CHAPTER-VI

IOR REGION: CONTEMPORARY GEOPOLITICAL AND GEOSTRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

Geopolitics is a universally recognised spatial approach to vexed political problems of various levels - global, regional and local. It is a political paradigm that helps the practitioners of politics or statecraft to identify the criteria for the choice of problems concerning the interstate relationships, when taken for applications. Geopolitics, however, is only one of the subjects studied by political geographers. It is concerned basically with the application of geographic information and geographic perspectives to the development of a state's foreign policies.¹ But each state’s approach to geopolitics manifests differences and variations in its dimension because it sets the paradigm in its own perspective. Taylor (1985) has rightly remarked:

One feature of geopolitics that each researcher’s theory invariably fits the particular needs of researcher’s country.²

The fundamentals of geopolitics, however, continue to be the same since the paradigm was first tested and brought into practice as a means to model problems and solutions by the German academicians, politicians and

war strategists with regard to their state's 'spatial requirements'. However, its definition and dimensions have changed over the years which involved philosophical debates and methodological discussion, whenever, the world has experienced changes in its political territorial patterns and interstate power relations as well as equations. As Henry Kissinger (1979) claimed:

Geopolitics a synonymity with global equilibrium and permanent national interest in the world balance of power.

However, in essence, geopolitics is an attempt to draw attention to the importance of certain geographical patterns in political history. It is a theory of spatial relationships and historical causation.

Furthermore, it can be argued that geopolitics is to emphasis that political predominance is a question not just of having power in the sense of human or material resources, but also in the geographical context within which that power is exercised. This is not to say that the geographical environment determines the objectives or strategies of the foreign or internal policies of a particular state. Instead, geographical configurations present opportunities for policy makers and politicians.

Every century has its own geographical perspective. The geographical perspective of the twenty-first century is different from that of the twentieth century. However, the extent to which geographical opportunities will be exploited depends on strategy that is concerned with the deployment and use

---

of armed forces to attain particular political objectives. Political objectives are consequence of choices made by policymakers. It is from these choices that political and strategic importance is attached to geographical configurations and locations. It also reflects the nature of politics as a decision-making process. In this process the geographical factors which influence politics are product of policy-makers, selecting particular objectives for the formulation of strategies. Furthermore, geography can be described as the mother of strategy. In that the geographical configuration of land and sea, with respect to a state's strategic policy or an alliance between states, can exercise a twofold strategic influence: on locations important for defence and on the routes and geographical configurations which in turn favour an attacking force, be it on land or sea.

Geopolitical Change in the Post-Cold War Era

The well known fact is that, evolution of the world geopolitical system follows organismic developmental principles. Global imbalance is a function of changes among geostrategic regions. As power becomes more diffused across the evolving world system so? The geopolitical changes are also taking shape in the same proportion. After the Second World War, the world was divided into two geostrategic realms; each controlled by a superpower. But later on a new balance was then fashioned, as geopolitical regions became

---

7 Ibid-3
important subsets of the world system\(^8\). This was due to the rise of additional great power centres and the emergence of important regionally based state. Since the 1980s, many events took place like Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the tearing down of the Berlin Wall and the unification of Germany in 1989 and 1990, the collapse of East European Communism, America’s changed status from a creditor to debtor nation,\(^9\) the disintegration of Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War, America’s lead role in defeating Iraq\(^10\), geopolitical change in the Adriatic region (Yugoslavia disintegration), end of Apartheid regime in South Africa, terrorist attack in the WTC Tower and the recent fight against terrorism in Afghanistan. These are all part of the process of geopolitical change. Moreover, change is not limited to the relationship between the North Atlantic and the European Heartland centres. The emergence of regional powers in the 1970s (China, Japan, India, Iran and Australia), developments in most of the developing world in 1980s and emergence of many trade blocs as well as WTO in 1990s have contributed to global geopolitical shifts.

Since the cold war the military rivalries have been superseded by the multinational corporate networks, global capital flows, and the specialization of industry, technological transfer and adoption. While these forces are viewed as global, in fact, these also often have regional clustering. This regional

---

\(^9\) Ibid., p. 559.
\(^10\) Despite its sweeping military victory, America’s political and economic dependence upon the support of other nations to wage the Gulf War has demonstrated its basic inability to impose American hegemony in the entire world.
impact contributes to the salience of the geopolitical region, as the second order powers interact with other countries in their regional arenas. Smaller states (in terms of economy, military) like Malaysia, India, Iran, UAE, Israel and Kenya have become specialised centres of economic and political activity with the global network. They also have a shadow effect on the regions within which they are located.

Here one thing is noteworthy to mention that the new major and regional powers have challenged and in the process changed the bipolar world, but they have not displaced the Superpowers. Rather, they have become absorbed within an evolving system. However, one can notice from the past history that the economic decline and over-extension of military commitments ultimately brought the downfall of all great powers.

Today's world system is fundamentally different from that of the past. In the present scenario, the economic hierarchy is not necessarily translated into a political hierarchy. We have learned from the experience of economically resurgent Japan and Germany that the exercise of parallel political/military power is neither necessary nor desirable for a nation to enjoy economic and social prosperity.

In addition, resources are being increasingly substituted, and a modern service and high-technology-oriented economy is emerging which relies increasingly on sophisticated manpower. The power and functions of the international agencies (Security Council, IMF) are becoming stronger; hence the major powers no longer wish to assume independent action.
Consequently, the gap in international political inequality between large and small states is narrowing in behaviour. Finally, hegemonic structure is becoming increasingly complex, as the concept of hierarchy of cultures is now widely challenged. The old notions of 'Eurocentric' cultural primacy are fading. Specially, the success of sophisticated offshore Asian economic undermines the myth of western cultural supremacy.

**Geopolitical System**

World War II and the end of colonialism paved the way for New World geopolitical arrangements. In the early post war years the two bipolar realms were controlled by the Soviet Union and the U.S. There was a general believe that the Superpowers could influence all parts of their respective geostrategic arenas, without the need for any intermediaries. However, that system quickly changed. Within the Maritime World, specialised regional cores like EU and Japan rose; initially as junior partners and then as friendly competitors to the U.S.A. Within the Eurasian realm, China soon challenged Russia for strategic parity and the USA in economic and weapons parity. These new power centres began to develop independent ties with other states and regions. In the same way, Pakistan has the capacity to challenge the Supremacy of India.

In the 1970s, a number of regionally important states began to emerge. This gave added dimension to the regional geopolitical structure. These states imposed a hierarchy of their own within their respective region. In the IOR region, India became dominant after defeating Pakistan in war and casted its stamp upon Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The emergence of Iraq as an
important geopolitical entity is due to the recognition by the Great Powers of the special strategies and economic significance of the Mesopotamian region.\textsuperscript{11} In the 1980s, Iran and Iraq emerged as dominating powers in the Middle East. In spite of their involvement in the war (Iran-Iraq war) during this period both the countries were called as Germany and France of Asia.\textsuperscript{12}

**Entropy and Orders of Powers**

A key element in the dynamism of the geopolitical system is the power shifts among different states and regions. Some power changes are the result of domestic development in economic structures and social orders. Others can be attributed to external and transnational forces. Three orders of national power: the first or the major, the second or the regional, and the third or the sub-regional, affect the balance of the global system. Even lesser order states are change agents which influence regional and global patterns. Here one can notice the role of Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, Palestine and Israel in the recent world geopolitical scenario. As Cohen (1991) in his article ‘Global Geopolitical change in the Post-Cold War Era’ use entropy level for scientific explanation of the world geopolitical system. Entropy level is indicative of the fitness of the state or region in the various orders of power. It is also a useful measure of balance in relationships between geopolitical units.


