Chapter 5

The Alliances and the Balance of Power system in South Asia during the Cold War

South Asia did not exist in colonial times—at least not in the sense we understand that regional label today. For the British, their empire in India defined the entire region and the country always occupied a central stage in the area. Ruled by London, the viceregal centre of power, established in Delhi, had the authority to decide the broad policy framework for not only India but also for the peripheral areas surrounding the country, including the northern states of Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet, the eastern state of Myanmar, the nearby islands of Sri Lanka and the Maldives, the northwestern states of Afghanistan. All these colonies were either British colonies or under British domination. The whole area had, thus, become a vast British empire or a sphere of influence with the decision making centre located at Delhi.

Since the end of the British Empire a number of reasons have made South Asia a preferred label when discussing the region. Topping that list of reasons was the partition of British India into India and Pakistan in 1947, and later, the creation of Bangladesh. Of course, the parceling out of Asia (and other parts of the world) into regional blocs we are familiar with today—e.g., South East Asia or Central Asia—is to a large extent, also products of the Cold War era. Strategic interests of the United States dictated the study of regions after the end of the Second World War. The emergence of the United States, first as the major Anglophone power, and now as a unique global superpower, has ensured that the labels they originally deployed have come to be used virtually universally across the globe. ‘South Asia’ as the description of a particular region is a product of that historical process, even though the category ‘South Asia’ came into common circulation only after the end of British colonialism. However, the disintegration of the viceregal centre of power after World War II, and the final establishment of seven sovereign states in South Asia (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka) did not diminish the importance of India in the region as she has remained a dominant factor in South Asian politics.
Bodies such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) dictate that the label South Asia be used to refer to a region comprising of the sovereign states of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan. Yet SAARC simply assumes the existence of an entity called South Asia instead of defining it. If South Asia is simply an expression of geographical proximity, then why, for instance, is Myanmar (Burma) not a part of South Asia, while the Maldives are? Why do some descriptions include Afghanistan in South Asia, while others, do not? These questions do not have answers we can simply deduce from ‘objective’ geographic realities. In fact, these questions themselves reveal that there is nothing natural or objective about South Asia. Most attempts to define the region are fairly arbitrary, and the boundaries this region encompasses, somewhat uncertain. The notion of South Asia today is a product not of proximity, nor is it based on a shared world-view. Rather, South Asia is the product of a variety of global, regional, and local political processes, which in turn reflect different configurations of power relations and history.

The following section of the chapter deals with analyses of the events that occurred in the region during the cold war to understand the different configurations of power relations and history in South Asia. The second section of the chapter seeks answers to such questions raised in chapter 2 such as whether balance of power was maintained between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The chapter also analyzes the role played by the superpowers during the Cold War period in the said region in alliance formation and maintaining the balance between them as elements of security cooperation as well as the role played by the local actors. However, the entire chapter will focus principally on two nations of South Asia – India and Pakistan – as the superpower game of diplomacy and politics was played here by taking advantage of the tense situation prevailing between India and Pakistan during the cold war, as well as the situation in Afghanistan. As rightly pointed out by Hilai:

“The South Asian region has always been an arena where great power competition has been played and managed. It is, of course, possible to argue that during the cold war the primary significance of the states of South Asia lies in their role in the competition between the United States, the Soviet Union and China for global and regional influence .... Moreover, the major actors of the region, India and Pakistan, were divided in terms of polarization between
the United States, the Soviet Union and China. In this context, India has functioned as an important ally of the Soviet Union and Pakistan has functioned as a broker for the West in relation to moderate Muslim countries in the Middle East and the Gulf areas and in relation to China.235

Section 1

This section of the chapter deals with an overview of the course of events that occurred in South Asian region during the Cold War period (divided into four phases based on time period) analyzing the role played by the superpowers and the local actors affecting the regional politics.

Phase 1: 1947-60

India and Pakistan have been locked in a state of mutual distrust since the partition in 1947. The partition of the country and the problems rising in its wake embittered the relations between the two countries. The existence of each has contradicted the basis of creation of the other. Numerous reasons are cited for the antagonism between India and Pakistan. Apart from the disagreement over the extent of partition, there are differences in ideology, perspectives on regional security, and perceptions of each other. Concerns that Indian supremacy in South Asia is detrimental to Pakistan’s security have shaped Pakistani foreign policy from its inception. As evidence, it cites India’s avowed policy of allocating to itself primacy in South Asian affairs by virtue of its preponderance in resources. Therefore, while Pakistan has attempted to balance Indian superiority by seeking external ties, India has perceived this as a way of upsetting the natural balance of power in South Asia. Since 1947 this state of mutual distrust has led to three wars, numerous smaller conflicts, arms races and crises that have brought both states close to war.

There are differing views on the roots of the conflict, but the partition of British India itself is a significant factor. Pakistan regarded partition as “necessary and inevitable”.

but incomplete (without the incorporation of Kashmir), while India regarded partition as unnecessary and tragic, but fundamentally complete (implying the accession of Kashmir to the Indian union was the completion). Dimensions of conflict between the two states involve territorial disputes, ideological differences and differing perceptions of regional dynamics.

India’s Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru asserted:

"India without Kashmir would cease to occupy a pivotal position on the political map of Central Asia. Its northern frontiers...are connected with important three countries, Afghanistan, the USSR and China. Thus, strategically, Kashmir is vital to the security of India; it has been so since the dawn of history."

While Liaquat Ali Khan, the Pakistani Prime Minister, claimed;

"Kashmir is very important, it is vital to Pakistan’s security. Kashmir, as you will see from the map, is like a cap on the head of Pakistan. If I allow India to have this cap on our head, then I am always at the mercy of India...The very position, the strategic position of Kashmir, is such that without it Pakistan cannot defend herself against an unscrupulous government that might come in India".

The roots of the Kashmir Issue

The British withdrew from India after World War II, and partitioned the subcontinent, on the basis of Hindu majority and Muslim majority, between India and Pakistan, leaving the bitter legacy of Kashmir, which is just one of the major bones of contention that continue to embitter relations between India and Pakistan. At the time of partition, there were 565 princely states in the subcontinent including the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The Viceroy of India, Lord Mountbatten, on 3 June 1947 presented a plan conceding the right to the creation of independent states of India.

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238 Ibid.
and Pakistan; "on the basis of ascertaining the contiguous majority areas of Muslims and non Muslims."\footnote{Chopra, V. D., \textit{Genesis of Indo-Pakistan Conflict on Kashmir}, Patriot Publishers, New Delhi, 1990, p. 1012.} The Cabinet Mission Plan of 16 May 1946 had merely stated: "Paramountcy can neither be retained by the British Crown nor transferred to the new Government."\footnote{Burke, S. M., \textit{Pakistan's Foreign Policy: A Historical Analysis}, Oxford University Press, London, 1973, p. 16.} The Indian Independence Act of 1947, in theory, left the states legally independent when the sovereignty of the British monarch over the Indian States lapsed. But, in practice, such independence was ruled out when the Secretary of State for India, Lord Listowell, declared: "We do not, of course, propose to recognize any states as separate international entities."\footnote{Buzan, Barry and Rizvi, Gowher, \textit{South Asian Insecurity and the Great Powers}, Macmillan, London, 1986, p. 98.} Thus, discretion was left to the respective rulers of the states to seek accession to either of the two Dominions in accordance with the broad principles of the partition itself; Muslim majority states located in territories contiguous to Pakistan would accede to Pakistan and the rest would go to India.

The British left no choice to the so called princely states after their departure, except accession to India or Pakistan. Lord Mountbatten, as representative of the British Crown, advised the leaders of princely states that they were free to accede to one or the other of the two new Dominions as the effective successive powers to the British Raj, at their discretion, with due consideration to be given to geographical contiguity and communal composition. This means that if neither choice was acceptable, they could form independent states. Most accessions to either India or Pakistan proceeded smoothly but there were several problematic cases. On 22 September 1947, Mountbatten, the Governor General, tried to persuade the ruler that "such an accession has given rise to serious concern and apprehensions to the local population" and advised that "normally geographical situation and communal interest and so forth will be the factors to be considered."\footnote{Ibid.} The Maharaja of Jodhpur was admonished by Mountbatten because, the subjects of his state being predominantly Hindu, accession

\[\text{\footnote{Ibid.}}\]
to Pakistan would surely be in conflict with the basic principle of partition of India, which was based on Muslim and non Muslim majority areas.

Kashmir became a vital object of competition, coveted with equal fervour by both India and Pakistan. It was the largest princely state and had a 75 percent Muslim population under a Hindu ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh. The state was adjacent to Pakistan and, despite the desire of the ruler the state would be integrated with Pakistan. Maharaja Hari Singh offered to enter into a "standstill agreement" with both India and Pakistan in order to buy time and ensure Kashmir a measure of autonomy. Pakistan accepted the agreement, but India hesitated, with the plea that it was not the right time for this type of arrangement. The Maharaja intended to exploit the Kashmir issue and was not willing for the state to accede unconditionally to either India or Pakistan.

In the circumstances, the Muslims of the valley began revolts against the Dogra government that spread to several parts of the state. At a popular level, there was much sympathy and support in Pakistan for the Kashmiris. Thus, thousands of volunteers from tribal areas (Pathan Afridi tribesmen from the North West Frontier Province) of Pakistan came to help the Kashmiri Muslims to wage a holy war (jihad) against State forces. The Indian government claimed that Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan (a Kashmiri and native of Poonch), the governor of NWFP encouraged the Pathans and provided petrol, transport, ammunition and food for the liberation of Kashmir. The tribesmen advanced rapidly and captured many towns (Domel, Grahi and Chinari) including Muzzafarabad on 23 October 1947. They formed their own government in the area liberated from the Maharaja, which they named 'Azad' (free) Kashmir.

In the face of tribal pressure, Maharaja Hari Singh, in desperation, appealed to New Delhi for military aid. Mountbatten and Nehru seized on the opportunity presented by the Maharaja's panic and decided on 25 October to send a detachment of airborne troops (by Gurdaspur) to Kashmir to secure formal accession to India. The hard pressed Maharaja signed the Instrument of Accession to India on 26 October 1947 under the pressure of Nehru, V.P. Menon and Sardar Patel. On 27 October, the airborne troops landed at Srinagar airfield and proceeded to beat back the marauders.

243 The Times of India, 22 October, 1948.
Mountbatten, as Governor General of India, formally accepted the Maharaja’s decision and Kashmir officially became part of India.

Mountbatten, in accepting the accession, made a fundamental error of judgement and left behind a bitter legacy in South Asia. He actually violated his own rules when he said "that in the case of any state where the issue of accession has been the subject of dispute, the question of accession should be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people." Further, Mountbatten’s letter accepting the "Instrument of Accession," brought the inflammatory principle of self determination into conflict with the Indian desire for territorial integrity. In his letter, Mountbatten stated that, "It is my Government's wish that, as soon as law and order have been restored in Kashmir and its soil cleared of the invaders, the question of the State's accession should be settled by a reference to the people." Similarly, Nehru also argued that the fate of Kashmir should be decided by the wishes of the people and promised;

"...We have declared that the fate of Kashmir is ultimately to be decided by the people. That pledge we have given and the Maharaja supported it, not only to the people of Kashmir but to the world. We will not and cannot back out of it. We are prepared and law and order have been established, to have a referendum held under international auspices like the United Nations. We want it to be a fair and just reference to the people, and we shall accept that verdict. I can imagine no fairer and more just offer".

1 January 1948, India referred the Kashmir dispute to the United Nations. India claimed that Kashmir had "legally" and "constitutionally" acceded to India, and it was Pakistan that was supporting the tribesmen and committing "an act of aggression against India." On the other hand, the Indian Prime Minister assured his Pakistani counterpart in a telegram on 31 October 1947 that "Kashmir's accession to India was accepted on condition that as soon as the "invader" has been driven from Kashmir soil


246 Ibid.

and law and order restored the people of Kashmir would decide the question of accession. It was open to them to accede to either Dominion then." In response, Pakistan accused India of genocide and on 15 January 1948, charged that the accession of Kashmir to India had been obtained through "fraud and violence." Pakistan also demanded the complete withdrawal of the Indian forces, followed by a plebiscite. However, the Security Council called on both countries to refrain from doing anything "which might aggravate the situation." It also established a UN Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) which failed to implement all the elements of the resolution but was successful in reaching a ceasefire which went into effect on 1 January 1949. The ceasefire went down in history as a turning point in South Asian politics, because it failed to neutralize India and Pakistan and merely provided a breathing spell.

On July 6, 1951, Nehru in a report to the All India Congress Committee stated:

"People seem to forget that Kashmir is not a commodity of sale or to be bartered. It has individual existence and its people must be the final arbiters of their future." However, following Pakistan's joining of the US-led Baghdad Pact in April 1954, and the South East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) in September 1956, Nehru reversed his position on plebiscite as he considered this decision by Pakistan as inimical to India's interest as a nonaligned state. He argued that Pakistan's alliance with the United States, rendered all plebiscite agreements in Kashmir obsolete. Subsequently, following the February 1954 States' Constituent Assembly's declaration that Kashmir's accession to India was final, India took the position that the Assembly's action was equivalent to a plebiscite. Based on that position it informed the Security Council that the issue of Kashmir was “finally settled” notwithstanding that Pakistan and the Council rejected that assertion. The Security Council met in January 1957 and reaffirmed its earlier resolutions that required a plebiscite. In February of that year,

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249 Ibid.

the council authorized its President Gunnar Jarring to mediate between India and Pakistan on the proposals of demilitarization and plebiscite. But like his predecessors, Jarring did not have any success during his visit to the region and proposed to the Council in April that the issue be referred to arbitration, which Pakistan accepted, but India rejected. In September following Pakistan Prime Minister Sir Feroz Khan Noon’s declaration that his country was willing to withdraw its troops from Kashmir to meet India’s preconditions, the Security Council once again sent Frank Graham to the area. He tried to secure an agreement between India and Pakistan but to no avail as India again rejected it. In March 1958, Graham submitted a report to the Security Council recommending that it arbitrate the dispute but as usual India rejected the proposal. From the mid-1950s onward, the Soviet Union rescued India by its frequent vetoes in the United Nations. Since then, the issue practically died in the Security Council until it was again raised in 1963 and 1965. Surprisingly, the Indo-Pak borders remained mostly quiet during the period 1949-65, despite the non-resolution of the conflict. In 1965, however, India and Pakistan fought another war.

Thus since the state’s inception the primary objective of Pakistan’s foreign policy has been to preserve its territorial integrity and security, which have been in jeopardy. A major focus in Pakistan’s foreign policy is the continuing quest for security against India, its large, more powerful, and generally hostile neighbor. Pakistan sought security through outside alliances. The new nation painstakingly worked on building a relationship with the United States and China, in which the obligations of both sides were clearly defined. On the other hand despite its hostile relations with Pakistan, India did not become member of any alliance system of the superpowers as means of security cooperation against Pakistan and took a neutral stand by adopting the non-alignment policy during the cold war. This, however, did not mean that India had no relations with the United States or the Soviet Union as well as China, a major communist power in Asia (if not a superpower during the cold war period). Thus to understand the power equation in South Asia during the initial phases of the cold war it is necessary to analyze the foreign policies of both India and Pakistan pursued from 1947 to 1960.

\[251\] Ibid.
India’s foreign policy

In 1947 India, as a newly independent state, decided to pursue a policy of nonalignment, which meant that it would not join military alliances created by either of the two superpowers. This policy was derived from its desire to pursue an independent foreign policy free of external influence and the realization that the developmental needs of a newly independent state would not permit heavy defense expenditure. Moreover, Indian leaders, particularly Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister and primary architect of India’s foreign policy, hoped that India would be able to acquire an international political and moral role by abstaining from bloc politics. However, this did not mean that it would steer a course equidistant from the two superpowers. Rather, it meant that New Delhi asserted the right to pursue its own interests, free from external domination. This policy enabled India to stand back from the ideological fray between the two superpowers and to play a global role disproportionate to its military might and economic prowess. India’s ostensible strength lay in the power of moral suasion. It spoke for the recently decolonized world, most of which was composed of non industrialized countries. It sought to promote global disarmament, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and economic development.

India was one of the major architects of the policy of nonalignment, and has remained one of the leading members of the NAM. The first and second Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi in 1947 and 1949 respectively, and the Bandung Conference of 1955, were major steps in this process of developing Asian solidarity to which Nehru attached so much importance. Nehru’s main determination was to remain ideologically independent, in a world torn into two vast and ideologically opposed blocs, and thereby promoting Asian solidarity. This was regarded as the policy of nonalignment which can be best understood from the following observation of Nehru in the Indian parliament in 1955:

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"The world seems to be divided into two mighty camps, the communist and the anti-communist, and either party cannot understand how anyone can be foolish enough not to line up with itself. That just shows how little understanding these people have of the mind of Asia. Talking of India only, and not all Asia, we have fairly clear ideas about our political and economic structure. We function in this country under a Constitution which may be described as a parliamentary democracy. It has not been imposed upon us. We propose to continue with it. We do not intend changing it. We intend to function on the economic plane, too in our own way. With all respects to some Hon. Members opposite, we have no intention to turn communists. At the same time, we have no intention of being dragooned in any other direction.... We have chosen our path and we propose to go along it, and to vary it as and when we choose, not at somebody’s dictate or pressure; and we are not afraid of any other country imposing its will upon us by military methods or any other methods.... Our thinking and our approach do not fit in with this great crusade of communism or crusade of anti-communism."\(^{254}\)

Thus with this viewpoint Nehru along with other Asian leaders\(^{255}\) launched the nonaligned movement with its first Summit Conference being held at Belgrade in 1961. A major objective of NAM was to resist the hegemonic military, political and economic strategy of the Western powers, from whose imperialism the Third World countries had only recently freed themselves. However, question now arises how far India was actually committed to the principle of non alignment and remained neutral towards bloc politics during the Cold War period. In words of Sumit Ganguly:

"... India did not pursue its policy of nonalignment in complete good faith. In practice, New Delhi rarely followed an independent foreign policy. The principal architect of India’s foreign policy, Jawaharlal Nehru, who was prime minister from independence in 1947 until 1964, was far more prone to criticize the shortcomings of the United States and the Atlantic Alliance than the


\(^{255}\) Asian leaders included the leaders of Third World countries such as Tito of Yugoslavia, Nasser of Egypt and Sukarno of Indonesia.
malfeasances of the Soviet bloc. Nehru’s propensity to overlook the many shortcomings of the Soviet Union stemmed from his strong anti colonial sentiments. And the Soviets, in his view, were sympathetic to the aspirations of the Third World. He also had profound misgivings about unbridled, American-style capitalism as an appropriate mode of economic development for the recently decolonized world. ²⁵⁶

But Dr. Arun Kumar Banerji in his article wrote:

“Both because of the Soviet antipathy towards India and the latter’s close economic ties with the West, particularly Britain, India’s non-alignment policy, in the initial years was tilted towards the West. Despite his earlier disappointments with the US government, .... Once he became India’s Prime Minister, he looked to the West, to the US in particular, for economic and technical assistance for India’s economic development and expected a better appreciation of India’s quest for an independent role in foreign affairs.” ²⁵⁷

Thus to analyze whether India was truly committed to the policy of non alignment or was tilted towards either of the two superpowers as well as her relations with China, a major communist power in Asia, during the initial phase of the cold war, it is necessary to make in depth study of India’s foreign relations during this phase.

