macro, 2000). As expected, women who earn money have much more freedom of movement than other women. But the point is that, whereas half of all women in SSA are involved in some kind of work outside the home, only a quarter of women in South Asia are (Ramalingaswami, Jonsson and Rohde, 1996).[9] In India, NFHS-2 reported that 61 per cent had not worked in the past 12 months; only 20 per cent were employed by someone else; 14 per cent worked on the family farm or in the family business; and 5 per cent were self-employed (IIPS and ORC Macro, 2000). Thus the autonomy, and hence agency, of a majority of South Asian women is circumscribed.

Other factors

Gender discrimination is not the only reason for high child malnutrition rates in South Asia. As I noted in my conceptual framework, the duration, frequency and severity of disease, especially diarrhoeal disease, are important determinants because they affect the absorption of nutrients by the child. The prevalence of disease is affected by the availability of safe water and sanitation (see Figure 20.5). Even though South Asia has much higher provision of safe water (especially in rural areas), it has a much lower share of the population with access to safe means of excreta disposal. When one combines this fact with the phenomenon that the density of population in SSA is a fraction of that of South Asia ($23/km^2$, in contrast to South Asia's $230/km^2$), the enormity of the problem becomes clear. Overcrowding worsens the environmental hygienic conditions for the child in South Asia. The greater density of population would be particularly harmful in urban areas, where overcrowding in South Asia is intense. The situation is compounded in South Asia by the lower provision of safe sanitation in rural areas (the level of urbanization is not that
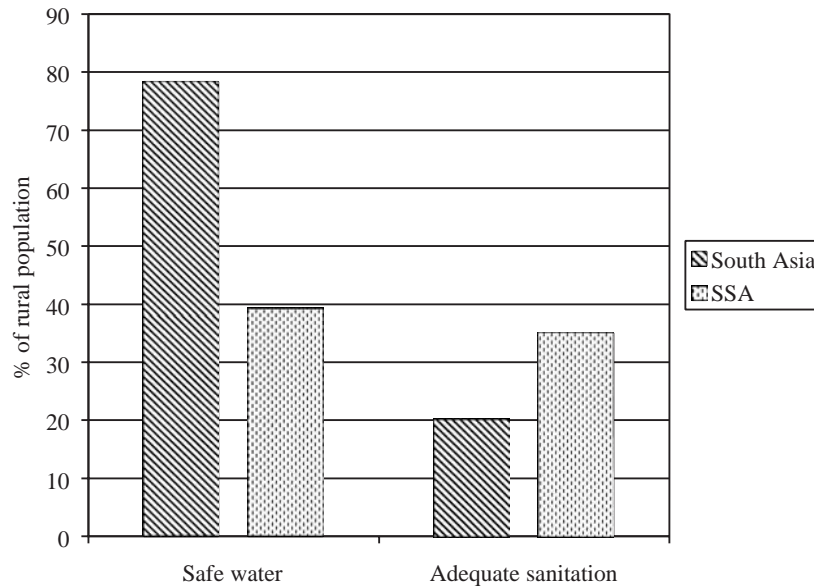
Figure 20.5 The availability of safe water and sanitation in rural areas of South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.
Source: UNICEF (2001).

different between the two regions, with 38 per cent in SSA as against 29 per cent in South Asia). Overcrowding would clearly lead to a much greater incidence of disease, thus affecting the absorption of nutrients by children.

Here too, however, the story may not be as simple as the mere quantitative differences in coverage of safe sanitation and the density of population. In South Asia there is a much greater number of physicians per 100,000 population than there is in SSA. Thus in India there are 48 and in Pakistan 57 physicians per 100,000 population, compared with much less than 20 per 100,000 in the majority of countries in SSA (see, for example, UNDP, 2002: Table 6). This would suggest that, despite the greater prevalence of disease in South Asia for the reasons mentioned above, people also have much greater access to medical care. However, the real issue is whether women have the autonomy actually to seek medical attention for their sick children or for themselves when it is needed.

From the second *National Family Health Survey* (IIPS and ORC Macro, 2000) in India, we have information regarding women's autonomy in these respects, which might shed light on this question. In order to mea-

sure women's participation in household decision-making, NFHS-2 asked the woman to report who in their household makes decisions about obtaining health care for herself. About half of all women (49 per cent) were not involved at all in decisions about seeking health care for themselves. Only 28 per cent of the women interviewed took that decision independently. Those women who earned an income were asked who decides how the money they earn is to be used. This is relevant to the issue of health-seeking behaviour by women – whether for themselves or for their children – because over 80 per cent of contacts with health professionals in India are with private practitioners rather than with the public health system. Of women who earn money, 30 per cent reported that only their husbands or only others in the household make the decision on how the money they earn will be used; 41 per cent reported that they make the decision on their own; and 28 per cent reported that they make the decision together with their husband or someone else in the household. In other words, despite the plethora of physicians in India, including in rural areas, there is no certainty that medical care will be sought at all given the out-of-pocket costs involved, or sought in time before the malaise worsens, thus delaying recovery and recuperation and prolonging the disease. Repeated episodes of illness without timely treatment are likely to reduce the child's (or the mother's) ability to absorb nutrients.

Yet another explanation is available for the high child malnutrition rates in South Asia. WHO–UNICEF guidelines recommend that an infant should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months. The available data suggest that in South Asia half of all infants were exclusively breastfed (whereas that share was only a quarter in SSA, according to Ramalingaswami, Jonsson and Rohde, 1996). Data from the second *National Family Health Survey* for India indicate that 55 per cent of infants were exclusively breastfed in 1998, 23 per cent received breast milk plus water, and 20 per cent received supplements along with breast milk. Although the share of breastfed babies may be higher in South Asia (and India) compared with SSA, the point is that we have already established that the health status and general status of women in South Asia is worse than in other parts of the world. Their poorer health status would prevent South Asian women from breastfeeding their babies adequately. In fact, a study based on findings from the 1992–1993 *National Family Health Survey* in India (IIPS, 1995) concluded that breastfeeding with supplements is more beneficial than exclusive breastfeeding even for children at very young ages (less than four months). That report suggests that mothers who are in poor health themselves may not be able to provide adequate breast milk for their infants. In other words, yet another ex-

planation for the high child malnutrition rate ultimately comes back to the status of women.

The preceding discussion has already indicated that the earliest years of a child's life, particularly the first three years, are critical to the growth of the child in later years. Thus it indicated that *in utero* growth of the baby, her proneness to disease in the early years, and whether or not she is exclusively breastfed in the first six months are all contributory factors to the child's nutritional status. After the first six months, the infant needs supplementary foods in order to meet protein, energy and micro-nutrient needs. Since South Asian mothers are unable to provide breast milk in adequate quantities, it is highly likely that South Asian infants need supplementary foods even more and earlier than even six months. However, apparently only one-third of infants aged 6 months receive such supplementary foods in South Asia (that share is as high as two-thirds in SSA, according to Ramalingaswami, Jonsson and Rohde, 1996).

In India, NFHS-2 for 1998 indicates that only 24 per cent of breast-feeding 6-month-old infants consume solid or mushy foods. This propor-tion rises to only 46 per cent at 9 months. Even at 12 months of age, more than one-quarter of breastfeeding children in India did not eat any solid or mushy food the day or night before the interview. Only 35 per cent of breastfeeding children aged 6–9 months receive solid or mushy food as recommended (IIPS and ORC Macro, 2000). In other words, mothers' poor knowledge about sound feeding practices is another factor that ac-counts for the high child malnutrition rates.

Some policy implications

Based on the conceptual framework with which this chapter began, and on the empirical evidence presented in the preceding two sections, one can draw a number of policy implications. Despite the presence of con-siderable food surpluses in India, there has been an entitlement failure on a massive scale, so that widespread hunger and malnutrition persist side by side with rotting food in warehouses around the country. There has been state-induced market failure in this area. State producer sub-sidies for agricultural products, together with state procurement of out-put at inflated prices, have ensured that the market prices for food grain remain out of reach for the poor. This outcome is mainly explained by strong farm lobbies (especially for wheat and rice). At the same time, the public distribution system (PDS) for food grain has remained inefficient and riven by corruption, so that the poor benefit little from it. Hence both sides of the coin have to be addressed: procurement prices and the

PDS. Functional PDSs can help to mitigate the effects of such market failure, and can even ensure that they do not translate into entitlement failure on a mass scale.

The problem is that, even when there might be no entitlement failure at the household level, the intra-household allocation of food in a poor household may discriminate against women and girls, with health and nutritional effects that last a lifetime. A gender-fair intra-household food allocation will be determined in the long run by women's autonomy, which can be enhanced by ensuring schooling for all and further reinforced by employment outside the home, particularly in non-agricultural employment. Since employment in the non-agricultural sector is a function of schooling, the latter is a prerequisite for triggering women's autonomy.

Meanwhile, given that the state, with the best political will in the world, will be unable to intervene in the household allocation of food, a second-best solution must be found. School feeding programmes for *all* children will ensure not only that all children, especially poor children, come to school but also that the poor family is saved the cost of at least one square meal for its children. Besides, since hungry children learn less than children who are well fed, it makes sense to ensure that a functional school feeding programme is put in place in every school in South Asia. In some of the least developed countries of South Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan) this might require some donor support, or perhaps a combination of support from such UN agencies as the World Food Programme and UNICEF. Clearly this programme would be targeted at children of school age and, at least in terms of nutritional outcomes (as opposed to their educational effects), can have only long-term effects – given that malnutrition sets in *in utero* and then is compounded during the first three years of a child's life, with life-long consequences. In other words, school feeding will have no effects on stunting of girls but may mitigate wasting and under-weight, thus improving their health status in the run-up to pregnancy. Most Indian states provide a 3 kg ration of grains. However, this needs to be substituted by a cooked meal because that has already been demonstrated to be more effective.

It is also well known that feeding women during pregnancy has very limited impact on low birthweight, increasing the baby's birthweight by a mere 10–20 grams. Hence, nothing but a life-cycle approach to the problem can make a serious dent in the problem. In other words, the focus of all interventions has to be on improving the health status of women generally, and then, as far as the infant is concerned, targeting most interventions to the first three years of life. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that, until a few years ago, that was not the focus of interventions. Thus, India

has one of the world's largest pre-school feeding programmes – the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) – which has been in existence for a quarter of a century. In fact, it now covers almost all districts of the country. However, the programme was until recently focused on the 3–6 age group rather than the 0–3 age group. That emphasis has changed in recent years, but it will be a long time before the impact of the change begins to be felt. The policy implication is that all South Asian countries need to have a programme with national coverage, comparable to the ICDS in India, and naturally focused on the 0–3 age group.

Even more importantly, ICDS-type programmes must rely on continuous home visits into the first year after the baby's birth in order to ensure that complementary food is definitely introduced by 4 months. As we saw earlier, undernourished women may not be able to breastfeed effectively even during the first four months, so it is critical that solid, mushy foods are introduced by 4 months. Home visits will also ensure that, during the first four months after giving birth, the mother's health condition is monitored, so that her ability to breastfeed exclusively is continuously evaluated. Regular home visits, however, require a functional primary health care system, providing complete reproductive health care services. At least in the states with the highest fertility rates in India, such a functional primary care system is non-existent.

We also saw that barely half of all women in South Asia exclusively breastfeed their babies in the first four to six months. A system of home visits would ensure that information and knowledge about breastfeeding spread. There is perhaps need for further research on knowledge, attitudes and practices, so that appropriate action can be designed.

Finally, rapid action is needed so that access to safe water and sanitation is extended to the entire population. In a region with a high density of population, the health of the population, and especially of mothers and children, is heavily dependent upon their access to water and sanitation. South Asia is characterized by one of the lowest coverage rates in the world for safe sanitation.

Notes

1. In fact, when analysts feed all these determinants – immediate as well as underlying ones – into a regression equation in order to understand the effects of various factors on child nutritional indicators, it underestimates the impact and statistical significance of determinants lying at deeper levels of causality. See, e.g., Smith and Haddad (2000).
2. Yet women do not have ownership rights over land. This is especially, but not only, true in South Asia. For an analysis, see Agarwala (1994).

3. Zimbabwe suffered serious social constraints on account of a variety of factors in the 1990s: repeated drought, the spread of HIV/AIDS, structural adjustment and political turmoil. In Botswana, social infrastructure was ravaged in the 1990s by the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

4. Osmani (1997) attempted to explain this ''Asian enigma'': why South Asia's child malnutrition rate is much higher than SSA's, despite almost equal poverty rates, higher food availability in South Asia and what he calls ''comparable levels of public provision of health and sanitation services'' (although the last is questionable, as Ramalingaswami et al., 1996, had already pointed out). The study used OLS regression to explore the determinants of child stunting for 66 developing countries in the early 1990s. The initial explanatory variables were per capita GDP ($PPP), health services (proxied by population per physician), the extent of urbanization and the female literacy rate. All were found to be significant determinants of stunting. A South Asian dummy variable was significant, suggesting (as I do as well) that additional variables underlie South Asia's extremely high rates of stunting. In fact, low birthweight and the factors influencing it (especially women's low status in South Asia) were found to be strong determinants of stunting. However, LBW is endogenous in the model, as in Smith and Haddad (2000), hence the OLS estimate is probably biased. Given the several levels of determinants of malnutrition, I have confined my analysis of determinants to a conceptual level.

5. The mother's health status affects not just the child's nutritional status but the prospects for survival of the child. Thus, in India, 60 per cent of the infant mortality rate (IMR) is accounted for by neonatal mortality (death within 28 days of birth). In fact, although vaccine-preventable causes of infant mortality reduced IMR in India in the 1990s, neonatal mortality remained constant. Neonatal mortality is highly correlated with low birthweight (personal communication from Dr. Vinod Paul, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi).

6. Haemoglobin is essential for transporting oxygen from the lungs to other tissues and organs of the body. Anaemia results from a deficiency of iron, folate, vitamin B12 or some other nutrients.

7. Gender discrimination matters not merely because mothers are care-givers, but for the sake of the well-being and capabilities of the woman herself. For a detailed philosophical discussion of this issue, see Nussbaum (2000).

8. The ratio is highest in CEE/CIS countries as a result of excess male mortality after the transition began. Hence the proper comparator is the ratio for industrialized countries.

9. Ramalingaswami, Jonsson and Rohde (1996) also suggest that, whereas in Africa the greatest obligation on a woman is to look after her husband's children, in South Asia tradition requires a woman to make her husband and her mother-in-law the focus of her responsibilities.

* The views reflected here are those of the author and not those of the organizations with which he has been associated.

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"Hum honge kamiyab … [We shall overcome …]": Non-governmental organizations, the state and human security in India

Rekha Datta

A kerosene vendor is selling in the streets without a license because the concerned official believes that a woman's place is in the home. A new rule is coming which will issue licenses for shops and ban street vending. She will soon be pushed out of the market.... A bamboo worker weaves baskets and sells these in the village market. She can no longer work because the bamboos are expensive and in short supply. Eighty per cent of the bamboos of her area are sold by the state to the paper mills and thus her demand for bamboo is not a priority. (SEWA, 1991: 2–3)

These are some of the stories of thousands of self-employed women in India, whose sources of livelihood and human security are being challenged on a daily basis. In India, as in other developing countries, many workers are considered marginal because their work is not documented and they do not work under contract. They are self-employed. They do not receive regular salaries like those in the organized sector, and they do not have any insurance against injury or any health benefits. Self-employed women are those who earn a living through their own small businesses or their labour. According to a 1996 profile of women workers in India, "out of 314 million workforce, 90 million are women … 87% are employed in agriculture as labourers and cultivators. Most of the women unorganized workers work in sectors like household industries, petty trades and services, building construction, etc. This profile clearly demonstrates that they are generally employed in areas of economic activities where remuneration, career prospects, and chances of skill development are marginal or non-existent" (Verma et al., 1996: xxv).

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In this environment of self-employment there is another reality, that of millions of children working in fields and factories instead of going to school. According to one estimate, India has the largest number of child workers in the world. About 100–150 million children (aged 5–14 years) do not go to school. Approximately 44 million children (aged 5–14) are employed in hazardous and non-hazardous industries; many of them are bonded labourers. This means that these children have to work to pay off their parents' small debts resulting from loans they had taken from moneylenders.[1]

To be sure, challenges to human security stemming from the lack of income or of access to resources, education and health are an indispensable aspect of life in developing countries. The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, 1948; the International Women's Year, 1975; the UN Decade for Women, 1976–1985; the Beijing Women's Conference, 1995; Beijing + 5 in 2000; and other conferences and several International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions have addressed the issue of women's equality in work and in society.[2] What makes it worse for women is that, despite measures and policy programmes, inequality of opportunity and discrimination against women still persist, denying them some of the basic premises of human security.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are still the primary bodies addressing issues of income and other aspects of human security that are challenged by employing child workers. These efforts can be successful with adequate policy and resource allocations by governmental and international agencies. The analysis begins with an examination of the progress in the effort towards human development and human security at the level of conceptualization and policy-making. It then focuses on the strategies and actions of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and evaluates its contribution to promoting human security. This includes the areas and extent to which governmental policies are assisting or hindering the work of non-governmental agencies such as SEWA. The analysis also looks at how NGOs are working to ensure greater human security among the millions of child workers and those sold to slavery in India.[3]

From human development to human security: Some conceptual issues

The discourse on development, for both scholar and practitioner, has gone through several transformations over the past five decades. Moving

from a strictly economic notion, quantifiable in terms of growth and income, the more recent trend is towards a qualitative holistic notion of development. This is demonstrated in "human development", as facilitated by the United Nations. For a country such as India, the *Human Development Reports* published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) since 1990 have provided important guideposts to refining and redefining the notion of development. Taking its cue from such efforts, India has engaged in what can be described as "a process of enlarging people's choices" (UNDP, 1993: 105).

What does this process entail and how does it ensure holistic human development? On the basis of the notion of three fundamental aspects of human security – life expectancy, literacy and income – countries such as India have developed their own efforts to assess human development. India sees life expectancy or longevity and education as both qualitative and quantitative measures of people's attainments, which contribute to more or less income for them. Furthermore, it is obvious that these outcomes cannot be attained without personal skills as well as access to resources, thus necessitating appropriate public policies and programmes to address health, nutrition, environment, education and so on (Planning Commission, Government of India, 2002). This approach also captures the variegated nuances of the development scenario in a country such as India where people's capabilities are seriously affected by their place of residence (rural/urban), caste and gender.

This integrated perspective also captures the "deprivational perspective", taking into consideration the effects of deprivation in terms of education, access to resources, etc. This perspective includes people's overall well-being (individual and collective), as manifested by social context and the physical environment of security in old age, freedom from violence, a healthy environment, including housing, sanitation, and so on (Planning Commission, Government of India, 2002: 9–10). It thereby addresses the impact on society's overall progress, taking into account all possible factors affecting human development.

The UNDP introduced this perspective more than a decade ago, though it was not country specific. Most notably, it called for a composite perspective that would establish security among "people" and not only among nations (UNDP, 1993). Put in these terms, obtaining security among people is a development or policy priority. In spirit, it follows the core value of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person" (Article 3).[4] In the post–Cold War world, states are in the process of redefining their security priorities. As ideological alliance-building wanes and nations face ethnic turmoil and challenges to economic stability and growth, there is a search

for a broader notion of security. In the 1990s, human security became the centrepiece of discussion among scholars and practitioners of development. In contrast to the traditional definitions and scope of security, in today's world, ''[t]hreats to individual security are not limited to situations of violent conflict'' (Kilgour, 2000). We live in an interdependent world, marked both by increasing transparency and by the resultant vulnerability. Borders are more porous and information is copious and fast flowing, owing to the communications revolution and its offspring, the Internet. This has resulted in many problems that threaten human security. ''These problems include terrorism, transnational organized crime, environmental degradation, famine, drug trafficking and money laundering, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and small arms. The world has changed, some of the greatest threats to civilians now come from non-state actors and go beyond traditional understandings of security'' (Kilgour, 2000).

In a changed world, states have to work with a redefined mandate to create an enabling environment, working in unison with international organizations such as the United Nations and its affiliated agencies such as the World Bank. States will also have to enable self-help groups to achieve their goals by supporting their initiatives. In this context, therefore, security will come to individuals if they have the skills necessary to survive. These in turn will be crucial to states. ''Each nation's primary assets will be its citizens' skills and insights'' (Reich, 1992: 3). This notion includes a greater awareness that people's security plays an important part in global security and stability.

No discussion of human security can be complete without mentioning the contributions of the economist and advocate of human development, the late Mahbub ul Haq. Pioneering the idea through various *Human Development* reports, Haq concluded that human security can be achieved through ''development, not ... through arms'' (Mahbub ul Haq, 1994; cited in Bajpai, 2000: 11). A more succinct definition of human security that will be the premise of this analysis is as follows: ''Human security relates to the protection of the individual's personal safety and freedom from direct and indirect threats of violence. The promotion of human development and good governance, and, when necessary, the collective use of sanctions and force are central to managing human security. States, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other groups in civil society in combination are vital to the prospects of human security'' (Bajpai, 2000: 48). For the purposes of this analysis, the focus will be on how NGOs are working to promote human security in two areas of socio-economic challenge: women in the informal sector; and child labour.

Women's work, NGOs and human security in India:
A case-study of the Self-Employed Women's Association

Although the premise of development and the promotion of human security through NGOs, with the help of the World Bank and governments, is a truism, how is human security achieved in reality? In order to understand and assess the true implications of human security, we have to look at how women's lives are changing and what they are achieving as a result of such endeavours.

India is a country full of contrasts. The constitution encourages gender equality, and there are several laws that seek to end discrimination against women. Yet images of dowry deaths, female infanticide and other "social diseases" present a stark picture of the status of women in India.[5] Gaps in the male–female ratio and gender differences in literacy are often baffling. Hence it is not enough to look at state and national policies. Exploring the work of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in the field might shed more light on how women's lives are being transformed with access to resources, cooperatives, literacy, bank loans and health care.

Doing it on their own with state cooperation: SEWA

The Self-Employed Women's Association is a movement and a trade union formed in 1972 in Ahmedabad in western India to ensure more human security for its members.[6] SEWA is engaged in addressing the challenges that self-employed women face, in rural as well as in urban areas. Since 1972, the membership has grown steadily. According to a recent estimate, SEWA has over 300,000 members throughout India. In Gujarat alone, the number of members exceeds 200,000 (SEWA, 2001: 1). The membership cuts across religions and caste, and includes significant numbers of Muslims and *harijans*.[7] SEWA operates like a trade union and organizes women into cooperatives. It also provides various services such as banking, child care, legal aid and vocational instruction. Although these collectively lead to security in the long run, the primary areas from which security comes are work, access to resources, and training and education. The SEWA model is primarily one of self-governance, but the organization has worked very effectively with state and national governments as well.

SEWA works with home-based producers (for example, weavers, bidi makers and seamstresses) and with vendors and hawkers, who usually have no licence to sell their merchandise. They sell vegetables, fruits and other household items from their carts or temporary sheds and stores.

Some members are service providers, such as manual labourers, agricultural labourers, construction workers, contract labourers, laundry and domestic workers. The members also include rag pickers and workers who gather forest products (SEWA, 1995a).

Over the past three decades, SEWA has had to devise innovative strategies to address the condition of poor self-employed women. Thus, as a trade union, SEWA is different; its main purpose is to mobilize and organize self-employed women into sustainable organizations so that they can promote their collective development. According to a recent estimate, union action has led to an increase in income for members of SEWA: in 1994, 32,794 women earned Rs. 3.9 crores; in 1998, 49,398 women earned Rs. 30.45 crores (SEWA, 1999). In urban areas, union action has often led to the creation of jobs and job stability through local economic organizations such as cooperatives and the SEWA bank.

SEWA and cooperatives

In the rural areas, where self-employed women are particularly vulnerable, SEWA's intervention initially met with resistance, including physical attacks and lawsuits against SEWA organizers. In such an atmosphere, women often suffered job losses (SEWA, 1997: 13). These protests against SEWA, which were mostly led by men, occurred because SEWA's involvement meant that the previous exploitation and extortion could not be continued. Employers were now accountable for their actions, and women were more vocal about their legitimate demands. SEWA confronted such challenges by working closely with rural women involved in the areas of handicrafts, livestock and agriculture. It engaged the women on two fronts: capacity-building and organizing. First, women's skills were diversified. Those who were previously dependent entirely on agricultural work, and therefore faced seasonal and weather-related unemployment, learned other skills such as handicrafts. By diversifying their skills, the women felt more empowered, and they became less vulnerable to the threat of seasonal job loss or dismissal on the whim of employers. Along with skill enhancement, SEWA also worked with the rural women to organize them into local units, thus strengthening their operation and bargaining capacity. The cooperatives that emerged as a result of such endeavours addressed the resources available locally and the needs of the rural people. Thus, through skill-building and organization, SEWA contributed to capacity-building for these women and empowered them to address their needs in a more effective manner.

More recently, SEWA has been focusing on more comprehensive capacity-building strategies for its leaders, by seeking to combine cooperative enterprises with union activities. Based on the challenges that its

members face in the various trades and occupations, this represents an innovative approach, attempting to combine the efforts of SEWA as a union and SEWA as cooperatives. The basic philosophy is simple yet effective: ''While the union mainly concentrates on struggle and cooperatives focus on development, there are elements of struggle and development in the action and activities of both'' (SEWA, 2000: 5). Accordingly, SEWA is conducting several campaigns in the fields of water, forestry, grass-roots research, health, child care, insurance and integrated rural development.[8]

Access to resources: The SEWA bank

Ensuring income remains one of the essential pillars of human security. The lack of assets and working capital is a major obstacle for self-employed women seeking to boost their income potential. The SEWA bank, established in 1974, provides new alternatives for women, offering loans at affordable rates of interest. Nationalized banks were intended to help self-employed women, but often lacked compassion and empathy, and did not understand their problems. Moreover, the women, being illiterate and ignorant of the nuances of a sophisticated banking system, felt intimidated by formal, nationalized banks and their staff. SEWA leaders, trained to work with such clients, were more effective in inspiring poor, self-employed women to approach the bank for loans and advice (SEWA, n.d.).

In essence, the bank seeks to generate human and work security through an integrated approach:
- it ensures financial discipline, resulting in improved repayment rates;
- it expands poor women's options and increases their resources;
- it ensures economic growth;
- it helps women's businesses grow;
- it serves as a form of security;
- women are able to borrow money for emergencies;
- women's social and community status rises.