\textsuperscript{12} Defined in physical systems, as the availability of energy to do work. Entropy is always on the increase as energy becomes exhausted. Thus a system’s ability to work constantly declines. If the world functions as closed geopolitical units, then surely each unit would ultimately collapse. Geopolitical entities whose leadership seeks to close them off from outside forces do suffer from the exhaustion of their human and natural resources and sink to high levels of entropy. Consequently, they become recharged through energy in the form of peoples, goods and ideas.
According to Cohen, criteria that can be used to measure entropy include: saving rate; agricultural yields; manufacturing productivity; debt payment; percentage of R&D exports; number of patents; scientists and engineers; foreign scientific exchange and reduction of fuel-energy intensity requirements. On the basis of these criteria, regions fall into four categories (Fig. 6(a)):

I. **Low entropy**: Anglo-America and the Caribbean, Maritime Europe and the Maghreb, and Offshore Asia.

II. **Medium entropy**: Heartland, Eastern Europe and Middle East.

III. **High entropy**: East and South Asia.

IV. **Very high entropy**: sub-Saharan Africa and South America.

Accordingly, a state or region can exert its influence beyond its border. The major factors are its entropy level and its military strategic strength. The
reach can be measured by external trade, capital flow, diplomatic relations, immigration, transit links and overseas military base. On the basis of these measures, the US is quite strong in five regions: Maritime Europe, Offshore Asia, South America, sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. Within a small region like IOR, only few countries like India, South Africa and Australia have partly reached such level.

The entropic level of EU is low. It is fully capable of transporting surplus energy to Eastern Europe and Russia. The EU has substantial geopolitical reach to Anglo-America, Offshore Asia and Eastern Europe. Europe is in balance with Anglo-America, Offshore Asia. It is over balance with its other regions of major contact. Offshore Asia, spearheaded by Japan and its successfully industrialized neighbours, reaches to Anglo-America, the Middle East, Europe, South and East Asia. With its very low level of entropy, it is also in a position to project substantial reach to the Heartland. The region is in balance with Anglo-America and Europe. The heartland is at a medium entropic level, which is rising rapidly in the light of its recent economic stagnation and the collapse of the centralized Russian political system.

Regional or the Second order powers are cores for their regions. They have nodal characteristic in terms of trade, transportation and military influence. They aspire for regional or sub-regional hegemony. Limited extra-regional economic or political ties are also characteristic of such powers. Finally, such regions are overshadowed by a great power. The economies like
India, Pakistan, South Africa, etc., of IOR region can be categorised under the second-order powers.

The third order states influence regional events in special ways. They compete with neighbouring regional powers on ideological and political grounds or for having a specialised resource base. They lack in population, military and general economic capacities of the second order rivals. Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, UAE, Yemen, Singapore and Sri Lanka can be categorised under this system. Lesser order states like Sudan, Tanzania, Mozambique and Somalia retain such status in the IOR region. They have impact only on their nearest neighbours. While the fifth order states like Bangladesh, Myanmar, Madagascar, Qatar, Bahrain, Eritrea, and Djibouti have only marginal external involvement. Such orders of powers can be shown in a tabular form.

Table 6.1

Orders of Power in the IOR Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Order</th>
<th>Second Order</th>
<th>Third Order</th>
<th>Fourth Order</th>
<th>Fifth Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>Australia, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, India, Pakistan, South Africa,</td>
<td>Kenya, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, UAE, Yemen,</td>
<td>Jordan, Kuwait, Mozambique, Oman, Sudan, Somalia, Tanzania,</td>
<td>Bahrain, Bangladesh, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Madagascar, Maldives, Myanmar, Qatar,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But the membership in the various orders is fluid. A decade ago, twenty-seven nations were measured as potential second order powers (Cohen, 1991). But in the recent years the power paradigm has shifted even on the smaller states. At present, smaller order states have played a major
role in the disorder of the world geopolitical system. The combined inputs of the major powers and the second and the third order give birth to regionalism in the geopolitical structures. The best examples are the role of Israel and Kuwait in the Middle Eastern geopolitical system.

**Role of Asymmetrical State in Geopolitics**

A state, which may be described as 'asymmetrical', plays special role in the regional personality. It promotes turbulence\(^{13}\) by challenging the norms of hegemonic regional structures and injecting unwelcomed energy into the system. Israel, Iran and Iraq as well as Myanmar are examples of asymmetrical states that have profound impact upon their respective regions. According to the present behaviour of Pakistan, it may also be categorised under asymmetrical state. At present the geopolitical scenario is in transitional phase due to the turbulent activity of asymmetrical states.

**Geostrategic Realms and Regions**

The geostrategic realm is the highest regional level of the world system. There are two geostrategic realms, namely the Trade Dependent Maritime World and the Eurasian Continental World. Despite the profound changes that have taken place in the world in recent years, the basic framework is intact. Of the world's five major power centres, only the US is a both military and an economic power. Russia and China are great military forces but are relatively weak economically. Japan and European Union are dominant economic forces.

without strong military capacities. They lack vast strategic space and are vulnerable to the military pressures of their Chinese or Russian neighbours. In this situation, the strategic alliance with the US is the strongest security card for them.

South Asia does not belong to any geostrategic realm. Instead it has a separate geopolitical regional status. As an independent geopolitical region dominated by India, South Asia remains rural-based and with continental orientation (inward-orientation) like the heartland. This does not minimize the growing importance to the region of overseas trade, shipping, and modern-day immigration. Inward-orientation of India has minimized its merchandise trade. Consequently, India’s extra regional impact is relatively limited and which cast a shadow over its geopolitical objectives. (See chapter IV table top five trading partners within the region).

![Fig. 6(b). Geostrategic Realms and Regions of the World](image_url)

Japan’s situation as the dominant economic and political power in Offshore Asia is unique because of its reluctance to exercise military pressure.
This is reverse in South Asia. The situation is the same in most of the IOR countries. If we look at the history since the end of Cold War, the IOR region is the perpetual battle ground and region of conflict. The West Asia and Gulf crisis in the Middle East region and Indo-Pak tensions over Kashmir have changed the geopolitical scenario of the IOR region.

The Quarter-Sphere of Marginality

The area centring on the South Atlantic and their bordering oceans represent the quarter of the world's land and oceans which can be referred as the 'Quarter-Sphere of Marginality' (Cohen, 1991). Economically, this area suffers from chronic over-production of commercial crops and minerals. The post industrial regions no longer regard this area as the potential storehouse of the world. The two southern continents, namely South America and Africa, especially Sub-Sahara come under the 'quarter-sphere of marginality'. However, North and East Africa come under our study area. The burden of high debt, low international trade levels, overpopulation, low life expectancy and low calorie consumption (Chapter III) will continue to plague the East African economies. Due to these problems, local conflicts and acquisition of mass weapons would affect global stability.

While dominated by the US and EU power centres, the 'quarter-sphere of marginality' is marginal in strategic sense. Naval and air strike forces, long range air weapons and satellite surveillance capabilities have minimized the significance to the Maritime World of East Africa. Moreover, the Suez Canal and shipping routes around the Cape of Good Hope enhanced the
geostrategic importance of this region, especially for the US and Maritime Europe.