India-US relations:

“As the world’s largest democracies, as pluralist societies, as market economies, and – dare one say it – as anti-Communists countries, the interests and approaches of India and the United States have converged for most of the Cold War. Yet contention usually bested convergence. Why? ²⁵⁸


For quite a long time, like their geographical positions on earth, exactly opposite to each other, India and America had remained oblivious or rather opposite to each other. Initially, India had never been a major concern to the United States prior to 1947 as Britain, the erstwhile colonial power, resented any US interference in Indian affairs. So when the British Empire in India was liquidated the United States had been called upon, virtually overnight, to establish diplomatic relations with the two newly independent states – India and Pakistan. As India and Pakistan had developed mutually antagonistic relations almost since the time of their independence, crafting a policy that would have satisfied the hopes and aspirations of both these states required diplomatic skill and political acumen that the United States lacked. Thus on the one hand the relationship between the United States and Pakistan had always been cordial, on the other hand, as commented by B.R.Nanda,

“Despite the similarity of democratic political set up and dedication to liberal democratic values, Indo-American relations have remained without warmth ever since the independence of India.”

The US policy towards the India-Pakistan conflict over Kashmir, at the initial stages was considerably influenced by British thinking. Thus when India took the Kashmir question to the Security Council in January 1948, she found to her bitter resentment, the United States in company with Britain taking an attitude hostile to her just stand. Although in 1949 Nehru visited the United States, his visit failed to produce any concrete or tangible result and the Indo-US relations over the last five decades continued depicting a story of mutual distrust and disagreements.

In late 1940s and early 1950s there were sharp differences in opinion between India and the United States on various international issues. The Indonesian question was the first in which the differences in the attitude of India and the United States appeared clearly. India invited on January 1, 1949 thirteen countries to consider the issue of Indonesian freedom. It also criticized the Western European Union and the United States for indirectly helping the Netherlands and taking a retrograde stand. Another international issue on which opinions of India and the United States differed was in 1949 when China emerged as a Communist state, India decided to give full

recognition to China. This decision was thoroughly resented and opposed by the Americans because they felt that this was against the American policy of Containment of Communism. As such, China came to be a disturbing and hindering factor in Indo-US relations. In 1950, Indo-US views again reflected strong differences and this time in respect of the Korean War. To begin with, India joined America in describing North Korea as the aggressor. However, later on when America tried to use the Korean crisis as a cover for opposing communist China (as reflected in the American’s decision to cross the 38th parallel in Korea), India came out with opposition to American decision and also did not hesitate to oppose the US backed “Uniting for Peace Resolution”. Moreover Nehru talked of admitting Red China to the United Nations which further infuriated the United States. Thus the Korean crisis made the Indo-US relations strained. The Indo-US relations further soured when in June 1951 India refused to join the San Francisco Conference which America had summoned for negotiating a peace treaty with Japan. The Indian government explained to the US the reasons of inability to participate in the Conference: First, the terms of the Treaty should give Japan a position of honour and equality with her counterparts and second, the Treaty should be so framed as to allow other countries as China and Russia to subscribe it sooner or later, for no Far East settlement can be made without the inclusion of these countries. In 1951, India sought US economic assistance and food and the US President Truman took prompt action and America provided valuable food and economic aid to India. But in 1952 when Eisenhower became the President of the United States, cold war and power politics through the device of military alliance came to dominate the US foreign policy. This was much opposed to Indian non-alignment which regarded Cold War and military alliances as dangerous instruments. Hence, the Indo-US relations during the Eisenhower period could not cover much ground towards the establishment of very cooperative bilateral relations between the two countries. But Pakistani acceptance of US military alliances led to cooperative and friendly relations between them. In fact Pakistan’s pro-US stand was reflected in 1950 when Pakistan’s Prime Minister Liaquat Ali visited the United States where he assured the US senate that Pakistan both

\[260\] Ibid, p.279.
supported and admired the Americans. The relation between the two countries further improved when Pakistani President Ayub Khan visited Washington and assured the US government that Pakistan was willing to act as ‘one of the Chief Asian bastions for the United States.’ This was soon followed by the US-Pakistan military alliance in 1954 (SEATO and CENTO) which led to further soured India’s relation with the United States.

In 1956, Nehru undertook a second tour of the United States and tried to strengthen the Indo-US friendship and relations. However, even this visit failed to produce any major result except the US agreement to provide aid to India. In 1956, India showed her appreciation for the more mature American stand on the Suez Crisis and there appeared some improvement in Indo-US relations. However, the Indian refusal to criticize Russian intervention in Hungary and the Indian opposition to American involvement in Lebanon in Middle East produced unhealthy effects and Indo-US relations failed to develop the expected warmth.

In 1959, Eisenhower visited India and during his visit the hope for improvements in the Indo-US relations were once again raised. By this time, India had become concerned with growing Chinese menace on her northern borders and felt the necessity of cultivating friendship with America. The year 1960 was a turning point in the Indo-US relations. During this time Kennedy became the new President of the United States. Kennedy was a bitter critique of military aid and alliance with Pakistan and an ardent supporter of massive aid programme to India. In May 1960, India and the United States entered into PL-80 agreement under which the US agreed to supply foodgrains to India against rupee payment and low interest. In June 1960, the US government announced that India would be provided 29 C-119 Flying Boxcar transport planes. Thus Pakistan started losing confidence in the friendship of the Americans and proceeded towards normalizing relations with the Soviet Union and China.

India-USSR relation:

“Since its inception in 1917, the Soviet Union supported the anti colonialist aspirations of the Indian people as part of its strategy to fight imperialism and promote Communist values. Both political cultures had much in common, and subsequent Soviet support for India as an independent state (since 1947) laid
the groundwork for the fostering of a relationship of trust and mutual respect. 261

India and Russia enjoyed close strategic relationship during the major duration of the Cold War. The relationship was a comprehensive one embracing political, military, cultural and economic cooperation and exchanges. Initially, the United States tried to co-opt India as a major partner in the South Asian subcontinent, and extended official invitation to the Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, to visit USA, who did pay a visit to the US in 1949. However, under Mr. Nehru’s purported role of being a fully independent and a non-aligned leader, India fought in the Korean war in the 1950s, gave unstinted support for China during the early 1950s, and was unwilling to align itself with the US in the latter’s attempt to counter and contain the communist threat emanating from China and the Soviet Union, which then distanced it from the US. Moreover, Nehru’s visit to Peking in 1954, and his acceptance of the Soviet invitation to go to the Soviet Union ultimately turned the US attention towards its neighbour Pakistan, which was destined to play a major role as the ‘most allied ally’ of the US in the Asian region. This backdrop of the developing Pakistan-US relations helped both the Soviet Union and India in coming together for strategic reasons.

The history of Indo-Soviet relations can be described as a friendship purely based on Indian needs, Soviet opportunism, and Western ambivalence. Despite their differing philosophies, and political and social systems, the two countries cooperated closely throughout the Cold War era.

South Asia has always occupied a central place in Soviet diplomacy. Since the end of the World War II, most of the Soviet aid and political endeavours were concerned with Asia and other parts of the Third World. Initially, the Soviet Union was lukewarm towards India for which two factors could be cited. India’s decision in April 1949, to remain within the Commonwealth, in contravention to its past declarations of abhorrence towards the Western world, and Indian Prime Minister, Jawahar Lal Nehru’s, announcement on May 7, 1949, that he had accepted an invitation to visit the United States in October of that year.

However, things took a different turn when on February 25, 1954, US President Eisenhower announced his government’s decision to provide arms to Pakistan. A month later, Pakistan and the US signed a mutual defense assistance agreement. Some four months later, Pakistan joined the US sponsored military pact, the SEATO, and subsequently the CENTO in 1955. This agreement brought a radical change in South Asia - for these agreements assured Pakistan the supply of sophisticated military hardware and economic aid in larger quantity from a superpower.

The new situation alarmed New Delhi, which, since its independence, was envisaging a greater regional role, if not a global one, for itself. In solving the Kashmir dispute with Pakistan, and later with China over northeastern Ladakh and the Aksai Chin of the Kashmir state and over the Mc Mohan line, which demarcates the eastern border of China and India, had forced the regional countries to look towards India with suspicion. The situation forced New Delhi to undertake an expansion of its military establishment and to find ways and means of offsetting the additional diplomatic strength gained by Pakistan. It also provided Moscow with an opportunity to develop its relations with New Delhi, since Soviet Union could not tolerate the US presence in its backyard. Such a political line was understandable, since India with her big size and strategic location was politically stable and industrially more developed than the other countries of the region. Furthermore, the USSR could use India’s status as a leader of the Non-aligned Movement to bolster Soviet policy in the Third World. Thus, a closer cooperation with India could make it relatively easier for the Soviet Union to forestall the influence of unfriendly major powers in the area. India and the Soviet Union, therefore, tended to pursue similar policies by holding that US military aid to Pakistan increased tension in South Asia. Against this background, India and Soviet Union exchanged military Attaches, who were assigned their respective positions in the embassies in Moscow and New Delhi. In 1955, Nehru’s visit to Russia and the return visit of the Soviet leaders Khrushchev and Bulganin to India further strengthened the relations between the two countries.

However, it was when the Sino-Soviet and Sino-Indian relations began to deteriorate in 1959-1960, that the Soviets began investing in military aid to India, to enable it to

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stand up to the People’s Republic of China, and to prop up an influential India to counter any Chinese influence in the region. The other motive behind this was to maintain the balance of power in the area, and to offset the Pakistan-China strategic nexus, which had started to develop following Sino-Indian War of 1962.

India-China relations:

India’s attitude to China, in the early years of independence, was influenced by the idea of a resurgent Asianism that would sweep away the last vestiges of colonialism and imperialism. On a number of occasions, immediately before and after independence, Nehru referred to the spirit of Asianism and the rightful role the Asian nations should play in influencing the course of history. In his broadcast to the nation as Vice President of the Interim Government on 7 September, 1946, Nehru made friendly references to China and expressed the hope that this friendship will endure and develop further.263

Thus by the time India became independent, a level of understanding was established between the leaders of the two states. In fact, India was one of the first non-communist nations to recognize the new Communist government (under Mao Tsetung) in Beijing. In fact Nehru urged the leaders of other states to recognize the government of China and to accord to the People’s Republic its rightful place in the United Nations. But in 1950 when Chinese armed forces marched into Tibet created anger in India. However, after initial protests, India accepted ‘the reality of China’s presence in Tibet, and expected that this would pave the way for the development of better understandings in India-China relations.’264 Four years after the entry of Chinese forces in Tibet, China’s position was consecrated through the India-China Agreement on the Tibet region of China in 1954, which, in its preamble enunciated the five principles of peaceful coexistence or Panchsheel. The friendship ties between India and China was further strengthened with exchange of visits by the leaders of the two states — Zhou En-Lai’s visit to India in 1954 and 1956, and Nehru’s visit to China in 1954.

263 Banerji, Arun Kumar, & Bhattacharya, Purusottam,, People’s Republic of China at fifty, Lancer’s, New Delhi, 2001, p.28.

264 Ibid, p.29.
Within five years from the signing of the India-China Agreement on Tibet, border became the subject of dispute between the two states. The basic Chinese position on the border question was that the Sino-Indian boundary has never been formally delimited and historically no treaty or agreement has been concluded between the Chinese central government and the Government of India. Since there was no agreement about the extent of the border, or its alignment, border disputes increased rapidly and in 1959 there occurred border skirmishes near Kongka Pass in the western sector and Longju in the east. Thus Sino-Indian relations gradually started deteriorating and the process was further accelerated by the parallel developments in Sino-Soviet relations. The rift between the two communist states cast its shadow on India-China relations, as the Chinese resented the Soviet Union’s attitude of benevolent neutrality on Sino-Indian border dispute. The Chinese were suspicious of the growing amity in Indo-Soviet relations demonstrated by the Indian government’s decision to enter a deal with the Soviet Union to purchase and manufacture, under licence, the MIG-21s. The situation further worsened when India failed to renew the India-China Agreement on Tibet in 1962. Such a tense situation between the two countries finally culminated in the breaking of war between India and China in 1962. Thus Nehru told to the parliament:

"It is sad to think that we in India, who have ...sought the friendship of China, and treated them with courtesy and consideration and pleaded their cause in the councils of the world, should now ourselves be victims of a new imperialism and expansion by a country which says it is against all imperialism."265

Thus, during this phase of the cold war although India remained committed to the principle of non-alignment, a cordial relation between India and Soviet Union was maintained. Initially India maintained friendly relation with another major communist power, China which gradually turned into a hostile one at the end of 1950s. Indo-US relations on the other hand remained without warmth with slight improvements only during the Kennedy period. Overall India remained neutral, not belonging to any of the superpower blocs, while diplomatically maintaining close relations with the Soviet Union, without being a part of the Communist camp.

**Pakistan’s foreign policy**

Pakistan's foreign policy has been marked by a complex balancing process – the result of its history, religious heritage and geographic position. A major focus in Pakistan's foreign policy is the continuing quest for security against India, the primary objective of that policy being preserving Pakistan’s territorial integrity and security, which have been in jeopardy since the state’s inception. Pakistan’s security policy aims at maintaining the territorial integrity of the Pakistani state. Cobbled together from a number of Muslim-majority states in British India, Pakistan was at its inception a truncated state, with its eastern and western wings separated by over a thousand miles of Indian territory. Born out of communal disagreement between Muslims and Hindus, the fledging state was apprehensive that India would try to reabsorb Pakistan at some later date.266 This is because India’s natural advantages in size, population, industrial development, economic reliance, and defense forces inhibit Pakistan’s capacity to deter any aggression purely on its own strength. This imbalance has played a major role in the foreign-policy calculations of Pakistan’s strategists, who have sought to correct it by allying with external powers.

In trying to address the question of Pakistan’s inferiority vis-à-vis India, Pakistan had turned to the West rather than to the Soviet bloc. There are several reasons for this. The nature of the Pakistani state dictated an anti-Communist stance due to the powerful feudal forces that have played and continue to play a significant role in Pakistan. The most important organs of the state, namely, the bureaucracy, military and the political elite, are all recruited from the feudal class. The ideological incongruence between this class’s point of view (at least in the early days of the state) and Communism meant that cooperation with the Soviet Union was neither feasible nor desired. Therefore, the Pakistani government made it clear that they would prefer to seek help from the United States and its Western allies. Further, over time, the United States assumed the British role of being guarantor of regional peace. Britain’s retreat to east of the Suez following the 1956 debacle hastened this process.267 But at


the same time Pakistan always maintained cordial relations with China (despite of her being a Communist nation).

Thus Pakistan’s Foreign policy aims at maintaining the territorial integrity and protecting the security of Pakistani state and to minimize the Indian threat. Thus to realize such a security policy, the foreign policy makers of Pakistan shaped the foreign policies in the following method:

1. Balancing Indian power through alliance with the United States

2. Attempting to neutralize India through cultivating China

   1. Balancing Indian power through alliance with the United States:

Pakistan's relations with the United States developed against the backdrop of the Cold War. Pakistan's strategic geographic position made it a valuable partner in Western alliance systems to contain the spread of communism. In return for support against India (through financial and military assistance), Pakistan was ready to assume defense of the region (and American interests there) against Soviet expansion. As early as 1948, the state's founder, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, had dispatched an emissary to the United States asking for a $2 billion grant spread over five years, of which $500 million would be utilized for defense. While this was rejected, later attempts to balance Indian superiority through external assistance proved more successful when Pakistan sought and received admission into the American-led alliance system designed to contain the Soviet Union in the 1950s. This happened during Eisenhower administration when Secretary of State Dulles’s emphasis on pacts as a means of containing Soviet power drew Pakistan's attention, and in 1954 Pakistan and the United States signed the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement, by which the latter undertook to give training and military equipment to the Pakistani armed forces.\(^{268}\)

Pakistan in turn provided military bases to America in Peshwar presumably for reconnaissance and spying activities against Russia. One of the purposes of the military aid provided on the basis of this agreement was to check India’s power and influence, as Pakistan considered India was emerging as an important regional power, with a central role in South, South-East and South-West Asia. Later in 1954, Pakistan

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accepted an invitation to join the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). However, the treaty made it clear that SEATO would counter only Communist aggression, not all aggression, as Pakistan had hoped. A similar situation prevailed when Pakistan joined the Baghdad Pact (CENTO).