The organizers of SEWA mobilize and recruit members using several innovative strategies. In some areas, they operate a ''mobile bank'', whereby the organizers visit local areas on scheduled days to conduct banking services, thus enabling those who cannot travel to the bank, owing to lack of time or transportation, to save and borrow through the SEWA bank.[9]

Alliance with the government and other NGOs and international organizations: The DWCRA Project

Despite its remarkable success at the grass-roots level, SEWA is mindful of the need for policy change and for resources from the government as

well. Although grass-roots activism and awareness of women's groups and movements such as SEWA have gone a long way in empowering women, it is my contention that, in developing countries, governmental intervention to supplement that process is a necessary part of empowerment. The literature suggests that empowerment has to be attained by women, it cannot be given; however, given the nuances of developing countries, a combined effort by women themselves, local agencies, state and national governments, and international organizations produces empowerment in a more holistic sense.[10] SEWA has made several efforts to respond to that, so has the government in India. Some of the projects it has undertaken highlight this phenomenon.

The Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) is a programme initiated by central government under the Integrated Rural Development Programmes. In the state of Gujarat, where SEWA is located, DWCRA was implemented in 1988. The programme seeks to ensure greater opportunities for self-employed women by providing funding from the government and international organizations and by using the resources of SEWA (both leaders and members). Several projects are being carried out under this joint programme. One such project is the Santalpur Regional Water Supply Scheme in Banaskantha district, launched in collaboration with the state government and the Indo-Dutch bilateral programme to secure water, health and sanitation. When SEWA became involved in the programme, it introduced many strategies to generate income and sustained work for the women, who would otherwise not have had that opportunity. The employment was based on the women's skills, and SEWA became a conduit to channel them (SEWA, 1995b).

Since 1983, SEWA has been at the forefront of the movement to raise the status of home-based work at the national and international levels (see Datta, 2003: 363–365). Inspired by such outcomes, SEWA has worked closely with organizations such as the National Centre for Labour and HomeNet to implement programmes to enhance the security of poor, self-employed women. In addition, SEWA has worked with many international and national organizations. For example, it has collaborated with UNICEF on water projects and with Women in the Informal Economy, Globalizing and Organizing to disseminate knowledge that will help policy makers assess self-employed workers' situation in the informal sectors (SEWA, 2000: 14).

NGOs and child labour in India

Child labour persists in India for a variety of reasons. The poverty of millions of families, including farming families, makes it almost impera-

tive that children work to bring home some food and sustenance. Although child labour is a centuries-old phenomenon worldwide, its prevalence despite legislative and social pressures, particularly in South Asia and other developing regions, remains a big challenge.

On June 17, 1999, when the member states of the ILO unanimously voted to adopt Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, the world community made a commitment to stop the suffering of millions of children. It was recognised that ending the commercial exploitation of children must be one of humankind's top priorities. It was accepted as a cause that demands immediate attention and immediate action.

   Since then many governments, organizations, and individuals have stepped forward to meet this challenge. Governments have ratified Convention 182 at the fastest rate ever for an international treaty. NGOs, trade unions, and some businesses have launched innovative programs to protect children. Ordinary people have readily given whatever they could to help this cause.[11]

International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour

The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) works with various NGOs focusing on, among other issues, children's rights and women's rights, education or health. In its quest to eliminate child labour, IPEC has adopted a multisectoral approach that includes governments, employers' and workers' organizations, and civil society. NGOs are often key players in this effort.

   Recent efforts by the UNDP in conjunction with NGOs demonstrate the need for joint action. International organizations such as the UNDP can provide the financial resources and NGOs can provide the necessary access and ability to run the programmes, with their local roots and cultural understanding of the situations. One such programme in India is the School Works Programme, which is administered through the UNDP, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Catholic Relief Services. It has targeted 69,000 children to give them access to education. The hope is that access to education will reduce child labour. "In FY 2000, USAID obligated $1 million over a period of three years to UNDP to oversee small grants to NGOs working to get out-of-school children in the 6–14 age group employed in agriculture, industry or in the home back into school. Activities focus particularly on the girl child, children of migrant labor working in the brick kilns, and street children living on railway platforms, in squatter colonies, or in red light districts" (see Table 21.1).[12]

   It is significant that, during the 1992–1997 period, 120 action programmes and 68 mini programmes were implemented in India with an overall budget of US$5.13 million. These programmes covered about 100 NGOs, the five largest trade unions of the country, employers' organ-

Table 21.1 Integration between USAID, the UNDP and NGOs

NGO partner	Location	Grant manager	Grant amount (US$)	No. of children reached
CINI Asha	West Bengal	UNDP	300,000	4,890
Vidhayak Sansad	Andhra Pradesh	UNDP	300,000	3,500
Dr. Reddy's Foundation	Andhra Pradesh	UNDP	100,000	750
CREDA	Uttar Pradesh	UNDP	300,000	5,250

Source: Excerpted from the USAID website – http://www.usaid.gov/in/UsaidInIndia/Activitieschildlob.htm, accessed 1 December 2003.

izations and government bodies such as the V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, the Central Board of Workers Education and the National Institute of Rural Development.[13]

The South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude

The South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude (SACCS) began in the 1980s as "the first civil society initiative to fight against child slavery and child labour". Officially, it has freed more than 55,000 children from slavery. As part of its direct action programmes, it rescues children from bondage and liberates them through education, training and rehabilitation. It has also coordinated indirect action such as the Global March Against Child Labour.[14] SACCS therefore works as an NGO, coordinating with other NGOs, trade unions, human rights organizations, and so on. It currently networks with more than 400 organizations in South Asia.[15]

Among the notable campaigns that are ongoing under the leadership of SACCS are the Global Campaign on Education, the School Campaign, the Fair Play Campaign and the Campaign against Domestic Child Labour. These are all very effective and innovative programmes. Working for a Global Campaign on Education, and working with the Global March Against Child Labour (see below for a fuller discussion on the Global March), Education International, teachers' unions and OXFAM, SACCS developed an NGO initiative spread over 180 countries to persuade governments to ensure education for all. After a few initial failures, this international coalition has made 2015 the year by which all governments are to make this possible for their citizens.[16] In February 2001, this network organized the World Congress on Education, attended by representatives from 33 countries. Indian leaders such as former prime ministers I. K. Gujral and V. P. Singh and Union Minister Maneka Gandhi decided to mount pressure on governments to increase spending

on education. (The proposal was for at least 6 per cent of GNP and 8 per cent of the overseas development budget of developed countries to be allocated to education). At that meeting, Kailash Satyarthi, chairperson of the Global March Against Child Labour, said, "We are here to reaffirm our collective commitment to millions of nameless, faceless exiles of our civilisation. Our very presence, as civil society leaders and educators, is an open announcement to the world that we are not ready to wait any more. We want education now."[17] The spirit of cooperation among the various organizations is the fundamental premise of the action network founded by SACCS.[18]

Other initiatives of SACCS include working with village communities to make villages free of child labour. This programme, called the *Bal Mitra Gram* (Child Friendly Village), now covers 74 villages in six states – Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab & Haryana, Maharashtra and Jharkhand. Essentially, the goal of this programme is to involve local communities in activities that seek to remove child labour from the villages, get the children into school and involve children and child welfare in the decision process of village bodies such as the *panchayats.* Health education is a major part of this enterprise.[19]

Global March

Global March is a worldwide movement, started in 1998, to raise awareness of the problem of child slavery and child labour. Headquartered in New Delhi, Global March lobbies for policies to promote education for every child. It networks with other organizations (see above), and influenced the adoption of ILO Convention 182 in 1999. This convention is a very good example of the effectiveness of NGO action in association with international organizations such as the ILO.

The nature and extent of the areas of child labour that this convention and the approved instruments cover are substantial. According to the introductory paragraph of the convention report,

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization, having been convened at Geneva by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, and having met in its 87th Session on 1 June 1999, and considering the need to adopt new instruments for the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, as the main priority for national and international action, including international cooperation and assistance, to complement the Convention and the Recommendation concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, 1973, which remain fundamental instruments on child labour, and considering that the effective elimination of the worst forms of child labour requires immediate and comprehensive action, taking into account the importance of free basic education and the need to remove the children concerned from all such work and

to provide for their rehabilitation and social integration while addressing the needs of their families, and recalling the resolution concerning the elimination of child labour adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 83rd Session in 1996, and recognizing that child labour is to a great extent caused by poverty and that the long-term solution lies in sustained economic growth leading to social progress, in particular poverty alleviation and universal education, and recalling the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 20 November 1989, and recalling the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 86th Session in 1998, and recalling that some of the worst forms of child labour are covered by other international instruments, in particular the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, and the United Nations Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, 1956, and having decided upon the adoption of certain proposals with regard to child labour, which is the fourth item on the agenda of the session, and having determined that these proposals shall take the form of an international Convention; adopts this seventeenth day of June of the year one thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine, the following Convention, which may be cited as the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999.[20]

On the eve of the 2002 World Cup football games held in Japan and Korea, the Child Labour News Service, a news service of the Global March consortium, sent out an e-mail to its subscribers. This e-mail, titled "FOOTBALL DREAMS STITCHED WITH CHILDREN'S HANDS", contained disturbing news about children being used to make footballs in India, Pakistan and China. Even though the Federation of International Football Associations (FIFA) has entered into contracts with many sporting goods companies to stop the practice, child labour and unfair labour practices continue.

The report by Global March found that "[t]he hands of children are still employed to stitch footballs, even at the price of their education and often their health. Adult football stitchers are still receiving less than the minimum wage, even though the footballs they stitch are sold for that much more. Women still face discrimination in wages, often earning five rupees less than men, since women are more likely to be home-based stitchers. A decided lack of freedom to organize and restrictions on personal freedom still pervade the multi-billion dollar football industry."[21] The report was made possible by the ILO-established monitoring system in Pakistan and India where soccer balls are made, in the Sialkot region and in Punjab.

"These efforts are still insufficient to lead every child away from stitching footballs and into schools. The actual labour conditions do not reflect the FIFA agreement with the sporting goods companies. Child labour is still common and other labour standards are still grossly vio-

lated,'' said Kailash Satyarthi, chairperson of the Global March Against Child Labour. ''We sincerely hope that this year's World Cup, already dedicated to children in a joint effort by UNICEF and FIFA, will present an opportunity for civil society groups, trade unions, governments, international organizations and the sporting goods industry to work together in establishing a reliable and transparent monitoring system on labour conditions. We hope that FIFA and the sporting goods industry will take the leadership to make football truly a fair game for all.'' Such efforts will go a long way in ensuring, first, awareness of the issue and then, it is hoped, action on the part of consumers and policy makers alike.

Rugmark

Rugmark is an international trade mark and labelling system that seeks to promote the sale of carpets and rugs made without the use of child labour. It also rehabilitates and educates the children who are freed from child labour. Initiated in 1998, Rugmark has offices in India, Nepal, Germany, the United States, Luxembourg and Canada. Rugmark's success depends on a voluntary inspections system by Rugmark inspectors. There is little that Rugmark can do about loom owners who do not allow inspections. According to executive director Major-General Sondhi, ''[i]t is an all voluntary exercise by which consumers, importers, exporters, loom owners and weavers join hands with Rugmark to eliminate child labour from the carpet industry. Each motivates the other down the line to cooperate with Rugmark. Therefore there is need for greater effort from NGOs in developed countries to make consumers, including the importers, aware of their roles in the task of restoring childhood to child carpet weavers'' (Sondhi, 1998: 2).

Discussion and conclusion

Despite the extensive range of NGO activities, several questions remain. How effective are NGOs in fostering human security? For instance, in spite of its commitment and the growing membership of SEWA since 1972, what is the net worth of SEWA?

This analysis has demonstrated that, in order to promote overall human security, grass-roots activism needs to be integrated with policy changes at the state, national and international levels. SEWA is silently changing the lives of thousands of women in India, and also inspiring similar efforts in countries such as Turkey and South Africa. The kind of security that SEWA is creating for self-employed women involves access to resources,

capital, knowledge and skill-building, use of technology, health care, savings for capital and for security, and literacy. This is a slow, long-term process of organizing and pooling resources – whatever little these women have, coupled with resources from the state and from national and international organizations.

In order to assess whether and to what extent SEWA is generating an increased sense of economic and overall security for its members, we can look at several issues. By its very nature, SEWA is an NGO, attempting to work with members and with local, state and national governments, as well as with international agencies, to address its goals of full employment and self-reliance. "Full employment is employment that provides work security, income security, food security and social security – at least health care, child care, insurance and shelter – to women and their families" (SEWA, 2000: 3). Such employment generates self-reliance, leading to increased bargaining power and more control over decision-making.

One can question the net worth of SEWA in realizing these goals for its members. According to one study of the impact of the SEWA bank, even though the outcome is not overwhelming, it was estimated that, at the household level, membership in, borrowing from and saving with the SEWA bank have a positive effect in terms of generating more security for SEWA bank members (Chen and Snodgrass, 1999: 1–2). The benefits included higher incomes, more diversified income sources (even though limited), home ownership, consumption of healthy foods and increased ability to cope with shocks. The borrowing or saving did not significantly increase fixed assets or related "transactional relationships".

One might argue that SEWA has not yet had the significant impact that micro-finance services have had on the aggregate data. None the less, SEWA has had positive effects, which are stronger in some areas than in others. These include improvements in housing services, consumption patterns and enrolment rates. Most significantly, the study indicated that the net secondary enrolment rates were higher than the national average (Chen and Snodgrass, 1999: 27–28).

Thus, SEWA's work continues to bring greater security to its members. SEWA's work definitely affects the ability of its members to cope with the challenges of poverty and its related obstacles. Its strategies include capturing the potential and skill of poor women and organizing them to bring about change. This simple and integrated strategy of "capacity-building" is what makes SEWA effective. And, because SEWA is able to address issues that challenge women's human security (income for food, health, literacy for security and further skill enhancement), its qualitative impact on the lives of its members is enormous. The SEWA experiment has demonstrated that it has grown to accommodate new challenges and to address the changing needs of it members.

This philosophy of generating human security is best summed up in "SEWA's TEN QUESTIONS".[22] These are simple, yet address all the basic issues that poor women face, in urban as well as in rural areas. The questions are:

- Is there an increase in employment of our members?
- Is there an increase in the income of our members?
- Do our members get nutritive food?
- Was their health taken care of?
- Were their children taken care of?
- Do they have proper housing conditions?
- Is there an increase in their assets?
- Is there an increase in their organized strength?
- Have our members taken leadership roles?
- Are the members becoming individually and collectively more self-reliant?

Arguably, all of these components satisfy the definition of human security. SEWA is very active in generating educational and training opportunities for its members, even though these are not explicitly highlighted. SEWA Academy and Video SEWA are two very good examples of SEWA's commitment to literacy and to disseminating skill enhancement through peer education. Reports also show that SEWA has contributed to a rise in school enrolment of children from families that are SEWA members (Chen and Snodgrass, 1999).

Likewise, in order to assess the impact of child labour NGOs in promoting human security, one has to identify certain aspects that can be said to constitute human security. For instance, NGOs such as SACCS and its related initiatives are engaged in freeing thousands of children who have been working in gruelling conditions. Beyond addressing the mere indignity and appalling conditions that rob millions of children of their childhood, these NGOs have taken up the single greatest challenge that these children face, i.e. access to education. On 28 November 2001, the Lok Sabha (lower house) of the Indian parliament passed the 93rd Constitutional Amendment Bill, which ensures that education for children in the 6–14 age group is a fundamental right. This bill, long overdue, had been pending since 1997; it was finally passed by 346–0 after a debate lasting almost four hours in the Lok Sabha. According to Kailash Satyarthi, chairperson of SACCS, "This is certainly a victory for children as well as for hundreds of social organizations, mass movement organizations, teachers unions, conscientious citizens, and active men and women of letters."[23] The NGO influence on the passage of the bill is truly noteworthy. Although there are still some concerns about whether and how to implement such a law, the role of NGOs in leading the movement is commendable. In addition, in true participatory democratic

spirit, many NGOs, such as Child Relief and You (CRY), had started online petitions to put pressure on the government to pass the bill.

Since 1992, numerous programmes supported by UN agencies aimed at eliminating child labour and ensuring the empowerment of children through education have been implemented through NGOs. By 1997, 121 agreements on action programmes through the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) had been signed. Of these, most were implemented through NGOs. NGOs are effective in such action programmes because they have direct access to the children and the areas in which reforms are to be implemented, and are thus best suited to identify and decide on the needs of the community. The purview of such programmes has made the work of NGOs essential. For example, ''the action programs focused on the setting up of nonformal education centers, drawing local working children into these centers, and often supplementing the diet of the children, providing health care, and conducting awareness-raising campaigns for the children, their parents, the community, and employers'' (Chanda and Datta, 2000: 184). The empowerment that occurs through such programmes leads to human security that may not be measurable in numbers alone. A qualitative change occurs in the children, in their families and in their communities.

In order for child labour to be considered a violation of human security principles, it has to be established that such practices violate the basic human rights of children. International instruments such as the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child form the foundation of children's rights and other legislation that seeks to address the issue of child labour and how to eliminate it. Such instruments, together with government intervention and support and direction from NGOs and agencies such as the ILO and UNICEF, have been successful in many such projects.[24]

To be sure, the importance of NGOs in addressing child labour has become more crucial because the Indian government has put in place several laws and clauses that seek to eliminate child labour. For instance, there is a stated commitment in the constitution to ''endeavour'' to ensure ''free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years'' (Article 45).[25] It is noteworthy, however, that this provision is under ''Directive Principles of State Policy'' and the language of the constitution is that the state shall ''endeavour''. So it did not have the force or effectiveness of a fundamental right for a long time. Recent efforts, however, such as the Child Labour Act of 1986, the proposed Elimination of Child Labour programme of 1994, and the more recent compulsory education bill have addressed the issue more directly.[26]

As already mentioned, joint efforts by several NGOs and international

organizations are also very effective. The M. Venkatarangaiah Foundation began a project to eliminate child labour in some village areas of Andhra Pradesh that focuses on getting parents to understand the need for formal education. It works with the IPEC programme of the ILO and has so far ensured that 85 villages are free of child labour. It has also enabled all children below the age of 11 in 400 villages to go to school. This model has been so successful that it is being replicated elsewhere in India. It works because of the joint effort of funding from IPEC and implementation by Global March. It also works because it seeks to empower the actors themselves to recognize the importance of education and the elimination of child labour, thereby enhancing the long-term human security of the children, their families and their communities.[27]

Despite such positive trends, the challenge of child labour continues to threaten human security prospects in India. Poverty, caste-based discrimination, gender inequity and lack of access to education continue to draw more and more children to work. Adding to this the fact that half of the nation's children suffer from malnutrition[28] makes the challenge of eradicating child labour and fostering a healthy, happy future for children more compelling and desperately urgent.

To sum up, when a vegetable seller, often harassed by the police and subject to extortion by middlemen, can transform her life by learning video technology and making videos to engage in peer teaching, learning and empowerment, that is an enormous step towards creating and generating human security. When a SEWA bank leader exudes self-esteem and confidence because she has enabled her husband to give up alcohol and pursue a paid job, that is the success story in a social relationship in which traditional boundaries of gender prevent such camaraderie between spouses.[29] SEWA is thus generating human security that transcends gender boundaries and transforms gender relationships, contributing to a lasting sense of security for both men and women.

Likewise, when 12-year-old Iqbal Mashi, a bonded labourer freed by a human rights organization, was able to tell reporters, ''now I am not scared of the factory owner ... He is scared of me'', it was a sure sign of his freedom. Even though Mashi is from Pakistan, his sentiment resonated through India and elsewhere, reflecting the will of child slaves and bonded labour worldwide. Tragically, he was killed upon his return to Pakistan, but this incident, along with an overall sense of commitment to eliminate child labour, gave renewed energy to the movement in which hundreds of other children, some even from far-off countries, joined (Kielburger and Major, 1998: 2 ff). Subsequently, movements such as the Global March spearheaded marches to end child labour throughout the world. The commitment to human security is clear in such efforts. They

are aiming to end violence among peoples and to promote a sense of security among them in unison with the state and international agencies such as the ILO and other UN-affiliated bodies.

Notes

1. http://www.usaid.gov/in/UsaidInIndia/Activitieschildlob.htm, accessed 1 December 2003.
2. For a fuller discussion and a list of several of these and other UN conventions and instruments, see Verma et al. (1996: Chap. 4).
3. I appreciated the opportunity to meet members of SEWA and also Kailash Satyarthi, of the South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude in New Delhi, and Maj. Gen. Sondhi (Retd) of Rugmark, New Delhi. Dr. Rehman of the National Labour Institute very generously shared resources on child labour statistics when I visited the Institute in Noida. The insight I received during these visits was testimony to the power of NGOs working in concert with government and also with international agencies to make human security a reality. Travel grants from Monmouth University in the form of the Stanley Fellowship and Grant in Aid for Creativity provided partial financial support.
4. http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html.
5. For an overview of some of the ills associated with mistreatment of women and the repercussions, see Thakur (1995: 27–35).
6. A more concise version of SEWA's strategies and policies appeared previously in Datta (2000b). A more detailed version of this article is Datta (2003). Some of the content and discussion in the sections of this chapter on SEWA are drawn from these articles.
7. *Harijans* are the members of the lowest castes, also known as the Untouchables. Mahatma Gandhi called them *harijans*, meaning the children of God.
8. For details of these and other projects, see SEWA (2000).
9. A working study of the effectiveness of the SEWA bank is a rich source of information and provides a sound assessment of the bank. This study was conducted by Martha Alter Chen and Donald Snodgrass for the USAID project "Assessing the Impact of Micro-enterprise Services" (AIMS), in cooperation with other organizations. The August 1999 report is available at http://www.mip.org/pdfs/aims/india.pdf (accessed 4 June 2003). See page 5 of this document for some of the innovative strategies that SEWA organizers use to mobilize more savings from SEWA members.
10. For a discussion of this multi-level perspective, see Datta and Kornberg (2002: Chap. 1).
11. Kailash Satyarthi, chairperson, Global March Against Child Labour, http://globalmarch.org/worstformsreport/foreward.html, accessed 1 December 2003.
12. http://www.usaid.gov/in/UsaidInIndia/Activitieschildlob.htm, accessed 1 December 2003.
13. http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/newdelhi/child/ipecpast.htm.
14. http://saccsweb.org.in/, accessed 1 December 2003.
15. http://saccsweb.org.in/organization.php3, accessed 1 December 2003.
16. http://saccsweb.org.in/ogc-gce.php3, accessed 1 December 2003.
17. Ibid.
18. I thank Kailash Satyarthi for explaining the work of SACCS when I visited his office in New Delhi in 1998. Under the fearless leadership of Satyarthi, who has made freeing children from bondage his "mantra", the work of this NGO is fascinating.
19. http://saccsweb.org.in/bmg.php3, accessed 1 December 2003.

20. http://www.globalmarch.org/convention-campaign/C-182-English.pdf. accessed 1 December 2003.
21. Quote from e-mail report, received on 24 May 2002.
22. These Ten Questions are on the walls of the SEWA building and serve as constant reinforcements of their goals. They also appear in SEWA publications.
23. http://www.campaignforeducation.org/_html/2001-news/enews-12-06/frameset.shtml.
24. For a fuller discussion, see Datta (2000a: 283–303).
25. For details, see http://www.indiatogether.org/education/const2001.htm.
26. For a fuller discussion, see Datta (2000a: 288–291); and http://www.advocateskerala.com/government_policies.htm, accessed 18 July 2002.
27. http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/ngos/, accessed 23 May 2002.
28. http://www.globalmarch.org/cl-around-the-world/world-enough-children.php3, accessed 1 December 2003.
29. During my visit to SEWA in 1998, and in subsequent interaction and correspondence, the life experiences of these and other SEWA members have demonstrated the high degree of security that SEWA has created for them.

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Part VIII

"9/11", Afghanistan and South Asia

22

Post-Taliban Afghanistan and South Asian security

Samina Ahmed

South Asia remains at risk from an unstable and insecure post-Taliban Afghanistan. In the Afghan capital, Kabul, the presence of international peacekeepers and the deterrent of US military action have resulted in relative stability. Even in the capital, however, that peace is fragile. Frequent bomb blasts and even assassination attempts against leading Afghan officials, including President Hamid Karzai, underscore the security threats in a country that has yet to emerge from conflict. Outside Kabul, rival warlords strive to increase their political and military clout in post-Taliban Afghanistan and refuse to share the economic spoils of peace with the central government. Widespread lawlessness and factional infighting, moreover, could transform into an all-out civil war that would enable terrorists once again to operate with impunity from Afghan soil.

The US-led war against terrorism and the presence of the US-led military coalition have prevented this internal tussle for power from assuming more threatening dimensions. The external, in particular the US, military presence also prevents South Asian state-sponsored actors or sub-state extremists from using Afghan territory as a base for operations and as a sanctuary, but their activities are unlikely to cease so long as anarchy prevails in Afghanistan. South Asian security will also remain vulnerable to an Afghan war economy that remains dependent on smuggling, drug trafficking and arms peddling (Rubin, 2000: 1790). At the same time, competition between India and Pakistan over access to power

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and influence in Afghanistan could not only heighten their bilateral tensions but also further destabilize the Afghan polity.

Other regional states, including Iran, China and the Central Asian Republics, also influence developments in Afghanistan, with these cross-border linkages, in turn, affecting South Asian security. Russia, moreover, continues to play a role in the region both directly and through its influence over its former Central Asian republics. Since 11 September 2001, however, it is US policy toward Afghanistan that is shaping both Afghanistan's and South Asia's security environment. US policy options and preferences will also continue to guide the response of the international community to the challenges and threats posed to regional security and international peace by an unstable Afghanistan.

Whereas continuing conflict in Afghanistan will undermine South Asian security, a stable Afghanistan would promote regional stability. A secure Afghanistan would reduce the threat of terrorism to South Asia, prevent regional tensions and rivalries from escalating to dangerous heights, and create new opportunities for trade and commerce between South Asia and its resource-rich Central Asian neighbours. Assessing post-Taliban Afghanistan's impact on the South Asian region, this chapter will identify measures to promote Afghan and hence South Asian peace and security.

Post-Taliban Afghanistan: Domestic dimensions

One of the immediate objectives of the US-led military operations in Afghanistan was the removal of the Taliban regime, and the US-led coalition was quickly to achieve that goal. Mullah Omar's Taliban clique, abandoned by its main regional ally (Pakistan), deserted by its Afghan partners and facing the overwhelming firepower of the US-led coalition, soon crumbled. With the Taliban in disarray, the international community moved swiftly to prevent an internal tussle for power: through the Bonn process, it created an Afghan Interim Administration (AIA), headed by Chairman Hamid Karzai. Backed by an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the Interim Administration succeeded in asserting its control over the Afghan capital, Kabul.