**Shatterbelts**

Shatterbelts are used as strategically-oriented regions, being politically fragmented areas of competition between the maritime and continental realms. The distinguishing feature of the shatterbelt, is that it presents an equal playing field to two or more competing powers, operating from different geostrategic realms. By the end of the 1940s, the Middle East and Southeast Asia had emerged as shatterbelts. In the 1970s (Cohen, 1991) the major change in the geopolitical map is that Southeast Asia has lost its shatterbelt status, due to considerable industrial development and economic linkages with Japan and the USA. It has become economically and politically part of Offshore Asia and the Maritime World. Myanmar is an exception due to military regime. It is almost isolated and has no foreign trade and contacts. When the military regime is eventually overthrown, and the country opens itself to the world, it will probably become re-oriented to South Asia.

Shatterbelt areas and their boundaries are fluid. During the 1970s and 1980s, Sub-Sahara Africa also became a shatterbelt. The Soviet Union used its Cuban strategy as well as its Eastern European satellites to provide military and technical support to Ethiopia, Namibia, Angola and Mozambique.14 Its adjoining Middle Eastern European bases were important jumping-off points.

---

14 Cohen. 'Global Geopolitical Change in the Post-Cold War Era', *op. cit.*, p. 567.
for Africa. But with the retreat of Russia from Africa, the region has shifted back to the Maritime World.

At present, the Middle East is the only shatterbelt. It is internally highly fragmented and there are six powers in this region: Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Syria and Turkey. They cast their shadow over remaining states. But the alliances among these states are fluid. The outside powers like the USA, EU and China, as well as Pakistan can help for regional stability in the Middle East, particularly by pressing for elimination of weapons of mass destruction, reduction of conventional arms and commitments to act against regional aggressors.

However, since the Gulf crisis, every Middle East state and some of the major ethnic and religious groups (Jewish and Muslim) are directly or indirectly involved in the conflict. Basically, interpenetrating seas like the Mediterranean Red Sea, Persian Gulf, Arabian and Caspian; and the Turkish and Iranian land bases played militarily significant roles. Moreover, in the recent years, oil-pipeline networks, interregional migration, capital flows and water, all emerged as factors that shape the regional personality.

Particularly, in the Post-Gulf war, Maritime Europe exerted more influence on the Middle East scene and emerged as the second major intrusive power, after the USA. Now Russia and China play a secondary role. Hence there is a possibility that a new balance can be developed. Indeed, Russia and China play a stabilizing role between Europe and US, in pursuing their own agenda.

242
Gateway Regions

The world is currently in disequilibrium because of the substantial differences in entropic levels between the two geostrategic realms. The Russian, Central Asian and Chinese cores of continental Eurasia have medium levels of entropy that are rapidly increasing. In contrast, the cores of the Maritime World and many other parts of the Developed Market Economics, particularly, the Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) are at low levels of entropy. However, the most promising geopolitical mechanism now for restoring the balance between the two realms is the emergence of Central and Eastern Europe as a ‘Gateway region’ (Fig.6(c). Such a region could facilitate the transfer of new energies into the faltering Russian core. The Gateway region will facilitate the transfer of economic innovation from West to East. But Western Europe is concerned with Russian military power while the latter needs West European’s economic help. In this situation both should address through cooperation, not through the competition that makes for shatterbelt. Here we can look the Indo Pak crisis in the light of above-mentioned situation. The cooperation in both countries can enhance the economic and geopolitical stability in the IOR region.
Gateway States

The function of Gateway states are just like microelectronic circuit. In a microelectronic circuit or chips, gates permit currents to pass through arrays of transistors. Transistors are made faster by making them smaller, giving the current less distance to travel. This applies to the potential of gateway states to make the world system more responsive.

The major characteristics of the Gateway Sates are:

- Politically and culturally, they are distinct historic cultural hearth, with separate language, high degree of education, and favourable access by sea or land to external areas.
- Economically Gateways tend to be more developed than the core areas of their host states.
- They are linked to groups of overseas that can provide capital and technology flows.
- Gateways are often of military value to their host states.
- They lack self-sufficiency and depend upon the host state for raw materials and a substantial market.
• They are located mainly along the border of the world’s geostrategic and its geopolitical regions.
• Gateways states are specialized in manufacturing, trade, tourism and financial service functions.
• They are stimulating factors for global economic, social and political interaction.
• Far from the traditional territorial unitary or federal states, whose goal included self-sufficiency and defence capacities.
• Such states will be mini-trading states with qualified sovereignty.

Cohen recognised the following gateway states in the world-

**Prospective Gateway States**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By early 21st century</th>
<th>By mid-21st century</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Gateway states are in the IOR region.**

From the above discussion we find that at the geopolitical level, the different regions are at different stages of development. Their power and influence cannot be comparatively measured by the same criteria. On the other hand, regional states play different role within their regions, depending on their particular qualities and political-economic interactions with major powers and neighbouring states. Moreover, the emergence of regional trading blocs in all over the world could prove a serious challenge to the world’s open system. They might promote protectionism and monopoly competition within the blocs.
From Geopolitics to Geo-economics

Although power and security constitute the nuclei of the foreign policy of every state but the emphasis on the economic aspect of their relationship has now assumed new dimensions. After the Cold War, the bilateral or multilateral relations of each state have had shifted from the centrality of political factors to that of economic interests. Economic factors have become influencing forces in the making of foreign policies of the nations. The age of military superpowers is passing away and we are slowly passing into a new age of economic superpowers. Military power can no doubt be a powerful source of influence in the international relations, but economic power can prove to be a stronger source of influence in the world affairs.

It has been observed in recent times that the major power blocs have been reducing political confrontations and moving towards trade-cum-commercial groupings. Particularly the emergence of a global economy with the growth of world trade and spread of foreign investments in the international markets, coupled with the production of innovative electronics and the revolution in communication technology, show that there has been a clear shift of the international affairs from politics to economics. A former president of the U.S. Bill Clinton declared:

In this new era, our first foreign priority and domestic priority are one and the same: reviving our economy. I will elevate economies in foreign policy, create an Economic Security Council... and change

---

the State Department's culture so that economics is no longer a poor
cousin to old school diplomacy. 16

Reason for Weak Geopolitical Role of IOR Economics

In the IOR region India, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, UAE, South Africa and
Mauritius are in the growing stage of development of their own economic
productive forces. This has gradually led to the involvement of these
economies in the economy, society and politics of the region. The tie
developed among the IOR countries is based on political economy. These
overseas ties have been manifested through aid programmes, contracts, joint
venture investment, technology transfers, banking and trade facilitation. The
data, of the top five trading partners of the world and the top five trading
partners within the region(see chapter IV) shows the economic dependency of
the IOR countries on the superpower economies (U.S.A, Japan, China,
Germany, Malaysia and Singapore). This is particularly important if we are to
translate a political economic analysis of the IOR countries' to the study of IOR
countries foreign relations. They are prone to experience the pressure of big
economies in determining their foreign policies and relations. Finally, it
weakened the geopolitical and geo-economics importance of the IOR
countries within the region to give the scope of being dominated by the
outsider economies.