Any flexibility in choosing between superpowers was lost after the tilt of the Soviet Union toward India. Given this situation, there was little that Pakistan could do except hope for strengthened ties with the United States. Patterns of relationship between the United States and Pakistan oscillated between strong alliance and American disapproval of Pakistan, sometimes resulting in the severance of arms supplies, as in the case during wars with India. As the United States has never directly clashed with India, there was little support in the United States for augmenting Pakistan’s strength purely against India. From 1957 until 1964 there was an improvement in India’s relations with the United States, resulting in increased aid being provided to India. At times this surpassed the amount given to Pakistan, notwithstanding the latter’s close ties. It should be noted that the US aid to India was economic and had little or no military components, except during the Sino-Indian war of 1962.

The American decision to boost aid to India was prompted by the belief that if India lost out to China in economic competition it could mean millions of people lost to Communism. The result of this growth in aid to India was Pakistan’s growing disillusionment about an alliance with the United States. Part of this stemmed from the fact that India received US aid even though it was a nonaligned state critical of American policy, while Pakistan was treated no differently than India. Pakistan’s expectation was that Pakistan would receive more favourable treatment due to its status as a US ally. Moreover, Pakistanis viewed Indian acquisition of US weaponry as being directed against them. General Ayub Khan, the Pakistani president, tried to revitalize the alliance but met with little success. This state of affairs came to head in 1962, when India was attacked by China and became the recipient of massive

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270 Ibid.
amounts of military aid.\textsuperscript{271} At this position Pakistan was in the unenviable position of being totally dependent on American aid and therefore could not voice its grievance strongly.

2. Attempting to neutralize India through cultivating China:

Pakistan was the first Islamic country and a non-communist state to accord recognition to the People’s Republic of China. Although Pakistan established diplomatic relations with China in 1951, the actual consolidation of relations started in the early 1960s, when Pakistan changed its previous stance and supported China’s seating in the UN in 1961. Sino-Pakistan relations cannot be truly understood without mentioning the Indian factor—India as a common enemy of China and Pakistan. Many analysts considered it the prime reason of Beijing-Islamabad nexus.\textsuperscript{272} Such conclusions seem to be sweeping statements if analyzed form the latest developments. Normalization of Sino-Indian relations since the late 1970s parallel with similar warmness in Sino-Pakistan relations is one of such examples. It is true that Sino-Pakistan relations started warming in the context of Sino-Indian differences which emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s leading to their border clashes in 1962. However, it was not the sole reason of China’s becoming closer to Pakistan. Some other factors like Pakistan’s disappointment from its western allies, further deterioration in Indo-Pakistan relations leading to war in September 1965, Sino-Soviet differences and peaceful settlement of Sino-Pakistan boundary issue in March 1963 were some factors which contributed towards their entente cordial. In the subsequent two decades Sino-Pakistan relations cemented and witnessed unprecedented progress.


**Phase 2: 1961-70**

**India-China War, 1962**

Territorial dispute between India and China was the prime determining factor for the 1962 war as when India became independent the British-India Empire did not leave behind a clear territorial boundary between the two countries. Although India initially maintained cordial relations with China, Prime Minister Nehru was apprehensive of the fact that 'India and China, having nearly a 2000 mile long border, could have differences in future over the extent and alignment of their boundaries.'273 What was not foreseen was that such differences could lead to a war.

Historically, the territorial boundary between India and China was not well defined at the time of India’s independence, either in the eastern sector, stretching from the eastern extremity of Bhutan to the India-China-Myanmar trijunction – an area through which the Mcmahon line passes or in the western sector extending from the eastern sector of Jammu and Kashmir, bordering Tibet. The Chinese Government never accepted the legality of the Mcmohan line demarcating the international boundary between India and China in the eastern sector. In the western sector as there was no well defined boundary alignment, according to the map published in 1954 India claimed the John Ardogh line (as demarcated by the British) to be the the border line between India and China (Tibet). This border in the western sector included the crest of the Kuenlun range as the north and north eastern boundary of Kashmir while the Macartney-Mcdonald Line alignment however put forth the claim of territory north of the Karakoram range and the east of the Karakoram Pass that left to China the whole of the karakash valley and almost the whole of Aksai Chin proper. Thus China considered the boundary alignment shown in the Macartney-mcdonald Line to be most appropriate as the Chinese built the Aksai Chin road linking Xingxiang with Tibet and claimed to be part of their territory. India however accuses China of occupying her territory.

The border dispute led to the deterioration in India-China relations and the process was further accelerated by the parallel developments in Sino-Soviet relations. The rift

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273 Banerji, Arun Kumar, & Bhattacharya, Purusottam, “India-China Relations: Retrospect and Prospect”, *People’s Republic of China at fifty*, School of International Relations and Strategic Studies, Jadavpur University, p.28.
between the two communist states cast its shadow on India-China relations, as the Chinese resented the Soviet Union’s attitude of benevolent neutrality on Sino-Indian border dispute. In 1959 border skirmishes near Kongka Pass in the western sector, and Longju in the east further deteriorated the relations between India and China.

Nevertheless, given the political will, the differences between India and China on the border issue, though substantial, were not irreconcilable. But a conjunction of events, unrelated to the border dispute, led to the hardening of attitude on both sides. First and perhaps most important of these was the Chinese attack on Tibet and flight of Dalai Lama to India and the reception accorded to him angered the Chinese. Moreover, China became apprehensive about the growing amicable relations between India and the Soviet Union where the Indian government decided to enter a deal with the Soviet Union to purchase, and manufacture under license, the MIG-21. Last, but not the least, India failure to renew the India-China Agreement on Tibet in 1962 led to the final showdown and breaking of war between India and China. The military debacle suffered by India led the nation’s policy of non alignment completely shaken.

Thus in the immediate aftermath of the Sino-Indian war, India began a rapid build up of its military forces. Between 1962 and 1965, India received economic and military aid from both the United States and the Soviet Union, who had a common interest in containing China. After the 1965 India-Pakistan war the Soviet Union emerged as the principal supplier of military hardware to India, remained so throughout most of the 1970s. Moreover, with deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations and improvement in Indo-Soviet relations, the first step China had taken to break out of this perceived threat of encirclement was to befriend Pakistan. A significant move in that direction was the conclusion of the Boundary Agreement with Pakistan in 1963.

**India-Pakistan War, 1965**

"The India-Pakistan international boundary passes through the states of Gujarat, Rajasthan and the Punjab: the terrain through which the boundary passes, changes in character from state to state. At the southern end, the international boundary passes through the Rann of Kutch (in Gujrat). The location of the international boundary in this sector became a bone of

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274 Ibid, p.36.
contention between the two States that developed into armed conflict, in March, 1965. The dispute, India argued, was not a territorial one, since the border was well-defined in pre-partition maps. It was the linear demarcation of the boundary that was in question. Indians claimed that the India-Pakistan boundary ran roughly along the northern edge of the Rann, as shown in pre-partition maps. Pakistan claimed, on the other hand, that it was a jurisdictional dispute: that the Rann a a "maritime feature", should be treated as an island lake and should, therefore, be divided equally between the two states.\textsuperscript{275}

Since the partition of British India in 1947, Pakistan and India remained in contention over several issues. Although the Kashmir conflict was the predominant issue dividing the nations, other border disputes existed, most notably over the Rann of Kutch, a barren region in the Indian state of Gujarat. When Junagadh, a former princely state, had been integrated into India, its borders, especially in the marshlands to the west, remained ambiguous. On March 20, 1965, and again in April 1965, fighting broke out between India and Pakistan in the Rann of Kutch. Initially involving border police from both nations, the disputed area soon witnessed intermittent skirmishes between the countries' armed forces. In June 1965, British Prime Minister Harold Wilson successfully persuaded both countries to end hostilities and set up a tribunal to resolve the dispute. The verdict, which came later in 1968, saw Pakistan awarded 350 square miles (900 km\textsuperscript{2}) of the Rann of Kutch, as against its original claim of 3500 square miles.\textsuperscript{276}

After its success in the Rann of Kutch, Pakistan, under the leadership of General Ayub Khan, believed that the Indian Army was unable to defend itself against a quick military campaign in the disputed territory of Kashmir; the Indian military had suffered a loss to China in 1962. Pakistan believed that the population of Kashmir was generally discontented with Indian rule and that a resistance movement could be ignited by a few infiltrating saboteurs. Pakistan attempted to ignite the resistance

\textsuperscript{275} Banerji, Arun Kumar, “Geopolitical Environment and Security India and her Neighbours,” School of International Relations and Strategic Studies, Jadavpur University.

movement by means of a covert infiltration, codenamed Operation Gibraltar.\textsuperscript{277} The Pakistani infiltrators were soon discovered, however, their presence reported by local Kashmiris, and the operation ended in a complete failure.

Crossing the cease-fire line (CFL) India launched an attack on Pakistan-administered Kashmir marking the official start of the war. India said that it was in response to a massive armed infiltration. Initially India met with considerable success in the northern sector of Kashmir. Prolonged artillery barrage led to the capture of three important mountain positions. However by the end of the month both sides were on even footing. Pakistan had made gains in Tithwal, Uri and Punch. India had captured the Haji Pir Pass, eight km inside Pakistan-occupied territory. Following the failure of Operation Gibraltar, Pakistan launched a bold counter attack on 1st September 1965 in the Chhamb-Jaurian sector of Jammu to reclaim vital posts in Kashmir previously lost to India. This attack, known as ‘Operation Grand Slam’ was intended to capture the strategic town of Akhnoor in Jammu. The attack was launched at a point west of Chhamb, where the India-Pakistan international boundary (running through Punjab) meets the CFL, renamed with some modifications the Line of Control (LOC)\textsuperscript{278} to sever communications and cut off supply routes to Indian troops. Attacking with an overwhelming ratio of troops and technically superior tanks, Pakistan was on the verge of springing a surprise against Indian forces, who were caught unprepared and suffered heavy losses. India then called in its air force to target the Pakistani attack in the southern sector. The next day, Pakistan retaliated, initializing its air force to retaliate against Indian forces and air bases in both Kashmir and Punjab. But Operation Grand Slam failed to achieve its aim as the Pakistan Army was unable to capture the town. This became one of the turning points in the war, as India decided to relieve pressure on its troops in Kashmir by attacking Pakistan further south. India

\textsuperscript{277} Operation Gibraltar was the name given to the failed plan by Pakistan to infiltrate the disputed Jammu and Kashmir region in north-western India and start a rebellion against Indian control. Launched in August 1965, Pakistan Army soldiers and guerrillas, disguised as locals, entered Jammu and Kashmir from Pakistan with the intention of fomenting an insurgency among Kashmiri Muslims. However, the strategy went awry from the outset as it was not well-coordinated and the infiltrators were soon found.

\textsuperscript{278} Banerji, Arun Kumar, “Geopolitical Environment and Security India and her Neighbours”, School of International Relations and Strategic Studies, Jadavpur University.
escalated this conflict by mounting air attacks on Pakistani forces, compelling the Pakistani Air Force to intervene.

Finally on September 22, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed a resolution that called for an unconditional ceasefire from both nations. The war ended the following day. The Soviet Union, led by Premier Alexey Kosygin, brokered a ceasefire in Tashkent (now in Uzbekistan), where Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and Pakistani President Ayub Khan signed an agreement known as Tashkent Declaration. According to the terms of the Declaration:

- Indian and Pakistani forces would pull back to their pre-conflict positions
- The nations would not interfere in each other’s internal affairs
- Economic and diplomatic relations would be restored
- The two leaders would work towards building good relations between the two countries.  

Thus while the Soviet Union took initiative in bringing about ceasefire between the India and Pakistan, the United States too showed its interest to end the war by suspending military aid to both the countries, in spite of the fact that the United States was under a treaty obligation to assist Pakistan during the war. Although both India and Pakistan accused against each other a number of cease-fire violations, the ceasefire ensured a six year period of relative peace between the two neighboring rivals before war broke out once again in 1971.

**Phase 3: 1971-80**

**India-Pakistan War, 1971**

“The 1971 Indo-Pak war was fought not due to any bilateral problem between the two countries. In fact, it was imposed on India and it gave a new dimension to Indo-Pak relations. The consequences of the war helped in relieving tension from the Indian sub-continent because it completely changed

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the power structure in the region. It shattered Pakistan economically and militarily and the elites of Pakistan started thinking on new lines i.e., friendship with India and not the parity.\textsuperscript{280}

The partition of the Indian Subcontinent in 1947 created two independent countries: India and Pakistan. India, which became independent on 15 August 1947, stood for a secular, equitable polity based on the universally accepted idea that all men are created equal and should be treated as such. Pakistan, which officially came into existence a day earlier, was based on the premise that Hindus and Muslims of the Subcontinent constitute two different nationalities and cannot co-exist. The Partition created two different countries with most Muslim majority areas of undivided India going to the newly created nation, Pakistan. Pakistan was originally made up of two distinct and geographically unconnected parts termed West and East Pakistan. West Pakistan was made up of a number of races including the Punjabis (the most numerous), Sindhis, Pathans, Balochis, Mohajirs (Muslim refugees from India) and others. East Pakistan, on the other hand, was much more homogeneous and had an overwhelming Bengali-speaking population.

Although the Eastern wing of Pakistan was more populous than the Western one, political power since independence rested with the Western elite. This caused considerable resentment in East Pakistan and a charismatic Bengali leader called, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, most forcefully articulated that resentment by forming an opposition political party called the Awami League and demanding more autonomy for East Pakistan within the Pakistani Federation. In the Pakistani general elections held in 1970, the Sheikh’s party won the majority of seats, securing a complete majority in East Pakistan. But West Pakistan’s ruling elite were so dismayed by the turn of events and by the Sheikh’s demands for autonomy that instead of allowing him to rule East Pakistan, they put him in jail.

The dawn of 1971 saw a great human tragedy unfolding in erstwhile East Pakistan. Entire East Pakistan was in revolt. In the West, General Yahya Khan, who had appointed himself President in 1969, had given the job of pacifying East Pakistan to his junior, General Tikka Khan. The crackdown of 25 March 1971 ordered by Tikka Khan, left thousands of Bengalis dead and Sheikh Mujibur Rehman was arrested the

next day. The same day, the Pakistani Army began airlifting two of its divisions plus a
brigade strength formation to its Eastern Wing. Attempts to disarm Bengali troops
were not entirely successful and within weeks of the 25 March massacres, many
former Bengali officers and troops of the Pakistani Army had joined Bengali resistance
fighters in different parts of East Pakistan.

The Pakistani Army conducted several crackdowns in different parts of Bangladesh,
leading to massive loss of civilian life. At the same time, the Pakistani Administration in
Dhaka thought it could pacify the Bengali peasantry by appropriating the land of the
Hindu population and gifting it to Muslims. While this did not impress the peasantry, it
led to the exodus of more than 8 million refugees (more than half of them Hindus) to
neighbouring India. West Bengal was the worst affected by the refugee problem and
the Indian government was left holding the enormous burden. Repeated appeals by
the Indian government failed to elicit any response from the international community
and by April 1971, the then Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, decided that the
only solution lay in helping Bengali freedom fighters, especially the Mukti Bahini, to
liberate East Pakistan, which had already been re-christened Bangladesh by its people.
Mrs. Gandhi in a broadcast to the nation declared:

“...the war in Bangladesh has become a war on India. This has been imposed
upon me, my Government and the people of India a great responsibility. We
have no other option but to put our country on a war footing.”

A full-fledged war between India and Pakistan started when the Pakistani Air Force
(PAF) and ground troops launched a massive attack on the western front stretching
from Jammu and Kashmir to Rajasthan. On the 3rd of December 1971, PAF struck a
number of Indian airfields in northern India. By midnight, India was officially at war
with Pakistan. With the help of Mukti Bahini, Indian armed forces launched attacks on
Pakistan armed forces and on December 16 compelled the Pakistani armed forces to
surrender. The very next day India announce unilateral cease-fire on the western front
in the hope that there would be corresponding immediate response from the
Government of Pakistan. The main factor that prompted India to offer unilateral
cease-fire was the fulfillment of her mission i.e. liberation of East Pakistan. The act of
surrender marked the birth of a new nation: Bangladesh.

281 Ibid, p.42.
During the war, the USSR and the Eastern European countries sided with India while the United States and China were with Pakistan. The United Kingdom, France adopted a neutral stand. As far as the United Nation’s role was concerned it failed to defuse the tension from the Indian sub-continent as it is evident from the fact that the Security Council failed to adopt any resolution on this issue. A draft resolution introduced by the United States was vetoed by the USSR. It was only after the end of the war on 21st December when the Council succeeded in adopting a resolution demanding a durable cease-fire and cessation of all hostilities in all the areas of conflict be strictly observed and remained in effect until the withdrawals took place.

In 1972 Pakistani president Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (formerly the foreign minister) met with Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at the hill resort town of Simla in northern India to discuss a postwar settlement. Although the third Indo-Pakistani war had not been triggered by events in Kashmir, the unresolved issues surrounding that disputed state weighed heavily in the settlement talks. The two leaders negotiated a settlement that recognized the de facto border in Jammu and Kashmir as the Line of Control (LOC). Both sides agreed to abstain from the use of force to settle the Kashmir dispute, and India agreed to return some 90,000 Pakistani prisoners of war.

Indo-Pakistani relations continued to be strained after the Simla Agreement, for it did not address the final status of Kashmir. Armed hostilities continued to erupt in the territory along the LOC, making any political resolution to the dispute highly unlikely. The vast majority of India’s political establishment has indicated a willingness to settle the dispute along the LOC and formally cede the Pakistani-controlled portion of the state to Pakistan. However, Pakistan has refused to accept the status quo in Kashmir as long as Muslim-majority areas, such as the fertile Kashmir Valley, are under Indian administration. Meanwhile, the proliferation of nuclear weapons by both India and Pakistan has dramatically increased the stakes of their long-standing territorial dispute.