The US-led coalition in Afghanistan, however, has found it far more difficult to achieve its medium- and longer-term objectives: to eradicate terrorism through the political, social and economic reconstruction of post-Taliban Afghanistan. Having helped form the AIA, the Bonn process, which sets the guidelines for Afghanistan's political and economic recovery and reconstruction, has faltered.

The Afghan Interim Administration failed to extend its reach beyond

Kabul for a number of reasons. These included the division of power and responsibilities within the administration itself. Although the administration had replaced a discredited and defeated Taliban regime, the international community's failure to reflect Afghanistan's political, ethnic and regional diversity in the composition of the AIA undermined its domestic credibility. In fact, the threat to the security of the post-Taliban political order had begun when the United States failed to rein in its Northern Alliance allies, who moved into Kabul and moved swiftly to assert their political clout. With the support of their international benefactors, Tajiks from the Shura-i-Nazar, the Panjshiri faction of the Jamiat-i-Islami, then consolidated their political power in the Interim Administration, undermining Kabul's authority from the very start.

Heading the Interim Administration, Hamid Karzai, a southern Pushtun, represented the majority Afghan ethnic community. Many Pushtuns, however, believed that the Panjshiri trio, Foreign Minister Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, Defence Minister Marshal Mohammed Fahim and Interior Minister Younis Qanooni, controlled the AIA (International Crisis Group, 2002a: 10–11). The overwhelming representation of the Tajik-dominated Shura-i-Nazar in the Interim Administration even alienated their Northern Alliance allies, including Uzbek commander Rashid Dostum and the Hazara-led Hizb-i-Wahdat. The result of this alienation was an upsurge in ethnic and regional tensions and the refusal of many powerful actors, including Ismail Khan, the governor of Herat, and Dostum, to accept Kabul's authority.

The US military presence and the hopes of a redistribution of power, however, kept tensions under control as the Bonn process moved toward its second landmark, the formation of a transitional administration. Guided by the United States, however, the United Nations also faltered in successfully meeting its next challenge, the creation of an Afghan transitional administration with more domestic legitimacy than the Interim Administration.

In June 2002, an emergency Loya Jirga (the traditional tribal Grand Council) selected a Transitional Administration. In its 18-month tenure, this Transitional Administration was expected to transform the political landscape of Afghanistan, helping to reunite the country and to bolster the peace through good governance and an extension of the state's reach and authority. The Transitional Administration was also to prepare the constitutional and political framework of the post-Taliban state by end-2003, and then transfer power in mid-2004 to an elected government.

The very fact that every significant regional and ethnic actor had chosen to participate in the emergency Loya Jirga meeting in June 2002 reflected their hopes that the new government would redress some of the imbalances of the Interim Administration. The process of selecting dele-

gates for the emergency Loya Jirga, however, raised concerns that the Transitional Administration selected by the Loya Jirga would be neither representative nor accountable. Pushtuns were suspicious that the Panjshiri ministers in the AIA would manipulate the process to retain power at the bidding of the United States and with the assent of the United Nations. Leaders and warlords within and without the AIA, including General Rashid Dostum, former President Burhanuddin Rabbani and pro-US Pushtun military commanders, were anxious to ensure that the composition of the Transitional Administration reflected their interests (Rashid, 2002).

The Loya Jirga and its aftermath have, however, served only to heighten regional and ethnic tensions, thus undermining political stability in post-Taliban Afghanistan. The process itself lacked transparency, with many delegates arbitrarily added to the list of participants at the very last minute, and Loya Jirga representatives were even threatened by Shura-i-Nazar-dominated security forces within the tent to rubber-stamp a new administration (International Crisis Group, 2002b: 3–4). The international community's failure to prevent these abuses and its subsequent acquiescence in a political arrangement that continues to favour the Shura-i-Nazar have undermined the legitimacy of the Transitional Administration. In fact, the administration in Kabul closely resembles its predecessor. With the "power ministries" of Defence, Foreign Affairs and the Interior controlled either directly or indirectly by the Panjshiri trio – Fahim, Abdullah and Qanooni – many Pushtuns consider President Hamid Karzai to be powerless and thus incapable of protecting the interests of Pushtuns.

Subsequent events, including the assassination of an influential Pushtun representative, Vice President Haji Abdul Qadir, have only reinforced Pushtun distrust of the Transitional Administration. If there is unrest in Pushtun-dominated eastern and southern Afghanistan, regional leaders in the north and the west are also alienated by their underrepresentation within the Transitional Administration. As a result, Ismail Khan and General Dostum are not inclined to accept Kabul's writ by disarming their militias and sharing the proceeds of considerable customs revenues with Kabul.

The Transitional Administration thus faces multiple challenges. Alienated ethnic actors, in particular the Pushtuns, contest the Administration's legitimacy. Powerful Afghan warlords continue to control their own territories. At the same time, factional infighting, lawlessness and absence of the rule of law undermine the prospects of political and social reconstruction. In a bankrupt country, where the only hope for recovery and reconstruction is external assistance, project implementation is also severely hampered by insecurity. The slow pace of recovery and recon-

struction has, in turn, adversely affected political and social reconciliation in post-Taliban Afghanistan.

Afghanistan and South Asian security

The political impasse in Afghanistan closely resembles the period of violent internecine fighting that resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths, destroying the vestiges of state authority and control in the 1990s. Then, as now, a Tajik minority had obtained power in Kabul through external assistance. Reneging on the bargain reached with other stakeholders, the Rabbani government had attempted to retain power by the use of force, but its writ was soon restricted to the capital and some peripheral Tajik-dominated regions. The crisis of legitimacy remained unresolved after the Taliban militia ousted the Tajiks and reimposed Pushtun control. From 1996 onwards, the anti-Pushtun Uzbek, Tajik and Hazara opposition tried unsuccessfully to oust the Taliban with the support of external backers until the Taliban's defeat by the US-led military coalition.

As in the past, the outcome of the ongoing tussle over political power and economic resources in Afghanistan has security implications for its neighbourhood. Although the presence of the United States military and its allies currently deters present and potential spoilers in Afghanistan from ousting the minority-dominated Kabul administration by force, the international community's reluctance to extend its security presence beyond Kabul has emboldened numerous sub-state challengers, ranging from warlords to bandits. Should the fragile cold peace unravel and an all-out civil war resume, the conflict within Afghanistan will have grave repercussions on South Asian security. The Taliban had given sanctuary and support to anti-US terrorists such as the al-Qaida leadership and cadres. The Taliban had also provided safe havens and patronage to a range of South Asian sub-state actors, ranging from Kashmiris to Pakistani Sunni extremists. The ousting of the Taliban and ongoing US military operations have deprived these South Asian extremists of military training grounds, a base of operations and a sanctuary from their state or sub-state opponents. Should the violence and lawlessness in Afghanistan assume threatening dimensions, these South Asian extremists will benefit from the absence of an effective Afghan state authority.

The absence of effective state authority beyond Kabul has also proved a boon for Afghanistan's war economy. Since the Afghan Soviet war years, various Afghan factions have used the proceeds of a lucrative drugs and arms trade to finance and arm themselves against their adversaries. If the Transitional Administration or its successor fails to extend its authority over the territory of the state, local warlords and militia

commanders will continue to use the narcotics and arms trade to finance their bid for power. Ironically, the ousting of the Taliban has re-invigorated the Afghan war economy.

Although the Taliban had not destroyed opium and heroin stockpiles, they had successfully enforced a ban on poppy cultivation in 1997–1998. Their ousting has resulted in a resumption of opium production under the protection of various Afghan warlords, even within the territories controlled by the Transitional Administration's allies. According to the United Nations, Afghanistan produced between 1,900 and 2,700 metric tons of raw opium in 2002, an estimate that is considered conservative by independent observers.[1] Production in 2003 was expected to rise even further, reaching 3,400 tons, back to the levels of the 1990s. This drug trade and other sources of illegal income, including smuggling, will help Afghan commanders to expand their private militias, empowering them even further against a weak central government.

The illicit Afghan trade in arms and drugs as well as Afghan smuggling of licit items have fuelled crime and violence in South Asia for decades. South Asian sub-state extremists have benefited from easy access to arms from Afghanistan, enabling them to challenge their domestic rivals and state authority. The Afghan arms and drugs trade and smuggling crimi-nalize politics in South Asia, even as they deprive state authorities of customs and trade revenues. The flow of narcotics from Afghanistan has also resulted in increased drug use. Continued instability in Afghanistan will only serve to strengthen its war economy further and to undermine South Asian security. Should the internal tussle for power escalate in Afghanistan, its near and distant neighbours such as Pakistan, India and Iran will also be encouraged to intervene in Afghan affairs, motivated by the dual goals of expanding their influence and undermining the standing of their regional rivals. This tussle for power and influence will have re-percussions on both Afghan security and regional stability.

Regional imperatives

Pakistan's intervention in Afghanistan pre-dates the Taliban interlude. Relations between the two states have oscillated between diplomatic correctness and outright hostility since Pakistan's independence. Afghan-istan's refusal to recognize the Durand Line as the international border with its newly independent southern neighbour and Afghan irredentist claims over the Pushtun-majority territories in the bordering Pakistani provinces of Baluchistan and the North West Frontier had resulted in re-taliatory Pakistani intervention in Afghanistan's internal affairs (Dupree, 1994: 491–492). Since the mid-1970s, for instance, Pakistan supported

anti-Kabul dissents and in the 1980s, in concert with the United States, it backed a proxy war against the Soviet-supported Afghan regime.

Pakistan and its regional rival, India, also used Afghan territory as one of the many venues to conduct their mutual war of attrition. Talking advantage of Pakistan's strained relations with Afghanistan, India was quick to establish cordial ties with Kabul. Both Pakistan and India also used their external alliances in their tussle for influence over Afghanistan. Allied to the United States in the Cold War, Pakistan successfully persuaded the United States to distance itself from Afghanistan. India's Cold War ally, the Soviet Union, had its own strategic interests in Afghanistan, bordering on its soft southern belt.

Afghanistan's strategic location and great power imperatives acquired a new dimension in the 1980s when Pakistan assumed a front-line role in the US war of attrition against the Soviet-supported government in Kabul and against Soviet forces on Afghan soil. India, for its part, was less averse to the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and far more concerned about the military and political rewards reaped by its Pakistani adversary in return for services rendered to the United States.

The rivalry between India and Pakistan in Afghanistan impinged more directly on their bilateral relations after the Taliban emerged as the dominant political actor in Afghanistan in the mid-1990s. Pakistan had played a major role in bringing the Taliban to power, motivated by the desire to extend its influence over Afghanistan. For Islamabad, the ascendance of the Taliban meant the transformation of Afghanistan from a traditionally hostile state to a valuable strategic ally. Pushtun irredentism was no longer a threat since the Taliban were beholden to their Pakistani benefactors. Although the Taliban represented Pushtun resurgence, their Islamic ideology countered the earlier Pushtun emphasis on cross-border ethnic nationalism.

With the Taliban controlling more than 90 per cent of Afghanistan's territory, Pakistani policy makers also hoped to gain access to the resource-rich Central Asian republics and to undermine India's regional standing and security (Askari-Rizvi, 1999: 184). Through its close ties with the Taliban, Pakistan used Afghan territory to train and arm Kashmiris and a range of Islamic extremists, including Afghans and Pakistanis, to conduct a proxy war in Indian-administered Kashmir. India, for its part, alienated by the Taliban's pro-Pakistan tilt and their provision of sanctuary and support to anti-Indian insurgents, supported the anti-Taliban Northern Alliance forces.

The Taliban's downfall and a resurgent Northern Alliance have created new opportunities for India to increase its influence over Afghan affairs. Deprived of its Taliban allies, Pakistan is no longer in a position to use Afghan territory as a sanctuary and a base for anti-Indian ex-

tremists. In fact, Pakistan is under immense US pressure to end its support for insurgents conducting cross-border attacks against India in the disputed territory of Kashmir. Pakistan, however, is increasingly concerned about a potential expansion of India's influence in Afghanistan because of the Northern Alliance's political and military predominance. Pakistan's backing for the Taliban, moreover, still remains a hurdle in the normalization of its relations with the new Afghan authorities.

Despite Pakistani overtures, Afghan mistrust of Pakistan remains high, exacerbated by concerns that Pakistani intelligence agencies have continued to support Pushtun dissidents in the southern and eastern provinces. Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan are thus marred by repeated accusations by high-level Afghan officials of Pakistani intervention as well as by Kabul's reluctance to recognize the Durand Line as the international border with Pakistan. Kabul, for its part, is irked by Pakistan's refusal to normalize trade relations until the contentious issue of the smuggling of commodities from Afghanistan into Pakistani territory is addressed. Pakistani attempts to ensure an expeditious return of Afghan refugees, including pressures on the refugee population, are yet another source of contention in the relations between Kabul and Islamabad. Exacerbating these tensions is the resurgence of Taliban activity, including attacks on the forces of the Afghan government and the US-led coalition by Afghan insurgents who, as in the past, use Pushtun-majority areas in Pakistan's border provinces of Baluchistan and the North West Frontier as sanctuaries and a base of operations.

As relations between Kabul and Islamabad remain tense, India hopes to exploit anti-Pakistan sentiment in Afghanistan to undermine its regional adversary. Pakistan is, for instance, concerned about the establishment of Indian consulates in sensitive Afghan state capitals such as Jalalabad and Kandahar. Above all, the rise of Indian influence in Kabul could adversely affect Afghan security if Pakistan–Afghanistan relations fail to normalize. Pakistan could be tempted (and, indeed, is accused of already having been so by factions within the Transitional Administration) to resume a longstanding policy of cross-border intervention if its policy makers perceive that a hostile government in Afghanistan, allied to its regional adversary India, undermines Pakistan's regional interests and its internal security.

The competition between India and Pakistan for influence over Afghanistan is also influenced by Afghanistan's geostrategic location at the crossroads between South Asia and the resource-rich Central Asian region. Pakistan's desire to open trade routes and to establish gas and oil pipelines via Afghanistan was, in fact, one of the motivating factors behind its diplomatic and military support for the Taliban. Pakistan has resumed negotiations with Afghanistan and Turkmenistan on a gas pipe-

line deal. Mutually beneficial economic ties would ease tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Agreements such as the proposed Turkmen gas pipe via Afghan territory to Pakistan are, however, unlikely to materialize partly owing to Pakistan–Afghanistan tensions and partly because the international finances needed for such a project are unlikely to materialize, given the absence of security and peace in Afghanistan.

Pakistan's desire to gain access to Central Asia's resources is complicated further by the Iranian factor. Iran, like India, had supported the Northern Alliance because of the threats posed to Afghanistan's Shiite minority by the Sunni extremist Taliban. Iran was also motivated to intervene in Afghanistan's affairs by its competition with Pakistan for regional influence, including access to Central Asia's resources (Rubin et al., 2001: 26). The triangular "Great Game" between Pakistan, India and Iran could assume dangerous dimensions should Afghanistan once again disintegrate into autonomous fiefdoms, controlled by quarrelling warlords.

Other regional actors, including China and the Central Asian republics (CARs), could also adopt a more assertive role in Afghan affairs if the civil war resumes in Afghanistan. Having supported factions within the Northern Alliance against the Taliban, Russia and the CARs have extended their support to the reconstituted central authority in Kabul. If anarchy prevails once again in Afghanistan, Russia and the Central Asian republics could once again intervene, concerned that Central Asian insurgents might, once again, use Afghan soil as a sanctuary and a base of operations. China also claims that anti-state elements have used Afghan territory to launch attacks on its territory, so it too is closely monitoring political developments in Afghanistan. China's response to the challenges emanating from Afghanistan will, however, be influenced by the policy preferences of its South Asian ally, Pakistan. India, for its part, will continue to coordinate its approach toward Afghanistan with its regional allies Russia and the CARs (Fielden and Goodhand, 2001: 23). This combination of regional interests and the vestiges of Cold War politics will have an impact on Afghanistan's internal dynamics. It will also shape inter-state relations and thus affect regional stability in South Asia. Ultimately, however, the prospects of peace in Afghanistan and hence the security of the South Asian region will depend on US policy preferences.

The US factor

It was US-led military operations that led to the downfall of the Taliban. The US decision to use military force against the Taliban and al-Qaida elements in Afghanistan also had an immediate impact on the South

Asian region. Until 11 September 2001, the United States had distanced itself from its longstanding regional ally Pakistan for a number of reasons, including Pakistan's alliance with the Taliban, its proxy war in Indian-administered Kashmir and the disruption of the democratic process by the October 1999 military take-over (Ahmed, 2001/2002: 83). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, India and the United States had also come closer together, expanding their political and military ties. India was bereft of its Cold War ally and the United States perceived India, an emergent regional power, as a balancing force against a potential adversary, China.

In the aftermath of the 11 September terrorist attacks, the United States abruptly reversed course toward Pakistan, extending diplomatic and economic support to General Pervez Musharraf's regime in return for Pakistani support for US military operations in Afghanistan. Although the revived US–Pakistan alliance is far from the Cold War partnership of the past, US diplomatic support and economic rewards for the Pakistani military government have adversely affected India–Pakistan relations. India perceives the renewed US–Pakistan alliance as a set-back to its efforts to isolate Pakistan internationally for its support for the Kashmiri jihad. Emboldened by US support, the Pakistani regime has adopted a more hostile posture toward India, continuing its support for the anti-Indian insurgents in Kashmir, albeit on a reduced scale. If and when the international environment is more favourable, Pakistan could conceivably resume a full-scale proxy war in Indian Kashmir.

The continued use of US military force against perceived Taliban and al-Qaida targets has its own implications for India–Pakistan relations as well as Pakistani political dynamics. Internal developments in Pakistan, in turn, have implications for post-Taliban Afghanistan. Since Pakistan's cooperation is important for such operations, the United States has opted to support Musharraf's bid to retain power indefinitely by halting the democratic transition. Confident of continued US diplomatic and economic support, the Pakistani military opted to retain absolute power after the October 2002 polls, which resulted in the election of a powerless prime minister and parliament.

In the absence of any counterbalancing civilian restraints, the military's hostility toward India continues to shape Pakistani policy toward India. The BJP-led Indian government's mistrust of General Musharraf and his military colleagues has also hampered the resumption of a bilateral India–Pakistan dialogue. Even though Indian Prime Minister A. B. Vajpayee has initiated a bid to normalize relations with Pakistan, he has made progress conditional on the cessation of Pakistani support for the insurgency in Kashmir, accusing Pakistan of continued support for "cross-border terrorism". So long as Musharraf retains absolute power, bilateral

tensions will continue to grow, increasing the risk of an all-out war be-
tween the two nuclear-armed states.

Pushtun alienation is also on the rise on both sides of the Pakistan–
Afghanistan border since US military operations are largely confined to 3
of Afghanistan's 32 provinces – the Pushtun-majority eastern provinces
of Nangarhar, Paktia and Paktika. The United States is also conducting
joint operations with the Pakistani military against al-Qaida and the
remnants of the Taliban in the hitherto autonomous Pushtun-dominated
Pakistani Tribal Areas.[2] Exploiting Pushtun opposition to these opera-
tions through anti-American and pro-Taliban slogans, the Muttahida
Majlis-i-Amal (MMA; United Council for Action), a six-party alliance
of religious parties, won an unexpected electoral victory in Pakistan's
October 2002 polls and formed the government in the North West
Frontier Province. In Baluchistan, too, the MMA performed well and
entered into a coalition government with the pro-military Muslim League
(Quaid-i-Azam). The Afghan Transitional Administration is understand-
ably concerned about the threats posed to Afghanistan's security by the
political resurgence of pro-Taliban sympathizers in the two Pakistani
border provinces, linking increased hostile activity by the Taliban to the
MMA's rise.[3]

Despite its rhetoric, the MMA is unlikely to take on the central gov-
ernment by halting military operations against the Taliban and al-Qaida
in Pakistan's tribal belt. Pakistani and Afghan Pushtuns could, however,
once again join hands to oppose the central authorities in their respective
states if Pushtun alienation continues to heighten in Afghanistan. Paki-
stan could itself attempt to establish ''Pashtun rule of the 'right' kind in
Afghanistan'' (Rubin et al., 2001: 24), tempted by unrest on its borders or
a deterioration of relations with Kabul. The future of the Bonn process
therefore depends on a number of imperatives. These include the suc-
cessful integration of the Pushtuns – and, indeed, every Afghan regional
and/or ethnic entity – into the ongoing process of political, social and
economic reconstruction; a changed emphasis in the United States'
Afghan policy from military to political goals; and a *rapprochement* be-
tween Afghanistan and its immediate neighbours.

Promoting the peace in post-Taliban Afghanistan

Afghanistan's political, social and economic recovery and reconstruction
require representation, participation and accountability. For instance,
economic recovery and reconstruction will play an important role in as-
sisting Afghanistan's political and social reconciliation, so long as benefits
are equitably distributed. The international community must therefore

ensure that international aid and assistance benefit all regions of the country. Because the distribution of portfolios within the Transitional Administration has undermined its legitimacy, political stability in Afghanistan will depend on the international community's ability to redress perceived wrongs and to address perceived grievances as Afghanistan moves towards elections in 2004.

The Bonn process includes the creation of new constitutional and legal structures for post-Taliban Afghanistan. The draft of a new constitution will be prepared by end-2003. The constitutional commission must ensure a just distribution of political and economic power between the centre and the provinces. Learning from Afghanistan's history, the constitution should be drafted in such a manner that the centre can assert its presence in and extract resources from the periphery without impinging on the autonomy of the provinces. Otherwise, regional players, particularly in border regions, are likely to challenge the centre's authority. Domestic unrest will, in turn, encourage external state or sub-state intervention.

It is equally essential to ensure a separation, as far as possible, between the secular and the temporal in forming Afghanistan's new legal systems. The Karzai administration is already under pressure from factions within the government, including the superior judiciary, to accept the pre-eminence of the Islamic over the civil code. This incipient Islamization of Afghanistan serves only to enhance the bargaining power of religious conservatives, undermining civil rights. The more Afghanistan moves toward religious conservatism, the more likely it is that Pakistani, Iranian and Afghan religious extremists will strengthen their ties with their Afghan kin, threatening Afghanistan's peace and the security of its immediate and distant neighbours.

The international community, including the United Nations, must also learn from the lessons of the emergency Loya Jirga to ensure that the same mistakes are not repeated during the June 2004 national elections. A pre-poll countrywide census, for instance, is essential to determine and delineate electoral constituencies, thus removing misgivings that one community is favoured over another. Transparent proceedings, including respect for the sanctity of the ballot, would strengthen the domestic legitimacy of an elected government. If the polls are not free and fair, excluded or alienated regional and ethnic players will question the legitimacy and the writ of the elected government. However, if all Afghan political, regional and ethnic factions perceive a central government as legitimate, the threats of external intervention would incrementally reduce.

Afghanistan's political and economic recovery and reconstruction, even the continuation of the Bonn process itself, are contingent on security. The Afghan state, however, lacks the capacity to control its territory in

the absence of a national military or police force that could curb the power of warlords and militias. Although the United States believes that the answer lies in the creation of a national army and police to extend state authority and to enforce the rule of law, it will take months if not years to train even a modest military and police force.[4] Until Kabul is capable of extending its writ to the periphery, an expanded International Security Assistance Force could have helped to enforce the peace by containing factional infighting and lawlessness. The United States has, however, strongly opposed even a limited expansion of the ISAF's mandate and mission from its present role of guarding Kabul (International Crisis Group, 2002a: 4).

A shift in US strategy from military to economic goals partially addresses some of Afghanistan's most pressing security concerns. The Bush administration has, for instance, pledged additional aid for quick-impact projects such as road building, the first project being a road that will link Kabul with Herat. If other proposed projects such as the rebuilding of road links between Kabul and Jalalabad materialize, the resultant influx of international assistance and job generation would help to assuage Pushtun grievances.

The United States has also opted to station civil affairs soldiers along with troops from the US-led coalition and Afghan national army personnel in a number of population centres throughout Afghanistan (Dao, 2002). In the near term, the limited presence of US troops and Afghanistan national army soldiers will help to deter existing and potential spoilers who would fear US military retaliation. As elections approach, however, regional factions are more than likely to assert their political and military clout in a bid to dominate the power structure after June 2004. A piecemeal solution based on limited US military teams might then prove insufficient to keep the peace in Afghanistan. The United States must therefore acknowledge the need for the presence of an international security force beyond Kabul if security is to be assured in the run-up to and after the June polls. If the political process stalls in the absence of security, the civil war could resume in Afghanistan. Without peace in Afghanistan, South Asia will remain vulnerable to the threats posed by Islamic extremism and terrorism from Afghan soil as well as to the dangers posed by the Afghan narcotics and arms trade.

Afghanistan's stability: South Asia's role

If the turmoil within Afghanistan poses a threat to South Asian security, conversely Afghanistan's political, social and economic reconstruction would buttress the security of its South Asian neighbours. Peace and

security in Afghanistan are largely dependent on the policies of influential global actors such as the United States and its Western allies. Afghanistan's near and distant neighbours, Pakistan and India, can, however, also help promote peace and stability in Afghanistan, preventing a return to the post-1992 chaos that led to the Taliban take-over.

Pakistan's policies toward Afghanistan will be particularly crucial because of its geographical proximity, a cross-border Pushtun population, a large Afghan refugee presence, and a longstanding history of conflict. Despite General Musharraf's repeated declarations of non-intervention, Afghan suspicions will not dissipate until Pakistan proves, by its actions, that it intends to support Afghanistan's post-Taliban political order. Pakistan must, therefore, demonstrate its neutrality by denying sanctuary to Afghan insurgents. Pakistan must also refrain from exploiting Afghan (in particular, Pushtun) dissent to undermine Kabul's authority and legitimacy. Thus Pakistan must not provide any support – political, military or economic – to selected warlords and militias within Afghan territory.

Pakistan should, moreover, refrain from exploiting land-locked Afghanistan's dependence on Pakistani trade routes to pressure Kabul. On the contrary, Pakistan should and can gain Afghan goodwill if it combines a policy of non-intervention with tangible measures to support Afghanistan's economic recovery and reconstruction. Finally, Pakistan must put a permanent end to a longstanding policy of using Afghan territory to export the jihad to Indian Kashmir. These Islamic extremists not only are an irritant in India–Pakistan relations but also pose a threat to Pakistani citizens and hence to the Pakistan state (Maley, 2001: 73–74).