However, another reason for weak geopolitical role of the region is the mass poverty. Due to this reason the IOR economies can only mobilize their potential productive capacity up to a certain point. The mass poverty limited the outward expansion of the economy and the future of domestic development strategy. Further, they act as an encumbrance on existing resources and necessitate continued import of aid from the economic powers; thus keeping most of the IOR countries in a dependent position. This continuing dependence imposes constraints on most of the IOR countries, which led them towards foreign debt. Similarly, the constant threat of mass internal unrest which aborts IOR's new overseas ambitions is also a result of this continuing mass poverty and internal social oppression. Another reason for weak geopolitical role of the IOR economies is that even some interstate problems (boundaries, terrorism) can not be solved without the interference of the Western industrialized countries, especially the US and UK.

The Geopolitics of Regionalism

In the context of post-cold war scenario, much academic and media attention has been focused on issues concerning regionalism and the consolidation of regional trading and security blocs such as, European Union (EU), Mercado Commun Conodel Sur (MERCOSUR), Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC), IOR-ARC, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This growing trend towards regional cooperation and networks has undoubtedly been facilitated by the dissolution of cold war geopolitical landscape. It has been argued within the
Southern Hemisphere, regional groupings such as MERCOSUR, the South African Development Community (SADC) and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) are designed to promote regional economic bargaining power on one hand and these groups are a reaction to the 'deterritorialisation' of state power by the activities of multinational corporation and global markets on the other hand.\textsuperscript{17}

Most of the liberal and realist commentary on regional cooperation and new security agendas believes that these processes directly contribute to political stability, economic integration and democratic integration.\textsuperscript{18} Regionalism and regional security organizations are important contributions to the management of international security. In the twentieth century, new economic and political relationships have changed the regulatory powers of the state and the relationship among state, region and the world economy. International politics based on the notion of a territorially bounded sovereign state have also been challenged by a range of transnational issues such as environmental affairs, electronic currency flows and global information network. As a consequence, regional organizations can be understood as a part of a political strategy in which member states seek to increase their bargaining power in the face of economic and political globalization.\textsuperscript{19}

Regional cooperation over trade barriers, common markets and commercial


transaction is widely perceived to be one particular strategy for dealing with external trading pressures. Regionalism in the IOR is not simply promoted due to geographical proximity and economic interdependence but also by common historical experiences such as colonialism, political ideologies and war.\(^\text{20}\)

In this market competitive era, states have had to adjust their roles in the world political economy in the light of new development, networks and organizations such as banks, foreign exchange markets and transnational corporations. The behaviour of states and their adjustments to global political economy has been of critical concern into the new international political economy. Regionalism, in general, is the tendency towards and preference for regional systems. It seeks to defend a certain cultural disposition. The aim of regionalism is towards a degree of autonomy in the management of regional affairs. In the sphere of international security, regionalism is the attempt by a group of states in order to further their relations among each other, to advance commonly agreed aims.

**Pipeline Geopolitics of the Middle East**

The Middle East has about 60 percent of the world's proven oil reserves and the world's highest reserve-to-production ratio. In addition, 9 of the world's 10 largest oilfields and 28 of the 33 super-giant fields that have over half of the world's oil are located in the region.\(^\text{21}\) Most of these vast fields are concentrated within the Arabian-Iranian oil province, an area measuring some

---


1200 by 800 Kilometres around the head of the Persian Gulf Caino-Zoic sedimentary belt. Consequently, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, and Iraq between them have roughly 80 percent of the region's reserve.

Although the Middle East is the major producer of oil, it is not a major consumer. Most of the oil is shipped to Western Europe, Far East, North America and the IOR countries by tankers. Accordingly, elaborate networks of pipelines link the oilfields with marine export terminals, loading platforms and refineries. Of particular interest are the strategic pipelines that greatly shorten tanker voyages. In certain cases there are by-pass shipping routes which are vulnerable to political interference. The most important is the 1718KM Tapline (Trans-Arabian Pipeline), built in 1950 which transported oil from eastern Saudi Arabia via Jordan, the Golan Height and Syria to Saida or Sidon in Lebanon. This avoids the 4800Km long tanker route through the Suez Canal or the much longer Cape of Good Hope route.

Tapline has been vulnerable to closure because it passes through major war zone and has been the subject of frequent disputes over transit fees. About 40 percent of the crude oil from the Middle East flowed westward by pipelines to ports of the Mediterranean Sea for shipment and refining in Europe and North America. Of far greater significance is Saudi Arabia's 1213 Km Petroline, opened in 1981, which connects the eastern oil fields with Yanbu on the Red Sea. When used in conjunction with Egypt's 335 Km

22 Ibid.
Sumed Pipeline, which runs between the Gulf of Suez and the Mediterranean, Petroline will allow a substantial proportion of Saudi oil to be shipped out of the Middle East without having to go through the vulnerable Hormuz and Bab al Mandeb straits, the Suez Canal, Syria and Lebanon or around the Cape of Good Hope. Saudi Arabia, Iraq, United Arab Emirates and Oman are also exploring the possibility of building a second line that would by-pass the Strait of Hormuz, which would run from Ras Tannurah to the Gulf of Oman.  

Of all the oil-producing countries in the region, Iraq is the most dependent on international pipelines for exporting its oil. Almost all of its oil is pumped from Kirkuk to the Mediterranean ports of Tripoli in Lebanon and Baniyas in Syria. These lines are very unreliable because of frequent political disagreements and transit fee disputes. However, this route was closed in 1976 and 1979 due to conflict between Syria and Iraq. Hence, in 1976 it opened a strategic pipeline to Al-Faw on the Persian Gulf. The following year, oil began flowing through a 986 Km line through Turkey to Yumuratalik on the Mediterranean. But both pipelines were disrupted in the 1980s due to Iraq, Iran war and in 1990s because of American bombardment and international embargo. Iraq also planned to construct a parallel pipeline of petroline to Yanbu on the Red Sea.

However, a decade of pipeline construction has diversified the Middle East’s oil export routes and significantly reduced their vulnerability.

---

Hydrocarbon and Pipeline Geopolitics in the IOR Region

Central Asia, through which the once-famous Silk Route passed in the 16th century, has always been an object of geopolitical fantasies. Mackinder referred to its vital location as a "heartland country". Also, the German geopolitics Karl Haushofer took part in developing ideas about "Great Turkestan."

The Caspian-Caucasus region of Central Asia has the potential to become the largest supplier of oil and gas to Asia, Europe and North America with its estimated reserves approximately 200 billion barrels—surpassing any other region outside the Persian Gulf. The quest for exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbon resources in the region is termed as the "New Great Game". More significantly, the prospects of Caspian Sea natural resources have put some of the Central Asian republics in spotlight on the global strategic map. But in recent years the oil pipeline geopolitics of the Caspian region has become more important. The drain of Caspian hydrocarbon geopolitics has the strength to change the geopolitical cartographic map of some area of the IOR, especially Iran, Pakistan and India.

At present, the US stands behind all the strategically important processes in the Caucasus and the Central Asia. The strong advocacy for Baku-Tbilis-Ceyhan pipeline route is a reflection of this crucial strategic

---

Another US interest is to align with those of the Russian Federation as regards containment of Muslim extremism/militancy, cross-border terrorism, check on nuclear proliferation, control of small-arms and drug-trafficking, stability of the region, protection of foreign investment besides pursuing Washington's own agenda that includes promotion of western economic interests. Also, US policy has been to block Russia and Iran from becoming transit nations for the Caspian oil.