Both India and Pakistan acknowledge that the Simla Agreement requires them to settle their bilateral disputes without resorting to the use of force. However, neither one has been willing or able to uphold this provision, and they disagree over who is to blame for continuing violence in the territory. In addition, Indian and Pakistani officials interpret other important aspects of the Simla Agreement quite differently. Indian decision-makers believe that the agreement supersedes all former UN resolutions and requires strictly bilateral negotiations to bring a resolution to the dispute. The
Pakistani side argues that the agreement leaves open the possibility of multilateral negotiations.\footnote{282 ‘Indo-Pak relations during Nehru and Indira Gandhi’ in http://209.85.175.104/search?q=cache:V9KJtAKxdt4J:www.rocw.raifoundation.org/masscommunication/BAMC/InternationalPowerandMedia/lecture-notes/lecture-14.pdf+Indo-pak+relations+in+1980s&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=19&gl=in dated 19.08.2008.} The varying interpretations of this document aside, the two parties remain fundamentally at odds over the terms of any resolution to the dispute.

The 1971 Indo-Pak war opened a new chapter in the political history of Pakistan. For the first time power was transferred to the democratically elected representatives of the people in Pakistan and ended military rule in Pakistan. It also strengthened the Sino-Pak axis to that extent Pakistan assisted in bringing about Sino-US rapprochement. On the other hand Indo-Soviet friendship further enhanced culminating in the signing of the Friendship Treaty. The United Nation’s role during the war raised doubts whether it would able to achieve its aim i.e. maintenance of international peace and stability as it failed to stop the war.

**Indo-Soviet Friendship Treaty**

During the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965, Western embargo on the shipment of weapons to India and Pakistan made New Delhi almost wholly dependent on Moscow for the supply of sophisticated weapons in the years to come. Thus, the Soviet Union became the major source of economic and military assistance for India. In March 1969, armed clashes between the Soviet Union and China at the Ussuri River along the northern borders further worsened the Sino-Soviet relations. In these circumstances, Moscow needed India's cooperation as much as New Delhi needed it. However, it was the Sino-American rapprochement in 1970, which India thought of as upsetting the military equation in the subcontinent. This prompted Russia and India to sign a twenty years Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation on August 9, 1971.

The peak point of the Indo-Soviet relations was reached when the two countries signed the ‘Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation’ on August 9, 1971. Although the treaty was stated to be a political one, with emphasis on promotion of ‘consolidation of universal peace and security, preservation and strengthening of peace in Asia and throughout the world, halting of arms race, complete disarmament, elimination of colonialism and racism, and respect for India's non-alignment policy’, it sounded more as a military alliance to counter China and Pakistan in particular, and
the US in general. This can be gauged from the fact that, Article IX of the treaty stated that the parties undertake to abstain from providing any assistance to any third party that engages in armed conflict with the other party. In the event of either party being subjected to an attack or a threat thereof, the parties shall immediately enter into mutual consultations in order to remove such threats and to take appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and the security of their countries.\(^{283}\)

In consonance with this treaty, the Soviet Union began to strengthen India’s defence capabilities, and when called upon to live up to their treaty obligations, during the third India-Pakistan war soon after in December 1971, lent both material and diplomatic support to India. The Soviet Union played a decisive role in the dismemberment of the East Pakistan, both at the Security Council and in the military assistance it rendered to India. It vetoed the Peking-supported US resolution in the Security Council on December 5, 1971, which called for the immediate cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal of the armed forces, and stationing of observers on the India-Pakistan border. To the contrary, Soviet Union, in line with the Indian stand, demanded first for a political settlement in East Pakistan, to be followed by a cessation of hostilities. On December 6, 1971, the Soviet Union vetoed another resolution supported by the US, in which the Soviet Union’s recommendations did not contain any reference to a ‘political settlement’ of the East Pakistan crisis as a priority. Along with eight other socialist countries, the Soviet Union once more vetoed an Argentine-sponsored resolution asking for the cessation of hostilities and withdrawal of armed forces from each other’s territory. On December 13, it used its veto for the third time to prevent the passage of a US resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire. To the contrary, it supported the Polish resolution, which urged Pakistan to take steps for a peaceful transfer of power in the ‘eastern theatre of conflict’ to the lawfully elected representatives of the people, headed by Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, as the ‘correct approach’. Pakistan construed the Soviet stand as interference in its internal affairs. The Indians paid in kind when it kept a deafening silence over the Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, at a time when international efforts were

being consolidated to secure its withdrawal. India even participated in the 1980 Olympics held in the Soviet Union, which were boycotted by major countries of the world to express their resentment over the Soviet Union’s action.

The insidious nature of the treaty can further be gauged from the fact that at the time of the ratification of the treaty by the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, the then USSR Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko, stated that from then on, ‘no one can frame his policy, whether towards the Soviet Union or India, without taking this Treaty into consideration’.

The special relationship enjoyed by both the countries, however, started diluting when Gorbachev came into power in the Soviet Union, and set in motion the paradigm switch towards China as well as towards the Perestroika policies internally. He started calling for ‘a new China policy’, and ‘an end to China encirclement policy’. Thus, the mainstay of India-Russia strategic partnership and the Indo-Soviet Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1971, aimed at an encirclement of China, seemed to be quickly waning.

Thus, although India pursued the policy of non-alignment during most part of the Cold War, yet it can be observed from the above discussion that India’s relation with the Soviet Union was a cordial one and much of it was without warmth with the United States. This, however, did not mean that India got dragged into superpower politics or was she part of any alliance system during the Cold War. India’s closeness with Soviet Union was essentially due to her threat perceptions of both Pakistan and China, the two close allies of the United States, and naturally got her drifted away from the United States. Thus India framed her security policy in a manner as to combat the powers emanating from China and Pakistan. Pakistan, on the other hand, framed her security policy in such a manner as to minimize the Indian threat. During this phase both India and Pakistan opted for the acquisition of nuclear weapons in order to gain superiority over each other in terms of military power and to enhance each of its national security. The following is an analysis of the nuclear policies of India and Pakistan during the Cold War period.

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284 Ibid.
Nuclear Policies and Security of India and Pakistan

As early as 1957, India developed a full fledged nuclear programme for peaceful purposes by setting up the APSARA reactor at Trombay. India thus was on the forefront of the campaign for nuclear disarmament and enthusiastically joined the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT). Seven years later, in 1968, when the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was opened for signature, India refused to sign it on the ground that it was discriminatory, which, in fact, was sought to control horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, without controlling vertical proliferation. Moreover, the detonation of a nuclear weapon by China in 1964 was also an important reason for India not joining the NPT. However, when the India-Pakistan war broke out in 1971, the then Prime Minister of India, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, felt need for strengthening India’s nuclear option. Thus she allowed the Atomic Establishment to prepare for an underground nuclear test, which was made in 1974 at Pokhran. Although India disclaimed any intention of weaponization of its nuclear programme and considered the test to be a peaceful one, it was a serious alarm to Pakistan.

In Pakistan, nuclear technology became linked to power, status and national security after an Indian nuclear test explosion in 1974 and Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto responded in the National Assembly expressing doubts about India’s intentions:

“India has acquired nuclear weapons at very great cost, very great risk and a very great sacrifice to intimidate and blackmail Pakistan. The fact that Pakistan will not be intimidated and blackmailed is a separate question. That has been the purpose to use nuclear weapons, to brandish [the] nuclear sword at Pakistan and to extract political concessions, to exercise domination over the subcontinent, to exercise hegemony over the neighbouring states. These are the purposes for which India has acquired nuclear weapons and Pakistan cannot rule out the possibility that India will use the nuclear device; Pakistan simply cannot be so irresponsible as to say that there will be no war and that if a war occurred India would not use the nuclear bomb.”

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In fact, before India conducted its nuclear test, on January 1972 Bhutto held a secret meeting of the country's top scientists and engineers at Multan, where he committed his government to acquiring nuclear power and equipment. Thus Pakistan too started enhancing its nuclear programme. In 1983 Pakistan had manufactured and tested a nuclear device and reached successful weaponization by 1987. India, on the other hand, continued its research and development of nuclear programmes and in 1983 launched the integrated guided missile development programme. Simultaneously, Pakistan was acquiring ballistic missiles, mainly through outright purchase from China and later through indigenous production with Chinese help.

Nuclear capability is an effective military deterrent. What has maintained strategic balance in South Asia during the Cold War is the fear of the states that there would be no winners in an armed conflict involving the use of nuclear weapons and the cost would be the same for both the sides. The stage of mutual deterrence thus reached between India vis-à-vis China and Pakistan.

**Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan**

Afghanistan, unlike most other South Asian states, never experienced direct colonial rule, but was long subjected to inducements and pressures from outside great powers, especially Britain and Russia. The United States got involved in this diplomatic contest—...“the great game in Asia”—rather late and in limited measure. The first American resident diplomatic mission was established in Kabul in 1943. There followed a US aid programme in 1946, and for a time both American and Soviet economic and military assistance with advisory personnel flowed into Afghanistan. Invited to join CENTO, General Mohammed Daud Khan, who had assumed power in a 1953 palace revolt, declined and later Afghan efforts to obtain US weapons failed.

By the 1970s the Soviet Union had gained the upper hand in influence within Afghanistan. Sardar Daud, who had Marxist support within the country, and presumably Soviet sponsorship, in 1973 overthrew his brother-in-law, King Mohammed Zahir Shah. As he sought to improve relations with Pakistan, Daud in turn was overthrown. There followed a struggle among Afghan Marxist rivals until in December 1979 Hafizullah Amin, then holding power, was killed as Soviet troops pushed across

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the border bringing with them Babrak Kamal to head the Afghan government. President Carter of the United States called the invasion a "callous violation of international law and the Charter." The United States would not do business as usual with the Soviet Union until the Soviet troops were withdrawn, he said. He stopped grain deliveries, froze talks on strategic arms, halted sales of high technology, and urged that the United States and other countries boycott the summer Olympics in Moscow.

Phase 4: 1981-90

Post Afghanistan Invasion situation in South Asia

The United States viewed the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as a highly dangerous aspect of Russian expansionism. The United States believed that Russian presence in Afghanistan is illegal, immoral and against the rights and wishes of the people of Afghanistan. It regarded the Russian move as an attempt to encircle China, to pressurize Pakistan and to reach warm water of the Persian Gulf. It, therefore, condemns and opposes Russia over the Afghanistan issue. Thus soon after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Afghan refugees poured across the border and moved into Pakistan. Subsequently, the US government under President Reagan provided both military and economic aid to Pakistan. Support for Pakistan was accompanied by US naval movements that increased the fleet from a few vessels in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea to task forces ranging at times between thirty and forty ships. At the same time base facilities at Diego Garcia were enlarged. The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan brought forth US military and humanitarian aid for the Afghan refugees, reversed the trend in American aid for Pakistan and changed considerably the relations between the two countries. The United States believed in strengthening Pakistan military with a view to check the possible further expansion of Russian power. Consequently, the United States decided to supply and sell highly sophisticated arms and war planes to Pakistan.

287 Ibid.
288 Ibid.
India, on the other hand, showed her unwillingness to outrightly condemn Russia, as it felt that Russian intervention in Afghanistan was due to oppose certain other nations to secure the installation of an anti-communist anti-Soviet regime in Afghanistan. India also did not accept that condemnation of Russia could resolve Afghan crisis. India believed that only through peaceful negotiations and through the end of outside interferences, the withdrawal of Russian troops from Afghanistan could be secured. India did support the US view that Russian presence in Afghanistan endangered the security of Pakistan or South Asia. India also opposed the US military supplies to Pakistan as they were much above the security needs of Pakistan and apprehended that such arms could be used against India. Moreover, India strongly opposed the US military buildups at Diego Garcia. This complicated the US relations with India. When in June 1980 the United Nations General Assembly by an overwhelming vote called for immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan, India abstained.

Indo-US relations took a different turn when in June 1982, the then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi visited the United States and held valuable and important talks with President Reagan. Both leaders showed a better understanding of Indo-US relations and agreed to work for an era of more friendly and cooperative relations. In 1984 the US Vice President George Bush visited India and announced that there were no major irritants in the Indo-US relations and the latter’s friendship Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka did not mean that there was a US plan to encircle India. Also when the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited the United States in 1987, he received assurance from President Reagan that the US objective in South Asia was to reduce tension and its assistance to Pakistan was not directed against India. After this Gandhi-Reagan meeting, some initiatives for increased cooperation were announced, including decisions to proceed with joint construction of a new Indian light combat aircraft and with India’s purchase of new supercomputers. Gandhi thus expressed hope for better relations and wanted the United States to become “more of a player” in relations with his country.

**Indo-Pak relations**

The relation between India and Pakistan during the last decade of the Cold War period witnesses sign of improvement as evident from the fact that in 1981 Pakistan agreed to enter into immediate consultations with India for the purpose of exchanging mutual
dialogue on Non-aggression and Non-use of force\textsuperscript{290} in the spirit of the Simla Agreement. Several reasons can be cited for such a change in Pakistan’s view. First, pressure on Pakistan’s security as a result of Soviet invasion in Afghanistan and realized the need to make the Eastern borders to India safe; second, the growing fear of India’s nuclear policy; and finally, the hope of neutralizing Indian support for the Soviet Union’s role in Asia.

Pakistan, June 1982 submitted a text of her Government’s No War Pact proposal to India for consideration and further negotiations. India on the other presented the text of the proposed Treaty of Friendship, Peace and Cooperation that it prepared to sign with Pakistan in preference to the No War Pact. Accordingly, Pakistan in August 1982 Pakistan’s draft provided for Joint Committee to renounce War and non-aggression, settlement of Indo-Pak disputes exclusively through peaceful means and Joint Commitment to promote good neighbourly relations between India nad Pakistan. The Indian draft for the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation, on the other hand involved a comprehensive plan for putting Indo-Pak Relations on solid foundations of friendship, cooperation and commitment to peace and bilateralism. It advocated the need to accept bilateralism as the principle of Indo-Pak relations and the necessity to include the provision that no country shall give on its soil military bases any foreign power. The draft reaffirmed the principle of territorial integrity, inviolability of border, peaceful coexistence, non interference and sovereign equality of the two nations.

It was in March 1983, during General Zia’s visit to New Delhi for attending the 7\textsuperscript{th} summit of the NAM that the foreign Secretaries of both India and Pakistan signed and exchanged the documents which provided for the establishment of an Indo-Pak Joint Commission. It was also agreed to hold the first meeting of the Joint-Commission in June 1983 at Islamabad. In the first meeting of the Indo-Pak Joint Commission, Foreign Ministers of the two countries, not only exchanged the instruments of ratification pertaining to the establishment of the Joint Commission, but also made significant progress in other matters. The Commission provided for the setting up of sub-commission on economic matters dealing with Industry, Agriculture, Communication, Health, Science and Technology; Trade; Education, Information, Culture, Sports and Social services; Travel, Tourism and Consular matters.

\textsuperscript{290} India under the Prime Ministers Nehru, Shastri, Indira Gandhi expressed each of their Government’s willingness to sign a No War Pact with Pakistan, but failed each time to make Pakistan reciprocate.
The success towards the institutionalization of Indo-Pak economic, trade and cultural relations is, indeed, an important break-through in the interaction between the two countries. Moreover, the establishment of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in 1985 served the platform of interaction between India and Pakistan and brightened the hopes that through mutual accommodation and goodwill the relation between the two nations could be improved. Or, whether, the two countries joined the association to serve each of its own vested political interests? The following analysis would seek answers:

It was in 1980 that Bangladesh first proposed institutionalization of regional co-operation. SAARC was finally established in 1985 after nearly four years of preparatory meetings among the seven concerned countries, beginning from 1981. According to the SAARC charter, the objectives of the association include promotion of the welfare of the peoples of South Asia, to accelerate economic growth, promote and strengthen collective self-reliance and contribute to mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another’s problems in the region. However, an analysis of the expectations which each of the countries had from the association bring out certain important aspects. Firstly, though regional co-operation were the stated objectives for forming and joining the association, it is seen that each of the countries had a specific agenda—primarily political with regard to the association. This agenda was influenced by their perception of themselves, their countries’ national interests and its place in the region. Thus, the countries sought to fulfill these national agendas through the regional mechanism. Secondly, therefore these motivations show that the approach was to a certain extent negative and regional co-operation was not the primary motive for joining the association. Every country had a clear cut political agenda to fulfil and a political role to gain by institutionalizing regional co-operation. It is thus imperative to briefly analyze the circumstances under which they joined the association and their expectations therefore from the regional association.

Pakistan was initially apprehensive of joining the regional association primarily for two reasons. First, that the forum would further India’s hegemonic domination over the regions’ states in an institutionalized manner. Secondly, Pakistan was also wary of deeper involvement in the South Asian region since it would cast a doubt on the credibility and seriousness of its efforts to develop closer ties with the Islamic countries of West Asia. Pakistan finally decided to join the forum because it was
unwilling to isolate itself regionally.\textsuperscript{291} Further, according to an observer from Pakistan, the regional advantage of participating in SAARC was that the arrangement could if the need arose, “come to deflect the weight of India” \textit{vis-a-vis} its smaller South Asian partners.\textsuperscript{292} It was emphasized that Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bhutan and Nepal had very good, if not ideal relations with each other. However none of the six states could be said to be enjoying tension free relations with New Delhi. Of all the differences, the Indo-Pak relations, it was stated, were not conducive to regional cooperation. It is thus evident that just as the blame for the existence of a conflictual relationship was put on India, the onus for improvement in the state of affairs was also exclusively put on New Delhi.

