Chapter 4

The South Asian Context (1963–1991)
The South Asian dimension constitutes an important factor in the bilateral conflicting perceptions of India and China. The conflicting perceptions of India and China towards South Asia generated tension and further aggravated the bilateral relationship. China, perceived itself as a part of the South Asian region because of geographical contiguity, historical linkage and common heredity with the Mongoloid group of people in India, Nepal and Bhutan. As a result, China considered it natural to get involved in the intra-regional affairs of South Asia. Further, China's interest in the region stemmed from the perception of its security status as well as regional and global roles. India, on the other hand, had its own perception of its role and status in the region. It perceived China as an intrusive power in South Asia and believed that facts of geography, culture and ethnicity, reinforced by economic compulsions, tied the destiny of the South Asian nations much more with India than with China. As such, India viewed China's attempts to forge close relations with its South Asian neighbours as hostile acts. This very briefly sums up the South Asian context of India-China relationship.

Given India's predominant size and power in the region, Indo-Centricity of the region was not surprising. In the beginning, India
was the only country in the region, with which China had diplomatic relations. Gradually, even when China opened up with other South Asian Countries, its calculations about India were a major determining factor in its South Asian policy. Secondly, Chinese South Asian policy and approach has been almost totally divorced from ideology. China which was a communist country followed cordial and friendly relations with all South Asian countries, even when none of these countries were under communist rule. In the beginning China followed a policy of friendship with India. At the same time, it extended a hand of friendship to India's major regional adversary, Pakistan which was firmly in the imperialist camp. Even with respect to the smaller South Asian Countries like Nepal, Sri Lanka and subsequently, Bangladesh, China neither stressed the struggle of the working class nor encouraged the peasant masses to rise against their respective governments. Thirdly, China's policy towards South Asia had a global context. China's friendship with Pakistan was not only an extension of a policy of a hostility towards India, but was also an attempt to reduce Pakistan's commitment to United States of America and to prevent it from getting too close to the Soviet Union. From the beginning of sixties, China's South Asian strategy became

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a function of its long term preoccupation with a perceived Soviet threat.2

The India-China conflict of 1962 can be said to constitute a watershed in the history of South Asian relations and the Chinese role therein. China demonstrated her undeniable power vis-à-vis India and this fact impressed Pakistan which hereafter developed closer relations with China. Thus a new dimension to the power politics of the region become operative. Hereafter, Pakistan coordinated its efforts in the diplomatic field with those of China with the object of countering India influence wherever possible. Thus, China became an integral factor in South Asian politics.

II

The close relationship between China and Pakistan in the wake of India-China war of 1962, was further consolidated by the border agreement signed in Beijing on 2 March, 1963 by the Foreign Ministers of China and Pakistan, Chenyi and Z.A. Bhutto.3

China and Pakistan agreed to delimit their frontiers by fixing the alignment of the boundary between Xinjiang and Pakistan held Kashmir. Out of the 3,400 sq. miles of territory to which both sides had laid claim, Pakistan received 1,350 sq. miles and China the

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2 Steven I. Levine, China and South Asia, in Strategic Analysis (New Delhi), vol.12, no.10, January 1989.
remaining 2,050 sq.miles. However, a Pakistani spokesman pointed out immediately after the conclusion of the agreement that Pakistan profited by the arrangement since it received 750 sq. miles of territory then under actual Chinese control without surrendering any territory under the actual physical control of the government of Pakistan. Undoubtedly, Pakistan signed the border agreement with a view to embarrass India and to come to an understanding with China in an effort to strengthen its military and diplomatic position vis-a-vis India. Moreover, Pakistan thought that it was likely to get more favourable terms at that particular juncture than at any other time because the Chinese had been branded in the west as an aggressor in their border dispute with India. Chinese were interested in changing this image and presenting themselves as a reasonable and friendly powers.