Though, Iran is interested in playing an active role in solving the problem of transportation of oil and gas resources of the Caspian republics of the CIS to the world markets but faces American opposition. Russians could gain if they (CIS countries) support projects meant to transport oil and gas of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan through Iranian territory onwards to potential markets of South and South East Asia, through Persian Gulf and diverting pipelines (India and Pakistan). Economically, this is the shortest and the cheapest long-term export route option for the Caspian Sea. On the other hand, Iran is keen to export natural gas to Pakistan and India. Both South Asian countries could benefit from the proposed $5 billion Iran, Pakistan, India gas pipeline project, which is expected to post $700 million revenue per annum to Pakistan $500 million as annual transit fee and additional $200 million saved through cheap gas. Under this project, nearly 2,670 Km pipeline of 56 inches diameter is required to be laid for the supply of gas from

29 Ibid., p. 39.
30 The News, 23 August 2000, p. 16.
Iran to Pakistan which would ensure flow of 3.3 billion cubic feet.\textsuperscript{31} Unfortunately, due to India-Pakistan political discord the project could not take off. Pakistan is geostrategically located as a transport corridor for supply of gas. This pipeline holds greater prospects than Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan pipelines.

Originally, the Iranian Gas Company planned to deliver 2 billion cubic feet of gas daily to Karachi and Multan with an option to extend it to India and onwards to some countries in the Far East.\textsuperscript{32} However, India has reservations about this land route as in her view it would pass through “hostile” Pakistani territory. India is thinking of an alternative sea route being developed by the Russian Company, Gazprom that has a 10 percent share in the South Pars of shore gas fields of Iran.

On the other hand Turkmenistan as a gas-rich country is keen to export it to Pakistan and India and then onwards to Southeast Asia. The proposed $2 billion trans-Afghanistan pipeline covering 1464 Km is a 48-inch diameter pipeline that is proposed to connect the Daulatabad gas fields in Southeast Turkmenistan to Multan in central Pakistan. It is also proposed that it may be extended 600 Km into India after traversing 750 Km in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{33} Talks on the above proposal between Turkmenistan and Pakistan have been going on for many years but have been hampered by the recent war in Afghanistan.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{32} The News, 26 August 2000, p. 7.
Pak-China Economic Strategic Ties: Gwadar Seaport and Makran Coastal Highway

In August 2001 Pakistan and China signed a formal agreement under which Chinese government would provide financial support of $200 million for the construction of the first phase of the Gwadar Seaport and Makran coastal highway.³⁴ There is also a possibility that US firms may build a pipeline from the Central Asian Republics, via Afghanistan to Pakistan (Gwadar).³⁵ Both projects (Gwadar and Makran) hold commercial as well as strategic significance. Gwadar will emerge as the second and alternative seaport of Pakistan. In crisis this port would give Pakistan navy the ability to move naval assets away from vulnerable locations. Gwadar is near the mouth of Gulf of Oman, about 50 miles from Pakistan's border with Iran.

The Chinese investment in the mega projects is seen in the West as strategically motivated. The Washington Times stated that development of Gwadar port would give Beijing "a potential staging ground to exert influence along some of the world's busiest shipping lanes flowing into and out of the Persian Gulf."³⁶ A network of oil and gas pipelines could be a stabilizing factor in the region and may foster regional integration. At the same time seeds for conflict resolution may germinate in war-prone South Asia if new pipelines could lead to regional cooperation.

³⁵ Ibid., p.61.
Gas Pipeline Geopolitics: Middle East and South Asia

The gas pipeline geopolitics is a very sensitive issue for the survival of India's economy and security. In a decade, India's oil import will go to 320 million tonnes and gas to 150 million cubic meters.\textsuperscript{37} We will then be facing an unprecedented crisis—not because of supply problem, but because of financial problems. On an average India already spends about $8 billion to $9 billion on the imports annually. Near future about 70 percent of foreign exchange resources will go into oil and gas imports, leaving very little for other purposes. On the other hand our automobiles transport system is one of the largest. Similarly the gas-based industries are multiplying. We are always at the brink of war with our hostile neighbour. Hence we need perpetual deployment of armies for security. There is a question mark for India's survival without importing hydrocarbons from the Middle East and Central Asia. At present, tankers are the only option for imports. But according to the demand magnitude, tankers are not going to fulfil our requirement. Therefore, pipelines are the only option. The seabed pipelines are economically and technically very expensive and land route pipeline is very economic. For this the pipelines from the Middle East have to cross Pakistan's territory. On the other hand, from Central Asia, India can follow either the route from Pakistan or China. In both cases, India has to compromise with two distant neighbours.

\textsuperscript{37} Tribune (Chandigarh), 18 August 2000.
Iran-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline

Addressing the 12th annual conference of the International Association for Energy Economics in January 1990, New Delhi, the Iranian Deputy Minister of Mines and Metals, Mr. Ali Shams Ardekani proposed a 3300 Km Trans-Asia natural gas pipeline from Bandar Abbas in Iran to Calcutta. The $11.7 billion pipeline would take 4 or 5 years to be completed and would pay for itself in just 4 years. The pipeline, with the capacity of around 100 million cubic meter of natural gas, start from Bandar Abbas. The line will cross Pakistan where 20-25 million cubic meters per day of gas will be consumed. The remaining gas will enter India. The pipelines originate in Bandar Abbas and pass through the cities of Minab and Iransuauar and enter Pakistan in the Panjkoor area. The pipeline will enter India in the Viavea area (Gujarat) and will pass through Radhanpur into Ahmedabad, from where it will be extended up to Calcutta.

The length of the Iranian segment of the pipeline will be 752 Km, of the Pakistani segment 960 Km and of the Indian segment 1600 Km. The diameter of the pipe in these segments will be 1420, 1320 and 1170 and construction cost $3.25 bn., $4.30 bn. and $4.20 bn. respectively. If Brezhnev can do it by succeeding on the Trans-Siberian pipeline project despite opposition we can also do it, the Iranian Minister added. The pipeline would be a good vehicle to reduce tension. Again, the Australian BHP Corporation proposed the

---

38 The Times of India (New Delhi), 12 February 1990.
39 Ibid.
construction of a pipeline to transport Iranian gas to the west coast of India stretching from Qeshm Island (Iran) and along the Iranian and Pakistan coast up to India. But this project, could have also connected the South Pars offshore field (Iran) and Qatar.\textsuperscript{40}

On the other hand, in order to marginalise India, Pakistan separately proposed for the 1638 Km pipeline to carry gas from the field at Iran’s Assaluya to Gaddani in the coastal region of Pakistan’s Baluchistan province.\textsuperscript{41} Pakistan also tried to convince Iran that, “the gas being offered by Iran would be consumed by Pakistan, so there remains little scope for extending the pipeline to India”.\textsuperscript{42}

The volatile Afghanistan and uncertain Pakistan’s situation are the crucial factors for the use of Middle East and Central Asia hydrocarbon through pipelines in south, Southeast Asian rim countries and Australia. In the case of an Iran-India gas pipeline over Pakistan territory, the hostility of India-Pakistan relations will persist in foreseeable future, the pipeline could be closed in a war, conflict or tension. Blowing up oil pipelines by Kurdish terrorists in the 1980s in Turkey and terrorists in Assam in the 1990s are grim reminders.\textsuperscript{43} Any agreement on transportation over land, therefore, must include safeguards, including access for security, damage control and repair. Deep sea pipelines, on the other hand, raise costs substantially (Shared by only two countries). But the general assumption is that such pipelines would

\textsuperscript{40} The Observer (New Delhi), 21 November 2000.
\textsuperscript{41} The Observer, 10 May 1999.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{43} Financial Express (New Delhi), 14 April 2001.
be more secure. A hostile country could easily interdict the pipelines. If this happens, India would not even be in a position to send a protest note to Islamabad or complain to an international regulatory institution. On the other hand, repairs to damaged deep-sea pipelines are much more costly. Proposals to bring gas from Oman to the Gujarat coast through a sub-sea pipeline have the probability of same consequences.