India, the largest country in the region was also apprehensive in joining the regional association. First, India felt that the proposal of Bangladesh President Zia probably had an indirect Western sponsorship. This was in the context of the second cold war with the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan. A South Asian regional association could be the American mechanism to counter Soviet influence. This would result in not only the incursion of external powers in the region but also an anti-Soviet and pro-US South Asian front, which would be incompatible with India’s regional and broader strategic interests. Secondly, India believed that the proposed South Asian forum could be used by the smaller neighbours to put collective pressures on it (India) on matters affecting them collectively and individually in relation to India. However, India could not reject the idea and thus proposed two principles for participation. That the organization would not discuss bilateral issues and that all the decisions would be taken on the basis of unanimity.\textsuperscript{293} India was of the view that bilateral stresses and strains should not impinge on regional cooperation. Further, that the objective of India was to try to pursue regional co-operation autonomously without allowing it to be

\textsuperscript{291} “The Future of SAARC,” \textit{Regional Affairs}, vol11, no.1, January 1992. The statement of Pakistan President Gen. Zia, made prior to the first SAARC Summit brings out his views regarding SAARC and Pakistan’s relations with West Asia. He said that Pakistan’s participation in the summit would not in any way affect its relations with the Muslim countries and that it would maintain its national identity at all costs and continue to play a positive role in the Middle East, since Pakistan enjoyed an important place in the South Asian region as well as Western Asia. He emphasized that Pakistan would continue its policy of friendly relations with other countries of the world without compromising its ideology, independence and integrity.


subjected to the vicissitudes of bilateral co-operation. India thus approached the association with a belief that bilateral relations and regional cooperation could be completely compartmentalized. By adopting such an approach the dynamics of the bilateral relations to influence the regional association or vice versa, of the association to influence bilaterally were being deliberately overlooked.

The political role of SAARC comes out very clearly when it is observed with reference to the manner in which relations are structured in South Asia. They are characterized by asymmetry with the scales tilted heavily in favour of India on one side and all the others on the other side. A sense that the relations are indeed unequal, strikes one immediately. The inequalities are inbuilt with respect to the geographical dimension, demographic magnitude, economic resource base, production structures and growth potentials, and above all their armed forces and military capabilities. Relations between India and most of the member countries have been characterized by mistrust and suspicion. This was especially so during the mid eighties when the SAARC process had begun. Only India has common borders with all the member countries while none of them share borders. The smaller member countries have always looked with suspicion towards India and considered it to be a hegemonic power. Flowing from this asymmetry is that the security perceptions of India and the member countries are also divergent. As a result the policies adopted by India and the other member countries are different which only increases the mutual suspicion. However, by being members of SAARC whereby the principle of consensus and unanimity works, there is a sense of equality, which these countries have with regard to India. In this manner, the sense of asymmetry is cut down symbolically.

In a scenario where India’s relations with its neighbours are strained and there is a tendency for bilateral relations to affect the overall relations, it is observed that the regional association has had a very useful role to play. The SAARC forum and especially the summit meetings provide an opportunity to all the nations to maintain continuity in their bilateral dialogue. There is a silent acknowledgement by many, including the political leaders of the member countries, that while the official bilateral meetings may face rough weather, the member countries have been regularly meeting at the various SAARC Forums.

It is very difficult to answer if the SAARC informal meetings have in any way helped in bringing the countries closer to each other and resolving their bilateral differences.
One can safely say that while it might not have brought the member countries closer it has provided a useful link for the member countries. At times of crisis, it has helped to defuse the short term misunderstandings, which are only possible when the heads of the countries meet to give confidence to the people. Similarly, the meetings have helped to restart and give direction to the often-deadlocked official bilateral dialogue.

For example, the Indo-Pak relations have been given a boost time and again from the informal meetings that have been held on the sidelines. Though looking back one can say that the substantive nature of bilateral relations between these two countries have still not changed, the significant role of the informal bilateral relations cannot be overlooked.

A few examples will help to give a clearer picture. At the very first meeting at Dhaka in 1985, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President Zia met informally and discussed bilateral issues. This was followed by a bilateral visit to India by General Zia where the discussions continued.

Prior to the second SAARC summit in Bangalore, India, in November 1986, the air was tense in the sub-continent regarding some report of Indian troop movements on the western borders and that it was preparing to attack Pakistan. At the close of his visit to India, Prime Minister Junejo of Pakistan expressed the view that the discussions with his Indian counterpart had helped to clear the air between the two countries and that there was no substance in the reports of unusual troop movement. Even the media in Pakistan was almost unanimous in expressing that the summit may have helped in clearing the air and that SAARC in the long run may be expected to create a better climate of trust and co-operation.

Another significant summit was the fourth SAARC summit held in Islamabad. Though not informally, yet Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi did extend his stay for a few hours after the conclusion of the summit meetings and the two countries held official bilateral meetings. The two countries signed three agreements relating to avoidance of double taxation on mutual trade, promotion of cultural exchanges and agreement on prohibition of attack on nuclear installations. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto welcomed the forum of SAARC for having made the visit of Indian Prime Minister possible and hoped that more such visits would follow.
China factor in relation between India and Pakistan

The intensification of Sino-Soviet hostility and confrontation after the brief Sino-Soviet border war, as well as the deterrence of the Soviet expansion in Asia, brought China who was diplomatically isolated and the United States who was entangled in the Vietnamese war closer each other. Pakistan’s relationship with the US provided a reliable communication channel for opening the dialogue between China and the US. Sino-American secret dialogues in 1970’s led to the U.S. President Nixon’s successful visit to China and the restoration of Sino-American relations. This historic event marked the beginning of Sino-American cooperation against the Soviet Union within the context of their global relationship. As far as power structure of South Asia is concerned, the so-called America-China-Pakistan axis versus Soviet-India alliance came into being.

Meanwhile, as a countermeasure to Soviet-Indian joint pressure of China’s borders, normalization of Sino-Indian relations was also put on the agenda of China’s diplomacy. Sino-American rapprochement also led to India’s fear of an emerging America-China-Pakistan axis directed against India. So India took steps to improve Indo-American relations and relax Sino-Indian tensions. Both China and India had the common desire to relax their tensions in the global context, which led to the Sino-Indian détente. The normalization of Sino-Indian relations started and realized during Indira Gandhi, Janata and Rajiv Gandhi’s era with the changing global circumstances, especially concerning with the two Super-powers.

Sino-Indian détente started with the exchange of Chinese and Indian ambassadors in 1976 during Indira Gandhi’s first era. During the Janata rule, India emphasized “genuine non-alignment” and sought to improve relations with neighboring countries, which culminated in the visit to India by a high-level Chinese delegation of friendship headed by Wang Bingnan in 1978 and the visit to China by Indian Foreign Minister Atal Vajpayee in 1979. From 1981 to 1987, eight rounds of Sino-Indian border talks promoted the improvement of Sino-Indian relations in political, economic and cultural fields.

From the early 1980s onwards, the Soviet Union’s leader, Gorbachev's new Asia policy of maintaining friendly relations with India and normalizing relations with China created a positive atmosphere in both Sino-Indian and Sino-Soviet relations. Sino-
Soviet détente was accompanied by substantial progress in the Sino-Soviet border talks that culminated in Gorbachev’s Beijing tour in 1989 which marked the normalization of the party-to-party and state-to-state relations between China and the Soviet Union. As a matter of fact, the improvement of Sino-Indian relations was accompanied by a thaw in Sino-Soviet relations. Sino-Indian détente also led to Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi’s visit to China in 1988 which symbolized a normalization of the relations between China and India. By 1989, China had restored or established normal relations with the major powers of the Cold War era and its periphery countries. China, like India, tried to balance its relations with the US and USSR by adhering to an independent or non-aligned foreign policy.

While maintaining the traditional friendship with Pakistan, China also began to adjust its position on the Kashmir issue. Until 1980, China had strongly supported Pakistan’s position, calling for respect of the Kashmiri people’s right of self-determination, and insisting that the Kashmir dispute be settled on the basis of a plebiscite based on the relevant UN resolutions. Deng Xiaoping pointed to an Indian defense journal that the Kashmir dispute was a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan, and that it should be settled through peaceful negotiations on the basis of the line of actual control. Deng’s statement suggested a departure from China’s previous position on the Kashmir issue. While the dispute on Kashmir remaining, India and Pakistan tried to break the ice between the two countries.

It was under the changing international circumstances, Sino-Indo-Pak relations were changing accordingly. The normalization of Sino-Indian relations was the striking event during late 1970s and 1980s.
The Map Showing India’s borders with China and Pakistan

[Image of a map showing the borders of India, China, and Pakistan, including the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir.]

Section 2

This section of the chapter analyzes whether there was existence of balance of power between the superpowers while getting involved into the regional politics of South Asia during the Cold War discussed in the previous section. It also seeks answer to such questions as to what extent regional balance of power was affected by the local actors? What was the pattern of Superpower relation in South Asian region during the Cold War?

Underlying theories and concepts of balance of power politics among states are drawn primarily from the European and Western experience. These theories are not representative of the experience elsewhere in the world, especially in South Asia, except indirectly through its linkages with the Western world. During the colonial era, India was an appendage of imperial Britain’s global power politics in a European-dominated multipolar world. During the bipolar world of the Cold War, the military balance between India and Pakistan – two states unequal in size, population, and resources – was sustained by the two superpowers through balancing. Historically, balance of power politics in South Asia is viewed mainly as appendages or corollaries of Western great-power politics, first during the prewar European imperial era, and then during the Cold War era.

The differences between India and Pakistan are central to understanding South Asia’s security relationships during the Cold War, but the Indo-Pakistan rivalry was not unique in the region. Secondary disputes involved India and China, and Pakistan and Afghanistan. The leaders of Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka had their own security concerns, particularly worries about domination by either India or China. Apart from conflicting interests, economic and military capabilities between the antagonistic states in the region – India and Pakistan, India and China, and Pakistan and Afghanistan – were highly uneven. When crises arose in the region, states made efforts to compensate for these unequal relationships by forming alliances.

Pakistani efforts to correct the Indo-Pakistani imbalance prompted a search for military assistance and support among the United States and China. Pakistan enjoyed its greatest success when it received relatively high quality arms after joining the US sponsored SEATO and CENTO. Indian efforts to correct the Sino-Indian military imbalance included the quest for military sales and diplomatic support from the Soviet
The South Eastern Asian Region during the Cold War:
A Study in Alliance Formation and Balance of Power

Union. At the onset of the Cold War, India rejected calls by the United States to join its alliance system to counter threats from the communist world. Like President Woodrow Wilson, who considered balance of power politics the underlying cause of World War I, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru believed that alliances and counter alliances were the underlying causes of wars. He adopted a policy of non alignment between the East and West, but leaned heavily toward the Soviet Union for military support against an American armed Pakistan. Thus in spite of India’s avowed principle of non alignment there developed an undercurrent alliance system in South Asia with Indo-Soviet alliance on one hand and US-Pakistan-China axis on the other. The superpowers got involved in the regional conflicts of South Asia as to deter each other from gaining influence in the region.

Now to analyze the nature of balance of power system that prevailed in South Asia during the Cold War, one needs to understand, first, the United States and the Soviet Union’s perception of the region and second, the South Asian nations’ perception of the superpowers during the period.

The United States and the Soviet Union’s perception of South Asia during the Cold War

The United States’ involvement in South Asia has fluctuated, depending upon its intensity and style of competition with other great powers at the global level. In reality, South Asia is an area about which Americans knew little, where they have few interests, and which is always low on the scale of the US priorities. The United States did not become an imperialist nation in South Asia, but it replaced Britain as the principal Western power of the region and watched with interest as the British played the “Great Game” against Russia, trying to block czarist expansion through the northwest (Khyber Pass) into South Asia. The US strategic interests and perspective regarding South Asia, from the very beginning, were strongly influenced by the British who not only wanted the US to assume the role of a successor hegemon in the area, but also sought to guide the US to lead the world and control the strategic zones. The principal determinant of US policy towards South Asia has been the US perception of the region’s relevance to the pursuit of its global geopolitical and strategic goals. Moreover, the US policy in South Asia has been shaped not so much with reference to the interests of the states of the region but based on US interests vs. Soviet Union and China. Therefore, the major American interest was to prevent the absorption of the
area into the communist orbit. The early thrust was against advancing communism in general; and later, the emphasis was confined to Soviet expansionism after the Sino-US rapprochement.

After the World War II the communist threat seemed more menacing and it was utmost need that the United States must lead the world. Europe, Asia and Africa all were economically and militarily weak and politically unstable. Britain was no more capable of world leadership and only the United States was powerful enough to challenge the emerging threats in the bipolar international structure of the world. In the situation, the US abandoned its traditional policy of “isolationism” and assumed the leadership of the “free world,” embarked upon a global strategy of anti-communism.295 In fact, the US anti-communist strategy began in 1947 with the Truman Doctrine of containment in which he committed to “support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressure.”296 Its architect, George F. Kennan, postulated that “the Soviet pressure against the free institutions of the Western world….can be contained by the adroit and vigilant application of counter-force at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points, corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy but which cannot be charmed or talked out of existence.”297

After the introduction of containment policy, the US first turned its attention to Europe through the Marshall Plan (1947) and later American strategists abruptly set out to extend the policy of containment to Asia. Turkey has already been fortified by the Truman doctrine and the NATO pact in 1949. In 1952 the Truman administration signed bilateral defense treaties with several states such as Thailand, Taiwan, the Philippines and Japan. But one of the few Asian countries that reacted to the American search for allies with avid interest was Pakistan which was eagerly searching for international friends in order to counter Indian threat. Historically, the United States entered the subcontinent principally by way of the Middle East and Southeast Asia to protect the interests of industrialized nations. A degree of natural affinity between Pakistan and its Western neighbours was part of the reason; more important,


296 Ibid.

however, was Washington’s mechanical concept of containment that required a chain of contiguous allies around the perimeter of the Sino-Soviet bloc. Moreover, the US policy of strategic distance from India was based on the US assessment of India’s prospective role and capabilities that were seen as incompatible with the overall Western requirements in the region. Pakistan, in their perceptions, appeared well placed to deal with its problems. In this context, the policy makers of the State Department on 3 April 1950 said:

“. . . it may in time become desirable critically to review our concept that Pakistan’s destiny is or should be bound with India. . .the schism that led to the break-up of the old India was very deep. . . The development of a Pakistan-India entente cordiale appears remote. Moreover, the vigour and methods which have characterized India’s execution of its policy of consolidating the princely states and its inflexible attitude with regard to Kashmir may indicate national traits which in time, if not controlled, could make India Japan’s successor in Asiatic imperialism. In such a circumstance a strong Muslim block under the leadership of Pakistan and friendly to the US might afford a desirable balance of power in Asia.”

Thus, the US interests in South Asia have been to prevent the domination of the region by a single power which might constitute a threat to the United States and to assist South Asian countries to develop economically and as relatively open societies. The US officials made it clear that the denial interest refers to the communist nations; the free world was to be protected from communism whether it be of the Russian, Chinese or some other variety and Pakistan will be an integral part of the denial plans. The development interest has also been rationalized in terms of anti-communism. Moreover, the American policy makers argue that the United States has a vital interest in insuring Pakistan’s independence and its continuing alignment with the free world in collective security against communism. It is therefore, necessary to help Pakistan to maintain a military force capable of meeting this threat, to maintain levels of economic activity and standards of living capable of supporting the US interests in South Asia.

It was clear that a policy of containment of communism in Southeast and Southwest Asia predominated in the US approach and they found Pakistan more comfortable for US strategic interests as compared to India. Pakistan’s assets, such as its religious identity with the Muslim countries of Middle East, its geographical proximity to the oil-rich Persian Gulf and to the communist adversaries like the Soviet Union and China, and above all its potential and willingness to act as a regional balancer to India were indeed tempting. There was also general feeling by the American policy makers that by extending military assistance, Pakistan’s friendship could be won and its opposition to the communist nations strengthened. The United States also realized that with Pakistan the Middle East could be defended and without Pakistan it would be difficult to do so.\(^\text{299}\)

Thus, Pakistan is the only country in South Asia and within Muslim world which participated in all of the US led military alliances in the 1950s. This was a time when Pakistan was becoming increasingly anxious to obtain US military and economic assistance without antagonizing the Soviet Union and China. In general, Pakistan’s purpose in joining the alliances was not to contain communism but to strengthen its own defence and bargaining position vis-à-vis India, its arch adversary. Therefore, Pakistan became an ally of the West in May 1954, when the Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement with the United States was signed. Later, Pakistan became a member of SEATO and the CENTO in 1954-55 led to a close military relationship with the United States and Washington had a chance to establish military bases in order to protect the oil areas of the Middle East. In 1959, Pakistan also signed a bilateral “Agreement of Co-operation” with the United States and Pakistan was associated with the US through not one, but four mutual security arrangements. Moreover, the Pakistan military elites, especially General Ayub Khan, constantly pressed for larger allotments of arms and economic aid. His arguments were supported by many US officials who convinced that Pakistan had adopted a firm anti-Communist policy, argued that it could only play a role in regional defence if it were given more arms than originally planned.\(^\text{300}\) Policy makers seemingly believed that Pakistan assessed the


Soviet military pressure as a significant danger, which made cooperation with the West desirable. In fact, some important officials apparently thought that Pakistan regarded the Soviet threat as a close second to that posed by India. Thus, Pakistan did become a member of Western military pacts and was sometimes regarded as ‘America’s most allied ally in Asia’ and managed the problem of survival from the implacable hostility of India.