India, for its part, must also refrain from intervening in Afghanistan's internal affairs. Past Indian policies of encouraging anti-Pakistani sentiment in Afghanistan had served only to strengthen Pakistan's resolve to create a pliable regime in Kabul. The 11 September attacks on US territory demonstrate that interventionist policies always rebound. US support for Islamic extremists during the Soviet war years clearly backfired. Similarly, Pakistani support for a succession of Afghan Islamic extremists, including the Hizb-i-Islami and other mujahidin parties, culminating in its backing for the Taliban, has only undermined Pakistani security. If India chooses to continue to support selected players within the Afghan political milieu, it too could become the victim of blowback.

Recognizing that regional linkages of conflict undermine its own security, India must also acknowledge Pakistan's legitimate security needs and discourage its Afghan allies from adopting hostile anti-Pakistani policies and postures. Abandoning its present bid to shape the post-Taliban security apparatus to its liking in Afghanistan, India should use its abundant human resources and technological know-how instead to promote Afghanistan's economic recovery and reconstruction.

Pakistan's and India's interests would be best served if they abandoned their longstanding zero-sum game in Afghanistan. India and Pakistan should work instead to promote a viable peace in Afghanistan. Since security is vital for any movement toward political reconciliation and economic reconstruction in Afghanistan, India and Pakistan should urge the international community either to expand ISAF's mandate or to create an alternative international peacekeeping arrangement, under UN auspices, to guard the Afghan peace. In international forums, India and Pakistan should press the international community to increase assistance for Afghanistan's economic recovery and reconstruction.

Kabul is urging its neighbours to respect Afghanistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity. If Afghanistan's immediate and distant neighbours, including Pakistan and India, implement such a policy of non-intervention, this would greatly enhance the prospects of peace within Afghanistan. Pakistan and India will also stand to gain when, bereft of external patrons, Afghan extremists lose the ground that they have gained during decades of war and civil strife.

Notes

1. A UN poppy pre-assessment survey in February 2002 had also estimated the yield in southern Afghanistan alone at 3,300 metric tons of raw opium. See "Southern Afghanistan Emergency Sitrep, 75 – Recent Developments (21 February, 2002)" at http://www.hic.org.pk, under regional information from southern Afghanistan.
2. FBI agents and Pakistani military personnel conduct joint operations in the Tribal Areas.
3. "Those people who have been elected in those provinces [the North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan] are the mentors of the Taliban. . . . they are of the same mind, the same ideology, the same agenda", says Afghan Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah (Abdullah and Atmar, 2002).
4. According to an American assessment, only 12,000 troops would be trained by end-September 2002 for an Afghan national army (Gordon, 2002).

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23

South-West Asia after the Taliban

Mohammed Ayoob

In its war on terrorism, the United States has attempted to untie the knot of Islamic extremism that has been at the centre of Pakistani–Afghan relations for years. Optimists can point to two achievements: the installation of an interim Afghan government under the moderate Pushtun leader Hamid Karzai; and the 12 January 2002 speech by Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf, vowing to break Pakistan-based terrorist groups and to pull the country away from the brink of a "theocratic state". Both developments had been greeted with palpable relief in Washington and other capitals. Yet the threat of instability throughout South-West Asia – a region that includes both South Asia and the Persian Gulf and stretches into Central Asia – is far from over. Further conflict and fragmentation in Afghanistan could have continued ripple effects through the region. In Pakistan itself – despite the acknowledged boldness of Musharraf's crackdown – a history of creating, harbouring and aiding terrorist groups will not cease to haunt the country for the foreseeable future. Pakistan could yet become a new epicentre of instability, terrorism and state breakdown in the extended South-West Asian region. With al-Qaida terrorists losing their safe haven in Afghanistan, their surviving members are likely already to have moved to Pakistan. The existence of similar terrorist groups in Pakistan, many of them supported by elements in the Pakistani military and by fundamentalist Islamic groups such as the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Islam, could provide them with

adequate cover and sustenance – even in the face of Musharraf's announced crackdown.

There is evidence that the autonomous tribal belt on the border of Pakistan's North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Afghanistan has already become the refuge of hundreds if not thousands of Taliban and al-Qaida fighters. The Pakistan government's writ does not run here fully, and the tribal population is overwhelmingly sympathetic to both al-Qaida and the Taliban (Borchgrave, 2001a).[1] Recent reports confirm the extreme difficulty faced by Pakistani and US forces operating on the Pakistan–Afghan border to make headway in their search for the remnants of al-Qaida in the Tribal Areas. However, reports suggest that many of them may be moving back into Afghanistan to create further mayhem in that country (Risen and Filkins, 2002).

Pakistan-based terror groups stepped up attacks in India during October–December 2001, culminating in suicide attacks on the Indian parliament on 13 December 2001. This suggests that Pakistani groups have been receiving fresh recruits from across the Afghan border willing to do jihad against the Indian ''infidel'' now that the war against America has been lost. It also indicates that such groups are willing and able to defy Pakistani injunctions against such dramatic terror attacks after 11 September 2001. They seem intent on acting as catalysts for escalating hostility between India and Pakistan by forcing India to attack terrorist bases and training camps across the ''Line of Control'' (LOC) in Kashmir, thus raising the danger of war between the nuclear-armed states.

President Musharraf's speech on 12 January 2002, vowing a crackdown on militant Islamic elements, seems to have further raised the activity of these groups now intent on creating mayhem in Kashmir and defying Musharraf's decree before support from across the LOC and the India–Pakistan border is effectively cut off by the Pakistani authorities. This has led to the escalation of attacks in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, especially during the run-up to state elections scheduled for September–October 2002. Although India has recognized that there has been reduction of infiltration from Pakistan, it refuses to let Pakistan off the hook on the issue of cross-border terrorism because militancy continues in Kashmir, and Pakistan has been ineffective in cutting off all support to terrorists operating on the Indian side of the LOC. It is interesting to note in this connection that the US Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, stated in Islamabad in August 2002 that ''[n]o one, here in Pakistan or in India, thinks that the Pakistan Government is solely responsible for the infiltration'' (Reddy, 2002). This seemed to be a partial exoneration of President Musharraf's inability or unwillingness to stop all infiltration across the Line of Control. It also highlighted the delicate balancing act

that the United States has had to maintain between India and Pakistan since the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington.

The events since 11 September have sharpened the longstanding dilemmas that have troubled US policies towards Pakistan and India. Clearly, Musharraf deserves American support if he can demonstrate continued determination to divert his country from an extremist trajectory. Yet, in the long run, it is India and (perhaps less obviously) Iran – pre-eminent states in South Asia and the Gulf and natural status quo powers – that stand out as logical American partners. Musharraf's undeniable political risks do need to be rewarded. But India, a stable if somewhat raucous democracy, is a far safer bet as a US partner than Pakistan's struggling military dictatorship.[2]

Iran may look like an unlikely partner, especially after US President George W. Bush's hard-line classification of the country as part of an ''axis of evil'' in his State of the Union address on 30 January 2002. Yet the American decision to renounce hopes for *rapprochement* with Iran is misguided. The United States should not neglect the strategic logic of increasingly converging interests between Washington, New Delhi and Tehran, especially in the context of continuing instability in Afghanistan and Pakistan and increasing doubts about the staying power of the Saudi regime.

Post-war Afghanistan

The Bonn conference, which met from 27 November to 5 December 2001, brought together four Afghan factions to form a transitional regime under Karzai. Karzai's stewardship was formalized and legitimized at the Loya Jirga (tribal Grand Council) that met in Kabul in June 2002 and elected him president of the country. However, no single government, even if it has the backing of the United Nations and the United States, will be in a position effectively to control all or even most of the country for a long time to come. The squabbling at Bonn among the different factions, the visible divisions within the Northern Alliance and the absence of several major contenders for power from the Bonn meeting did not bode well for the future of Afghanistan as an integrated polity. Neither did the controversy among Pushtun factions and the subsequent fragile compromise over who should govern Kandahar after the departure of the Taliban from their heartland. Similar conflicts among Pushtun tribal leaders were reported from other parts of eastern and southern Afghanistan. Above all, the perception that Karzai, a relative lightweight, was imposed as the interim leader by the United States is expected to detract from his legitimacy.

The events surrounding the Loya Jirga in June 2002 confirmed this image of a fractious and contentious political élite. Karzai was finally elected president after substantial US and international pressure was applied, but this still left several factions – including those supporting the ex-king, Zahir Shah – resentful. The new government also left much of the power in the hands of the Panjshiri Tajiks, thus creating consternation among not only the various Pushtun elements but the Hazaras, the Uzbeks and the Tajiks from western Afghanistan as well. The outcome of the Loya Jirga may have done more harm than good by convincing many Afghans that the grand assembly was a puppet of the foreigners and the Panjshiris.[3]

Despite the diplomatic skills attributed to Karzai, his government's writ is unlikely to run in a sustained fashion very far from the capital. The presence of an international force in the numbers currently contemplated is unlikely to change this outcome. Afghanistan's terrain and its internal divisions, especially among those leaders who have men, money and guns at their command, make political fragmentation the most likely scenario. The scenario might be avoided if the international community were willing to deploy upwards of 50,000 highly skilled troops equipped for mountain warfare for an indefinite period of time. Even then the outcome would remain uncertain. In any event, there is no indication that such a force is being contemplated under the aegis of the United Nations or a multinational coalition. International financial aid may temporarily provide incentives for the warlords to cooperate with Kabul, but is unlikely to resolve the underlying political conflict among them. That Afghanistan continues to be in a politically precarious state was demonstrated very clearly by the attack on Karzai's life in Kandahar on 5 September 2002, and the simultaneous terrorist bombing in Kabul, which inflicted a heavy toll (Burns, 2002b).

Stability looks elusive also because the strategic interests of Afghanistan's major neighbours – Iran, Pakistan and Russia in particular – are at odds with each other. All have their favourite clients. Some, if not all, of them are likely to conclude that, if they cannot get a regime favourable to them installed in Kabul, they would rather have the country divided up into fiefdoms so that they can dominate the areas of Afghanistan that they consider to be strategically and politically most important. Reports of Iranian meddling in western Afghanistan and Pakistani manoeuvrings in the east of the country prove the credibility of this conclusion. The bloodshed of the past two decades has augmented and entrenched ethnic and tribal animosities that were never very far from the surface in Afghanistan. Continued warfare has also created elements with vested economic and political interests in its prolongation. Poppy cultivation, drug trafficking, gun running, protection money and control of scarce re-

sources in a context of acute scarcity have provided enormous benefits to "conflict entrepreneurs" who have an abiding interest in perpetuating insecurity in the country. As in Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone and the Congo, the major warlords in Afghanistan have been, and continue to be, the principal economic beneficiaries of fragmentation and civil war. It is unlikely that they will be willing to relinquish this role and its benefits any time soon.[4]

Moreover, illicit economic activities have also benefited external partners, especially Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and international drug mafias. Elements within these organizations are likely to encourage and support the activities of the conflict entrepreneurs covertly. Resources and conduits for illegal transit will be provided by such external agents to warlords engaged in the drugs trade – thus generating resources for them that can be spent on weapons and manpower. Since any UN-sponsored authority in Kabul is likely to be under tremendous pressure from the United States and the United Nations not to allow opium cultivation and to desist from the drugs trade, the Afghan government is likely to be denuded of adequate resources. It is also likely to become increasingly unpopular among both poppy cultivators and those engaged in narcotics trading, the two major economic activities in the war-ravaged country. External aid will be able to make up only partially for the central government's lack of resources, especially since international donors will strictly control its disbursement. They are unlikely to allow such funds to be used for buying off regional warlords who have returned to reclaim their former fiefs following the disintegration of the Taliban regime (Perlez, 2001).

External involvement

Afghanistan's major neighbours have conflicting visions of the country's future. The Russians and their allied regimes in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan would prefer to see the Northern Alliance as the senior partner in any government in Kabul. All three equate Pushtun domination with Islamic fanaticism. Faced as they are with their own Islamic insurgencies, they are extremely afraid that this contagion may spread if the Pushtuns, even if they be anti-Taliban for the most part, come to dominate the ruling coalition in Kabul. Although the control of the crucial ministries of Defence, Foreign Affairs and the Interior by the Northern Alliance may give them comfort, the elevation of the American-sponsored Karzai adds to their concerns.[5]

The interests of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan also could quickly diverge as the Tajik and Uzbek ethnic groups within Afghanistan begin to

quarrel over the spoils of victory. Given the history of Uzbek–Tajik relations in Afghanistan over the past two decades, especially the rivalry between General Dostum and the late Ahmed Shah Masood, such a falling out would not be surprising. Uzbeks, who form a small minority of about 6 per cent within Afghanistan and are concentrated in the north, have traditionally been afraid of being dominated by the neighbouring Tajiks, who form a quarter of the Afghan population and are more widely spread throughout the country, in addition to demographically dominating the north-east.[6]

Iran would also prefer to keep the Pushtuns of the east and south from playing a major role in the power structure. The American attempt to build up Karzai is likely to have them concerned as well. The Saudi-inspired Wahabi fundamentalism of the Pushtun-based Taliban and their treatment of Shiite Hazaras, whom Iran supports, have made nearly all Pushtuns, many of whom harbour visceral anti-Shiah and anti-Hazara feelings, suspect in Iranian eyes. For all their ostensible commitment to a radical version of political Islam, the Iranians, including their religious class, are a cultured lot. They have found the medieval brutalities of the Taliban highly repugnant. For strategic and political reasons, Iran has also been apprehensive of growing Saudi religious and financial influence on the Pushtun population.[7]

Furthermore, despite ostensibly cordial relations with Pakistan, Tehran remains suspicious of Islamabad's motives in Afghanistan. Iran also perceives Pakistan to be a client state of Saudi Arabia because of Islamabad's financial dependence on Saudi handouts and the religious affinity of important sections of the Pakistani population, including sizeable elements of its political and military élites, with the Saudi–Wahabi version of Sunni fundamentalism. Repeated massacres of Shiahs in Pakistan carried out by Sunni extremist groups, often clandestinely financed by Riyadh, have driven home the lesson to Tehran that the Saudi–Pakistani and Iranian versions of militant Islam are fundamentally opposed to one another. Saudi influence in Pakistan is also perceived by Iran as targeted at curbing Iran's rightful role in the Persian Gulf region.

Pakistan's interests run counter to those of Iran and Russia, but they are not congruent with those of the United States either. The United States is committed to, and has succeeded in, putting a coalition of different ethnic groups and political factions, excluding the Taliban, in power in Afghanistan. Pakistan, on the other hand, would have preferred the major share of power to remain in the hands of Pushtun tribal leaders, many of whom had spent the previous decade in Pakistan. It would have preferred to see the Northern Alliance's sphere of influence strictly limited to the extreme north of the country, away from Pakistan's borders. It is particularly wary of the Northern Alliance's close relationship

with India, a fact that was underlined by the visit of the Alliance's interior, defence and foreign ministers to New Delhi immediately after the Bonn conference.[8] The Alliance's close Indian connection was one of the main reasons Islamabad was stridently opposed to the Northern Alliance's capture of Kabul, undertaken, in Pakistan's perceptions, with America's connivance. Pakistan felt its external security directly threatened by this.

Pakistan and the Taliban

Pakistan's support for the Taliban was not merely a major pillar of its foreign policy but an important element of its domestic policy as well. The Taliban were deliberately fashioned as a military and political force by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) for the purpose of ensuring a client government in Afghanistan that would provide Pakistan strategic depth during times of conflict with India. This need became particularly acute in the 1990s, when war over Kashmir appeared to be a distinct possibility with the Pakistan-supported insurgency escalating in the Kashmir Valley. The Taliban, and their friends in al-Qaida, were also utilized by the Pakistani military to provide facilities and expertise for training Pakistani, Kashmiri, Arab and Afghan terrorists steeped in the jihadist ideology, who were then infiltrated across the Line of Control into the Indian-administered parts of Jammu and Kashmir to create mayhem in an already disturbed Kashmir Valley (Blank, 1999).

In addition to these external security concerns, the Pakistani support to the Taliban was intimately connected to two domestic trends that became increasingly prominent during the late 1970s and the 1980s. The first was the dramatic increase in the influence and visibility of Islamist forces in the Pakistani body politic. This was partly the result of Pakistani military dictator Zia ul-Haq's policy of using Islam to legitimize his regime during the period he ruled Pakistan (1977–1988). An integral part of this strategy was the bestowing of state patronage on fundamentalist religious groups and institutions in order to build a support structure among them. It also manifested itself in the increasing Islamization of the officer corps of the armed forces as loyalty to the regime came to be tested on the basis of religiosity and the public observance of Islamic rituals.[9]

The growing Islamization of the Pakistani polity was also in part the result of the increase in the inflow of Saudi money and puritanical and militant Wahabi religious ideas into Pakistan, both through Pakistani immigrants working in Saudi Arabia and other oil-rich states in the Gulf and by the deliberate effort of Saudi charities and, above all, of the Saudi government. Beginning in the late 1970s, the Saudi regime came to see the spread of Sunni-Wahabi fundamentalism as the best ideological anti-

dote to Iran's revolutionary Islam, whose appeal transcended the Sunni–Shiah divide. Pakistan's position on the eastern borders of Iran made it an important part of the Saudi strategy to checkmate the spread of Iranian influence and, therefore, of anti-monarchical revolutionary Islam. It was the same reason that led Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other Gulf sheikhdoms financially to underwrite Iraq's war against Iran from 1980 to 1988.

The insurgency against the Soviet-supported Marxist regime in Afghanistan in the 1980s, aided financially by the United States and Saudi Arabia and militarily by the United States and Pakistan, augmented this trend. It did so principally by providing ready recruits to the militant Islamic cause in the form of young refugees, many of whom were enrolled in religious schools situated close to the borders of Afghanistan that were run by fundamentalist Pakistani groups and funded largely from Saudi sources. These schools not only provided shelter and food to their students, but also inculcated among them a jihadist ideology based upon the strict and intolerant Wahabi version of Sunni Islam (Stern, 2000; also see Bragg, 2001). The Taliban (literally, "those who search for knowledge"), who were the products of these schools, were then trained, funded, armed and, according to some reports, led by the Pakistani military to take over Afghanistan.

The second trend that surfaced in the 1980s in Pakistan was also directly related to the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan and to Pakistan's role as the front-line state aiding the insurgency against Marxist rule. The Soviet invasion had a major impact on the attitude of the Pakistani Pushtun population, which is larger than the Pushtun population in Afghanistan (12 million as against 10 million), and led to their increasing integration into the Pakistani polity. Pakistan's role as the primary supporter of the anti-Marxist insurgency and a safe haven for 2 million Afghan, primarily Pushtun, refugees changed many Pushtuns' perceptions of Pakistan as Afghanistan's hostile neighbour. Similarly, the economic opportunities for drug trafficking and gun running that the unsettled situation in Afghanistan provided to enterprising Pakistani Pushtuns created a larger economic stake in Pakistan for many of them. As a result, there appeared to be a remarkable reduction in the sense of alienation from Pakistan that the Pakistani Pushtuns had harboured since the creation of that country in 1947, when the British divided India before quitting the subcontinent.

The Pushtun alienation was primarily the product of the resentment felt against the artificial border called the Durand Line, imposed by the British in the nineteenth century, that divided the Pushtun population, and indeed individual Pushtun tribes and sub-tribes, between Afghanistan and British India. All Afghan regimes before the Taliban had

explicitly refused to accept the Durand Line as the border between Afghanistan and the successor state of Pakistan. The two neighbours came to the verge of war over this issue more than once in the 1950s and 1960s. Even the Taliban, although they were Pakistan's protégés, did not officially endorse the Durand Line as the border with Pakistan. Afghan – essentially Pushtun – irredentism had, therefore, imbued relations between the two countries with a substantial degree of hostility that continued to nurture Pushtun separatism within Pakistan until the end of the 1970s.

The Soviet invasion changed all that, as Pakistan became the prime supporter of the Pushtun/Afghan cause against Moscow and the Soviet-supported regimes in Kabul. Pakistan's critical role in the 1990s in installing and maintaining the Pushtun Taliban in power in Kabul reinforced Islamabad's image as the main supporter of the Pushtun cause in Afghanistan and the principal bulwark against Iranian and Russian designs to help minority ethnic groups dominate the Afghan polity at the expense of the traditionally dominant Pushtuns. This perception had a remarkably positive effect on Pushtun opinion within Pakistan, as it did, for somewhat different reasons, on the fundamentalist groups within that country.

Pakistan and the Taliban's collapse

In this context, Pakistan's decision after the 11 September attacks to pull the rug from under the Taliban by joining hands with the United States against them came as a rude shock to both the Pushtun population and the fundamentalist religious constituency in Pakistan. It should, therefore, come as no surprise if the Pushtun resentment against the Pakistani regime's sell-out of the Taliban is eventually transformed into a resurgence of Pushtun separatism within Pakistan.

The prospect of such a scenario becoming reality has caused great consternation within the Pakistani establishment. It explains in substantial part the desperate attempt on the part of General Musharraf to prevent the Northern Alliance from entering Kabul and thus inflicting a grave insult on Pushtun tribal honour. It also explains his equally desperate attempt to find ''moderate'' Taliban willing to join a new dispensation. Musharraf's failure on both counts has created an ominous situation for Pakistan. On the one hand, it portends the disenchantment and consequent alienation of substantial segments of Pakistani Pushtuns from the Pakistani state. On the other, it clearly signifies the failure of Pakistan's Taliban-based strategic calculations and raises the prospect of Pakistan having to face hostile neighbours on both its eastern and western borders. It also raises the clear possibility of rivals such as Iran,

Russia and India coming to have a far greater say in Afghanistan's internal affairs and in its foreign policy than Pakistan, thus reversing the trend that had been in existence since 1990.

The problem is likely to be further compounded for Pakistan's rulers by the fact that the Taliban had close religious and ideological links with both Pushtun and non-Pushtun elements in Pakistan that espouse militant fundamentalism within Pakistan and a jihadist foreign policy abroad, especially in relation to India and the United States. Although these elements were temporarily stunned into silence by the speed with which the Taliban regime disintegrated, they are unlikely to forgive Musharraf for the indignities heaped upon their ideological brethren and their own religio-political cause. Once they overcome their present predicament, they might look for ways to destabilize the Musharraf regime in order to get their revenge as well as to reorient Pakistan's foreign policy in a more radical direction. Musharraf's crackdown on militant Islamic elements operating in Kashmir has, in fact, already led to the beginnings of a fundamentalist backlash against his regime.

Finally, there are credible indications that the officer corps of the Pakistan army is deeply divided. Rifts within the top brass became clearly visible when, in October 2001, Musharraf removed or shunted aside several leading generals, including the head of the ISI, who were considered sympathetic to the Taliban and were opposed to his alliance with the United States against the Taliban (Rashid, 2001). That there must have been substantial opposition in the armed forces to Musharraf's change of course appears logical in light of the political and financial investment made by the ISI in first bringing the Taliban to power and then keeping them there.[10]

Despite the major investment that the Pakistani military had made in the Taliban, most military leaders went along with Musharraf's decision, hoping that Pakistan would benefit more from ties with the United States than from supporting the Taliban and opposing Washington. Massive economic assistance and debt write-offs, access to sophisticated weaponry and, above all, an assurance that the United States would not support India in the latter's disputes with Pakistan seemed to make Musharraf's radical shift acceptable to them.

However, for the Pakistani military brass, the American assurance that the Northern Alliance would not be allowed to take Kabul was the key yardstick by which to judge Washington's reliability and its genuine concern for Pakistan's vital interests. With that promise in tatters and with anti-Pakistan forces in control of large parts of Afghanistan, Musharraf's policy is likely to cease making strategic sense to many of the top military commanders. Musharraf would increasingly appear to them either as too

gullible or as an agent of the United States working for American objectives to the detriment of Pakistani interests.[11]

Musharraf's decision, announced on 12 January 2002, to crack down on militant Islamic groups, including some of those operating in Kashmir, could further fuel military discontent. This is especially likely to be the case because Musharraf's latest action against jihadi elements was clearly undertaken under pressure not merely from America but from India as well. The Indian military mobilization following the 13 December 2001 attack on the parliament in New Delhi appears to be the key factor determining Musharraf's change of tactics against militant groups operating within and from Pakistan. Washington was convinced that New Delhi really meant business this time and conveyed this assessment in direct terms to Islamabad, prompting a climb-down on Musharraf's part.[12]

However, giving in to blatant Indian military pressure is unlikely to have endeared Musharraf to the armed forces' top brass, many of whom continue to be committed to pursuing the jihad in Kashmir and are angry about the failure of Pakistan's policy in Afghanistan. India's refusal formally to de-escalate its military mobilization, despite what is perceived as Musharraf's appeasement of the traditional enemy, is likely to detract further from his regime's legitimacy. Consequently, the overthrow of the current Pakistani regime by disgruntled factions of the military opposed to Musharraf's foreign policy cannot be ruled out. What this will do to Pakistan's political stability remains an open question. But a likely scenario would be a successor regime that is increasingly fundamentalist, overtly anti-American and with major revanchist tendencies.

It is becoming increasingly clear that Pakistan is in the middle of a deep crisis, much of which is of its own making. It is overextended in the east by its military and political support to the insurgency and terrorism in Kashmir, which could draw it into a war with India. At the same time it is faced by the grave possibility of instability and possibly guerrilla warfare in Afghanistan to the west, again the result of its support to the Taliban, which has backfired.[13] Furthermore, a likely increase in Pushtun restiveness within the country itself may threaten its territorial integrity or at least make it highly unstable. The deployment of Pakistani troops, sometimes with American contingents, in the tribal belt of the NWFP in the hunt for remnants of al-Qaida is likely to accentuate anti-regime feelings among the Pushtun tribes, who have traditionally fiercely guarded their autonomy from Islamabad.

If one adds the current severe economic crisis to all these political factors, Pakistan's future looks very gloomy indeed. Although the promise of American and international aid may give the regime some breathing space, this is unlikely to last. International assistance is not capable of

changing the lot of the common Pakistani in the short term. In the absence of such a change, economic disillusionment is likely to augment political disgruntlement sooner rather than later. The attempt by the Musharraf regime to control the outcome of the parliamentary elections in October 2002 and to change provisions of the constitution to concentrate power in the hands of the president is likely further to fuel resentment among the politically conscious strata of Pakistani society. Musharraf's policies seem to have succeeded in alienating both the religious and the liberal constituencies in the country simultaneously. This does not augur well for the future political stability of Pakistan.