With the conclusion of the border agreement between Pakistan and China, a new dimension was added to the Kashmir dispute. China recognised the defacto ownership of one third of Kashmir by Pakistan. India reacted strongly and stated that there was no common border between Pakistan and China. India protested to China as well as Pakistan and blamed China more

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4 Mohammed Ayub, "India as a Factor in Sino-Pakistani Relations", International Studies (New Delhi), vol.9, no.3, January 1963, p.292.
5 Ibid, pp.292-293.
strongly for colluding with Pakistan against India.\(^8\) Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru said in Parliament that China "is directly interfering in Indo-Pakistan relations, and by doing this, seeking to exploit the differences between India and Pakistan on the Kashmir question to further its own expansionist policies".\(^9\) It should be remembered that immediately after the Sino-Indian conflict, Britain and United States pressurised India to open dialogue with Pakistan on Kashmir question and bilateral talks actually began. Nehru rightly stated in Parliament that Sino-Pakistani moves had been 'timed to prejudice the joint talks on Kashmir'.\(^10\) By May 1963, India and Pakistan admitted their failure to arrive at a mutually accepted settlement on Kashmir.

On 17 July 1963, Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Z.A. Bhutto declared in the Pakistan Parliament that an "in the event of war with India, Pakistan would not be alone. Pakistan would be helped by the most powerful nation in Asia."\(^11\) This was clearly a reference to China. In a bid to further strengthen relations with China, both sides signed an air transport agreement on 29 August, 1963. The agreement provided for operation over each other's territories with

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\(^8\) For details see, *China, India, Pakistan*, Pakistan Institute of International Affairs (Karachi, 1966), pp.385-422.


landing and other necessary facilities.\textsuperscript{12} Bilateral relations between China and Pakistan became more close in 1964. Zhou Enlai visited Pakistan in February 1964 and in a joint communique with President Ayub Khan agreed that the Kashmir dispute should be resolved in accordance with the wishes of the people of Kashmir as pledged to them by India and Pakistan.\textsuperscript{13}

In 1965 political contacts at the highest level between China and Pakistan increased. In March 1965, President Ayub Khan visited China.\textsuperscript{14} In March 1965, the Sino-Pakistan boundary protocol was signed by Foreign Ministers, Chenyi and Bhutto.\textsuperscript{15} India construed the signing of the boundary protocol as 'final proof of the fact that motivated solely by their hostility towards India, the Chinese government and the government of Pakistan are opportunistically making use of their unlawful seizure of parts of Kashmir.\textsuperscript{16}

Gradually Kashmir became the core issue in the regional politics. China had declared its support for a plebiscite in Kashmir. India was of the opinion that the Chinese attack in 1962 had entirely changed the complexion of Kashmir because Chinese now captured about 15,000 sq. miles of Kashmir's territory. Moreover,

\textsuperscript{12} R. K. Jain, n. 3, p. 89.
\textsuperscript{13} ibid, pp. 92-94.
\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Beijing Review} (Beijing,) no. 10, 5 March 1965, pp. 3-4.
\textsuperscript{15} ibid, no.14, 2 April 1965, p.5
\textsuperscript{16} Quoted in T. Karki Hussain, \textit{Sino-Indian Conflict and International Politics In the Indian Sub-continent, 1962-66} (New Delhi), 1977, p.73.
by 1963 Sino-pak agreement Pakistan handed over additional territory of 2,000 sq. miles to China.\(^{17}\)

The continued impasse over Kashmir issue led to substantial deterioration in relations between India and Pakistan. In April 1965, an armed conflict broke out between Indian and Pakistani army in the Rann of Kutch. In September 1965, Kashmir became the cause of a major war between India and Pakistan, in which China pledged its support to Pakistan. On 4 September 1965, the Chinese foreign minister, Chenyi expressed support of the Chinese government for the Kashmiri people's struggle and endorsed the Pakistani version of the escalation of war in Kashmir.\(^{18}\) Even more important than the verbal support for Pakistan in the war was the increased activity of the Chinese troops on India-China border. This was done with a view to pressurise India to keep a large part of its army on its border with China and took some of the pressure off Pakistan.

On 8 September, the Chinese government charged India with serious border violations on India-China border. It demanded that India must dismantle all the military structures it had illegally built beyond or on the China-Sikkim boundary, withdraw its army and stop aggression against China in the western, middle and eastern sectors of the borders. Otherwise India must bear responsibility for

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\(^{17}\) ibid, p.70.