India-Bangladesh Gas Pipeline

The total reserve of natural gas of Bangladesh is 11 trillion cubic feet.\textsuperscript{44} On 26 August 1980, Dhaka proposed to sell one trillion cubic feet\textsuperscript{45} of natural gas to India but cancelled due to opposition by the people. Other major considerable factors for the cancellation of this proposal were: sharing of Farakka water, control over the New Moor Islands in the Bay of Bengal, demarcation of boundary and tri-junction boundary etc which are still unresolved source of contention. Another problem was related to the finance of 175 mile pipeline and the fixation of price of Bangladesh’s gas. Dhaka proposed that India should bear the whole cost of the pipeline construction. On the other hand, Japan, Greece and US are very keen to import and develop the gas of Bangladesh. This is a big threat to the Indian economy and polity.

The Bangladesh government is afraid of not having enough supply for itself if Bangladesh wants to wait until its government proves how big the reserves are, and then it may be too late. India will have found other ways to

\textsuperscript{44} \textit{The Hindustan Times} (New Delhi), 15 October 1992.
\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Economic Times} (New Delhi), 28 August 1980.
meet its energy needs. On the other hand, the foreign bidders are worried about India. If this good client goes out of their hands due to the slow process and lack of prompt decision by the Bangladesh government, then the exploring companies feel that they would be in trouble with the huge quantity of gas without any big consumer. India is the only county which offers a good price for the purchase of Bangladesh gas as the transportation cost would be lower.

However, one obvious and effective way for Pakistan and India to join for tackling the real problem, is that the two-share-economic and social development. It would determinedly strengthen South Asian regional cooperation. In this way, India and Pakistan can jointly propose Iran's membership of SAARC. Iran has historical, economic and geographical ties with the Indian subcontinent. Similarly, pipeline gas from Bangladesh will cost less than LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) imports from the Middle East through tankers. It will foster stability and improve relations between the two countries.

Geopolitics of Boundaries

To determine the limiting line on the earth's surface on one side on which all men and things are subject to jurisdiction of one state, whereas the moment that line is crossed everything is subject to another state. Such a line has therefore enormous effect on the lives of the people whose citizenship it alone determines. Not nearly under what government they must live for what state be ready to fight and die, but even where they must sell their products, where purchase their supplies, what language their school must, for the most part, use, what history, literature


47 Financial Express (New Delhi), 1 July 1999.

and songs their children will be taught, under what national, cultural, and moral influence they will be brought up all of these are determined for millions of people by the exact location of an international boundary line such an area as this.  

The years after the Cold War witnessed the beginnings of dramatic changes in people's identities and the symbols of those identities. Global politics began to be configurated along cultural lines. In the Post-Cold War world, the most important distinctions among peoples are not ideological, political or economic rather they are cultural. Peoples and nations are attempting to answer the most basic question, human can face: Who are we? People define themselves in terms of ancestry, religion, language, history, values, customs and institutions. They identify with cultural groups; tribes, ethnic group, religious communities, nations and at the broadest level civilization. All identifications finally assimilate to the state. It is an internationally recognised political and judicial entity. It claims sovereignty over specific area of land and possibly adjacent sea. This area is delimited in the minds of individuals and groups owing allegiance to the state by boundaries. Boundaries indicate the accepted territorial integrity of the state and the extent of government control. In the majority of cases boundaries are legally recognised by the states which share them and also by the international community. However, as a result of the global geopolitical changes over the past decade, approximately one-quarter of the world's land boundaries can be

---


51 Ibid., p.20.
classified as unstable.\textsuperscript{52} In addition, some two-thirds of the global maritime boundaries have yet to be settled.\textsuperscript{53}

Since the possession of agreed boundaries has a crucial bearing upon state security, conflicts related to boundaries are likely to remain a key component of the international geopolitical scene. It is hardly surprising that a high proportion of global flashpoints can be related to boundaries. Moreover, states are the key component of the global political system and boundaries are a major concern of their political decision-making. It is probably true to say that most territorial disputes have some element of boundary conflict. Though, the majority of the boundaries of Africa, Asia and Latin America were drawn by Europeans, largely according to their colonial interests. The geographical, ethnic and language factors were largely ignored in the face of the economic, strategic and diplomatic interests of the European states.

\textbf{Boundary Disputes in Littoral African and Middle Eastern Region}

Many of the international boundaries of contemporary Africa, especially, south of the Sahara, were defined by the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 by the European colonial powers\textsuperscript{54}, on the basis of superficial knowledge gained from records of missionaries, explorers and traders.\textsuperscript{55}

This is well known fact that most of the boundaries in the eastern and northern littoral Africa are arbitrarily drawn. Such boundaries were drawn a

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
\end{itemize}

263
straight lines from one known point to another or were made to follow physical features. Such types of boundaries are referred as *geometric* boundaries, they are defined by mathematical methods, not by any consideration for land or people between the end points. Examples include the boundaries between Kenya and Tanzania, Egypt and Sudan; Somalia and Ethiopia and most of the Middle Eastern States. Several of these boundaries have since become seriously disputed. In the morphological classification of boundaries, geographers simply consider physical features. In the eastern African region, international boundary lines have been drawn through lakes, along escarpments and mountain ranges. Lakes namely Victoria, Rudolf, Albert, Edward, Kivu, Tanganyika and Malawi were selected for matters of convenience and then divided by geometrical lines. The boundaries between Zaire and Sudan, the Central African Republics and Sudan, and Malawi and Mozambique follow watersheds divides. Such boundaries that lie along physical features are called physiographic boundaries. The present boundary along the Jordan River between Israel and Jordan is a *physiographic* political boundary. Between Sudan and Ethiopia, which skirts the lowest slopes of the giant Ethiopian mountain-land (and place follows a river) is in the same class.\(^{56}\)

A boundary that coincides with a cultural discontinuity is identified as an *anthropogeographic* boundary. This is what the Somalia people of the Horn of Africa want, that is to have their political boundary moved to incorporate all

those people now separated from the Somali Republic.\textsuperscript{57} Thus all Somali will be unified in a Somali state, with non-Somali country across the border. In other words, the conflict of border dispute, specially related with Somalia and Ethiopia is related with the ethnic differences, between the pastoral Somali-speaking peoples and Amharic speaking (Ethiopia), who are mainly cultivators.\textsuperscript{58} Furthermore, the present poor relations of the Horn of Africa provided scope for the involvement of the great world powers (US and Russia), who contributed to an increasing build up of arms, which made a much more intensive as well as an extensive conflict possible.