Pakistan's nuclear arsenal

If Musharraf is unable to purge Pakistani politics of fanaticism and return the country to a modicum of stability, one major concern for the United States and the international community as a whole would be the security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. A nuclear-capable failing state, with religious zealots, ethnic secessionists and disgruntled radical military officers vying for control of nuclear weapons, is a terrifying prospect. The arrest of several former high officials of the Pakistani nuclear establishment with close ideological ties to the Taliban and the al-Qaida leadership has heightened concerns about the security of warheads, nuclear technology and nuclear weapons grade material in Pakistan's possession (Burns, 2001; Sanger, 2001). Some of the Musharraf regime's own moves suggest that it is very concerned about the safety of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal (Moore and Khan, 2001). Reports also suggest that Washington recognizes the danger that Pakistani nuclear warheads might fall into the wrong hands and that it has devised contingency plans for either securing or destroying Pakistan's nuclear weapons, should there appear to be a credible chance that this might happen (for one such report, see Hirsh, 2001).

US policy towards Pakistan will also continue to focus on preventing any leakage of nuclear technology and on keeping the Pakistani and Indian nuclear deterrents as ''recessed'' as possible – that is, with warheads and delivery vehicles separated. This is easier to achieve in the case of India because it is committed to a ''no first use'' nuclear doctrine. An authoritative study has corroborated the fact that India's ''no first use'' doctrine is confirmed by its current nuclear posture. RAND's Ashley Tellis, currently senior adviser to the American ambassador in New Delhi, defined the posture as one of a ''force in being'' stopping well short of actual deployment (Tellis, 2001). Pakistan, on the other hand, is unwilling to subscribe to a ''no first use'' doctrine and to adopt a corre-

sponding posture because of its conventional inferiority *vis-à-vis* India and the consequent need to hold out the threat of nuclear response to a conventional Indian attack. Moreover, Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, unlike its Indian counterpart, is under the control of the military and, therefore, the decision to launch nuclear strikes is not subject to the moderating influence of civilian élites. These two factors together make Pakistan's possession of nuclear weapons highly dangerous because the risks of miscalculation or unauthorized use are much higher. These risks are likely to be multiplied if the control of Pakistan's nuclear weapons passes into the hands of groups more fanatical and irresponsible than the current regime.

The United States also will need to put continued pressure on China to stop its clandestine collaboration with Pakistan on nuclear and missile development. The United States must make this issue a centrepiece both of its non-proliferation policy and of its policy toward China, which has violated several assurances it had given Washington about cutting off the supply of missile-related technology to Pakistan (for details, see Malik, 2000).[14]

The United States, India and Iran

In this context of projected and possibly prolonged instability in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the best and most viable long-term US policy towards South-West Asia is one that coordinates US strategies with those of states in the extended region that have a stake in regional stability, backed by the capacity to contribute to its security. India and Iran immediately come to mind.

The United States and India were able to cultivate important economic and political links in the 1990s. Many have significant security implications, such as intelligence-sharing and combating terrorism, but are not limited to them. The pace of Indian–American security cooperation has increased visibly since the terror attacks of 11 September 2001 (Slater and Hiebert, 2001; also see Dugger, 2001a). However, their common interests go much beyond countering terrorism. Washington and New Delhi share common long-range strategic objectives both in South-West Asia and in the wider Asian region. The virtual endorsement by India of the Bush administration's decision to deploy ballistic missile defence, in both its theatre and national versions, very clearly indicates the convergence of Indian and American strategic perceptions (for details, see Malik, 2001; see also Dugger, 2001b).

Two goals that India and the United States share stand out from the others. The first is containing instability in Pakistan and insulating the

rest of the region from its negative effects. The second is the need to contain an increasingly powerful China, whose long-term interests in the wider Asian region are likely to clash with those both of the United States and of India.

India considers China to be its primary security threat (for details, see Malik, 1999). It is also increasingly clear that China is becoming, if it has not already become, America's principal strategic competitor.[15] On a number of issues, ranging from Taiwan to ballistic missile defence, American and Chinese interests run directly counter to each other. President George W. Bush's decision to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty is likely to force these contradictions to the surface very clearly and quickly. Moreover, China's long-term aspiration to become the second pole of global power ensures that its relations with the United States are bound to deteriorate sooner or later. Therefore, it makes a lot of sense for Washington further to upgrade its links with India to the level of strategic partnership.[16]

Although this may not currently be the overt conventional wisdom in Washington, the shared suspicion of China forms the subtext of much of the publicly stated rationale for strategic cooperation with India. Such cooperation will not necessarily result in a defence pact binding the two parties to come to the aid of each other in the event of war. However, it could provide a framework for military and intelligence coordination and the supply of sophisticated American weapons and dual technology to India that could serve the interests of both countries if the existing balance of power in Asia comes to be threatened by a more assertive China in the next couple of decades.

India's democratic credentials add to the attraction of an American–Indian relationship that has the potential to become a major pillar of the projected global democratic community. While India has demonstrated its democratic resilience against heavy odds over the past half-century, Iran too is struggling to achieve true democracy. As Robin Wright puts it, the country, "often in spite of its theocrats, has begun to achieve one of the revolution's original goals: empowering the people" (2000: 133).[17] Despite the attempt by the conservative clergy and the institutions they control to delay political reform and engagement with the United States, both these trends have gained significant support from the politically conscious strata of the Iranian population (Weldman, 2001; Fathi, 2001).

Moreover, Iran's antipathy toward the extremism and militancy of the Taliban and their ideological brethren in Pakistan, together with Iran's stake in ensuring the uninterrupted flow of oil from the Gulf, underlines the fact that it has a stake in regional stability similar to that of the United States. Iran has been integrated into, and is highly dependent upon, the international economy, primarily through oil exports, which form the

bulk of its foreign exchange earnings. Iran's rulers, therefore, will pay a heavy price if they continue to act irresponsibly in their dealings with the outside world. This is one of the main reasons why several of yesterday's Islamic revolutionaries have become today's political and economic reformers.

Despite these positive factors, it appears counter-intuitive to make a case for strategic *rapprochement* between the United States and Iran, because American–Iranian relations carry heavy historical baggage. However, it is time to bury the past. The liberalization and further democratization of the Iranian political system are in the interest of the United States, as is Iran's reintegration into the security structure of the Persian Gulf, where it is by far the pre-eminent state. Iraq remains unstable and hostile to the United States. Saudi Arabia has become increasingly suspect because of its financial and ideological support for fundamentalist elements (including the Taliban), which continue to thrive on anti-American sentiments.[18]

The Saudi regime is caught between its adherence to the Wahabi dogma, which has helped both to legitimize the regime and to produce Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida, and its political and economic ties to the United States (Gause, 2001; also see Omstead, 2001). This has resulted in immobilism in Saudi policy, most clearly demonstrated in the wake of 11 September, and precludes Riyadh from playing a major role in helping to provide security and stability in the oil-rich Gulf. The internal contradictions within the Saudi polity have also raised questions about the regime's survival beyond this decade. All these factors have drastically reduced Saudi Arabia's strategic worth to the United States, except as a major supplier of oil to the industrialized world.[19] However, with Russian oil supplies rapidly increasing and oil and gas reserves in Central Asia now coming on to the market, alternative sources of energy clearly abound. Consequently, Saudi Arabia's importance in this arena is also bound to decline, at least in the short to medium term, as long as these other resources are not exhausted.

As a result of a combination of the factors outlined above, Iran increasingly appears to be the only "responsible" power in the Gulf with sufficient regional capabilities and the corresponding interest to contribute to regional stability. As such, it ought to be the centrepiece of an American strategy committed to establishing a stable security structure in the Gulf that would protect American strategic and economic interests in the region. The war against the Taliban and its likely fallout in the region should convince the Bush administration to go beyond "limited engagement" with Iran – advocated by some policy analysts over the past few years – and to begin exploring additional strategic areas in which American and Iranian interests converge.[20]

Although certain aspects of Iran's policy, especially its support for the Hizbollah in Lebanon, may continue to cause concern in some American circles, this is not an insuperable problem. Hizbollah is a local phenomenon and the product of a specific context: the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. It does not have the global aspirations of al-Qaida and the consequent desire to hurt American interests worldwide. Moreover, Iran's position toward Israel also seems to be softening. Recently, President Khatami has gone to the extent of hinting that Iran might eventually recognize Israel if an Israeli–Palestinian settlement acceptable to Palestine is achieved (Sciolino, 2001).

Furthermore, Washington should relinquish the habit of treating Iran as a unitary, hostile actor. The rift between the reformists and the conservatives is clear for all to see. The Khatami-led government and the reformist parliament have been at loggerheads with the hard-line Council of Guardians for several years. This has obstructed the government's efforts both to liberalize domestically and to improve relations with the United States, but it has also demonstrated that the large majority of Iranians, who support Khatami and have elected reformists and liberals to parliament in overwhelming numbers, no longer consider the United States to be their enemy. Reports suggest that matters may be coming to a head, with the reformist camp, led by Khatami, increasingly losing patience with the conservative clergy's obstructionist tactics (for one such report, see Fathi, 2002). With a showdown appearing increasingly imminent, it is in the American interest to cultivate and strengthen those forces in Iran that represent the majority as well as symbolize the liberal, pragmatic trend in Iran's decision-making circles. Demonizing Iran no longer serves any American purpose. In fact, it is counter-productive because it prolongs the conservatives' hold on important state institutions by allowing them to portray the reformists as being soft on the "enemy".

Once American–Iranian relations take a positive turn and the reformists consolidate their control over the country, Iran's support for organizations such as Hizbollah can be expected to diminish quickly. In the changed circumstances, they will come to be seen as albatrosses around Tehran's neck rather than as instruments for the advancement of Iran's foreign policy goals.

A major obstacle to the improvement of US relations with Iran is the American suspicion that Iran is engaged in a clandestine effort to build nuclear weapons. Much of this suspicion is related to nuclear cooperation between Russia and Iran, especially Russian help in building a nuclear reactor in Bushehr. Russia insists that its nuclear cooperation with Iran is conducted "in accordance with the rules of [the International Atomic Energy Agency] and under its control" (Boese, 2001). However, American suspicions persist. This appears to be more a matter of building trust

than anything else. The problem can be overcome if the general atmosphere surrounding American–Iranian relations improves. Verification by the International Atomic Energy Agency could also contribute to reducing the saliency of this issue in US–Iranian relations. The bottom line is that, once Washington comes to perceive Iran as a ''normal'' rather than a ''rogue'' state, Iran's nuclear ambitions, even if they exist, will appear as non-threatening to the United States as those of India or Israel. Such an outcome is easier to contemplate under a pragmatic Bush presidency that is not overly committed to non-proliferation goals than it would have been under an administration, such as Clinton's, more committed to non-proliferation objectives for their own sake.

Before Bush's ''axis of evil'' speech, there had been no dearth of semi-clandestine contacts between the United States and Iran in the context of the war in Afghanistan. This is by now well documented (for example, see Mufson and Kaufman, 2001). American and Iranian officials had held consultations, relatively openly, on the sidelines of the Bonn conference on Afghanistan and at the United Nations. These contacts signalled strongly that Iranian and American interests converge more than they diverge on issues central to the stability and security of the South-West Asian region. However, more needs to be done. For example, the United States must lift trade sanctions on Iran and drop its objection to the construction of pipelines to export Central Asian and Caspian oil through Iran. The pipelines would benefit American companies as well as give Iran a greater stake in the health of the Western and Central Asian economies. Iran's Central Asian neighbours, especially Kazakhstan, have been urging the United States to remove this barrier to increased economic integration between the Central Asian states and Iran (Tyler, 2001). In addition, a sustained political and security dialogue with Iran should become a serious priority for Washington. Concerns about Iraq, the spread of Wahabi fundamentalism, Pakistan and Afghanistan could provide the incentive to begin such a dialogue.

In return, the United States can expect Iran to tone down its opposition to Israel, cooperate with the United States in Afghanistan, de-escalate its anti-American rhetoric and, above all, satisfy the international community that it does not aspire to become a nuclear weapons power in the near future. Given patience and goodwill, none of these issues should pose insuperable problems, but neither can all these goals be achieved at once. The United States must learn to compartmentalize its expectations of Iran as well as clearly demarcate areas of agreement from those of disagreement. Insulating the latter from the former will prevent disagreements on specific issues from disproportionately influencing America's overall policy toward Iran.

With Afghanistan and Pakistan likely to be in turmoil for much of this

decade and possibly longer, the United States needs the support of India and Iran to stabilize the South-West Asian region, all three of whose components – South Asia, the Gulf and Central Asia – will continue to be important to it for strategic or economic reasons, or both. New Delhi and important elements in Tehran also realize that they cannot make the extended South-West Asian region secure and prosperous without Washington's help and participation. Prospects for a tripartite strategic understanding among India, Iran and the United States should, therefore, be seriously examined both within the American government and in the wider American and Western strategic communities.

Two sides of this proposed triangle are already in place, though they need further augmentation. Indian–American and Indian–Iranian relations improved in the 1990s to the extent that the idea of India building strong strategic relationships with either or both would find serious takers in the most important circles in New Delhi. The convergence of Indian and American interests has been mentioned already. India and Iran have major common interests: the security of energy supplies; the installation of a friendly regime in Afghanistan (both India and Iran were staunch supporters of the Northern Alliance during its war with the Taliban); and trade with Central Asia, including India's access to Central Asian oil and gas reserves via pipelines traversing Iran.[21] Additionally, talks have been under way between Iran and India to build a pipeline either under the sea or via Pakistan to ship Iran's natural gas to India, one of the largest consumers of natural gas in the world (Mohan, 2001). Common concerns about preventing Afghanistan from again falling under the sway of Wahabi fundamentalists and keeping Central Asia stable and secure have added greater depth to India–Iran relations. Instability in nuclear-capable Pakistan and the likelihood of its fragmentation and/or Talibanization can be added to this list of common concerns. Many of these Indian and Iranian concerns coincide with those of the United States.

Clearly, Tehran and Washington still have a long way to go to establish mutual trust. But, given the new strategic climate in the aftermath of the war against the Taliban, both Iran and the United States have a vital stake in mending fences. India, which is on very good terms with both, and which could benefit from the proposed tripartite security structure in South-West Asia, could be persuaded to act as the conduit for future attempts to bring about a genuine *rapprochement* between Iran and the United States. This is an opportunity that the United States, India and Iran should not squander. It may also turn out to be the most long-lasting positive outcome of the war against terrorism waged by the United States in Afghanistan.

Notes

This chapter is a revised and updated version of my article published under the same title in *Survival* 44(1), 2002, pp. 51–68.

 1. After a week-long visit to the tribal belt, de Borchgrave (2001a), a veteran American journalist, concluded that "Pakistan's tribal areas are free-passage zones for Taliban and al Qaeda's foreign legionnaires escaping from Afghanistan".

 2. However, this does not mean that the United States should desist from criticizing or condemning large-scale human rights violations in India such as those that took place in the anti-Muslim pogrom in Gujarat in February–March 2002, which left 2,000 people dead. The violence was deliberately and meticulously orchestrated by extremist Hindu organizations with the connivance of the Gujarat government, which belongs to the Hindu nationalist BJP, which is also in power at the federal level. For details of the carnage, see Human Rights Watch (2002). In this instance, the American government virtually turned a blind eye to the carnage.

 3. For an analysis that confirms this conclusion, see Starr and Strmecki (2002). For a report projecting looming instability in Afghanistan, see Burns (2002a).

 4. For a general discussion of conflict entrepreneurs, see Keen (1998).

 5. That Hamid Karzai was Washington's choice to head the Interim Administration in Afghanistan and that this is why he was chosen by the Bonn conference was very clear to the participants at that meeting. See Onishi (2001).

 6. According to US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) estimates for 2001, Pushtuns form 38 per cent of the Afghan population, followed by Tajiks at 25 per cent. Other significant ethnic groups are the Hazaras at 19 per cent and Uzbeks at 6 per cent. Detailed statistical data reflecting the CIA's estimates for 2001 are available at http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/af.html.

 7. For the background to Saudi–Iranian relations in the context of their policies toward Afghanistan and the Taliban, see Rashid (2000: Chap. 15).

 8. "Afghanistan FM Abdullah Arrives, to Meet Jaswant", *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), 13 December 2001.

 9. For a sophisticated analysis of the use of Islam by Pakistani regimes and its consequences for the Pakistani polity, see Nasr (2001: esp. Chap. 6).

10. For one authoritative account of the ISI's role in creating the Taliban and maintaining them in power, see Tomsen (2001). Tomsen served as US Special Envoy to the Afghan mujahidin during the administration of former President George Bush.

11. For Musharraf's travails, see de Borchgrave (2001b).

12. This conclusion is based on my conversations with well-informed American sources.

13. It is interesting to note in this context that even "one month after the Pakistan government had agreed to end its support to the Taliban, its intelligence agency was still providing safe passage for weapons and ammunition to arm them" (Frantz, 2001). There were also several reports of Pakistani officers and soldiers fighting on the Taliban side in Kunduz in north-eastern Afghanistan well into November 2001. They had to be airlifted clandestinely to Pakistan when it became clear that the Taliban were about to surrender Kunduz. For one such report, see Filkins and Gall (2001).

14. According to one report, "One promise made by China in November [2000] was to stop exporting technology covered under the Missile Technology Control Regime to countries developing nuclear weapons such as Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and North Korea. China isn't a signatory to the MTCR, but it pledged to adhere to MTCR parameters that apply to whole missiles or parts of missiles capable of carrying a 1,100-pound payload over 186 miles. But on May 1 [2001] a US satellite spotted a shipment of parts for

Pakistan's Shaheen-1 and Shaheen-2 missiles – both of which can travel up to 1,240 miles and carry nuclear warheads – as they crossed the Sino-Pakistani border. To put it bluntly, China is fueling an arms race in South Asia. The danger here is that with Beijing's continued help, Pakistan is likely to succeed sooner rather than later in modernizing its nuclear arsenal with plutonium bombs and thus produce small and lighter warheads, which would result in longer effective ranges for its nuclear-armed missiles aimed at India and elsewhere'' (''Beijing's Broken Promises'', *Wall Street Journal*, 20 August 2001). A very high source in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs confirmed that Richard Armitage, US Deputy Secretary of State, had relayed the information to the Indians during his visit to New Delhi in May 2001 that China had violated the commitment it had made in November 2000 not to supply nuclear and missile-related material to Pakistan (personal conversation with me, July 2001).

15. The US government document available in the public domain that most clearly depicts China as a strategic competitor to the United States is the Cox Committee Report (1999). Also see Khalilzad et al. (1999) and Shambaugh (1999/2000).

16. I have argued this at greater length in Ayoob (2000).

17. Wright goes on to say that ''[t]he most innovative movement in Iran today is the Islamic reformation.... Much of the most profound discourse within Islam today is taking place in Iran's newspapers, courtrooms, and classrooms'' (2000: 137).

18. For the Saudi contribution to the creation of the jihadist/terrorist groups, see Zakaria (2001: 34).

19. The value of Saudi Arabia to the United States in the context of the war in Afghanistan and America's larger geopolitical interests is analysed cogently in Klare (2001).

20. For the ''limited engagement'' idea, see Kemp (2001).

21. For the development of India–Iran relations during the 1990s, see Naaz (2001).

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24

The changing geopolitics of Central, West and South Asia after 11 September

Amin Saikal

The 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on New York and Washington and the US response to them have had a profound impact on the political and strategic landscape of Central, West and South Asia, altering key geopolitical configurations in the area. The medievalist, extremist rule of the Taliban and al-Qaida in the name of Islam has been dismantled in Afghanistan. It has been replaced with an internationally backed regime, with a US commitment to help stabilize and rebuild Afghanistan so that the country will never again emerge as a source of international terrorism. Pakistan, the main sponsor of the Taliban/al-Qaida rule, has had to switch sides to support the US-led military campaign against its clients and to denounce the use of Islamic extremism as a foreign policy instrument. Of the two South Asian nuclear foes, Pakistan has renewed its alliance with the United States, and India has piggy-backed on the legitimacy of the US campaign against terror to up the ante on Pakistan in order to deter it from continuing its support for what New Delhi has called ''cross-border terrorism'' in the Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir. Together with Afghanistan, the Central Asian republics (especially Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and, to a noticeable extent, Tajikistan) have been transformed in many ways into US strategic footholds, which the United States has not had in the region since the overthrow of the Shah's pro-Western regime in Iran over 20 years ago. Iran is virtually encircled by American forces, placing the Iranian Islamic regime under increasing pressure either to come to terms with American power or to

face the United States in a costly competition in the region. Defiant political Islam is put on the defensive, threatened more than ever before with a geopolitical marginalization in world politics. The United States has also achieved a position whereby it has been able to limit the space for Russia and China to be key players in the area.

Yet the role of the United States in stabilizing the area as a whole in the medium to long run is still unclear. The United States has essentially two options. It can be an "over-the-horizon" actor in pursuit of preserving what has emerged as a result of its war against terror in Afghanistan, which leaves the region inherently volatile and prone to more conflicts. Or it can engage each of the regional constituent states in the difficult task of nation-building and help them to bring about structural changes as the best way to ensure the long-term stability of the area. Washington's choice will be critical in determining the region's direction in the years to come.

Changes

Dramatic change came to Afghanistan not because the world community suddenly decided that the Afghans were a people worth saving from the regime that was leading them into an abyss, but because the Taliban and their allies finally engaged in activities that directly harmed the United States. If it had not been for the attacks of 11 September 2001 on New York and Washington, the Afghan people, in all probability, would still suffer under Taliban rule, without any significant international response to their plight. The attacks, ugly and deplorable as they were, brought an answer to the Afghans' prayers. At last, the only power capable of moving decisively against the Taliban and their supporters was forced to act. In the process, it had no choice but to engage the region more widely and deeply than it could have contemplated on 10 September (for a detailed discussion, see Saikal, 2002a).

As Taliban/al-Qaida rule succumbed to American military power, an Interim Administration under Hamid Karzai was inaugurated on 22 December 2001 for a period of six months, on the basis of an inter-group agreement hammered out under UN and US pressure two weeks earlier in Bonn. One of its main problems – the lack of a direct public mandate – was largely remedied by the indirect election of Karzai as the head of the Transitional Administration, and confirmation of his key cabinet posts through an emergency Loya Jirga (the traditional tribal Grand Council), convened in Kabul from 11 to 19 June 2002 in accordance with the Bonn agreement.

The Loya Jirga consisted of over 1,600 delegates, the majority of whom

represented the diverse ethnic groups within Afghanistan. A proportion were appointed by various power holders and brokers. A number came from abroad, representing Afghans living around the world. Of the delegates, 1,295 voted for Karzai as the head of state; 171 for a woman candidate, Massouda Jalal; 89 for a third candidate, Mahfouz Nadaei; and 83 abstained (*BBC News*, 13 June 2002). Despite some irregularities in the election and selection of the delegates (including intimidation and arm-twisting); despite procedural difficulties; despite behind-the-scenes dealings; and despite some blatant external cajoling, especially by President George W. Bush's envoy to Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, who reportedly pressured the former Afghan king, Mohammed Zahir Shah, to withdraw his nomination in competition with Karzai[1] – the Loya Jirga proved, broadly speaking, to be a success. It was the first moderately democratic Loya Jirga to confer indirect popular legitimacy on an Afghan head of state. After 24 years of conflict, it served as a major forum for the Afghans to air their differences. It set the foundation for democratic practices that the Afghan leaders could follow to govern and chart the future of Afghanistan. It also enabled Afghan women, who had been the main target of Taliban repression, to have an important voice in the post-Taliban politics of their country. None the less, serious disagreements prevented the Jirga from creating an elected Representative Council from its ranks to function as the legislative arm of the Transitional Administration – a complication that Karzai could not resolve. This was followed, a year later by a constitutional loya Jirga, which proved to be more representative than the one before it, and which approved a new constitution for Afganistan, setting the stage for a general election.

Despite these positive developments, confidence about the growth of democratic culture in Afghanistan is somewhat premature. Notwithstanding the mandate from the Loya Jirga, Karzai and his leadership team are far from claiming a national base of support. Karzai himself has had no solid national standing. Before his assumption of the interim headship as a compromise choice, few inside or outside Afghanistan had ever heard of him. He was known only to the extent that he had participated in the mujahidin resistance against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s and had served briefly as deputy foreign minister in the first mujahidin government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani (1992–1996). During the Taliban period, he spent most of his time in Pakistan and the United States, where his family has run businesses for many years. He earned his credentials as a Kandahari Pushtun leader when in November 2001 he decided, with US political and combat support, to fight the Taliban. Karzai has emerged as a conciliatory, moderate and forward-looking leader. But he cannot claim widespread acceptance among

either the tribally heterogeneous Pushtuns, who have historically consti-
tuted the largest (although not majority) ethnic group in Afghanistan
and to whose ranks the bulk of the Taliban leadership belonged, or the
non-Pushtun segments of the population. There are many elements
among the non-Pushtuns in western, northern and central Afghanistan
who have strong local allegiances. Karzai has sought to overcome these
problems to some extent by appointing a number of vice-presidents and
ministers simply because they represent a particular ethnic or power
group, but a number have few qualifications and little experience in re-
lation to the portfolios that they hold.

Karzai's power is fundamentally limited. His Interim Administration
functioned largely through the goodwill of the signatories of the Bonn
agreement. The Transitional Administration has also functioned mainly
at the behest of key power players in Kabul and various other parts of
Afghanistan, with continued dependence on the United States and the
International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), deployed in Kabul as
the backbone of any central government for the foreseeable future.
These players have set the limits within which Karzai can operate, de-
spite his pledge at the emerging Loya Jirga that he would use the Jirga's
mandate to follow and protect the religion of Islam, rebuild Afghanistan,
bring peace, security and prosperity to the country and safeguard its
independence.[2]

The key function of the Transitional Administration has been nomi-
nally to institute the democratic processes necessary to establish a pub-
licly mandated government and a stable political order. At this stage, the
plan is to hold a general election by mid-2004. But whether this happens
will depend on the achievement of security and stability in the country,
the setting up of a proper electoral system and political parties, the es-
tablishment of effective legal and administrative structures, the readiness
of the essential institutions to facilitate institutionalized power-sharing
and public participation, and the preparedness of the key players to
pledge their acceptance of the election outcome, whatever it may be.

During Afghanistan's transition phase, there is the danger that national
unity may take a back seat to parochial interests and local hegemonism, a
common feature of Afghan life since 1978. Currently, there are a number
of influential autonomous actors, ranging from powerful Ismail Khan, the
governor of four western provinces, to Gul Aqa, the governor of Kanda-
har, to the Uzbek warlord, Abdul Rashid Dostum, and a host of others,
who have their own personal armies and resources to frustrate the efforts
of any central government to create a national system of governance.
Some of these figures have already come into open conflict with one an-
other, as in the case of clashes between Dostum's forces and those of the
Tajik General Atta Mohammed in the north. Sometimes the clashes have

been so severe that the international humanitarian agencies have been unable to discharge their duties. There have also been numerous instances of fighting between various Pushtun warlords in southern and south-eastern Afghanistan, and of northern Pushtun dwellers being subjected to persecution and expulsion by dominant non-Pushtun groups, as well as a lack of law and order in many parts of the country, especially outside the main towns and cities.