Therefore, military alliances with Pakistan became a strategic necessity and the US acquired an image in South Asia “as a friend of Pakistan and opposed to India.”\(^301\) Some Indian scholars argued that the United States’ attitude towards India has allowed India to believe that the US patronization of Pakistan meant denial of proper status to India.\(^302\) Moreover, the US military aid to Pakistan alienated India and pushed it toward the Soviet Union. Subsequently, India’s willingness to expand relations with the Communist countries enhanced their international stature and made other Asian countries more receptive to Soviet overtures. The Soviet Union backing of India vis-à-vis Pakistan strengthened New Delhi’s resolve to stand firm on Kashmir rather than seek a compromise, just as the alliance with the United States encouraged Pakistan to think it might succeed in pressuring India to be more accommodating. Thus, within a decade of independence the two major nations of the region were caught up in the Cold War and their involvement in great-power politics enabled them to extract material benefits.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s the United States almost withdrew from South Asian affairs. The US adopted neutral stance between the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965 and 1971 and terminated military aid to both countries, which hurt Pakistan more than India. The US neutrality made the Pakistani elites painfully aware that their “long nourished American equalizer” would not be available in time of crisis.\(^303\) The greater challenges to the US neutrality occurred during the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 because the Soviet-India partnership and treaty of 1971 successfully neutralized the US and


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China. But the US strategy in South Asia changed the regional scenario and upset the ‘balance of power’ and left India “unchecked” to impose its will upon the other countries of the region. This was a time when Pakistan helped the Nixon administration’s moves to improve relations with China, including the secret arrangements for Henry Kissinger’s visit to Beijing via Pakistan in 1971. The US and China gave verbal support to Pakistan but both were helpless to defend Pakistan’s territorial integrity. State Department and American public opinion were unfavorable to Pakistan and its army’s action in the eastern wing. In addition, the US showed their tilt to Pakistan but it was simply to avoid war in the region; they accepted the inevitability of Bangladesh, but only to save West Pakistan’s anticipated disintegration. The US conveyed to the Soviets that if they were not going to restrain India, the US might have to undertake tougher action. 304

The Soviet Union was a Eurasian empire since its formation and before continuous with czarist Russia. In the recent past, Soviet concern with Asia dates, however, only from the post World War II, when the communist leadership adopted a “forward” strategy in Asia and this region became an arena for Moscow’s global competition with the United States and, later, for regional competition with China. Moreover, the patterns of Soviet involvement in South Asia began to evolve long before the break-up of the British colonial empire in the subcontinent. Through the international communist movement, the Soviets had relations with communists in several countries of the region. These parties often accepted Moscow’s lead, especially on issues of foreign affairs but also about the domestic strategy to counter the bourgeois capitalists.

South Asia occupied an intermediate position in the hierarchy of the Soviet foreign policy. No South Asian nation possessed the indigenous power to threaten the Soviet Union and the ability of certain countries to ally themselves with a major power hostile to Moscow periodically created apprehension among Soviet leaders. Initially, Soviet leaders concentrated attention on Europe because they saw Europe as having anti-capitalist revolutionary potential and later they perceived the United States as the most serious threats to Russian security. The rising powers of Japan and China were also great concern to the Soviet policy makers. The Soviet leaders were aware that

they could not achieve their cherished ambition of being recognized as a global power without a strong position in the region along their southern border from the eastern Mediterranean through the Indian subcontinent. It was therefore natural for the Soviet Union to compete with the United States and preserve the Asian status quo and it was committed to maintain its predominant interest in Asia, particularly in South Asia.

The Soviet Union was generally perceived as the dominant external power in South Asia. Its influence and presence in the region had proved to be more effective and durable than those of its two rivals, the United States and China. Armed conflict between the forces of national liberation and those of imperialism had paved the way for Soviet penetration of the South, Southwest and East Asia. Thus, in fact, the Soviet became involved in South Asian affairs in the late 1950s as an outcome of its anti-capitalist approach and reactionary intrigues directed against the suppressed people of the subcontinent. Initially, Moscow’s most important purpose was to ensure that the subcontinent would not be utilized by any power against any country. Its principal means was to be India’s security guarantor and even to stand ready to be the neutral mediator of intra-regional disputes. However, the situation changed radically when the United States introduced their doctrine of containment as pursued through the defence pacts in the late 1950s. These developments attempted to match the substance of Soviet-Indian relations against the Western strategic partnership. However, India and the Soviet Union both came together to seek diminution of Western dominance and limitation on the American military presence in Asia and to counter the ideological and military threat of China in different ways. The Soviet and India both bitterly opposed military alliances (SEATO-CENTO) because Pakistan joined and Nehru’s belief that military alliances restricted the sovereignty of newly independent countries, and would bring India-Pakistan into the region of the Cold War. India also felt Pakistan’s aim was to put pressure on her because of the Kashmir conflict and to encircle her with a ring of hostile alliances.

The Soviet leadership showed their will in South Asia to limit the US and China influence in the region. India cooperated with the Soviet Union and they moved from non-alignment to a kind of bi-alignment with the Soviets to counter Chinese influence. Both conducted long friendship and become an important symbol in world politics. Moscow perceived the United States and China as potential threats to Soviet interests in South Asia and the Indian Ocean area. To a certain extent the Soviet considered
that the competition for influence in the area was a zero-sum game: to the extent that to reduce the Chinese and the US influence, Soviet influence must be expanded. For this purpose, the Soviet Union urged India to take diplomatic and economic decisions to assist in this process of lessening the US influence in South Asia.

The Soviet Union encouraged India, as a leader of the Third World, to take an international position as close as possible to that of the Soviet Union. For this purpose the Soviets sought to promote the image of a Soviet-Indian identity of views, for its impact on the US, China and the Third World. The main purpose of Soviet policy was that India would be the shield for the Soviet to maintain influence and friendship between the Third World nations and the Soviet Union. Moscow also supported India’s political, social and economic development in the direction of a “socialist economy” and a “progressive” polity. The third major Soviet reason for minimizing Chinese influence in Pakistan was because the Sino-Pakistan partnership was the direct result of Sino-Indian conflict. China emerged as a reliable partner of Pakistan, who seemed willing to give material and political support in the event of war with India. For China, Pakistan could provide the breach in an arc of hostile powers surrounding China; an ally that could prevent the consolidation of Soviet power in an area of vulnerability.

The Soviet Union perceived that the hold over South Asia, the Persian Gulf and Northern Tier (Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey) was vital for its strategic and vital interest. For this purpose, it looked on India as a reliable friend. The Soviet leadership was even hopeful that the close relationship with India would help to reduce western influence in the region. Moscow’s relationship with New Delhi had been built primarily on a mutual sense of need - a shared perception in each state that the friendship of the other was essential to the preservation of its own security.305 The Soviets had sought to build strong and lasting commercial ties with India—both as a way of weakening the fabric of “imperialist” economies and as a useful partner for their own economy—and, through propaganda and cultural exchange, to create attitudes among the Indian elite and masses that were favourable to the Soviet. However, India desired more balance in its relations with the “great power triangle” than the Soviets would have liked, however, and the Soviets sought to maintain more balance in their own relations in the subcontinent than India desired or needed. However, the Soviet

adopted a moderate policy toward Pakistan; its support for the Indian position on Kashmir disappeared from Indo-Soviet communiqués and Moscow proclaimed its neutrality in the disputes between India and Pakistan. The Soviet also took a similar position during the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965.

During the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965, Premier Kosygin volunteered to provide the “good offices” of the Soviet Union in helping to settle the conflict between Pakistan and India. It was a clear indication of the Soviet’s interest and stature in the region. The Soviet was the only superpower capable of intervening in the conflict and bringing about a peaceful settlement which would have been all but impossible if left to the devices of the Indians and Pakistanis themselves. Moscow also used its efforts in the United Nations to promote a cease-fire and in January 1966 both countries accepted Soviet mediation and at the invitation of Premier Alexei Kosygin, India and Pakistan were brought together in Tashkent, the capital of the Republic of Uzbekistan, to negotiate a settlement and end of. Tashkent was a personal triumph for Kosygin; the “spirit of Tashkent” temporarily served to warm Soviet-Pakistan relations; and it signaled the Soviet Union as a major player in South Asia. Thus, in 1960s the Soviet focused on India, Afghanistan and Pakistan and sought to assist these countries in pursuing a non-capitalist path of development. Afghanistan and India were among the top priorities of the Soviet Union and they received considerable attention from Soviet policy makers and financial assistance for development. In 1969 Pakistan agreed to close down the extensive US intelligence facilities in Peshawar which was the main source of confrontation with the Soviet Union.

During 1969-71 Pakistan was in serious political turmoil because the people of the eastern wing were demanding autonomy and Pakistan’s elites considered that the demand of rights from the eastern wing was a challenge to the country’s solidarity. The inability to manage the political situation led to the outbreak of civil war in March 1971. At that time the Soviet Union was the only major power to intervene openly in the internal affairs of Pakistan. On 3 April 1971, Nikolai Podgorny sent a message to President Yahya Khan in which he expressed concern at the suffering and privations of the people of Bangladesh and urged an immediate stoppage of the bloodshed and a peaceful political settlement with the elected leaders of the people. Yahya Khan

ignored the Kremlin’s warning and was hopeful of receiving US help in setting up a civilian regime in East Pakistan, under Awami League leadership. Soviet leaders also felt disturbance when Pakistan arrange facilitated a secret trip by Henry Kissinger, to Beijing in July 1971. Ultimately, this dramatic shift raised serious doubts in New Delhi and Moscow about the specter of a Sino-US and Pakistani alignment.

Kissinger’s visit to China changed the strategic situation of the region. India and the Soviet also thought that an emerging alliance between the US and China would be directly against the Soviet Union and India. This situation persuaded Brezhnev to make a special relationship with India and both countries signed on 9 August 1971 a 20 years Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation. The significance of the treaty cannot be over-estimated. The Soviet Union was guaranteed to meet the security needs of India in the event of aggression or threat of aggression. Both countries issued a joint communiqué calling for the withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam. Under the treaty, India was able to rely on Soviet diplomatic support and arms supplies in the war against Pakistan which was already in the offing. The Soviet military forces massed on China’s northern border served as a clear warning to Beijing not to render more than verbal assistance to Pakistan. The war played the role of midwife at the birth of Bangladesh. It also played an essential role in India’s victory over Pakistan, which was no longer able to mount a credible challenge to India. Moreover, in the late 1970s the Soviet objectives in South Asia were relatively based on Indo-Soviet collaboration to counter the Sino-US and Pakistan alignment and to minimize Chinese influence in the region. Thus, with the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 the US was forced to recognize the region’s strategic importance and establish relations with Pakistan in order to contain communism. China also cooperated with the United States to counter Soviet adventurism. Moreover, the period of 1970-79 proved to be unsuccessful for the Soviet diplomacy in terms of geopolitical perspective. Events in the countries of South Asia were demonstrating to the Soviet Union that backsliding was always a danger for the young fragile regimes. Thus, the Soviet Union’s dream of countering the US and Chinese influence in the region collapsed with its own demise and disintegration.
The South Asian perception of the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War

The postwar world, characterized by Cold War politics, was dominated by two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. In a scramble to carve out their spheres of influence, they sponsored military alliance systems to draw client states into their strategic folds. In South Asia, for newly independent countries like India, it was a tough choice to stay away from bipolar politics and to instead chart an independent path in world politics. Initially, India's non-aligned policy was looked upon with deep suspicion by both superpowers. In explaining the country's rationale for its position, Indian Prime Minister Nehru stressed that economic development and nation-building imperatives demanded that India align with neither of the superpowers. In other words, India's doctrine of non-alignment was aimed at cultivating equally friendly relations with the United States as well as the Soviet Union, in the ultimate interests of peace and development. But in reality if seen from the Cold War paradigm, India's relations with the Soviet Union were guided by a host of intermeshing factors such as geopolitics, India's defense and security concerns, and the two countries' shared ideology. Thus during the Cold War, India's orientation towards Soviet Union prevented any meaningful relations between India and U.S. On the other hand, the essence of Pakistan's foreign policy was rooted in the insecurity syndrome, i.e., the security apparatus of Pakistan essentially and comprehensively operates in the field of Indo-Pakistan relations. As Pakistan was born out of threat perception vis-à-vis India in 1947, it always stressed the need of an external “equalizer”, such as the United States as a mediator of conflicts with its eastern neighbour, India. The reason for such a perception of Pakistan towards the United States was due to relatively freeness of any baggage from the past in terms of hostile relations, being as they were geographically distant and historically and politically irrelevant to each other, especially as Pakistan had emerged as a distinct entity only in 1947. Moreover the American capital and technology that Pakistan direly needed and that the United States was ready to make available to a significant level in different phases of the country's history was another reason for better relation between the US and Pakistan. That means that Pakistan-American relation operated essentially from a pragmatic perspective, because both looked at each other as being engaged in a mutually beneficial relationship with no hangovers from the past. But as far as Pakistan's relation with the Soviet Union was concerned, the former had deep apprehensions of
Moscow almost since its inception. Moreover, India’s cordial relation with the Soviet Union all the more embittered the Soviet-Pakistan relation.

The United States geopolitical contest vis-a-vis the Soviet Union was for control over resources (and for global preponderance. This prompted the latter to draw the countries of the Third World into its fold, not only to maintain the global balance of power but also to expand its role in world politics. India fitted well into Soviet strategic thinking aimed at thwarting the geopolitical offensive of the United States and China, particularly in the context of South Asia. India also realized that its friendly ties with the Soviet Union, its location in Asia, as well as its geographic proximity to the USSR all had a "special meaning" for safeguarding its national interests. In realpolitik terms, congruent geopolitical interests drew India and the USSR closer to each other.

However, the early phases of Indo-Soviet relations were also marked by deep mutual suspicion. For instance, Stalin had a very low opinion of India's policy of non-alignment since India had decided to remain in the British Commonwealth of Nations even after having attained political independence from the British Empire. Turning to Pakistan, the country inherited a broad foreign policy perspective from British India. This was rooted in the suspicion of the Soviet Union as a country that was searching for a warm water port in southern Asia. From the perceived support of Moscow for successive Afghan regimes, along with their Pakhtun irredentism, up to the Soviet incursion into Afghanistan in 1979 and beyond, Pakistan remained steadfastly anti-communist and anti-USSR from most of the period after independence.  

The post-Stalin leadership in Moscow gradually came to realize India's geopolitical importance within the contours of its broad strategic framework. India’s special place in and contribution to the non-aligned movement was a strong incentive for Moscow to cultivate its relationship with India. Geopolitically, India's non-aligned policy far better suited the Soviet Union's strategic interests in a bipolar world, since it presented the newly independent Afro-Asian countries with an alternative to joining US-led military alliances. If viewed in its larger global geopolitical context, the Soviet aim in South Asia was for the enlistment of Indian participation as a counterweight to China in the Asian 'balance of power' game. The attainment of this objective required the exclusion of Chinese influence from India (and later, Bangladesh) and the minimization

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of Chinese influence in Pakistan. The USSR also sought Indian assistance in limiting American influence in South Asia, where Pakistan was a close ally of American-sponsored military alliances such as the SEATO and the CENTO. New Delhi looked on Moscow as a reliable source of military hardware for its defence as well as for diplomatic support at the United Nations and elsewhere on critical issues like Kashmir. Apart from this, India perceived Moscow as a countervailing force against the Pakistan-Beijing-Washington axis. This attitude needs to be viewed in the context of India's adversarial relations with Beijing and Islamabad as well as its strained ties with the United States. In fact, their shared geopolitical interests led to the conclusion of the 1971 Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between New Delhi and Moscow. This treaty acted as a psychological deterrent against direct military involvement by China and the United States on behalf of Pakistan during the Indo-Pak War of 1971 and contributed to the establishment of "special ties" and a "time-tested friendship" between India and the Soviet Union.

As far as the attitude of Pakistan towards the United States was concerned, it has been characterized by structural imperatives of the strategic alliance between the two countries. A major source of Pakistani perception about the United States, both positive and negative, lies in the way the latter has been understood to be addressing Islamabad's security concerns.308 The ruling elite of Islamabad remained steadfastly committed to American friendship as a potential equalizer in the context of the superior military power of India vis-à-vis Pakistan. A secondary interest in Islamabad, which was indeed the first priority for Washington in the regional context, was the Soviet threat from the north. Whenever the two perspectives of Washington and Islamabad differed in terms of a joint commitment of diplomatic or strategic resources to one or other of the two issues, it led to the exposure of Pakistan to what it considered a security threat, and hence to mistrust of Washington.

The American tilt in favour of India in the post 1962 Sino-Indian war led to the first major disillusionment with Washington in Pakistan. The country had become used to enjoying American support in and outside the United Nations in its conflicts with India. This led to what can be considered the second most important policy initiative in

Pakistan’s history, namely turning to China, after the initial and in the end even more consequential initiative of turning West in the 1950s. It found China a willing partner in the new relationship, in the aftermath of the latter’s partial estrangement from the Soviet Union in 1959, and more recently the American tilt towards Delhi in an expedient mode of diplomacy in the post 1962 framework. The 1965 Indo-Pak war led to an American embargo on the supply of weapons to both countries. During the 1971 Indo-Pak war, the promised arrival of the US naval vessel Enterprise in the Bay of Bengal turned out to be a non enterprise and therefore a bleeding wound in the US-Pakistan relationship in an hour of the latter’s defeat in Dhaka. These events thus created a Pakistani sense of displeasure with Washington.

While the two Indo-Pak wars strained the US-Pakistan relationship, India’s defence and security compulsions brought it closer to the Soviet Union. After the 1965 Indo-Pakistan War, the Indo-Soviet military supply relationship grew much stronger. An arms race between India and Pakistan had already begun following the Pentagon’s heavy supplies of sophisticated weapons to Pakistan. Though India was not, in a strict sense, a military ally of the Soviet Union, its tilt towards Moscow was inevitably rooted in its weapons dependence on the latter. This was later one of the principal reasons behind India’s ambiguous stance on the question of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. Western countries, especially the United States, criticized India’s pro-Soviet policy in Afghanistan, and India was naturally charged with abandoning its non-aligned policy. The indirect outcome of the Soviet attack on Afghanistan was the resumption of US military assistance to Pakistan on a massive scale. This further bolstered India’s dependence on Soviet weaponry.

The Soviet incursion into Afghanistan opened up a new chapter in the history of Pakistan-US relations, as it again led to a close strategic alliance between the two countries, almost fulfilling the original purpose of the US led military alliances CENTO and SEATO. There was an obvious overlap in the aims and objectives of the two countries as they got deeply engaged in the Afghan conflict. For the United States, it was the presence of the Red Army in Afghanistan that remained a critical factor in its decision to build up a resistance movement against Kabul in the first place. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan thus provided a classical scenario for an unstable regional setting that laid the basis for the foreign policy ambitions of Pakistan for establishing close ties with the United States. Provision for cultivating an abiding relationship with
Washington has been a cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy. This line of thinking has been facilitated by the fact that there is no negative historical legacy of the United States in this part of the world. Nor was the United States was remembered as an occupier of Muslim, as opposed to the Soviet Union. Its occupation of Afghanistan by proxy in 2001-02 and Iraq more directly in 2003 were to come later. It is thus clear that anti-Americanism has had no historical and cultural roots in Pakistan. Therefore, it never acquired the status of an ideology, unlike anti-Russian, and anti-Indian perspectives.