However, it has already mentioned that Ethiopia has ongoing conflicts on three of its five international boundaries, namely those with Sudan, Eritrea and the Somalia Republic. After the independence of Eritrea, Ethiopia lost her strategic coastline, and Assab and Massaw ports as well as vital contacts with the outside worlds. Territorial disputes also exist over the Sudan-Egypt boundary. Both states claim a small piece of territory, i.e. Wadi Halfa, now under the waters of Lake Nasser. Further east, Sudan seems reluctant to acknowledge Egyptian sovereignty over tribal grazing lands administered by Sudan since 1902.\textsuperscript{59}

The creation of Israel in 1948 as a sovereign state was not a problem but the manner of territorial division, under the United Nations Partition Plan of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[57] Ibid., p.387.
\item[59] Blake, \textit{The Atlas of the Middle East and North Africa}, op. cit., p. 69.
\end{footnotes}
29 November 1947 has been the root of all West Asia problems. On the above mentioned date the UN General Assembly voted to set up both a Jewish and an Arab State, and fixed their borders. The Jewish state was to be three segments and was to exclude Jaffa (to become an Arab enclave) and Jerusalem (to be an International Zone). The Jewish accepted the statehood. The Arab not only rejected it but once attacked Jewish settlements in every part of Palestine (Fig.6 (d)).

---

Syria insists on the return of the Golan region occupied in 1967 and Jordan equally demands the return of the West Bank to Arab control. Similarly, the new Egypt–Israel boundary agreed in 1982 is still the subject of legal and technical disputes at the local level. Moreover, the boundaries of Israel are the least permeable in the world. Until 1979 Israel had no borders, only ceasefire lines from a series of wars in 1948, 1967 and 1973. Treaties with Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1984 led to these borders being defined and agreed. Negotiations over Israeli settlements in disputed territories such as the West Bank, and the issue of self-government for the Palestinians, continue. Saudi Arabia’s boundaries with her two southern neighbours (Yemen and Oman) have not yet been aligned/demarcated due to desert, but is the least disputed. In the Middle East, the classic case of a potential dispute is the boundary between Iraq and Iran which follows the river Shatt-al-Arab. The position of the boundary between Iraq and Iran along the Shatt-al-Arab was the immediate cause of war in 1980.\textsuperscript{61} Similarly, the Kuwait-Saudi Arabia boundary was drawn in 1922, a Neutral Zone of 5700 Km\textsuperscript{2} was left in a region whose ownership was undecided. Although, in 1966, this Neutral Zone was partitioned between the two states and the revenue from petroleum was shared by both, but the partition agreement did not resolve disputed ownership of the islands of Qaru and Umm-al-Maradin, which lie off the Neutral Zone. The islands were occupied by Saudi Arabia but are claimed by Kuwait. The islands are small but large areas of seabed are involved. Following border

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., p. 99.
agreements in 1981, the Neutral Zone, west of Kuwait was partitioned between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The boundary settlement between Kuwait and Iraq resulted in a change of location for the international boundary from the median line of Khor Zubair to the low water line (springs) on the Kuwaiti side. Thus from having originally shared it, Iraq gained full access to the port of Umm Qasr. Similarly, there is an offshore boundary dispute between Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) over Abu Musa and the Tunbs Islands in the Persian Gulf.

Boundary Dispute in Southeast Asian Region

Political boundaries of Southeast Asian states are very typical. Most of the boundaries run through the region’s emptier areas. Malaysia and Indonesia are fragmented states. The geographical area of Indonesia is entirely on islands. Here internal frictions and secessionist uprisings, especially in Sumatra and Sulawesi are very common. The government of such fragmented country is bound to concentrate on secessionist movements which generate centrifugal forces. The peoples of the outer Islands have shown resentment against Javanese domination in Indonesian affairs.

Malaysia lies partly on a continental mainland and partly on Islands. Far-flung Malaysia was force to yield to the centrifugal forces inherent in its

---

63 Ibid., p. 127.
ethnic complexity and its spatial and functional structure, and permitted the microstate of Singapore to secede.64

The core areas of Thailand and Myanmar are compact, but in the south, they share sections of the Malay Peninsula. These peninsular portions are long and narrow, and states that have such extensions leading away from the main body of territory are referred to as prorupt states. The prorupption of Thailand extends neary 600 miles south ward from Bangkok, where the Thailand-Myanmar boundary runs along the peninsula. The Thai prorupption is in some places less than 20 miles wide. This area is far away form the core and also lacks easy transportation. Sometimes this area becomes troublesome.

In a region of peninsulas and islands such as Southeast Asia, the surrounding and intervening waters are of extraordinary significance. Specially, since the exploration of offshore hydrocarbon, the claim for territorial water became more acute. Other minerals also can be expected to lie in the subsoil. The whole Southeast Asian Sea Zone is surrounded by the Indonesian Islands, though the continental shelf of this region is less than 500 feet below sea level. That means the seabed rocks are very accessible. At present about 20 percent petroleum comes from the continental shelf mainly form North Sea, Gulf of Mexico, Persian Gulf, North China Sea and off-shore Mumbai (Continental shelf of the Arabian Sea). Though, Southeast Asia's continental shelf is one of the largest and it may well become an area of

64 Blij. Geography Regions and Concept, op. cit., p. 537.
exploration and competition. Hence in near future it is going to be the most disputed region of the world.

**Boundary Dispute in South Asia**

Boundary dispute arises when two or more adjacent governments contest about the line to be drawn between their respective territorial domains. In such cases it is a common feature that both (or more) states have lawful claims to adjacent territory. The real question to be decided is how this territory can be divided between them. For instance, in the Sino-Indian boundary disputes, the Chinese government has challenged the traditional boundary delimitations and has demanded the redrawing of the contested boundaries. On the other hand, territorial dispute arises when one government seeks to supersede or eliminate another in relation to a particular land area. For instance, in Kashmir, which was attacked and partially occupied by Pakistan in 1948, both India and Pakistan are claiming an absolute title to entire territory, and are demanding suppression of one state by another. Such disputes may not involve the drawing of lines between adjacent territorial communities.\(^{65}\)

Disputes over Jammu and Kashmir have caused three serious wars between India and Pakistan. Since 1947, most international maps show the 'Line of Control' (LoC) agreed in 1972 as the *de facto* border.

The LoC came into prominence after the 1971 war when India unilaterally ended the fighting in the western sector after Pakistan had

surrendered in the east and Bangladesh had been born. As the Para IV of the Shimla Agreement (1972) states:

> In Jammu and Kashmir the line of control resulting form ceasefire of December 17, 1971, shall be respected by both sides without prejudice to the recognised position of either side.

Furthermore, the accord makes a distinction in “the international border (between India and Pakistan) and ‘the line of control’. Under the Shimla Agreement the two forces fell back to the international borders, but the line of control was different from the ceasefire line that prevailed before the 1971 conflict. However, the situation is further complicated by a Kashmiri independence movement, active since the late 1980s.

India has boundary disputes with almost all neighbouring countries. In 1974, India signed an agreement demarcating the land boundary with Bangladesh. The agreement signed between Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, gave the ownership of Berubari enclave to India. But the tri junction boundaries in the southern part among India, Myanmar and Bangladesh and India, Myanmar and China in the northern part are still unresolved.

But much of the discord over river waters between India and Bangladesh relates to the Farakka Barrage, built to divert the Ganga waters into the Bhagirathi–Hooghly in order to save the Kolkata port. In Article 18 of

---

66 Tribune (Chandigarh), 7 July 1998.
68 Indian Express (New Delhi), 21 November 1974.
the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Declaration of Prime Ministers of the two countries of May, 1974, it was clearly laid down that:

The two sides expressed their determination that before the Farakka barrage is commissioned they would arrive at mutually acceptable allocation of the water available during the periods of minimum flow in the Ganga.\(^{69}\)

On October 1, 1993, Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia addressing the 48\(^{th}\) session of the UN General Assembly said.