This situation of potential fragmentation is being reinforced by the US tactic of arming various strongmen and according them differential treatment for the purpose of using them to hunt down the Taliban and al-Qaida remnants. The United States has taken the view that there is no alternative to dealing with warlords until there is a strong central government to replace their authority. However, if not curtailed immediately, this practice, together with the ISAF being mandated to cover only the capital, could prove to be a major catalyst for instability in the long run. Hamid Karzai has repeatedly called for an expansion of ISAF's role beyond Kabul as the best way to curb the power of local hegemons and to enable the central government to cast its authority wider in the country. However, Washington had until recently remained averse to the idea, fearing the possibility of getting bogged down in Afghanistan at too great a cost. Yet it is clear that, without the substantial deployment of ISAF outside Kabul, the Transitional Administration will have enormous difficulties in expanding its jurisdiction beyond the capital and the few other areas whose leaders are in solid coalition with it.

One factor that could reduce the chances of Afghanistan again going down the path of political fragmentation would be the rise of an inter-ethnic political force that could cut through social divisions and strengthen national unity in conjunction with national reconstruction and the growth of democratic values and practices. At present, the political will and necessary unity to create such a force appear to be in very short supply. Both the former United Front and the Rome group under the former Afghan king, Zahir Shah, which were the key participants in the Bonn agreement, are now fractured.

As to the components of the former United Front, Rashid Dostum and his Uzbek followers remain distinctively loyal to their ethnicity, and the Tajiks are quite factionalized among themselves. Ismail Khan and his followers are yet to establish close interactive relations with the Panjshiri faction, which is composed of the hometown followers of the legendary mujahidin and anti-Taliban commander of the United Front, Ahmed Shah Masood, who was assassinated by al-Qaida agents two days before the 11 September attacks on the United States. Meanwhile, neither can claim unity with another Tajik faction – the Badakhshi followers of the former President Rabbani. A further component, made up of various

Afghan followers of the minority Shiite sect of Islam, remain concerned about their share in the post-Taliban power structure.

On the other hand, despite Karzai's heading both the Interim and the Transitional Administration, many Pushtuns (whose Durrani tribe, to which Zahir Shah belongs, had mostly dominated the power structure from the foundation of modern Afghanistan in 1747 until the communist coup of April 1978, and whose Ghilzai tribe dominated the Taliban rule from 1996 to 2001) feel dissatisfied with the post-Taliban situation. All the ex-United Front factions, including two Pushtun groups headed by Abdul Rasul Sayyaf and the now assassinated Haji Abdul Qadir, claim to have played a central role in the ground war against the Taliban/al-Qaida rule, but it was Masood's core Panjshiri fighters who formed the most effective backbone of the anti-Taliban resistance. At the end, the Panjshiri faction was able to capture Kabul, lead the negotiations for the Bonn agreement and assume the three key ministries of Defence, the Interior and Foreign Affairs in the Karzai Interim Administration. The faction was obliged to relinquish the position of interior minister in favour of a Pushtun in the Transitional Administration, but it still retains the ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs and dominates the intelligence services. This remains a sore point with other components of the United Front and the Pushtuns, who view the Panjshiris as wielding disproportionate power.

To forge national unity, Karzai has appointed five vice-presidents in his Transitional Administration, each representing a major ethnic group. One of them was Haji Abdul Qadir, the governor of the Pushtun-dominated Nangarhar province on the border with Pakistan, who was also appointed minister of public works. Qadir's credentials as a prominent leader representing the eastern Pushtuns (as against Karzai who is a southern Pushtun) as well as an anti-Taliban force in the United Front and a mujahidin leader against the Soviet occupation were critical in Karzai's political juggling act. However, Qadir was assassinated in broad daylight in early July 2002, which constituted a major set-back to Karzai's efforts to create a stable government and assure the Afghans and the international community of a return of normalcy to Afghanistan. Karzai promised to hunt down the assassins and asked the ISAF to help him in this task, but to no avail, given the limits of his power and that of the ISAF. Some reports named the Taliban and al-Qaida as being responsible, but this could not be established. Qadir's murder was followed in September by a huge bomb blast in Kabul, which killed and injured dozens, and a serious attempt on Karzai's life in Kandahar, not to mention numerous smaller incidents in the capital and elsewhere. Although Karzai had opted for American bodyguards even before the attempt on his life, all this called for more drastic measures to ensure the stability of the Tran-

sitional Administration and Afghanistan, and many analysts criticized the Bush administration for underinvesting in Afghanistan's security and reconstruction.[3]

Meanwhile, not all is well within the Panjshiri faction either: some tension seems to be have developed between the defence minister and vice-president, Marshal Mohammed Fahim, who succeeded Commander Masood, and some other major players in their camp. Fahim is viewed as somewhat self-centred and distant from Commander Masood's vision for Afghanistan. A rift has also surfaced between the Transitional Administration and the Badakhshi faction, whose most prominent minister in the Interim Administration, Engineer Abdul Rahim, was dropped. Rahim had been outspokenly recriminatory towards the Panjshiri faction, accusing them of blocking the former President Rabbani from playing a key role in post-Taliban politics. This is not to mention the differences between the Transitional Administration and the anti-Taliban Pushtun mujahidin figure, Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, who too has no share in the Transitional Administration.

The situation in Zahir Shah's camp is no more promising. Zahir Shah's return to Kabul in April 2002 after 29 years of exile in Rome to serve as a symbol of national unity has proved to be very low key, for several reasons. The king is very old and vulnerable to manipulation by younger members of his family, some of whom have rarely lived in Afghanistan. During his long years of absence, conditions in Afghanistan have changed so much that some two generations of Afghans cannot easily identify with him. There are already signs of a potentially serious rift within the ex-king's camp between those who wanted him to play a central role in the Transitional Administration and those who opted for compromises in favour of Karzai. This is in addition to rivalry between Zahir Shah's younger son, Mir Wais, and his grandson, Mustafa, who is now Afghan ambassador to Italy. This is reminiscent of the debilitating rivalry between the ex-king and his ambitious cousin and brother-in-law, Mohammed Daoud, which bedevilled Afghan politics in one way or another for some 30 years until Daoud succeeded in overthrowing the monarchy in 1973 and declared Afghanistan a republic. The rivalry was instrumental in opening the way for the radicalization and disintegration of Afghan politics, and therefore the bloody conflict and ideological extremism that gripped the country from 1978 to 2001. This history may have contributed to Zahir Shah's final decision not to contest the position of head of state in the emergency Loya Jirga and to rest content with the title that Karzai bestowed upon him: ''Baba'' or Father of the Nation. Yet many of his supporters are unhappy with the situation as it has turned out.

Moreover, although the Taliban regime has been dismantled, most of the Taliban leaders and their committed foot-soldiers and al-Qaida allies

are at large. They may not be in a position to cause a widespread insurrection, but their capacity to engage in guerrilla warfare, hit-and-run battles, suicide bombings and targeted assassinations could tie up the resources of the Afghan government and its international supporters far into the future. Despite the declaration by the commander of the British forces in Afghanistan in late April 2002 that the war against terror had been won, the two major joint US–British operations in Paktika province, codenamed Anaconda and Condor, did not yield the expected results. US and allied Special Forces have found their hunt for Taliban and al-Qaida fighters, who now operate out of sanctuaries in Pakistan's traditionally autonomous Tribal Areas, increasingly frustrating and difficult (Ayoob, 2002: 51). There are also reports that these fighters and their leaders still receive considerable support from renegade, if not regular, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) officers in Pakistan. Although US Special Forces have become active inside Pakistan, their operations remain limited for fear of inciting tribal resentments and for lack of full cooperation from the ISI and the Pakistani population.

Outlook

Despite all the difficulties, Kabul and most of the other major cities are now calm and controlled. There is little sign of the savage rule of the Taliban and al-Qaida; the central government has proved to be more united and popular than could have been anticipated; and the ISAF, along with its Afghan counterparts, has been performing promisingly. Karzai and many of his senior ministers appear to be determined to expand the authority of the central government and to achieve their goal of peace, stability and reconstruction. Yet this calm could easily be shattered if the international community falters in promptly delivering its promised reconstruction aid of US$4.5 billion to allow rebuilding work on a large scale to generate a higher level of economic activity and provide employment for most of those men who otherwise will remain loyal to the culture of the gun, poppy growing and drug trafficking.

The calm could also be affected if social complexities are not carefully placed within a coherent national framework on a long-term basis. Afghanistan has historically had a weak state but a strong society, in which the power of the central authority has been determined by that authority's relationship with the country's numerous self-driven micro-societies. Warfare and humanitarian disasters have certainly made Afghanistan a severely disrupted state. But the micro-societies, shaped by ethnic, tribal, sectarian and linguistic allegiances and the role of dominant personalities, have not lost their inner vitality and dynamism. The post-conflict

reconstruction needs to be managed in such a way as to enable these micro-societies to rebuild and to strengthen organic bonds among the micro-societies themselves and between them and the central authority. It is also important that the activities of international aid agencies, including the United Nations, are regulated according to a viable national reconstruction plan. These agencies should have a "light footprint" so that the role of Afghans in the reconstruction of their country is maximized. Not only would this remove some of the recent tensions between Afghan authorities and international agencies over who should determine Afghanistan's requirements, but it would also help work against any future xenophobic backlash (see Manuel and Singer, 2002).

One of the most immediate problems that faced the Transitional Administration in 2002 was a debilitating budgetary deficit. With UN help, expenditure in Afghanistan's national budget for the year was set at US$600 million. This was a prudent and warrantable figure, especially for a war-torn state with a population of over 20 million. US$83 million of this expenditure was supposed to be raised from internal revenues and the remainder from foreign donations. However, the government was hard pressed, especially in the absence of income tax, to make up its share. The government's main income is derived from customs duties. Yet all the transit points of entry are under the control of various local leaders, who absorb most of the income from duties for their own purposes; only a small amount trickles through to the central authority in Kabul. Moreover, it was estimated that by late 2002, even if the central government succeeded in raising sufficient revenues from internal sources, the budget would still face a critical shortfall of an estimated US$120 million. An urgent appeal was made to meet this deficit at an OECD Development Assistance Cooperation Directorate meeting in mid-2002 (see OECD, 2002; Saikal, 2002b). The response was not very promising.

It is not only incumbent upon the international community to remain vigilant against a Taliban and al-Qaida resurgence and to keep at bay Afghanistan's neighbours (especially Pakistan), whose past interferences in Afghanistan in pursuit of their conflicting regional interests have been instrumental in destabilizing Afghanistan. It is also imperative for the international community to ensure that the central government has the necessary resources to sustain itself and expand its authority beyond Kabul. Afghanistan must not be left in a position in which substantial amounts of foreign aid are promised, but only fractions are dispensed. International donors call on Afghans to be patient. But, unless reconstruction is substantial and rapid, the central government will be unable to defend itself against rising expectations on the part of an impoverished and restless population.

Given the fluidity of the situation, the United States and its allies face a stark choice: either remain fully engaged in Afghanistan for the next 5–10 years, or risk Afghanistan descending into renewed fragmentation. At this point, there is no guarantee that the United States and its allies will stay in Afghanistan for this length of time and bear the costs. Most likely, the United States and its allies will be looking to start withdrawing as early as possible. The United States has committed itself to build a de-politicized, professional Afghan army, but this task is not easily achievable within a short period. Given the mosaic nature of Afghan society and the dispute over who should have the strongest representation in the new army and the size of this army, it will be many years before such an army becomes fully operational. If the United States and its allies quit Afghanistan before the creation of this army, they may find that they have committed a fatal error. Yet, in the meantime, they would need to conduct themselves in such a way as not to be viewed by the Afghans as occupiers.

Afghanistan's neighbours

Pakistan

It is also clear that peace and stability in Afghanistan depend on how the situation develops in neighbouring states and therefore the region as a whole (Rubin et al., 2001). In Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf cannot be expected to deliver everything that he has promised to the United States and the international community. Musharraf's biggest problem is a domestic political environment that could easily frustrate his foreign policy promises.[4] His declared opposition to Islamic extremism and any form of terrorist activities will fall flat unless he effectively tackles their root causes: the out-of-control behaviour of the ISI, which has been a main sponsor of political and religious extremism; the lack of genuine democracy, which would provide for the institutionalization rather than the personalization of politics; and confusion over Pakistan's national identity – whether it will be an Islamic state or a secular state with an Islamic slant. What General Musharraf has achieved so far is largely superficial. If he is serious about reforming the Pakistani polity, he urgently needs to attend to two areas: the military and its raft of intelligence activities. With the military consuming nearly half of the annual budget (which imposes a major burden on Pakistan's social and economic development) and assuming an ever-growing role in Pakistani politics, Musharraf has no rational choice other than to implement the kind of reforms that would depoliticize and down-size the military.[5] Further-

more, he needs to restructure the ISI completely, so that it is no longer a law unto itself and capable of operating beyond what is required of an intelligence service in a democracy. Although Musharraf has announced some measures in these areas, there are many renegade ISI elements over whom he has little or no control, some of whom still remain committed to the Taliban and al-Qaida as well as to various Pakistan-based groups fighting India in Kashmir.

So far, Musharraf has been both circumspect and contradictory in his approach to reform. On the one hand, he has claimed to have returned Pakistan to democracy by the end of 2002 and has taken steps to improve relations with India as a precondition for reducing the costs of the military and its growing role in politics. On the other hand, what he has instituted in terms of democratic arrangements has been seriously flawed. He has done everything possible to ensure his dominance in the power structure and to maintain the military-driven institution of the National Security Council (NSC) as a central guiding and decision-making body in Pakistani politics. The NSC is dominated by military/ISI elements who have all along had a vested interest in keeping the Kashmir conflict on the boil as a significant source of legitimacy for perpetuating military rule and stifling the necessary conditions for the growth of democracy in Pakistan. Should Musharraf continue on his present course of behaviour, the chances are that, with or without American pressure and support, his attempts at reform will come to nothing.

To ensure success in Afghanistan, the United States adopted Musharraf, a quasi-pariah prior to 11 September, as an important ally in its campaign against terror. After being handed an ultimatum immediately after the terrorist attacks, Musharraf prudently decided on the course of cooperation.[6] The United States has rewarded Musharraf handsomely for the use of Pakistan's airspace and bases for operations in Afghanistan. Washington and its allies have not only lifted all the sanctions imposed on Pakistan in the wake of its nuclear tests in 1998, but also promised Pakistan billions of dollars in aid to bail it out of its dire economic predicament and political and social disarray.[7] They have forgiven Musharraf and his colleagues in the military and the ISI leadership for ending democracy, for sponsoring the Taliban, for permitting the development of the Taliban/al-Qaida alliance, and for the tragedy that these forces inflicted upon Afghanistan. They have decided to overlook the fact that, as late as July 2001, Musharraf had vehemently defended the rule of the Taliban as a ''national security imperative'' for Pakistan and urged the United States and the international community to deal with the Taliban directly and recognize the militia as the legitimate ruler of Afghanistan. However, if Musharraf's reforms are ineffective, a military/ISI-dominated government with no intention of backing down over

Kashmir or ceasing its support for terrorist groups will make Pakistan a problematic ally for the United States, to say the least.

The Central Asian republics

The regimes in all the Central Asian republics could become troublesome for US and regional stability. With the exception of Kyrgyzstan to an extent, all the republics are authoritarian. Their social and economic reforms are faltering badly. Public discontent, resulting largely from lack of political participation and worsening social and economic conditions, has paved the way for increasing instability in all the republics, although in varying degrees. Elements within the republics had seen the Taliban version of Islamicism as a potent ideology of opposition, particularly in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, where the Islamic movements had indigenous roots as well as external stimuli. Although the Uzbekistan Islamic Movement may have been scuttled following the death of its leader, Juma Namangani, in the American anti-terror campaign in Afghanistan, and although its counterpart in Tajikistan has entered a power-sharing arrangement with the ruling former communists, the conditions giving rise to public discontent have not dramatically altered.[8]

The United States has been prompt to embrace the Central Asian states as new-found friends, utilizing their fear of a radical Islamic threat from Afghanistan under the Taliban (see Rashid, 2002) and their desperate need for capital investment and high levels of technology to develop their resources. Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have opened up their air bases, where the United States has stationed more than 100 front-line fighter-bombers, and Tajikistan has negotiated for joint Franco-American use of one of its air bases. Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have welcomed American aid to develop their oil and gas resources. Turkmenistan urgently wants pipelines for the export of its gas and oil. During the rule of the Taliban, an international consortium led by UNOCAL of the United States and Delta Oil of Saudi Arabia had expressed a keen interest in constructing such pipelines through Afghanistan at a cost of US$2.5 billion in order to export Turkmen gas to South Asia and beyond (for details, see Saikal, 1998: 119). They were not able do so, however, because of the strife in Afghanistan.

The United States as new regional hegemon

Shortly after disposing of the Taliban regime, the United States decided to put pressure on its longstanding adversary, the Islamic Republic of Iran. Giving no credit to Iran for opposing the Taliban and acquiescing

in the US campaign against the militia, as early as December 2001 Washington accused Tehran of providing refuge for the Taliban and al-Qaida leaders fleeing Afghanistan and of aiding opposition elements in Afghanistan. It contradicted UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who in January 2002 praised Tehran's stand on Afghanistan, by continuing its allegation of Iranian interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. President George W. Bush, in his State of the Union speech on 29 January 2002, finally branded Iran as constituting, along with Iraq and North Korea, an "axis of evil". To enforce the United States' anti-Iranian position, in early May, during a fleeting visit to Kabul, US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld also flew to the Afghan city of Herat, on the border with Iran, to meet with Ismail Khan to make sure that he was not becoming too receptive to the Iranians. The United States apparently felt that such an approach would intimidate and weaken the Islamic hard-liners who control the main instruments of power in Iran and thus bring about a change of regime, to one with a better attitude towards the United States. Yet what has transpired so far is a weakening of the position of the reformers, headed by President Mohammed Khatami, who have had no choice but to fall into line with their hard-line opponents in the face of a common threat from the United States.

The overall situation has empowered the United States to encourage American oil companies to exploit the oil and gas resources of the Central Asian republics. The United States is also in a position to push for the construction of pipelines through Afghanistan for the export of Central Asian – most importantly, Turkmen – gas and oil. An agreement to build such pipelines was signed by Afghan, Pakistan and Turkmen leaders in early June 2002. From the US perspective, this will have two important geopolitical benefits: one is to bypass Iran as a pipeline route; the other is to obtain alternative sources of supply so as to be able to put pressure on Arab oil producers, especially Saudi Arabia, and keep them in line. US–Saudi relations have been strained since 11 September: 15 of the 19 hijackers were Saudi nationals, and Saudi Arabia funded many of the Pakistani religious schools that provided manpower for the Taliban.[9] Although at present the total oil reserves of Central Asia are estimated to be only one-seventeenth of Saudi Arabia's, more could be uncovered in the future.[10]

To what extent is the United States prepared to get involved in the task of nation-building in Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Central Asian republics? The Bush administration has so far remained ambivalent on the issue. On the one hand, prior to 11 September 2001 it repeatedly declared that it was opposed to promoting regime change and participating in nation-building, and it has reiterated this a few times since the terrorist attacks on the United States. On the other hand, in the wake of 11 Sep-

tember, the Bush administration not only acted to change the regime in Afghanistan but declared a lasting partnership with Afghanistan. Yet this change of attitude has been contradicted by frequent assertions that it would be best if America's allies were more involved than the United States in the task of nation-building in Afghanistan, and that it is still US policy not to act as a nation-builder abroad (Rawnsley, 2002).

If the United States really wants to stabilize West, Central and South Asia as a significant building block for a stable post–Cold War international order, then it needs to get involved in the task of nation-building beyond Afghanistan, to include also Pakistan and the Central Asian republics. But it can be successful only if it adopts internationalism rather than unilateralism as central to its policy behaviour (see Nye, 2002a,b). President George W. Bush's combative approach to solving regional problems is indeed disquieting in this respect (Albright, 2002).

Conclusion

The rule of the Taliban and al-Qaida has gone and America's power has expanded in Central and South Asia. This is not to suggest, however, that from now on the area can expect peace and security. The problems of each of the states in the area and US ambivalence over its role in a resolution of these problems will remain critical to the direction that the region takes in the years to come. There are many national and regional problems and forces that could easily circumvent the American victory in Afghanistan and American power in the region, leaving Central and South Asia to languish in its present state of uncertainty and volatility for the foreseeable future.

Notes

An earlier version of this article appeared in *Survival*, 44(3), 2002.
 1. Khalilzad publicly denied having pressured the king, but the fact that he announced the king's decision to withdraw his nomination well before the king's own announcement left no doubt in the minds of many analysts that Khalilzad was calling the shots. This also became apparent when Khalilzad weighed into a debate about whether or not Karzai needed to gain the approval of the Loya Jirga by insisting that the Loya Jirga should have the final say on key cabinet posts. "Afghanistan Awaits New Cabinet", *BBC News*, 19 June 2002.
 2. "Loya Jirga's Mixed Message", *BBC News*, 19 June 2002.
 3. "Security in Afghanistan", editorial, *Washington Post*, 9 September 2002.
 4. For a critical assessment, see Haqqani (2002).
 5. Officially, Pakistan's annual defence budget for the fiscal year 2001/2002 was about

US$3.2 billion, approximately 4.6 per cent of its gross domestic product and around 29–30 per cent of the national budget. But these figures do not fully reflect reality. An undetermined amount of military expenditure is hidden elsewhere in the budget (for example, in spending on communications infrastructure). When this is taken into account, the defence budget for 2001/2002 is estimated at 50–60 per cent of the national budget. The defence budget is not transparent, and two items in the official budget – "defence administration" and "defence services" – represent all military expenditures. Given the lack of democratic procedures to verify the defence budgetary allocations, the military is in a position to give whatever figures it wants in the interest of "national security". See SIPRI (2001–2002); United States Department of State (1999).

6. For a comprehensive discussion of Pakistan's relations with the Taliban and Pakistan's involvement in the origins and operations of the militia, see Rashid (2000).

7. US economic assistance to Pakistan after 11 September 2001 has largely been in the form of assistance through multilateral international agencies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The IMF has readjusted its financial assistance to Pakistan through the Structural Adjustment Program, and it has taken a conciliatory attitude to Pakistani requests for waiver and modification of the assistance through the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF). In December 2001 the IMF approved US$1.33 billion PRGF credit to Pakistan. The Asian Development Bank has also approved loans worth US$2.4 billion since September 2001. Debt rescheduling talks have been held by the Pakistani government with the IMF, the World Bank and the Paris Consortium to ease Pakistan's burgeoning debt-servicing burden. In 1999/2000, Pakistan's external debt was over US$43 billion. Overall, Pakistan receives approximately US$2.5 billion annually in financial assistance from the international multilateral agencies. As a result of the changes in Pakistan's foreign policy since September 11, Islamabad's foreign exchange reserves increased to US$5.2 billion in April 2002 from a miserly US$1.5 billion in August 2001. The US government has promised to provide Pakistan with roughly US$1 billion, as well as waiving nearly all the economic and military sanctions imposed on Islamabad since 1975. See White House Press releases, 22 and 28 September 2001, 13 February 2002; Afzal (2002); United States Department of State (2001).

8. Luong and Weinthal (2002) contains a good discussion of the potential for instability in Central Asia, with a focus on Uzbekistan.

9. For a detailed account of the nature of US–Saudi relations, see the three-part series of articles by Kaiser and Ottaway (2002).

10. At present the proven oil reserves of the Caspian region (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) are put at 15.3 billion barrels. But this is a highly conservative figure. Most geologists would give a figure of 20–30 billion barrels. A report presented to the US Congress cites an estimate of 145 billion barrels for the additional "possible reserves". See Fairbanks et al. (2001: 8); Ruseckas (1998: 47–48).

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Part IX

Towards a brighter future

25

Pakistan and India:
The way forward

Samina Yasmeen

On 16 October 2002, the Indian government announced its decision to
withdraw troops along its international border with Pakistan while main-
taining its military presence along the Line of Control (LOC) in Kashmir.
Pakistan reciprocated by taking a similar decision the next day (*Dawn*,
Karachi, 17 and 18 October 2002). Together, these steps initiated the de-
escalation of tensions between the two South Asian states, which had
reached the brink of war in May 2002. This escalation and de-escalation
cycle is not new for the two South Asian adversaries. They have fought
three major international conflicts in 55 years, engaged in a limited con-
flict in Kargil (1999) and come close to a major war on other occasions
(1987 and 1990). However, given that both India and Pakistan acquired a
declared nuclear status in May 1998, the perpetuation of an adversarial
relationship has caused added concern in the international community. A
number of questions are being asked about the nature and the manage-
ment of their hostile relationship. What accounts for the Indo-Pakistani
hostile relationship? Can the two South Asian states move towards a
more accommodating mode of existence? What role can external actors,
and especially the United Nations, play in this process?

   This chapter attempts to answer these questions with reference to the
negative mythology regarding the "other" present in both India and
Pakistan. I argue that this mythology provides the context for diverse
opinions on appropriate modes of relating to the "other". For a large
part of the existence of India and Pakistan as independent states, those

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who have viewed their relationship in zero-sum terms have dominated. However, alternative voices and perspectives in the two states do exist. These views have either contributed to short periods of ''appropriate'' relationships at the state level, or created a relatively more positive context in which the relationship could develop. The process needs to be aided by outside actors, including the United Nations and the United States but, to produce effective results, these actors must take existing perceptions and realities into account. This, in turn, necessitates differentiating between the immediate and long-term steps that might contribute towards pushing India and Pakistan into a more accommodating relationship. It also requires an acceptance that, although the United Nations may not play a major role in the short term, it can act as an agent of change in the long term, with the prospects of improving the context in which the Indian and Pakistani governments and societies relate to each other.

The context of Indo-Pakistan relations: Diversity in mythology

Since their independence in August 1947, India and Pakistan have related to each other within the context of a ''perceptual blockage'' and the myth of the ''enemy across the border''. The origin of these images lies in their experiences during the Partition as well as the course of Indo-Pakistan relations during the past five decades. Having gone to war three times and against the backdrop of continuing rivalry over Kashmir, each views the ''other'' in a negative light. For both India and Pakistan, the ''other'' is manipulative, unreliable, incapable of rational thinking and aggressive.