With regard to the ideological factor, the post World War II Soviet policy was crafted on the premise of "inevitable conflict" with the West, thus providing an ideological rationale for transforming the world in its own image. According to one political analyst, the Marxist-based ideological paradigm played a potent role in guiding Soviet policy towards the outside world from 1945 to the early 1980s. Its "mobilizing and motivating" function was to gain legitimacy and advance the cause of world socialism. India's socialist orientation, both in its domestic and foreign policy, was a critical factor in the evolving political and economic relationship between India and the Soviet Union. Ideologically, both New Delhi and Moscow shared common perceptions on anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism and anti-apartheid. Both countries were staunch critics of the US's Vietnam policy; both championed the cause of anti-racism in South Africa; and both had put their political and moral weight behind the non-aligned movement's avid struggle against colonialism and imperialism, and for the political liberation of Afro-Asian countries.

As regards economic philosophy, India and the Soviet Union shared the perception that they were opposing the forces of capitalism and espousing the cause of socialism. Although India was politically democratic, it was "economically Leninist." Practically, India adopted a "Soviet-style economic system." It is worth recalling that Nehru was highly impressed by the USSR's transformation of its primarily agrarian economy into a rapidly developed industrial state through a planned economy. He experimented with the idea of planning a system on the Soviet model to accelerate India's economic development. His attempts at transforming India into a progressive modern state through democratic socialism brought the country closer to the Soviet Union geopolitically. For India, Soviet assistance was of paramount importance for the development of its industrial infrastructure, since the United States had flatly refused
to "subsidize" India's socialism. In the energy sector, the Soviet Union assisted India in fulfilling its energy needs by supplying it with oil and natural gas. Furthermore, Soviet aid in the setting up of heavy electrical and heavy machine plants provided a stimulus to the Indian economy and its development process, which contributed to cementing the two countries' political and economic ties. With Gorbachev's ascension to Soviet leadership, the ideology and traditional notions of geopolitics and military power were seen as outdated, as is obvious from his introduction of the paradigm of "new political thinking" in the mid-1980s. President Gorbachev publicly stated that status and power in the international system were determined by "economic efficacy," "technological breakthroughs" and the "effectiveness of the political system." This became manifest with the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan in 1989, Soviet acquiescence to the reunification of Germany in 1990, and Soviet endorsement of the Security Council resolution for economic sanctions against Iraq in 1990 and 1991. Gorbachev discovered the contradiction "between Soviet security interests and ideological goals" and "between economic prosperity at home and fulfilling international ideological obligations.

Thus from the above analysis it may be concluded that during the cold war period in spite of its commitment to the principle of non-alignment, India's perception of the superpowers was essentially pro-Soviet and anti-American, while vice versa for Pakistan's perceptions of superpowers with the occurrence of intermittent issues that generated a sense of displeasure for Pakistan towards the United States.

**Bipolarity and Balancing in South Asia during the Cold War**

Balance of power is perceived as the basic concept in the relations among states. Modern theory on balance of power is connected to the Newtonian conception of a universe in equilibrium. The substance of this theory is: "Under normal circumstances, all states always seek to maximize their power and international positions through various methods and techniques, and because of the adjustments of the "invisible hand", no one gains hegemony and an equilibrium in the international relations system is maintained.\(^{309}\) This definition suggests a mechanism in which any attempt by any

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state to expand its power and attain dominance or hegemony that would allow it to impose its will on the other states will be resisted. No state, therefore, will be in a position to determine the fate of others. Thus, a state of equilibrium in the international relations system is one in which no state becomes an absolute dominant power; more powerful states, in spite of pursuing various strategic interests, are satisfied with the existing territorial, political and economic arrangements in the system. Although some elements and adjustments may take place, no powerful state (or group of states) seeks to change the system fundamentally, as it would not yield additional benefits commensurate with the anticipated costs. Consequently, the Great Powers have frequently supported the balance of power system throughout history, because they have both greater capacity to influence outcomes and the largest stake in the established order. In effect, balance of power mirrors the Great Powers’ compromises on the distribution of benefits and spheres of influence in the world on the basis of their correlation of forces.

The aim of countervailing power is the protection of each state’s security and the system in which these states exist as a whole. Therefore, the way to ensure each state’s security is to prevent the emergence of any preponderant state that would lead to an upset of the existing status of equilibrium. As Wolfer puts it, in balance of power terms, these rules can be stated in the following manner:

(a) Watch a potential adversary’s power and match it.

(b) Ally oneself with a weaker state to restore the balance of power.

(c) Abandon such alliances when the balance has been restored and the common danger has passed.

(d) Regard national security interests as permanent; alliances must therefore change when a new threat rises.

(e) Do not treat defeated states harshly through punitive peace treaties (today’s adversary may be tomorrow’s ally).  


An international system is not maintained in a state of stable equilibrium when important shifts in the array of forces among states occur. There are two basic elements leading to the attempts to change the balance of power system: differential growth in political, military and technological power that creates a change in the array of forces among states; and shifts in states’ domestic political coalitions may necessitate redefinition of their “national interests” and foreign policies. An equilibrium can be altered if there is a shift in political, military and technological capabilities of states and, as a result, the expected benefits exceed the expected costs of bringing about a change in the system.

Throughout history, a new equilibrium was principally established by war. The victorious state or states would create the new peace settlements and status quo reflecting the redistribution of power in the system. The hegemonic wars in this view included the Thirty Years War from 1618-1648, the wars of King Louis XIV from 1667-1713, the Napoleonic Wars from 1792-1814, World War I from 1914-1918 and World War II from 1939-1945. However, resolution of crises is still possible through peaceful adjustment of the systemic disequilibrium, by compromises or moderation of the ambitions of emerging Great Powers. Essentially, it is the sharing of costs and benefits in keeping the status quo among the existing Great Powers.

The determinants of whether or not to create and maintain the international balance of power are the cost-benefit calculations that a state (or states) will make in the determination to change the existing equilibrium. The material environment (e.g., economic growth, demographic change, military technologies, communications and transportation conditions), the international system structures, and “internal” factors (e.g., leadership personalities, national identities, political-economic interests of groups and others in the society) provide incentives or disincentives for a state to attempt to change the international system. With these remarks in mind, the ever-increasing stake of international interdependence and the existence of nuclear weapons in the world today will certainly cause extremely high costs if one state (or a group of states) seeks to change the existing balance of power.

As J. Spanier explains, all states are very concerned about their strength or power for survival. To prevent an attack, a state must be as powerful as potential aggressors; a disproportion of power may tempt another state. A balance of power is thus a prerequisite for each state’s security. When the balance is disturbed, the tendency is
to take responsive action to return to a position of equilibrium. If states disregard the operational rule that power must be counterbalanced, they place their own security in jeopardy.\footnote{Spanier,J., \textit{Games Nations Play}, Paperback, Washington D.C., 1962, p. 24.}

As Kissinger argues, the balance of power serves to restrict the ability of states to dominate each other and to limit the scope of conflicts. Kissinger views the balance of power not as an automatic mechanism, but instead as one of two possible outcomes of a situation in which states are obliged to deal with each other. One state can become so powerful that it dominates the others, or else the “pretensions” of the most aggressive member of the international community are kept in check by a combination of the others; in other words, by the operation of a balance of power chosen by prudent leaders.\footnote{Kissinger, Henry, \textit{Diplomacy}, Simon & Schuster, US, 1994, p 20.}

The concept of 'balance of power' is complex and multifaceted. Waltz has noted that “if there is any distinctively political theory of international politics, balance-of-power theory is it. And yet one cannot find a statement of the theory that is generally accepted”\footnote{Waltz, Kenneth N., \textit{Theory of International Politics}, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1979, p.117.}. Despite the conceptual debates about its operability, the basic notion of the concept of balance of power in international relations is “the relationship between the number of actors and the stability of the system” (Deutsch & Singer).\footnote{Deutsch, K., & Singer, D., "Multipolar Power Systems and International Stability," \textit{World Politics}, Vo. 16, No. 3, April, 1964, pp. 390-406.} Haas states that the concept of balance of power has various meanings, “one of the more common is a mere factual description of the distribution of political power in the international scene at any one time.”\footnote{Haas, Ernst B., “The Balance of Power: Prescription, Concept, or Propaganda?” \textit{World Politics}, Vol.,5, No.4, July 1953, p. 446.} There is, however, also a theoretical component of the concept which acts as a guide for policymakers with the intention to avoid the dominance of one particular state in the system. Such a system may take on various forms, either with two or more dominant players, possibly accompanied by a balancer, a state who keeps the balance even.
Neorealist Kenneth Waltz formulated a balance of power theory that explains how states interact, from the premises that the international system is anarchic and that states are "like units", Waltz derives the behavioral expectations that balances of power will form and recur. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union and United States dominated international politics as opposing superpowers. Their influence spread over almost every aspect of the international climate, and many countries that had strategic significance were affected by this division which resulted in 'the first true polarization of power in modern history' (Gaddis, 1987 & Kissinger 1994). There are, however, multiple notions of bipolarity. A first understanding of the bipolar structure was that the United States and the Soviet Union were locked in a battle for world dominance, or at least in a struggle for their relative positions within the world system. A second notion of bipolarity stated that substantial territorial and/or political changes can take place in international relations without impinging on the overarching stability. The discussion on bipolarity is intrinsically connected to its alternatives, multipolarity and unipolarity. The main issue of debate is the question which system delivers the most stable environment in the international system (Wohlforth, 1999; Mearsheimer, 1990). This discussion has been dominated by neorealist scholars who viewed the Cold War division between the two superpowers as the most preferable.

Advocates of bipolarity state that a division of world dominance over two parties is the most favorable to international security. Neorealists may argue that bipolar system is more stable, because the possibility of shifting combinations and alliance patterns can more readily cope with such occurrences. There may be four reasons why bipolarity will reduce international conflict and violence. First, bipolarity divides the world evenly, which causes the superpowers to show interest in every part of world politics: 'the commitment on opposite sides has led to a solid and determinate balance' as 'counter pressure is always applied'. Second, the competition urges participants to compete at their maximum level. The intensity of competition has increased drastically, such as the space race, economic growth, military preparedness, and domestic issues of all sorts that have gained importance in international relations. Third, the reoccurrence of crises, on the premise that conflict is a natural given fact, and will therefore reemerge, helps keep the international system quit when there are two main players in the

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system. Bipolarity forces the two players to be cautious and moderate towards each other. 'One pushes to the limit, but not beyond.' Finally, minor shifts in the balance of power do not have major implications for the parties involved. Defections in the system are not encouraged but can be tolerated.\textsuperscript{318}

Traditional realists argue that a simple balance involving two states (a bipolar system) is more unstable than a complex balance (a multipolar system), as the former may upset an established equilibrium. Critics of bipolarity raise a number of issues. Carr, a classical realist, asserted that power politics most appropriately identified the pattern of behavior between states based on his observations of the historical behavior of states. The balance of power, deterrence, and rationality became core concepts or assumptions in foreign policy formulations. States must take on strategic relations with one another to ensure their survival, they cannot count on morality in the realm of world politics.\textsuperscript{319} Morgenthau (1948) has stressed that in a bipolar world, a gain for one party is a loss for the other and therefore the only solution available to both parties is to increase their own strength at all times. In bipolarity there is no place for intelligent statesmanship. In addition, the bipolar structure creates a 'degenerative process': one side may think not only of the risks consequent upon striking his opponent, but also of the risks he may suffer if he decides not to strike. Preventive war may thus be seen as preferable to war at the opponent's initiative.

The following analyzes whether the realist notion of balance of power was maintained in South Asian region during the Cold War period.

Realism has been the most dominant theoretical tradition in international relations and security studies. The realist's worldview depicts international relations as a struggle for power among strategic, self-interested states. They argue that international society is best described as a condition of international anarchy, since there is no central authority to protect states from one another. States act as independent, sovereign political units that focus on their own survival (or expansion). Thus the primary actor in the realist conception of international affairs is the state and national interests drive state behavior to maximize power for self-preservation. However, the state-centric

\textsuperscript{318} Ibid, pp.314,315.

focus of realism is too rigid. The level of analysis focuses strictly on states but there is a growing list of influential actors in the realm of international relations. The emergence of globalization has brought the issue of a state centered focus into further contention. State sovereignty has been perceived as weakened by globalization. Globalization transcends borders and undermines government controls in many aspects of state activity, in particular economic matters. Realism’s unit of analysis is not flexible and does not recognize the role of non-state actors in state behavior. These factors make realism too top down oriented.

States may persist as the dominant actors in international affairs. However, they are not the only actors of importance. Non-governmental organizations, multi-national corporations, sub-national groups, and regional institutions comprise a short of actors that have increased their impact on global politics. Since the 1970s, mainstream theorists in the field of international relations have expanded their analytic framework to include other actors. This includes such neorealist theorists as Kenneth Waltz who shifted the level of realist analysis from state-to-state relationships to examine state-to-system level relationships.

The controversy surrounding the level of analysis in American policy-making has become a serious issue. Realism examines how states interact and behave in the context of global politics. What occurs within the state is beyond the scope of realists. These shortcomings have led to colossal failures in policy-making. An example is the failure of policy makers to envision the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.

During the Cold War the US policy agenda was set for containing the spread of the Soviet Empire. Policy makers were aware of external strains placed upon the Soviet regime as American policy was directly or indirectly responsible for most of those stressors. However, by ignoring the economic decline brought about through various internal events and processes policy makers failed to see the broader implications of those events. The scale of economies simply did not favor the USSR in its competition with the United States in its effort to develop a comparable military force. In addition, the Afghan war depleted the fiscal resources needed to replenish the military; efforts to develop more sophisticated weapons programs were not feasible considering the economic situation within the USSR.
Idiosyncratic factors are another aspect of the internal factors that led to the demise of the Soviet Empire. Gorbachev’s withdrawal from Eastern Europe was more than a retreat because it marked the defeat of Soviet expansion. If the incompatibility of Glasnost and Perestroika are added to the entrenched communist philosophies, the result was a deconstruction of norms. These policies caused large-scale internal shocks throughout the Soviet empire, eventually leading to regime change. The US policy makers failed to see the consequences of each of these processes.

How did these oversights occur? Realists defend their theoretical underpinnings by classifying the Cold War as an unprecedented event, not a process. Realism deals not with events but processes. This inability of realist based policies to account for internal nuances of domestic politics is the most significant problem with realist-based American foreign policy. In sum, realism may best be interpreted by using Thucydides’ formula of the strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must. However, the descriptive nature of the theory has allowed it to remain relevant from the onset of the Cold War in the 1940s to the beginning of the twenty-first century. Realism deals with processes between states that occur over time, not events internal to a state. The observation of patterns and problem-solving capabilities has allowed realism to provide valuable insights into global political phenomena. The causes of war and conditions for peace can still be explicated through realist discourse. The fact that many of the same global conditions of the post-World War II environment are applicable today is a testament to the broad appeal of realist theory. The persistence of the application of core principles to the understanding of political phenomena is what has allowed realism to remain the dominant paradigm in international relations and specifically American foreign policy-making.

The state is in control and it seeks to secure itself. Realism is relevant to contemporary IR and is the only theory that holds enough weight to be considered the grand theory within the field. Realism may not explain every event, movement, or foreign policy action. However, it provides the most insights, as outlined above, for undertaking an analysis of American foreign policy decision-making. This will become increasingly clear through the following case studies.

The Afghan War: In 1979 the Soviet Union began a military invasion and occupation in Afghanistan. This event had an immediate impact on the nature of American policy towards the region. American policy shifted from moral support to military support. This response to the Soviet invasion had repercussions that forever changed the political landscape of not only this region but of the entire world.

Why did the Soviet leadership decide to wage this campaign in Afghanistan? One popular explanation is that Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev was determined to hold the course on his foreign policy, the infamous ‘Brezhnev Doctrine’. The doctrine’s basic tenets were that once a nation chose to follow the path of socialism, the USSR would not allow that state’s political institutions to pursue reformations leading away from the end goal of a communist system. Brezhnev expanded the Afghan conflict into a low intensity conventional war, holding true to his doctrine by invading Afghanistan as its communist-oriented government was losing power.

Others assert that it was more important in the perceptions of Soviet strategists to secure Afghanistan as a base of operations for the eventual invasion of Pakistan or war ravaged Iran. This expansion of the Soviet empire was perceived to hold two important geo-strategic benefits. The first advantage would be the creation of two or more buffer states, similar to those in Eastern Europe that would serve to further insulate the empire from a conventional attack. The other strategic gain in the eyes of Soviet strategists was believed to be the realization of a long sought goal of the Soviet naval fleet, access to a warm water port. Whatever long-term vision Soviet strategists had conceived through the invasion of Afghanistan, it translated into the highest level of concern for the government of the United States.

William Wolforth claimed that the Soviet invasion was part of a familiar routine in super-power relations. Wolforth describes the cycle as one that starts with a perceived shift in power of the United States, publicly acknowledged by both sides. This is followed by a new Soviet drive for increased prestige, seeking positive early feedback on the new policy. Instead there is a sharp crisis that eventually revealed the contradictions between the two sides’ interpretations of the political implications of the power shift and an eventual relaxation of tensions based on mutual acceptance of a

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stalemate. The realist’s perception in Washington was that Moscow was now able to lessen its concern over an Asian threat, reducing the balancing effect of China in the global balance of power. Obviously, the United States did not want to see its adversary afforded a position of greater power.