The unilateral withdrawal of Ganges water by India upstream of Farakka has created a life and death problem for Bangladesh.\(^{70}\)

However, the crux of the problem is the water sharing arrangement during the January to May dry season. Bangladesh proposed long-term sharing of the Ganges water on the basis of the 'Ganges Water Agreement of 1977.\(^{71}\) Apart from the Ganges water-sharing dispute, issue of a permanent sharing of the flows of the Barahmaputra, the Teesta and the Meghna are still unresolved.

Apart from land boundary, India had already signed agreements demarcating the marine boundary with Sri Lanka and Indonesia. The maritime agreement signed with Sri Lanka, recognised the ownership of Colombo over Kachechativu.\(^{72}\) Demarcation of maritime boundaries has become an urgent international task because of the possibility of finding off-shore oil. The

---

\(^{69}\) Bangladesh Observer (Dhaka), 28 October 1993.

\(^{70}\) Ibid.

\(^{71}\) Bangladesh Observer (Dhaka), 22 December 1993.

\(^{72}\) Indian Express, 21 Nov. 1974.
The maritime boundaries of India with Bangladesh and Pakistan have not been demarcated as yet.

The above discussion has demonstrated that international law recognizes the importance of the possession of landmass as a basis of national power potential and prescribes rules and policies designed to protect boundaries as juridically separating lines of territorial integrity and exclusive control. However, the overall community objective of these rules and policies is to promote a territorial organization of the world which will best serve the common interests of all people. This can be achieved only when states make positive efforts to settle boundary disputes peacefully.

The decolonization process that began after World War II led to the decline in the powers and the influence of the traditional extra regional powers. The British gradually began to withdraw from the Indian Ocean. But keeping in view the importance of the transportation and communication facilities, the British maintained their control over some islands like Seychelles and the Chagos Archipelago in which small islet of Diego Garcia is situated. The new colony, the British Indian Ocean Territories (BIOT) was set up.

The island of Diego Garcia in the Chagos Archipelago, was originally administered as part of Mauritius. When Mauritius was granted independence, Diego Garcia and two other atolls in the Archipelago were bought by the British Government from Mauritius for 3 million pounds. The 1966 Anglo-
American Agreement made the islands comprising the BIOT available to both countries for military purposes for a period of 50 years.\(^{73}\)

Agreement between the United States and Britain, signed in 1972, permitted the United States to build a US $19 million naval communications station on the island for joint use. It came into operation in the spring of 1973. Diego Garcia was then added to the United States Communications network in the Indian Ocean extending from Armara of Ethiopia (at present Eritrea) to the North West Cape of Australia.\(^{74}\) From 1975, Diego Garcia became a fully fledged naval and air base. It is now considered to be one of America's most important overseas military installations, establishing and supporting American power in the Indian Ocean, Asia, the Persian Gulf and beyond. It has recently seen action in the Gulf War, the 1992 intervention in Somalia, action in Afghanistan against Osama bin Laden and 600 sorties were flown from the Island during the 1999 bombing of Iraq.\(^{75}\) Diego Garcia and similar bases are viewed as essential to American air power and its ability to react to crisis the world over; put simply, American bomber, even the latest B-25, cannot conduct all of their operations from the continental United States.\(^{76}\)

The status of Diego Garcia has remained a bone of contention between Britain, America and Mauritius. The Government of Mauritius maintains its


\(^{74}\) Ibid.

\(^{75}\) \textit{Mauritius News}, August 2000, p. 3.

claim to sovereignty. Though it remains a matter of international debate, it is unlikely that America will give up what is considered to be an integral part of its worldwide military structures. A 1990 White Paper noted that:

"The Strategy of US forces were, to be able to strike at any point in the world from only three bases – one in the US, another on the Pacific Island of Guam, and a third on Diego Garcia." 

The strategic imperatives of previous centuries of imperial warfare remained in the Indian Ocean at the end of the Second World War, and the drawing Cold War and the nuclear age has layered it with new significance. Mauritians became the pioneer corps backbone of Middle East Land Forces until the Suez Crisis of 1956. The Royal Navy remained on Mauritius until the mid 1970s. It maintained a communications station on Mauritius until 1976. Similarly Seychelles remained under British until 1976. Mauritius had performed its traditional role as a facility for ship, and had seen its importance as a communications facility enhanced by the closure of the wireless station at Welisara in Sri Lanka. As late as 1968 Mauritius and its Indian Ocean dependencies were of significance to Britain's east Suez strategy. With the rapid shrinking of the empire, Aden remained one of the only two main bases

---

77 Mauritius News, August 2000.
east of Suez, following the withdrawals from Palestine, Egypt and Kenya and the failure to get the UN mandate on Libya.\textsuperscript{81} Political unrest in Aden threatened its utility as a base. So Socotra, the Seychelles, Mauritius and Diego Garcia were canvassed as possible alternatives.\textsuperscript{82} In a world of imperial contraction, Britain sought to pursue her traditional strategic ends and use imperial connections to provide footholds in the new world of Cold War defence. The Raj had gone; Britain still felt an obligation to be in a position to offer defensive aid to her ex-colonies. Britain had a keen interest in the Indian Ocean Rim, particularly the Middle East and Persian Gulf and in retaining control of the oceanic 'gate ways' to the Indian Ocean.

With growing interest in the sea after World War II and the growing dependence of the industrialised countries on Persian Gulf petroleum, interests in the Indian Ocean began to awaken. This interest was reinforced by the beginning of the decolonisation process on three sides of the ocean.\textsuperscript{83} During the Cold War, the world's oceans were transferred into a series of militarized geographies based on shipping lanes, defence areas and strategic coke-points. In this period, the emergence of Russia was the biggest threat to the western interest. However, the ending of the Cold War has changed the political geographies of the Indian Ocean. Despite the 'official' ending of the

\textsuperscript{81} Libya was under British and French military administration until 1949, and although Britain retained bases in Libya until 1960s, a UN mandate would have enabled Libya to be used as a replacement for the Suez Canal Base.
\textsuperscript{83} Glassner, \textit{Systematic Political Geography, op. cit.}, p. 279.
Cold War and the dramatic dismantling of the Soviet Union, the geostrategic–military discourse of national security persists in the Indian Ocean region. As O. Tuathail and Agnew have pointed out:

The Cold War as a discourse may have lost its credibility and meaning, as a consequence of the events of 1989 but it is clear from the Gulf crisis that intellectuals of statecraft in the West at least, and the military industrial complex behind them, will try to create a new set of enemies in a restructured world order. The factories, reactors, laboratories and bases used to develop, maintain and deploy nuclear weapons have a global distribution and constitute a major sector of industrial and military activity; they will not stop working overnight.84

More recently, with the two traditional South Asian rivals–India and Pakistan the geostrategic environment of the Indian Ocean region has acquired an unprecedented complexity. China’s growing strategic and economic interests in the IOR, including important defence ties with Pakistan and Bangladesh, growing involvement in Africa, and bilateral marine cooperation with Kenya, Sri Lanka and Tanzania, have been perceived by some in India as part of China’s maritime strategy to expand its influence far beyond the South and East China Seas. The Indian defence sector is concerned over the deepening Chinese relationship with Myanmar which now includes the supply of military aid to Yangon and the joint construction of communication networks.

The proliferation of small arms and the growth of drug trafficking are also of increasing concern to the countries of the Indian Ocean region. The connection between the supply of arms and the production and trade in narcotics in the region, is resulting in a lethal mix of narco-terrorism.