This negative imagery is not restricted to decision-making circles but pervades the two civil societies as well. Education plays a major role in the context (Yasmeen, 1995: 2–4). The textbooks used in both India and Pakistan provide selective information to students about the identity of their country and its place in the region. This selectivity is not limited to the post-independence era but extends back to the pre-Partition days. For Pakistani students, their history begins with Mohammad bin Qasim's arrival in Sind and victorious campaigns by a number of Muslim warriors against ''oppressive'' Hindu rulers. Indian students, on the other hand, are generally exposed to a selective reading of Mughal history. For them, Akbar represents rationality and secularism, with an emphasis on mediating between the different religious identities of Mughal India. Emperor Aurangzeb, who is mostly revered in Pakistan, is ignored and there is

little or no discussion of his contributions to the empire. These and other similar ideas conveyed through textbooks have created a situation in which each generation acquires "scholarly images" of the other as uncompromising and vindictive. Quite understandably, these images also reinforce a sense that one's own reading of history is correct and based on objective facts. Essentially, therefore, generations of Pakistanis and Indians have been educated to look at themselves in a positive light while imputing negativity to the "enemy across the border".[1]

The media in both South Asian states have reinforced these images. Historically, the state-owned media in the two states represented the governmental understanding of Indo-Pakistan relations. But even privately owned media shied away from presenting alternative perspectives on the country across the border. The trend has changed in the past decade, but only slightly. Although some positive aspects of the other side are covered on occasions, in times of crisis there is limited recourse to objectivity. Negative images of the other and the justification of one's own policies abound at such times. Even the entertainment industry plays a role in reinforcing the imagery of the other as an uncompromising entity. Cinema is popular with ordinary people, and films about the authenticity of one's own position and the irrationality of the other attract and influence a large audience. They create and reinforce negative "folk images" of the other. In countries with low levels of literacy and a preference for the oral tradition, these images are powerful even for those who have not been formally educated.

Together, the scholarly and folk images have contributed to a "shared consciousness" in both Indian and Pakistani societies that rests upon and draws strength from a demonization of the "other". This shared consciousness provides the context in which Indian and Pakistani decision makers develop and adopt strategies for dealing with each other. As in other countries, opinions differ on the nature of these strategies. They can be broadly categorized as orthodox and moderate schools of thought. To some extent, these approaches are linked to and reflect different notions of the identity of the polity. In Pakistan, for instance, a debate exists on the nature of the state. For some, Pakistan is an Islamic state created to enable Muslims in the subcontinent to realize their true identity as Muslims. This conception of identity leads to India being perceived and portrayed as a Hindu polity that, by its very nature, is antithetical to Islam and an Islamic state. Indian hostility towards Pakistan, therefore, is considered to be unconditional. This assessment is shared by some who identify Pakistan as a state for Muslims. Drawing upon the history of Indo-Pakistan relations, they argue that India has refused to accept the reality of Pakistan. This, in turn, suggests to them a continued uncon-

ditional threat from the neighbouring state. Moderates who approach Indo-Pakistani relations in geostrategic terms question the thesis of unconditional hostility. They accept that Pakistan is a state for Muslims but disagree that religious difference or previous experiences prevent the two states from establishing an appropriate relationship towards each other. The moderates subscribe to a notion of comprehensive security and emphasize the need to engage India with a view to mitigating hostility.

A multiplicity of views also exists in India on dealing with Pakistan.[2] These differences are linked to views on India's identity as a secular state and its meaning for India's foreign policy. For a large majority, India's secular identity stands in marked contrast to Pakistan's perceived theocratic nature. As a state created in the name of Islam, Pakistan is considered to be unwilling to shelve the ''two-nation theory'' or to accept the reality of India's secularism. In this context, Pakistan is predominantly perceived as a unitary actor. At the same time, however, some subscribing to this view add sophistication to their perceptions by referring to institutional interests, particularly those of the Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI), and to Islamists in society as well as in the military. These groups are viewed as committed to an anti-Indian posture and to carrying forward the divisive agenda of the Partition. Seen against the background of Pakistan's claims to Kashmir on religious grounds, such perceptions lead orthodox groups to argue in terms of Pakistan posing a threat to Indian polity, and not the other way round. These perceptions of unconditional Pakistani hostility to the ''essence'' of the Indian polity are shared by some Hindu fundamentalists. Like their counterparts in Pakistan, however, these elements distinguish between the two polities on religious grounds to arrive at the assessment of unconditional hostility.

As in Pakistan, moderates in India have questioned these views. They deviate from the unitary model and accept a multiplicity of views in Pakistan on India. This leads them to acknowledge the presence of moderates across the border who may subscribe to ideas of shared security instead of zero-sum games. Hence these elements are perceived as worthy of being engaged in charting a different course for the Indo-Pakistan relationship. At this end of the spectrum are also views emanating from a geostrategic approach to foreign policy, in which India's security is inextricably linked to a stable Pakistan.[3] A weak and failing Pakistan, on the other hand, is seen as capable of introducing elements of uncertainty that could affect India. Based on this premise, while accepting the history of adversarial relationships and acknowledging India's dominant position in the region, those subscribing to this view highlight the need to engage Pakistan in an appropriate, if not a cooperative, relationship. To put it differently, conditional hostility with a possibility for engagement remains a more effective strategy for most Indian moderates.

The continued relevance of orthodoxy

The presence of moderate views notwithstanding, hawkish and/or orthodox views have remained dominant in both India and Pakistan for a large part of their existence as independent states. They have generally adopted a policy of ''one-upmanship'', with a preference for zero-sum games. The gain by one is seen as a loss for the other, and the loss for the other is automatically considered a victory for oneself. On occasions, even moderates have fallen into the trap and adopted apparently hawkish policies to divert the attention of the masses away from domestic issues. This was the case during the Cold War (see, for example, Ganguly, 2002). The Pakistan government's decision to join the US-led alliance system in the 1950s, for instance, was prompted by its interest in ''nullifying'' the perceived Indian threat to its security. The Indian government responded by declaring that the relationship had undermined the logic of holding a UN-monitored plebiscite in Kashmir. In the early 1960s, the military regime in Pakistan retaliated by sending infiltrators into the Indian part of Kashmir. The strategy relied on the assumption that internal instability in the Indian part of Kashmir would resolve the issue in Pakistan's favour, and that New Delhi would have no option but to accept. This was obviously a miscalculation, which resulted in an all-out war between the two adversaries in September 1965. Five years later, the two states engaged in another major conflict that grew out of the Pakistan government's mismanagement of its domestic political agenda. It was, however, equally a reflection of the Indian government's willingness to exploit Pakistan's internal problems with a view to permanently ending the possibility of fighting a future war on two fronts simultaneously.

The tendency to subscribe to orthodox modes of relating to each other has not subsided in the post–Cold War era. India and Pakistan continue to view each other through the prism of negativity, which results in the domination of a geostrategic approach. Developments in the region are viewed in terms of a regional and/or international balance of power, in which both states attempt either to neutralize the gains of the other or to tilt the balance in their own favour. The emphasis on the logic of balance exists despite the risks that may emanate from such a policy. The manner in which India and Pakistan approached the nuclear and missile proliferation issue in the 1990s is a vivid example of such an approach.

As the world entered the post–Cold War era, Pakistan and India had both acquired nuclear capabilities. Although neither of them actively demonstrated this capability until May 1998, the conception and articulation of their respective nuclear and missile programmes reflected an emphasis on the idea of mutual deterrence. The Indian nuclear programme was explained in terms of Sino-Indian rivalry and the need to

balance the Chinese nuclear threat. Islamabad questioned this link and claimed that the programme was targeted against Pakistan and not China. To counter this perceived threat and retain a balance of power in the nuclear cum conventional field, Islamabad continued its own nuclear programme.[4] This occurred despite the attendant cost of losing US assistance in 1990 under the Pressler Amendment. The policy of ''matching'' India's undeclared nuclear capability did not change even as Pakistan's economic conditions deteriorated. Successive democratically elected regimes in Islamabad acquiesced to the idea of retaining a nuclear capability as the number of people living below the poverty line increased.

The logic underlying their nuclear programme did not alter when India conducted nuclear tests on 11 and 13 May 1998. New Delhi explained its decision in terms of countering the threat from China. Pakistan was identified as merely part of a lower level of the balance: China was seen as assisting Pakistan in its nuclear programme and thus increasing the level of threat posed to India. Despite this, soon after testing nuclear weapons of various yields, some Indian leaders issued statements suggesting that the newly declared nuclear capability could be used to settle the Kashmir issue on India's terms. This reliance on the notion of influencing an adversary's policies by using a favourable balance of power attracted an essentially similar response from Pakistan. Having acquired an undeclared nuclear capability, some sections in Pakistan had been arguing since the early 1990s in favour of moving into the stage of declared nuclear status (Reiss, 1993: 1112). They repeated their demands, using the language of the balance of power, nuclear deterrence and the need to prove the credibility of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. If Pakistan did not respond in kind, the argument went, it would be permanently relegated to a position of inferiority *vis-à-vis* India. This was presented as opening the door to India subjugating Pakistan and imposing its will with respect to all regional issues, including the dispute over Kashmir. This secular articulation of the balance of power was supplemented by suggestions from the Islamists that Pakistan's Islamic identity would also be compromised by Hindu India. In effect, they presented a picture in which countries with two different but dominant religious traditions could not coexist without a balance in the military arena. These arguments for ''matching'' India's nuclear programme did not change despite the fact that the United States had already imposed sanctions on New Delhi following the 11 May tests. The United States had also indicated that nuclear tests by Pakistan would attract a similar response. Given the inherent weakness of Pakistan's economy, it was apparent that the cost for Pakistan would be higher than that for the Indian economy. At the same time, the offer of American assistance if Islamabad desisted from following New Delhi's example would have helped Pakistan economically. That the Nawaz Sharif regime nevertheless conducted nuclear tests on 28 and 30 May

Table 25.1 India's missile capabilities

System name	Status	Range (km)	Payload (kg)	Origin	Notes
Prithvi-150	O	150	1,000	I/USSR	From Russian SA-2 army missile
Prithvi-250	O	250	500	I/USSR	From Russian SA-2 army missile
Dhanush	D/O?	250	500	I	From Prithvi; last tested September 2001; soon to be operationalized
Bramhos	D?	300?	225?	I/Russia	Launched from either ship or aircraft
Sagarika	D?	250–350?	500?	I	From Prithvi
Prithvi-350	D	350	500	I/USSR	From Russian SA-2
Agni	T	1,500	1,000	I/USA/France	Tested February 1994
Agni II	O/P	2,000–2,500	1,000	I/USA/France	Last tested January 2001; limited production started
Agni III	D	3,000	?	I	
Surya	D?	3,250+?	?	I	

Source: Carnegie Non-Proliferation Project estimates, at http://www.ceip.org, accessed 24 August 2002.
Note: O = operational; D = in development; T = tested; P = in production; I = indigenous.

1998 was clear evidence of the power of hawkish attitudes in Pakistan. The need to balance Indian nuclear capability had superseded the country's broader long-term security interests.

A similar picture emerges with respect to the missile race. Since the 1980s, the Indian government has developed a series of short- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles, including the Prithvi, Agni and Sagarika missiles (see Table 25.1). Of these, Prithvi 150 – "a mobile, liquid-fuel, single-stage ballistic missile capable of travelling 150 kilometers with a 1,000-kilogram payload" – has been deployed close to the Pakistani border. With a range of 150 km, it poses a direct threat to Pakistan's security. Islamabad responded to India's missile development programme by diverting resources to developing its own missile capability. As Table 25.2 indicates, Pakistan has also invested heavily in acquiring missiles from the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the People's Democratic Republic of Korea (PDRK) and combining them with indigenously developed technologies (Sachdev, 2000). The main aim has been to neutralize the Indian threat to Pakistan. The Ghauri I, for in-

Table 25.2 Pakistan's missile capability

System name	Status	Range (km)	Payload (kg)	Origin	Notes
Hatf I	O	80	500	I	
Hatf II/ Abdali	O	180	500	I/PRC?	
Hatf III/ Ghaznavi/ M-11	O	290	500	I/PRC	
Shaheen I	P/O	700–750	500	I/PRC	Tested April 1999; solid fuel missile; Pakistan announced "serial production" of missile October 2000
Ghauri I/ Hatf V/ Nodong	T/O	1,300	500–750	I/PDRK	Last tested May 2002
Ghauri II	D/T	2,000?	700	I/PDRK	From Nodong
Shaheen II	D/P	2,000–2,500	1,000?	I/PDRK	Road mobile, two-stage weapon displayed in March 2000
Ghauri III	D/T	2,700–3,500	?	I/PDRK	Engines tested 23 July 1999

Source: Carnegie Non-Proliferation Project estimates, at http://www.ceip.org, accessed 24 August 2002.
Note: O = operational; D = in development; T = tested; P = in production; I = indigenous.

stance, was developed with a view to counterbalancing India's ability to threaten Pakistan by posing a similar threat to a number of major Indian cities. In other words, both India and Pakistan have been guided by a basic tendency to approach the issue in terms of retaining or gaining a strategic advantage over the other.

The Kashmir issue has also been a major example of the zero-sum approach to Indo-Pakistani relations. Pakistani decision makers viewed the instability in the Indian part of Kashmir as a way of "paying India back" for its role in the creation of Bangladesh. Hence, instead of allowing India to find a solution to the uprising, Islamabad initiated a policy of encouraging "freedom fighters" in the Indian part of Kashmir. Taking advantage of Islamization and the attendant rise of Islamic groups within Pakistan, as well as experience in Soviet-occupied Afghanistan, the ISI proceeded to train and fund terrorist activities in the Indian part of Kashmir. The democratically elected governments supported the process by raising the issue in international forums and demanding that UN resolutions be implemented. The policy gained momentum with the rise of

the Taliban in Afghanistan. Subscribing to the notion of strategic depth, the ISI used Afghan territory for training camps where groups were trained as jihadis to wage jihad in the Indian part of Kashmir. The triangulation of jihad continued, despite Indian representations and demands that Pakistan cease interfering in India's internal affairs. The perceived advantage of ''weakening India from within'' was too great for Islamabad to alter its Kashmir policy.

The move from an ambiguous to a declared nuclear status further encouraged some hawkish elements in Pakistan to pursue their Kashmir agenda. Convinced that the nuclear dimension had reduced the likelihood of a major conflict between the two adversaries, they engaged in the Kargil misadventure of 1999. The Indian government's decision to employ its air force in the conflict, the US intervention and the subsequent withdrawal by Pakistani infiltrators set in motion a rethinking of the Kashmir strategy. To some extent, the Agra Summit (July 2001) between Pakistan's president, General Pervez Musharraf, and the Indian prime minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, reflected a realization among Pakistani decision-making circles of the need for an alternative Kashmir policy. However, the summit also became a hostage to the two neighbours' traditional misperceptions of each other. Neither the hawkish elements in the Pakistani delegation nor those in Indian decision-making circles were prepared to agree to a statement that compromised their view of the situation in Kashmir. An excessive emphasis on language instead of substance prevented the two leaders from issuing a joint statement at the end of the summit.

Developments in the South-West Asian region after the 11 September 2001 attacks are also an example of the primacy of orthodoxy over moderation. The attacks had placed Pakistan in a difficult situation owing to its close links with the Taliban regime. Faced with an existential threat against the background of a clear articulation of President George W. Bush's approach to counter-terrorism, General Musharraf's regime took the difficult decision of altering the course of its Afghan policy. Given the linkages between the Taliban and the effects of Islamization within Pakistan, the policy carried the risk of serious domestic instability and a threat to the military regime. Instead of appreciating these difficulties, groups in India viewed the emerging US–Pakistan partnership in countering terrorism through the prism of the zero-sum game. The Indian government strongly condemned the terrorist attacks on the United States but also used the occasion to draw attention to Pakistan's support for terrorism. Washington was urged not to draw a distinction between support for terrorism in Afghanistan and in Pakistan. To substantiate the need for this approach, the Indian intelligence agencies handed over incriminating evidence against Osama bin Laden and the details of training camps in the Pakistani part of Kashmir (Suri, 2001; Singh and Chowd-

hury, 2001). New Delhi also offered the US government the use of its defence bases and refuelling facilities for mounting air attacks against the Taliban and al-Qaida. From Islamabad's perspective, this indicated a concerted Indian effort to enlist American support for neutralizing Pakistan as a viable state.[5] The need to deny India the strategic advantage, therefore, prompted Islamabad to provide logistical support to American forces and access to its airspace. It also resulted in General Musharraf publicly rebuking the Indian government in his address to the Pakistani nation on 12 January 2002. In effect, an international issue was reduced to a bilateral struggle for ''significance'' without exploring the options for cooperation in countering terrorism.

The dominance of orthodoxy in Indo-Pakistan relations in the new millennium is also apparent in developments in the region since 13 December 2001. Soon after the terrorist attacks on the Indian parliament, New Delhi accused Pakistan of harbouring and encouraging militancy (Naqvi, 2001). The Indian government threatened retribution unless Islamabad halted the infiltration of terrorists across the border in Kashmir. It also demanded that Pakistan hand over 20 ''criminals'' wanted in India (Bose, 2002: 2550). Before the year was over, the Indian government had recalled its High Commissioner in Pakistan and stopped land (road and rail) links between the two countries. The Samjhota Express, which had remained in operation even during the Kargil crisis, was stopped (*Dawn*, 29 December 2001). Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) was also asked to close its offices in India and was denied access to Indian airspace (Hashmi, 2001). These acts were supplemented by the mobilization of Indian troops along the international border with Pakistan.

The Pakistan government differed in its interpretation of the attacks on the Indian parliament. Privately, some groups argued that the attack was part of a conspiracy by New Delhi to weaken the nascent alliance between Pakistan and the United States.[6] Publicly, Islamabad sought evidence from New Delhi to substantiate its claims that groups supported by Pakistan had perpetrated the attacks. Meanwhile, Pakistani troops also moved to the international border. Soon, however, faced with pressure from the United States, which wanted to continue its operations against al-Qaida in South-West Asia, the Pakistan government initiated steps to control terrorist groups operating from Pakistan. President Musharraf announced banned terrorist organizations, including Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad (ul Haque, 2002). He also expressed his commitment to finding a peaceful solution to the Kashmir issue. The decision indicated the government's recognition that the strategy of supporting the ''freedom struggle'' in Kashmir was no longer viable, and that Pakistan needed to change its strategy. Instead of recognizing this change

within Pakistan, New Delhi persisted in its pressure along the international border.

Tension reached a new level in mid-May 2002 after the terrorist attacks on the military camp of Kaluchak near Jammu. On 17 May, the Indian parliament authorized the federal government to take action against Pakistan's support for terrorism (Dutta and Ahmad, 2002). Soon, Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee was talking of a "decisive battle" with Pakistan. This was accompanied by the movement of front-line warships of the Indian Eastern Fleet to augment the force levels on the west coast (*The Hindu*, Delhi, 22 May 2002).

These messages were interpreted by those subscribing to orthodox views in Pakistan as evidence of India's unconditional hostility. They argued that Pakistan had compromised its Afghan policy and clamped down on the Kashmiri freedom fighters without evoking a positive response from India. The build-up of tension, for them, was evidence that New Delhi was using the post–11 September emphasis on counter-terrorism to subjugate Pakistan. Taking into account these views, the Pakistan government announced on 24 May that it would be conducting a series of missile tests during the next four days (*Dawn*, Islamabad, 26 May 2002). The mounting tension was gradually brought under control by active US efforts, but it clearly demonstrated the negative effects of the predominance of hawkish attitudes on both sides.

The post-crisis interaction between Pakistan and India continues to indicate the role played by a zero-sum approach to their relations. The developments surrounding access to airspace are an example of this approach. As the level of tension declined in June 2002, New Delhi announced that it would allow Pakistani aircraft to use its airspace. Islamabad reacted to the offer in a cool manner (*The Hindu*, Delhi, 11 June 2002). By the end of September 2002, it had not responded favourably to the announcement. The delay was caused mainly by an assessment in Pakistan that India had suffered more by losing access to Pakistani airspace. Its flights had to take longer routes to reach destinations in Europe and northern America. PIA, on the other hand, had mainly lost access to South-East Asian destinations only,[7] and was happy to accept this loss in the knowledge that India was suffering more than Pakistan.

Alternative voices: Moderation amidst orthodoxy

The predominance of orthodox and negative views of the "other" does not alter the fact that groups exist in both India and Pakistan that favour a reinterpretation of history and adopt a different approach towards the neighbouring state. Moderates in Pakistan, for instance, have a broader

concept of security and argue that the perpetuation of hostility diverts resources from other essential sectors. A more moderate policy, with an emphasis on engaging India in a cooperative relationship, remains the most appropriate foreign policy option for them. Similar voices exist in India. Basing their arguments on the geographical realities, they argue that a strong and viable Pakistan serves India's broader security interests. A weak Pakistan, on the other hand, is seen as introducing elements of instability into the region with security implications for India too. Hence, cooperation and engagement with Pakistan remain their preferred option.

The presence of these moderate voices has been apparent in the organizations engaged in either ''second-track diplomacy'' or ''one-and-a-half-track diplomacy''. A number of groups, mostly from the élites but also extending to the business community and the intelligentsia, have established networks and contacts that enable them to explore the space for cooperation. Some favour a focus on the ''core'' issues separating the two, whereas others have suggested alternatives that improve the context in which India and Pakistan relate to each other. For example, the business community has been active in promoting the idea of greater economic linkages. This reflects the fact that Pakistan and India have engaged in direct and indirect trade that amounts to more than US$1 billion in value.

Feminist organizations have also participated in the process of providing alternative approaches to foreign policy. By highlighting the commonality of the issues affecting the status of women in South Asia and their relevance for the larger development agenda, these organizations and groups have attempted to bridge the gap.

The voices of moderation, however, are not restricted to civil society. In fact, the course of Indo-Pakistan relations in the past 10 years indicates the presence of moderate elements in both states. These groups have played a significant role in preventing their mutual antagonism from escalating into large-scale conflict. They have also brought the two states closer to mutual agreements that add an element of stability. The Gujral Doctrine was proof that groups in India acknowledge the need to improve links with its smaller neighbours. The Lahore Declaration signed in February 1999 is a major example of this moderate approach. The two sides are still honouring the agreement on advance notification of missile tests, which formed part of the Lahore Declaration. The Agra Summit in July 2001 was also evidence, albeit limited, of the prevalence of moderation over orthodoxy. The Indian government took the decision to end its refusal to negotiate with the architect of the Kargil crisis and extended an invitation to General Musharraf to visit India. The exchange of visits between academics, the business community and children prior to the summit and positive coverage of the ''other'' supported by the respective

governments indicated that the two sides were willing to negotiate. The failure of the summit did not stop the two governments from expressing the will to continue the process of negotiation, which also validates the presence of positive elements in the decision-making circles.

Promoting moderation: A role for external actors

The question arises as to how the alternative voices that argue for moderation can be strengthened in India and Pakistan. What is the way forward for the two South Asian states to extricate themselves from the continued hostility? What role can external actors play in the process?

Given the nature of the "shared consciousness" that predominantly views the other as an enemy, the process of altering the imagery requires a resolute effort by those who have contributed to the creation of this consciousness. This automatically creates a problem because the solution appears to lie in an attempt by the "agents" to alter their own "created reality". Although this is not theoretically impossible, such a rereading of history and creation of another consciousness normally occur after major traumatic developments. Instead of relying on such trauma-driven change, it is essential to look at agents that can reduce the level of hostility and strengthen the voices of moderation. Such an exploration, however, needs to take place in terms of immediate/short-term and distant/long-term scenarios. Whereas some agents may be more effective in improving the atmosphere, others may play a constructive role in the long term.

Judged on these criteria, one could argue that the United Nations has a limited role to play in the short term. This stems from the differing views in India and Pakistan on the relevance of the international organization to regional developments. Pakistan has consistently maintained that the Kashmir issue needs to be resolved on the basis of the UN resolutions. To counter the argument that the resolutions have lost their validity after decades of inaction, Islamabad has started pointing out that the Kashmir issue was mentioned in the UN resolutions condemning the nuclear tests in South Asia. More importantly, at the height of tensions in May 2002, Pakistan's ambassador to the United Nations urged the Security Council to "live up to its Charter obligations to prevent a threat to international peace and security posed by India's threat to attack Pakistan" (Haider, 2002). New Delhi has contested the idea of a UN role in the region. It has consistently highlighted the irrelevance of the UN resolutions passed in 1948 and 1949 and argued that Kashmir is an integral part of India. This reluctance to concede a role to the United Nations in lessening tensions in the region was apparent in the fifty-seventh UN General Assembly

session of September 2002. The Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, identified the tension between India and Pakistan as one of the four threats to world peace. He suggested that the ''underlying causes'' of the Indo-Pakistan tension needed to be addressed before another crisis erupted in the region. The Indian government reacted sharply to the suggestion and criticized the mind-set that talked of ''underlying causes''. The Indian reaction indicates that, although the Secretary-General can urge the parties to exercise restraint (Jayamaha, 2002) and ask Pakistan to control terrorism, the United Nations' ability to enforce its ideas in South Asia on ''high politics issues'' is currently rather limited.

The United States, in contrast, is in a better position to deal with regional developments in the short term. This ability is partially a function of its emergence as the sole superpower in the post–Cold War era. But, more importantly, it is linked to the recent history of gradual American involvement in South Asian politico-strategic developments since the late 1980s. Although initially the Indian government was wary of this involvement, it has shown more acceptance of an American role in the region. Washington, for instance, actively worked to limit tensions between India and Pakistan in early 1990. The acceptability of this role increased in the Kargil conflict of 1999. The United States' concern about the prospects of a nuclear conflict in the region was nothing new. But Indian willingness to let Washington play an active role in securing the withdrawal of Pakistani forces indicated that a US role in Indo-Pakistan relations was gaining greater acceptability in India. This recent historical record therefore creates the context in which Washington can continue to play a role in ameliorating the tensions between India and Pakistan.

However, American involvement in Indo-Pakistan relations cannot take the form of mediation. To begin with, experience in the Middle East has amply demonstrated the pitfalls of power mediation even by a superpower. Despite its status, Washington has not allayed concerns of partiality among Palestinians. Nor has it always been able to dictate terms to its ally, Israel. The applicability of a mediatory role is limited even in South Asia. The Indian government has consistently resisted any suggestion of mediation by outsiders, and has favoured the idea of bilateralism. Given this opposition, and despite Pakistan's willingness and interest in securing Washington's help as a mediator, the United States can play only the role of a facilitator. US awareness of this reality has been borne out by its response to the heightened Indo-Pakistan tensions in 2002. A number of senior officials in the Bush administration, including Colin Powell, Donald Rumsfeld, Richard Armitage and Christina Rocca, visited India and Pakistan to urge restraint and suggest ways of managing the crisis. During these visits and in other official statements, the US government was careful to identify its role as purely that of a facilitator. To

substantiate this claim, it has been balancing its criticism and praise of the two sides. Whereas Pakistan has been urged to restrain Kashmiri "freedom fighters", India has also been encouraged to appreciate the difficulties being encountered by Islamabad in reining in the jihadi elements. The United States has also suggested ways to eliminate sources of tension, including the idea of electronic surveillance of the LOC in Kashmir.