The Afghan War quickly settled into a stalemate, with nearly 100,000 Soviet troops controlling the cities, large towns, and major garrisons and the Mujahideen roaming freely throughout the countryside. Soviet troops tried to crush the insurgency by various tactics, but the guerrillas generally eluded their efforts. The Soviets then attempted to eliminate the Mujahideen’s civilian support by bombing and depopulating the rural areas. Their tactics sparked a massive flight from the countryside; by 1982, nearly 2.8 million Afghans had sought refuge in Pakistan and another 1.5 million had fled to Iran.322

The Mujahideen were eventually able to neutralize Soviet air superiority using shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles supplied by the United States and the tactical assistance of the CIA. This marked the first time American-manufactured military hardware was supplied to a sub-state actor, bringing an end to the era of plausible deniability. Never before had the U.S. openly provided military support to a rebel group with hardware that was engraved with ‘made in the U.S.A’.

The Mujahideen were fragmented politically into a handful of different groups and their military efforts remained uncoordinated throughout the war. They were eventually able to achieve victory through the quality of their armament and improved combat organization. This was due exclusively to the experience and arms shipments sent by the United States via Pakistan. In 1988 the United States, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the Soviet Union signed an agreement for the withdrawal of Soviet troops and the return of Afghanistan to nonaligned status.323


To many observers including US policy makers, the Afghan War seemed like a total and complete victory. However, in war nothing is total except destruction. After the Soviet withdrawal and the proclamation of an Islamic state, each formerly rebel faction began to fragment into various political splinter groups. The result was a civil war to determine who would take power in Kabul. What ensued was a bloody contest between pro-Western moderates and fundamentalist Muslim factions. The result was bipolarity among various groups into one of these two ideological camps. The larger of the two groups was the Taliban (students) who were highly effective in their ability to recruit, educate and govern a largely illiterate and devastated populace.

The policy outcomes in Afghanistan resulted in the containment of Soviet expansion, the rise of the Taliban, and the establishment of a base of global terrorism. Under Taliban rule, Afghanistan’s citizens suffered the most serious of human rights violations, the increased production of poppy for narcotic-production, and the failure of state institutions.

The Kashmir Issue: The issue that is often addressed in current media and policy debates regarding South Asia centers on the resolution of conflicts between Pakistan and India over the Kashmir region. The question over Kashmir focuses on the status of that nation’s sovereignty. This is one example of an issue that arose as a consequence of British colonialism. When the British withdrew from South Asia, they knew that Kashmir would be the issue that would keep South Asia divided. By not clearly appropriating the lands between Hindu and Muslim populations, a struggle to protect national identities expanded into a clash of nations. The dispute exists due to competing claims between Pakistan and India over the small and mountainous lands in the northern most region shared by both states. However, the fact is that the conflict has been portrayed as one that is territorial in nature to cloak the true nature of this conflict. The issue is not about territory, as no resources or agricultural lands large enough to matter to either side are at stake. Instead it is an issue of competing ideologies, cultures, and religions.\textsuperscript{324} All these elements embody the national identities of India and Pakistan. What Kashmir represents then is a rivalry between two national

identities, each vying to cast their identity over the people of Kashmir as a symbol of greater political, social, and ideological prestige.

On the one side, there is theocracy, the Pakistani identity as a Muslim state, which is held as the nation's highest cultural ideal. On the other side, there is secularism, India's pride in its ability to remain a civil society despite the numerous outside invaders and influences it has had to overcome. The dilemma over the Kashmir region has taken a heavy toll on both national economies and psyches. In 1947-48, 1965, 1971, 1989, and 1999 Pakistan and India have waged conventional wars of varying intensity along the northern border region. Both have devoted disproportionate amounts of their national budgets towards national security, with the Kashmir issue providing most of the justification for such expenditures.325

Hardliners and their defense budgets were kept in check during the Cold War by the influence of the superpowers. Traditionally the defense budgets were fueled by aid packages that were a by-product of the Soviet-American geo-strategic rivalry. However, this is no longer the case. India has successfully created an increasingly self-reliant economy, with occasional assistance in the form of loans from Russia and others.326 The Indian economy is growing at an unprecedented rate. Pakistan, on the other hand, is failing. Its agricultural output was strong at one point, but the demand of a growing populace in conjunction with the free fall of agricultural commodity prices has been devastating. The role of Pakistan in global narcotic trafficking was greatly underestimated by many experts in Washington who thought that sanctions were effective in reducing Pakistani involvement in narco-trafficking for income. However, an alternative to drug money was never introduced to bolster the national budget.

In the bipolar environment of the Cold War, it was mutually advantageous for Pakistan and India to play into the ideological rivalry to benefit their defense budgets. The fact that an ideological split between secular and theocratic identities already deeply divided the region only compounded the effects of the Cold War division between the South Asian neighbors. The bipolar environment that coincided with the creation of India and Pakistan, as separate entities, may have been a historical coincidence. The

reality of the South Asian states was heavily influenced by the power politics of the international system that emerged during the post-World War era. The US policy has always played a pivotal role in the politics of this region since its split into Hindu and Muslim states.

Nuclear Proliferation: The third event crucial to the formulation of American foreign policy was the surprise response from Pakistan in May 1998 when it followed Indian nuclear tests with several of its own. There was now a transparent nuclear arms race in South Asia. The Soviet Union made no secret of its export of nuclear technologies to India and its role in the Indian nuclear program. The first Indian test was in 1974, and Soviet involvement was explicitly clear in their foreign policy which sought to establish a nuclear balance of power in Asia. This was known as the Asian Strategic Triangle policy at the Soviet Foreign Ministry. The triangle existed between Russia, China and India, states the Soviets considered vitally important for Asian stability.

Inevitably an arms race ensued, but the USSR and the US thought they would be able to keep it under control through their respective super-power influence. With the unforeseen demise of the Soviet Union, South Asia’s arms race was left unchecked. This situation made Chinese leaders increasingly worried about Indian hegemony in Asia, so it countered Russia’s strategic relations by supporting Pakistan’s efforts to develop a delivery vehicle for its few nuclear warheads. Keeping India in check became a priority concern for Pakistan and China, but the US failed to recognize the gravity of the situation. In this respect, the former Soviet Union was far ahead in creating a geostrategic partnership in South Asia. The USSR succeeded in creating the balance of power through the Asian strategic triangle.

However, the geo-strategic game between the superpowers ended on a path neither had envisioned. South Asia was not intended to project a nuclear threat toward the former Soviet Union, nor was Pakistan meant to pose a terrorist threat to the United States. However, the situation remains where both former adversaries of the Cold War

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now face grave danger as a result of their rivalry for influence in South Asia. The concepts employed to dissuade the superpowers from entering a nuclear exchange were successful in their goal of maintaining peace through dialogue. However, in South Asia there are some key differences, disparities in core concepts such as the idea of détente through mutually assured destruction is one example. The geographical proximity of Pakistan to India affords one adversary to strike quickly across short distances, thus reducing the ability of the other side to track a first strike attack. In terms of the American and the Soviet nuclear arsenals, the fact that two oceans separated the rivals assured the aggressor that retaliation would ensue. However, this is not the case with Pakistan and India, thus making a nuclear strike option far more appealing in an effort to decimate the enemy. Factors such as this allow first strike options to remain as viable options in the nuclear posture of both India and Pakistan.330

The regional movements outlined earlier hold much significance when examining the theoretical constructs of American policy toward South Asia. It may be beneficial to summarize the relevance of each critical event. First, the Kashmir issue is the manifestation of an ideological split between South Asia’s most powerful actors and this rift widened because of the competition between the superpowers during the Cold War. Second, the Afghan War provided the US policy makers the opportunity to realize their worst Cold War fears. What they did not realize was that the idealism and nationalism so fervent in the region would result in a South Asian nuclear arms race. Considering the many contributions and shortcomings of the realist paradigm, there is more than a reasonable doubt about whether policy makers should continue the theoretical application of realism and its decision-making concepts and models.

Does realism remain relevant in terms of US foreign policy in South Asia? For better or worse, realism has remained at the core of policy-making during and after the Cold War. George Kennan’s containment doctrine was at the heart of US policy formulation after World War II and was a guiding hand for international affairs in the United States throughout the Cold War. Kennan said that idealism is dangerous, and in the case of

the Soviet Union, it was more than perilous, it was evil.\textsuperscript{331} Ironically, the containment doctrine became an ideological issue in and of itself for the American government. The disillusioning effect of ideology that Kennan warned about came to effect policy makers in Washington. This had the effect of obscuring the faults within the realist theory from those who subscribed to it in their policy formulations.

History has proved that the US policy goals in South Asia had a tendency to be uni-dimensional due to the ideological influences of the containment doctrine. It had the effect of creating “tunnel vision” for foreign policy makers, thus hiding the internal issues of a state and thereby discounting the effects of social factors such as the influence of culture in the political activities of a state. Containment of Soviet expansion was the only objective pursued with any measure of consistency in the Cold War period, occurring at the expense, unfortunately, of other policy goals, including humanitarianism, democratization and non-proliferation.

In South Asia, the goals of the containment doctrine were achieved through supporting a variety of regimes ranging from democratic to authoritarian, so long as it was not a communist regime. The containment doctrine was implemented in full force despite the fact that its zero-sum approach became outdated. In other words, it became clear that a gain by the United States in one aspect of power did not mean that the Soviet Union relinquished some measure of power in return. But the international system is in fact a positive sum game, meaning that there are multiple beneficiaries in the global power system.

The idea of containing all hostile forces in the South Asian region marked a new era in the policy approach of the United States. The regional balance of power approach is one that allows adversaries to rival each other or rival the United States, so long as these rivalries cost states valuable resources, thus limiting their power in the region. The result of this approach is intended to reduce the capability of rival states to interfere with the American policy agenda. In the end, whom they rivaled was of no consequence. American foreign policy desired all competing actors to cancel each other in the struggle for power. An example of this combination of doctrines was apparent not only in South Asia (as in case of India and Pakistan) but in US policy

towards the Gulf States of Iran and Iraq. The US supplied weapons to both parties during the 1980s. The motivation for pursuing such a policy stemmed from a desire to witness two losers from the Iran-Iraq war.

This approach is referred to as the Dual Containment policy. It is similar to the British policy concept of Divide and Rule and is a clear illustration of classic realism in world politics. Divide and rule was prevalent in South Asia only sixty years ago and now it has returned. The division now exists between states rather than kingdoms. Nonetheless, imperialism has managed to find a place in South Asia’s political landscape long after colonial rule.

The current desire in US policy is for the normalizing of relations between Pakistan and India. This appears to be mere rhetoric as both sides build up their military capabilities during the current era of the Indo-Pak arms race. Some argue that US policy is intentionally slow-moving so that neither India nor Pakistan emerges as a regional power. When examining the US policy in the Asian theatre in general, one might argue that multi-containment is the proper name for the orientation of US policy in third world Asia. Consistent with the realist agenda, it is within the interests of a powerful actor such as the United States to control the international environment and limit its effects on sovereignty and security of the state.

From 1960 to 1979, China became a growing source of concern for the US despite the ideological differences with the Soviet Union. In order to create a balance of power in Asia, as part of the regional balance of power approach, the US heavily supported the regime in Pakistan while the USSR supported the Indian regime. Neither superpower wanted to see Chinese hegemony in Asia. At the time of the Soviet invasion into Afghanistan, ties between the superpowers and South Asia were deeply entrenched. Interventions in Japan, Vietnam, and the Philippines provide additional evidence to illustrate the multi-containment efforts of US policy in greater Asia. All of these doctrinal influences on American policy serve as textbook examples of power politics based upon a realist perspective in US policy intervention throughout the world.

After 1991 U.S. foreign policy makers began to see how costly their blunders were in regards to its relations with South Asia. The policy of active involvement in Afghanistan may have been perceived as a victory, however it was not. Policy experts in Washington have long been persistent in their efforts to thwart nuclear technology
transfers to the region and were essentially undercut by opting for involvement in the Afghan War. The current arms race is then a byproduct of the Cold War battle in Afghanistan.

During the Afghan War, Pakistan and China formed a secret alliance that brought the primary components for a nuclear device into Pakistan’s dominion. Washington was not in a position to compromise its alliance with Pakistan, so despite knowledge of Pakistan’s accumulation of nuclear technology the US chose not to act against it. With the strengthening of the Indian-Soviet relationship in other sectors and increasing evidence of a Pakistani nuclear weapons program, the USSR gave India the means to develop its own nuclear capabilities. Of particular concern was the fact that the Indian military possessed all components of the ‘nuclear triad’ referring to the Soviet transfer of technological capabilities to launch nuclear weapons by air, land or sea. India is now the second-largest purchaser of Russian arms.

Russia and the United States have been at odds over the nuclear deal for years. However, these deals are worth billions to Russia’s cash-starved economy. Therefore, Russia is not persuaded as easily as it once was by international pressure. US officials state that current technology transfers, after the largely condemned nuclear detonations in 1998, violate an important principle: that the world community should not engage in nuclear cooperation with aspiring nuclear weapon states, a principle that was agreed to in the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

India and Pakistan carried the torch of Cold War into the twenty-first century with their nuclear balance of terror. With Kashmir as the flash point, war is a shadow that hangs over both societies. The Kashmir region’s role as a trigger for nuclear engagement illustrates that certain issues lie at the heart of a nation’s interests and will be defended at all costs, those interests being security and power.

A final example of the shortcomings associated with realism’s dominance in American foreign policy is evident in the inability to forecast the consequences of policy success in Afghanistan. The civil war after the Soviet withdrawal was a consequence of a lack in long-term vision beyond the concept of self-preservation. The containment policy failed to recognize that a power vacuum would eventually result from the US defeat of the Soviet Union. American policy makers consistently pursued a policy that contained
the Soviet threat. They won the war, but lost the peace.\textsuperscript{332} This statement reflects the outcome of US policy in South Asia. The Soviet threat was contained, but the price for containment was international peace. More specifically, regional conflicts with their roots in ethnic conflicts could no longer be muted by superpower influence. The bipolar international system was quite stable, because of a nuclear balance of power and the regional balance of power in South Asia was too maintained through superpower involvement. That balance does not exist in the post-Cold War environment.

With an unprecedented policy success in hand, policy makers chose to turn their backs on the Afghan people who were so critical in carrying out US policy in the region. American policy makers failed to provide the citizens of Afghanistan the proper assistance to recover from war as it had in almost every other case in which it carried out an interventionist policy. When compared to US interventions in Latin America and Europe, it becomes painfully clear that the war effort in Afghanistan served a single-track policy objective: Soviet containment. This suggests that policy makers did not make an effort to anticipate an exit strategy, consequently leaving Afghanistan desolate, impoverished, and easily exploited by terrorist networks such as Al-Qaeda. It should also be remembered that there exist no natural balance of power between India and Pakistan. But an artificial balance of power between India and Pakistan was created by the superpowers in the context of cold war rivalry, by pumping large quantities of military and economic aid into Pakistan, by giving nearly total political and strategic support to Pakistan on the question of Kashmir at the UN and other international forums, and by diplomatically equating India and Pakistan in every conceivable way. With the end of the Cold War the Indo-Pak rivalry still continues and has led to the accelerated development of strategic nuclear missiles by Pakistan and its refusal to rule out the first use of these missiles, it is necessary for India to continue to develop a minimum credible nuclear deterrence. Thus the United States attempt to maintain the strategic balance in the region during the Cold War only accelerated the arms race between the two hostile states.

\footnote{\textsuperscript{332} See Bucklin, Steven J., \textit{Realism and American Foreign Policy: The Wilsonian and Kennan Morgenthau Thesis}, The International History Review, Vol.24, No,1, March 2002.}
Summary

Since 1945 the region of South Asia had no valuable importance for the United States but in the absence of the US the Soviet Union had taken full advantage to expand its influence in the region. For the United States the region was neither crucial to its economy nor vital for investment and trade relations. It always had shown its interest in the region from global pursuits disregarding the aspiration of regional actors. Thus, the United States never introduced a long-term and well-calculated policy for the region but it was more interested to prevent the flood of communism and determined to contain the Soviet expansionism in the Persian Gulf region. But the United States always misunderstood the “conflictual cobweb of South Asia” and pressurized Pakistan (the most loyal ally in Asia) not to annoy India. In fact, they failed to accommodate Pakistan’s wishes at the expense of India who always hurt the United States interests in the region. Thus, during the Cold War the US efforts for the stability and peace in South Asia were less impressive but the Soviet Union and China played more active role to stabilize their influence and position in the region. In this regard, the Soviet Union supported India and Afghanistan and China backed Pakistan to counter Delhi-Moscow axis in the region.

However, the United States and the Soviet Union engaged each other because of their respective regional and global interests and penetration occurred due to simultaneous push from the superpowers and pull from the local powers. Moreover, superpowers’ penetration and interest in the Indian Ocean and Afghanistan crisis basically initiated in the result of global rivalry and not from a convergence of interest of local states. Nonetheless, the Cold War provided an opportunity for South Asian states to set their own house in order and to grope for internal solutions for regional disputes, beginning with a restructuring of regional relationships on the basis of mutual interests rather than as proxy actors. The Cold War also provided an opportunity of freedom of action that could prove to be both a responsibility and a risk. The decade ahead will be a test for South Asian ruling elites of their capacity to convert responsibilities into power and risks into opportunities. Nevertheless, the Cold War lasted for over 50 years and ended with the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989. During this span of five decades if noted carefully it can be said a balance of power was maintained between the United States and the Soviet Union who in spite of getting involved into regional conflicts did not lose the “essence of cold war” as by not facing each other in open confrontation.
However, the regional balance of power involving the local actors was not strictly maintained as evident from the above discussion as there resulted outbreak of wars on several occasions, although the strategic balance of power was maintained with no occurrence of nuclear war. On a whole as in other regions the superpowers did maintain a balance of power between them in the South Asian region preventing the region from the experience of any war between them or a nuclear holocaust.