A dominant role for the United States in issues of high politics in the short term, however, must coexist with active promotion by the United Nations of cooperation between India and Pakistan on issues identified as the "emerging agenda of world politics". Both India and Pakistan are suffering widespread poverty, increased population growth rates, environmental degradation and an AIDs epidemic. The United Nations can encourage groups from both states to address these issues in regional forums and identify approaches that could solve these problems. The process is already under way but needs to be supported more actively. This will, in the long term, change the context in which Indian and Pakistani societies interact with each other. Indirectly, it would contribute to improving relations between these two adversaries. Participation in the process, however, needs to be extended to non-resident Pakistanis and Indians. In an age of globalization and reliance upon the Indian and Pakistani diasporas, their inclusion in the creation of space for dialogue could be useful. The suggestion is not based on the assumption that distance from the home countries eliminates biases and orthodoxy among diasporas. But the possibility of moderation induced by the Indian and Pakistani diasporas definitely does exist. The help of ideas from those aware of the context and yet willing to explore alternatives may open another space where accommodation can be explored. Ultimately, a combination of international, governmental and individual efforts may usher India and Pakistan into an era of appropriate if not cordial coexistence.

Notes

1. It is important to point out that not all educational institutions subscribe to such a selective introduction to history. A few schools in both India and Pakistan assist students to acquire a broader understanding of historical trends.
2. Based on interviews conducted with various Indian opinion makers, January and July 2001.
3. Interview with an Indian journalist, New Delhi, July 2001.
4. This was despite the fact that some Pakistani officials claimed that the programme had been "frozen"; cited in United States Congress (1996: 11).
5. Interview with a Pakistani journalist, December 2001.
6. Interviews with Pakistani officials in January 2002.
7. Information provided by a PIA official, Islamabad. September 2002.

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India–Pakistan relations: Ways forward

Gopalaswami Parthasarathy

Around 800,000 heavily armed soldiers are currently facing each other across the international border between India and Pakistan and along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir. The air forces and navies of the two countries have been alerted. There is naturally international concern about the prospects of an escalating conflict, which could break out accidentally or by miscalculation, even leading to the use of nuclear weapons. All this is taking place when the United States and the international community are involved in a war against terrorism in Afghanistan. This war has led to the ousting of the Taliban regime and to the establishment of a broad-based government enjoying a measure of popular support and legitimacy in Afghanistan. A Loya Jirga (a traditional tribal Grand Council) was convened in Afghanistan in June 2002 with considerable international effort and a government led by President Hamid Karzai assumed office. The international community has welcomed the establishment of a broad-based government in Kabul, and substantial pledges of foreign assistance have been made for rehabilitation and reconstruction in the war-torn country. However, it is important to recognize that the challenges posed by the Taliban and their supporters have not entirely been eliminated. Violence and conflict continue to plague many parts of the country.

The conflict in Afghanistan has inevitably spilled into Pakistan. There are continuing reports of the Taliban and al-Qaida regrouping and reorganizing themselves in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas

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(FATA) and elsewhere in Pakistan. There is also substantive evidence to establish continuing links between these elements and extremist and sectarian groups in Pakistan. The murder of American journalist Daniel Pearl; the arrest of al-Qaida terrorist leaders Abu Zubaydah in Faisalabad and Ramzi bin al Shibh in Karachi; the attack on diplomats from the United States and other countries attending a church service in the capital Islamabad; and the attack on French naval technicians in Karachi – all indicate that the battle against terrorism will have to be fought on Pakistani soil too. The United States is endeavouring to work closely with the Musharraf government to deal with terrorism emanating from Pakistan. Media reports indicate that military operations involving the United States and Pakistani armed forces and tribal militias are continuing in the FATA. The ousting of the Taliban has also seen the emergence of extremist groups with new names within Pakistan. Many of these groups appear to be primarily anti-American in orientation, with clear sympathies for the ousted Taliban and al-Qaida. Western countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom have taken note of these developments. They have drastically reduced their diplomatic presence in the capital Islamabad and ceased visa and other consular operations in cities such as Karachi and Lahore.

Following the nuclear tests by India and Pakistan in May 1998, there were growing concerns about the possibilities of nuclear conflict between the two countries. Paradoxically, the military establishments of the two countries did not share these concerns, primarily because each country knew that the other had, in fact, possessed nuclear weapons for over a decade preceding the May 1998 tests. Hopes for peace and reconciliation were raised in February 1999 when Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee visited Pakistan at the invitation of his Pakistani counterpart, Nawaz Sharif, for a summit conference in the historic Pakistani city of Lahore. The international community and people in both countries welcomed the Lahore initiative. The Declaration signed by the two prime ministers expressed a mutual commitment to resolve all outstanding issues, including that of Jammu and Kashmir, and reiterated their commitment to the Simla Agreement of 1972. The two prime ministers agreed to intensify the "composite and integrated" dialogue process between the two countries. They reaffirmed their commitment to achieving the objectives of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Vision Statement 2000, which envisages the establishment of a South Asian economic community by the year 2020. They also pledged to take immediate steps towards nuclear risk reduction, to discuss nuclear concepts and doctrines, and to develop confidence-building measures (CBMs) aimed at the prevention of conflict.

The Lahore Summit placed considerable emphasis on the finalization

of CBMs to promote mutual confidence. The two sides agreed that there would be a regular dialogue on security concepts and nuclear doctrines; to provide each other advance notification of missile tests and to conclude a bilateral agreement on this subject; to abide by their respective unilateral moratoria on nuclear testing; to conclude an agreement that would prevent incidents at sea involving their naval ships and aircraft. India and Pakistan decided that measures would be devised to improve communications links and contacts not only between the Directors General of Military Operations of the two armies but also between military commanders, and to consult with each other on security and disarmament issues. Prime Minister Vajpayee was looking forward to receiving Nawaz Sharif in Delhi, and dates for a second summit were being discussed, when the Kargil conflict broke out in May 1999, wrecking the prospects for peace and reconciliation.

A detailed account of the Kargil conflict has been written by Bruce Riedel, Special Assistant to President Clinton. Riedel was intimately involved in actions taken by the White House during the conflict. Riedel states that in spring 1999, around the time of the Lahore Summit, regular units of the Pakistan army, backed by militants, moved across the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir and occupied positions vacated by the Indians during the winter, in order to cut off India's lines of communication to its troops in northern Kashmir. He adds that, whereas Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif seemed ''genuinely interested in pursuing the Lahore process'', his ''military chief, General Pervez Musharraf, seemed to be in a different mold'' (Riedel, 2002). According to Riedel, Musharraf was ''said to be a hardliner on Kashmir, a man some feared was determined to humble India once and for all''. Riedel states that, while Indian forces were making progress in recapturing hill positions, Sharif urgently asked for American intervention to end the conflict in the last week of June 1999. He was told by President Clinton to come to Washington only if he was prepared to withdraw Pakistani forces back across the Line of Control.

During the discussions in Blair House on 4 July 1999, President Clinton made it clear to Sharif that he would be compelled to issue a statement mentioning Pakistan's role in supporting terrorism in Afghanistan and Kashmir if Sharif did not agree to an immediate withdrawal from the remaining positions in Kargil. Sharif was compelled to agree and in return Clinton agreed to ''take personal interest to encourage an expeditious resumption and intensification of the bilateral efforts, once the sanctity of the Line of Control has been fully restored'' (Riedel, 2002). The Kargil conflict, however, fuelled spiralling tensions and differences between the democratically elected Nawaz Sharif and his army chief, General Pervez Musharraf. Sharif felt that his army chief had misled and misadvised him

in undertaking the military operations in Kargil, and Musharraf blamed the prime minister for insisting, after the Washington Summit, on an immediate withdrawal of the Pakistani forces that had crossed the Line of Control. These differences ultimately led to Sharif's ousting in a military take-over by Musharraf on 12 October 1999.

The overthrow of the democratically elected government by General Musharraf shook New Delhi. Despite the Kargil conflict, the Indian government never personally criticized Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. There was a feeling that the Pakistani prime minister would remain committed to the agreements reached at Lahore. General Musharraf, on the other hand, who had refused to receive Prime Minister Vajpayee at the welcoming ceremony for the Lahore Summit, was widely viewed as being the architect and driving force behind the incursion of the Pakistani army in Kargil. Musharraf had also rubbished the agreements and Declaration concluded in Lahore as ''hot air'' in a speech he delivered in Karachi in April 1999. He also proclaimed during the course of this speech that low-intensity conflict with India would continue even if the Kashmir issue were resolved. Moreover, General Musharraf became the first Pakistani ruler to justify the violence by armed groups, comprising predominantly Pakistani nationals, as a jihad. Sensing that violence by Pakistan-based groups such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen would increase with the imposition of army rule, New Delhi made it clear that there could be no talks with Pakistan until violence by such groups (described as ''cross-border terrorism'') ended. Both the Clinton and Bush administrations also strongly urged Pakistan to ensure that armed groups operating across the Line of Control were reined in. President Clinton publicly stated this during his brief stopover in Islamabad on 25 March 2000 after his visit to India.

Relations between India and Pakistan took a turn for the worse in December 1999 with the hijacking of an Indian Airlines aircraft just after it took off from Kathmandu. The aircraft was flown to Kandahar in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. After days of negotiations, New Delhi was compelled to agree to humiliating conditions to secure the release of the aircraft and passengers. It had to release three persons facing serious terrorism charges in India. These included a British citizen of Pakistani origin, Syed Omar Sheikh, who is now charged with the killing of American journalist Daniel Pearl. Sheikh had been jailed for kidnapping American and British tourists in India in order to secure the release of Maulana Masood Azhar, an activist of the terrorist group Harkat-ul-Mujahideen. Maulana Azhar had been arrested in India while attempting to establish contacts with Kashmiri separatist leaders. It was clear to Indian negotiators that there was substantial rapport and sympathy between the hijackers (who were later established to be Pakistani nationals)

and the Taliban. New Delhi charged Islamabad with complicity in the hijacking – a charge Islamabad vehemently denied.

For reasons that are still not at all clear, Prime Minister Vajpayee suddenly changed tack and in June 2001 invited General Musharraf for a two-day summit in the historic city of Agra. General Musharraf's visit to India, which took place on 14–16 July, turned out to be a total failure, with each side accusing the other of being responsible for the set-back. India claimed that all that General Musharraf was interested in was ''public relations'', and Pakistan accused its neighbour of bad faith and of reneging on conclusions and understandings reached between the two foreign ministers. Yet it was obvious that the summit had not been properly prepared or thought through. In retrospect, the expectations raised were perhaps too high and what was attempted too ambitious. But, even as efforts to keep channels of communication open were being pursued and ways sought to create the climate for resuming a dialogue, the cataclysmic events of 11 September 2001 took place in Washington and New York, drawing the entire subcontinent into virtually the centre of the global war against terrorism.

Both India and Pakistan agreed to extend unconditional support to the US war against terrorism. New Delhi was only too happy to join the American-led coalition. The hostility of the Taliban regime to India was obvious during the Kandahar hijacking. The Taliban also freely allowed the use of their territory by armed terrorist groups such as the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen that were operating in Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere in India. When American Cruise missiles rained on Khost in southern Afghanistan in 1998, they actually hit a camp for extremists being trained and prepared for operations in Kashmir. While India has provided escort and other facilities for American aircraft and ships involved in the war on terrorism, Pakistan has allowed its territory, airspace and territorial waters to be extensively used by the global coalition against terrorism. The swift overthrow of the Taliban regime by coalition forces backed by the Northern Alliance was welcomed with relief in India. However, there is now widespread evidence that influential sections of the top leadership of the Taliban and the al-Qaida have escaped and are regrouping either within Afghanistan or in Pakistan. They enjoy support within Pakistan from Islamist groups that had associated with them earlier in Afghanistan. American concern about Pakistan becoming the epicentre of global terrorism was reflected by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, who proclaimed on 30 September 2002: ''Unfortunately today some of the worst schools of religious extremism and terrorism are now in Pakistan.''[1] The general assessment in New Delhi is that the American war against terrorism and the US presence in Afghanistan and Pakistan is going to be a long-term affair. This will have inevitable repercussions

within Pakistan and Afghanistan and on the hitherto cooperative attitude by neighbouring Iran. There is also growing concern that Pakistani nationals belonging to groups such as Harkat-ul-Jihad-ul-Islami, who were captured while fighting alongside the Taliban and released recently in Afghanistan, will turn their energies to fomenting terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

Just as efforts were under way to stabilize the situation within Afghanistan, two major terrorist acts took place in Srinagar and New Delhi. On 1 October 2001, the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly was attacked, with huge loss of civilian life. Then on 13 December a group of terrorists attacked the Indian parliament in the midst of a session, reportedly with the aim of killing or taking hostage the entire top political leadership of India. The terrorists were gunned down, and subsequent Indian investigations established that those involved were Pakistani nationals. After Syed Omar Sheikh was arrested in Lahore for his involvement in the Daniel Pearl killing, he acknowledged that the attack was masterminded by the Jaish-e-Mohammad, a terrorist group led by Maulana Masood Azhar.

The attack on the Indian parliament escalated tensions to new levels. New Delhi responded with a series of diplomatic and military measures. It recalled its envoy from Pakistan and demanded that the diplomatic staff in both embassies be cut by 50 per cent. Overflights by Pakistani aircraft over Indian airspace were banned. Finally, the armed forces were placed on alert and strike forces of the army moved to the border. With tensions escalating rapidly, the United States stepped in to cool passions. Washington assured New Delhi that General Musharraf would take measures to stop infiltration across the Line of Control. It was in this situation that General Musharraf's Address to the Nation on 12 January 2002 was noted with considerable interest and indeed evoked a measure of cautious optimism. In his address, General Musharraf noted: "if we want to normalize relations between Pakistan and India and bring harmony to the region, the Kashmir dispute will have to be resolved peacefully through a dialogue on the basis of the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. Solving the Kashmir Issue is the joint responsibility of our two countries."[2] He added: "Pakistan rejects and condemns terrorism in all its forms.... Pakistan will not allow its territory to be used for any terrorist activity anywhere in the world." General Musharraf also announced that two groups promoting terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Mohammad, would be banned. Both these outfits had earlier been declared to be terrorist organizations by the United States and the United Kingdom.

There was a brief decrease in infiltration across the Line of Control in January and February, immediately after General Musharraf's address.

However, India claimed that there had been a significant increase in such infiltration since March 2002. Matters again came to a head when three terrorists slipped across the border in the Jammu region and killed over 30 people on 14 May. New Delhi asked Islamabad to withdraw its High Commissioner from India and made it clear that it was prepared to take further "decisive" measures if terrorist actions perpetrated by persons infiltrated across the Line of Control and the international border did not end. The United States and the international community viewed these escalating tensions with serious concern. Islamabad was asked to take further action to curb infiltration across the Line of Control, and New Delhi was asked to resume a dialogue with its western neighbour. But tensions remained high and on 31 May 2002 the United States announced that it was withdrawing family members and all non-essential diplomatic and consular staff from India. A travel advisory asking American citizens not to travel to India except for essential reasons was issued. These measures were undertaken after Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Munir Akram, warned of the dangers of a nuclear conflict in South Asia. New Delhi made its unhappiness at these moves clear, believing that this only encouraged Pakistan to indulge in what Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee described as "nuclear blackmail".

Following direct intervention by President George W. Bush, General Musharraf assured visiting US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage on 6 June that Pakistan would "permanently" end infiltration across the Line of Control. New Delhi responded by withdrawing the ban on overflight facilities to Pakistani aircraft. At the same time it reiterated its earlier demand that Pakistan should demonstrate that it had irrevocably given up the "use of terrorism as an instrument of State policy". For this purpose, Pakistan was asked to deport 20 of the most wanted terrorists to India – all of whom were charged with serious terrorist offences. Over a dozen of those whose deportation was demanded are Indian nationals, including those charged with being responsible for bomb blasts in Bombay in 1993 that resulted in the death of over 250 people and others charged with being associated with terrorist groups involved in the assassination of the former chief minister of the Indian state of Punjab, Beant Singh. Pakistan has thus far declined to act against the terrorists involved, even though their presence in Pakistan has been reported, even in the Pakistani media.

The US ambassador to India, Robert Blackwill, stated in September 2002 that, despite the assurances given by General Musharraf to President Bush about "permanently" halting infiltration of armed terrorists across the Line of Control, such infiltration had increased from the end of July. Indian security analysts have repeatedly noted the mutually

reinforcing nexus between the Taliban and Islamic groups supporting Osama bin Laden, on the one hand, and groups backed by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI) operating in Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere in India, such as Jaish-e-Mohammad, Harkat-ul-Muja-hideen and Lashkar-e-Taiba on the other. All these groups have been declared to be terrorist organizations by countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom. Although some of these groups have been banned by General Musharraf, there have been several reports, including in newspapers such as the *New York Times*, that they continue to function under new names, with the support of the ISI. The link between these groups and al-Qaida and the Taliban also continues in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Events since the Lahore Summit in February 1999 have demonstrated the inherent volatility that characterizes the relationship between India and Pakistan. The differences between the two countries on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir appear unbridgeable at the moment. In his address of 12 January 2002, General Musharraf passionately averred: ''Kashmir runs in our blood. No Pakistani can afford to sever links with Kashmir.'' Pakistani leaders have often described the Kashmir issue as a part of the ''unfinished agenda of Partition'' that took place when India and Pakistan became independent in August 1947. Indian leaders voice similarly strong sentiments, with the former external affairs minister, Jaswant Singh, frequently stating that Kashmir is ''the core of our nationhood''. Other Indian leaders have stated that the only issue to be discussed with Pakistan is the return of the portions of the state of Jammu and Kashmir occupied by Pakistan. The issue of Jammu and Kashmir thus touches on the very sense of nationhood and existence of the two countries, leaving very little room for any immediate compromise or solution. If Pakistanis feel that India is still not reconciled to their separate nationhood, Indians assert that Kashmir is just an excuse for Pakistan to seek the breakup of the Indian Union. They refer to General Musharraf's comments in Karachi on 12 April 1999, when he asserted that low-intensity conflict with India would continue, even if the Kashmir issue were resolved.

The real diplomatic challenge that India and Pakistan face today revolves around how they are going to live as good neighbours despite the very basic differences in their national ideologies. This basic ideological question cannot be wished away. At the same time, it is necessary to create conditions in which the two countries can move from confrontation and conflict to peaceful coexistence, and thence to active cooperation and mutual interdependence, when differences on complex issues such as Jammu and Kashmir can be amicably reconciled. The United Kingdom and Ireland have been able to move away from centuries of animosity towards cooperatively resolving differences over Northern Ire-

land, primarily because the two countries are linked as members of a larger European family, within the European Union. During the Lahore Summit, the Indian and Pakistani prime ministers both agreed to implement the Vision 2000 Statement of the Group of Eminent Persons (GEP) set up by the SAARC leaders in 1997. This Vision Statement contains an action plan that envisages the creation in South Asia of a free trade area by 2010 and a customs union by 2015, leading to an economic union by 2020. There is therefore a mutually agreed upon road map to build a relationship of healthy interdependence and economic integration within South Asia. It would be far easier to address and resolve complex issues and differences if India and Pakistan were closely linked and even integrated in economic terms, as the countries of the European Union are today.

When SAARC leaders met in Kathmandu on 4–6 January 2002, they directed their foreign ministers to finalize the text of a Draft Framework Treaty for a South Asian Free Trade Area by the end of 2002. General Musharraf reiterated Pakistan's commitment to this at a ministerial-level meeting of SAARC countries in Islamabad, 8–9 April 2002. In addition to suggesting time-bound measures to establish a South Asian Economic Union by 2020, the GEP Report also envisaged the conclusion of an agreement on a Common Investment Area in the South Asian region to facilitate the flow of foreign direct investment. The Report also calls for trade and transport facilitation measures. These measures are to be reinforced by expanding regional cooperation in infrastructure development, health, human resource development, environment, energy and the adoption of a SAARC Social Agenda. What is heartening is that, despite existing tensions between India and Pakistan, there is agreement on this long-term vision to expand regional cooperation and economic integration. It is important that commitment to this larger goal should not be eroded by either India or Pakistan because of existing tensions and differences.

India and Pakistan have identified a number of issues to be discussed and resolved in order to enhance cooperation and confidence in their "composite and integrated" dialogue process. It is obvious that considerable time will be required to deal with issues that affect national sovereignty and the sense of nationhood of both countries. The progress on such issues will necessarily be incremental and also depend on the restoration of a measure of mutual trust and confidence.

As cooperation, confidence and trust increase, there will be scope even in Jammu and Kashmir for measures that would be welcomed by people on both sides of the Line of Control. The two governments could open travel and trade facilities across the Line of Control and even reduce the military presence on both sides of the Line of Control. As a first step, bus

services to enable people in Jammu and Kashmir to travel across the Line of Control to meet their friends and relatives could be started. There is no reason why, in the longer term, it should not be as easy and convenient for a Pakistani national to travel across the Line of Control and visit Srinagar and Jammu, as it would be for an Indian to visit Muzaffarabad and Gilgit. Such moves could be dovetailed with initiatives to enhance regional cooperation as proposed in the GEP Report. The effort should be to see that Jammu and Kashmir serves as a bridge for cooperation between India and Pakistan and not as a source of friction and conflict.

India and Pakistan can move ahead in a number of areas to reinforce confidence, trust and cooperation during the course of a dialogue process. What is important is to remove misgivings and mistrust about each other in the minds of the people in both countries. This would necessarily involve measures actively to promote people-to-people contacts. Such measures are particularly important for younger people in both countries, who have very little knowledge about each other. There is currently no system of student and youth exchanges between the two countries; it is essential to develop such linkages. Further, the existing Visa Agreement should be broadened to encourage visits by tourist groups between the two countries. As the larger country, India should take the lead and even unilaterally relax existing visa rules so that groups of Pakistanis can visit tourist and historic places in India without having to go through the cumbersome formalities that inhibit such visits at present. In due course, as the tensions abate that at present characterize the relationship, Pakistan would no doubt reciprocate.

With the advent of satellite television, television programmes are widely viewed across the border. Although Pakistan does not currently permit the operation of privately owned television channels, there are scores of such channels in India telecasting news, educational, cultural and entertainment programmes. Even though cable operators in Pakistan are forbidden to screen programmes broadcast by Indian television channels, it is well known that such programmes are widely viewed in Pakistan.

The same situation holds true with regard to trade exchanges. Whereas India has unilaterally accorded most favoured nation treatment to imports from Pakistan, Indian exports face a number of restrictions from Pakistan. Pakistani companies are not permitted to enter into technological or investment collaboration agreements with Indian companies. This is in marked contrast to trade exchanges between other SAARC countries – India's trade, investment and economic collaboration with its neighbours other than Pakistan is rapidly expanding. Pakistan appears to believe that it should not permit greater trade and economic exchanges

with India until Jammu and Kashmir and other contentious issues are addressed and resolved to its satisfaction. But many Pakistani business-men have excellent personal and even familial relations with their Indian counterparts. A large variety of Indian products do, therefore, reach Pakistan through ports such as Colombo, Dubai and Singapore. In addi-tion, there is considerable smuggling across the land and maritime fron-tiers of the two countries.

It is important that both countries make a conscious effort to ensure that their media do not constantly portray the other in adversarial or negative terms. The Simla Agreement of 1972 contains a specific com-mitment by India and Pakistan to prevent hostile propaganda against each other. The current ban on exchanges of books and periodicals should be ended. In any case, in an era when all these publications have Internet editions, such a ban makes little sense. There should also be an effort to promote understanding of each other's cultural traditions. There is after all much that India and Pakistan historically share in music, art and dance.

Apart from the promotion of people-to-people contacts, India and Pakistan can and should finalize a series of conventional and nuclear confidence-building measures, once a dialogue process commences. There should be far greater transparency in the nuclear doctrines of both countries. This would involve a substantive and sustained dialogue on their nuclear strategies and measures to avoid escalation of nuclear tensions by unforeseen incidents or happenings. There are very few ex-changes at present between the armed forces of the two countries. Al-though the Directors General of Military Operations of the two countries speak to each other every week on the telephone, there are no personal, face-to-face meetings. Several measures that can be considered to pro-mote exchanges and direct contacts between the armies, navies and air forces of the two countries could enhance mutual confidence. There is little doubt that the CBMs on issues such as prior notification of missile tests that were agreed to during the Lahore Summit could be concluded expeditiously. Issues such as the demarcation of the two countries' mari-time frontiers can and should be addressed in a spirit of give and take.

The days ahead are inevitably going to be marked by tensions and un-certainties in the India–Pakistan relationship. The present situation could even lead to a limited conflict. But fears that India and Pakistan will un-thinkingly escalate tensions to a level that will result in a nuclear conflict are misplaced and unwarranted. It must be remembered that, in past conflicts between India and Pakistan, neither side ever wantonly attacked civilian targets in the other country. The existing tensions will, however, inevitably have their fallout on the larger global war against terrorism now being waged by the United States in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is,

therefore, important to create a climate that is conducive to holding a meaningful bilateral dialogue between India and Pakistan that promotes trust, confidence and cooperation, even as it seeks to address complex issues such as Jammu and Kashmir. The Lahore Summit showed that, where careful preparations are made and political will is demonstrated, it is possible to move towards a measure of stability and cooperation in the relations between India and Pakistan. The agreement reached during the SAARC summit in Kathmandu on the need to build bridges of economic cooperation and integration regionally is a good development. Pakistan's potential role as a bridge between the subcontinent, on the one hand, and the energy-rich countries of Central Asia and the Persian Gulf, on the other, could reinforce this. For all this to happen, however, both countries need to cease being hostages of the mistrust and animosity of the past. Neither will gain by attempting to shed blood or to inflict pain or misery on the other.

Notes

1. Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz during the inaugural session of the US–Pakistan Business Council in Washington on 30 September 2002; at http://news.indiainfo.com/2002/10/01/01pakschool.html.
2. President Musharraf's Address to the Nation, 12 January 2002; at http://www.dawn.com/2002/01/12/speech020112.htm.

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