\(^{18}\) Beijing Review no.37, 10 September, 1965, pp.7-8.
all the consequences therefrom. On 13 September the government of India rejected the Chinese note of 8 September but offered to send on 'independent and neutral' observer to inspect and report on the existence of Indian military structures in Chinese territory beyond the border of Sikkim. The Indian note denied that such structures existed and rejected any link between Kashmir and India-China relations. On 17 September, China demanded again that India dismantle within three days 'all its military works for aggression on the Chinese of the China-Sikkim boundary or on the boundary itself. Otherwise, the Indian Government would be responsible for all the grave consequences of its action.

In a statement in the Parliament on 17 September, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri described the Chinese posture as interference calculated to prolong and to enlarge the conflict. Shastri stated that ".. what China is looking for is not a redress of grievances, real or imaginary, but some excuse to of start its aggressive activities again, this time acting in collusion with its ally, Pakistan". In the Lok Sabha, External Affairs Minister Swaran Singh told the Members that a critical situation has emerged due to

20 Statesman, New Delhi, 14 September, 1965.
21 Quoted in Bhabani Sen Gupta, n.7, p.212.
24 ibid, Col.-6570.
China-Pak Collusion: "Beginning as a marriage of Convenience it was nourished by a concern hatred for India and seems to have now become an integral part of the foreign policies of China and Pakistan . . . we have in our preparations and in our attitude keep always this in mind and all our future actions will have to be carefully taken, keeping this dual danger always before us." 25 The crisis eased on 23 September following the ceasefire between India and Pakistan. China climbed down from its provocative posture simultaneously with the acceptance of the ceasefire by Pakistan. China's hostile posture during India-Pakistan war of 1965 proved to Pakistan the value of China as an ally in its conflict with India. The Chinese threats were accompanied by intrusions and armed provocations all along the border. Chinese forces indulged in provocative intrusions at several points in the western, middle sectors and also across strategic passes on the Sikkim-Tibet border. The aggressive military activities on India's border by Chinese troops were intimately connected with Sino-Pak Collusion. 26 For India, this was the first time that it was threatened to face war simultaneously from two fronts.

Even during the subsequent phase of ceasefire and the Tashkent agreement, China persisted in its diplomatic support to Pakistan over the Kashmir question. From mid sixties onwards, China emerged as the major arms supplier to Pakistan. In 1966, on

the occasion of its national day military parade Pakistan displayed a number of T-59 tanks and MIG-19 fighter planes which it had received from China. By 1968, China undertook to supply 1000 T-59 tanks, 80 MIG - 19s (F-6s), and 10 Ilyushin - 28 bombers. After 1965, Pakistan received large quantities of Military Supplies from China. These included complete equipment for two infantry division, about 350 tanks, 120 MIG aircraft, two squadrons of IL-28 bombers and large number of artillery pieces, Vehicles, spares for tanks and aircraft, etc.27.

The inward looking posture of China after the outbreak of the Cultural revolution about the mid of 1966 did not affect Sino-Pak relations in any significant measure. Before the fall of president Ayub Khan in March 1969, China seemed to harbour reservations about Pakistan due to Ayub's moves to improve relations with China's adversary, the Soviet Union. Soon after the change in Pakistan's regime, Chinese Premier, Zhou Enlai sent a message to incumbent President Yatya Khan assuring him of China's continued support. Shortly thereafter, Soviet foreign minister, A. Kosygin visited Pakistan and tried to persuade top leadership to join its regional economic and military organisation. Predictably China was anxious to gauge Pakistan's reaction to the Soviet overtures. After a lapse of about two years during the cultural revolution, in 1969 China filled the post of Ambassador to Pakistan with Senior

diplomat, Chang Tung. Later Pakistan sent its Chief of Air Force to Beijing and he reaffirmed Pakistan's firm determination not to collaborate with the Soviet Union, in any scheme that would be directed against China. Thus, a little bit of coolness that had crept in the later phase of Ayub era was removed by the end of 1969.

Thus, by 1969 China had carved out a special place for itself in South Asia by developing a very close relationship with Pakistan. Pakistan found this situation as an opportune time to drive a hard bargain with India over Kashmir, and in this respect found China as an ideal lever against India. The stalemate that continued in India-Pakistan relations in turn provided China with an opportunity to exploit Pakistan's susceptibilities against India.

In the 70's, at the regional level, geo-political changes of major significance were to be unleashed in south Asia. While the triangular Sino-Usa-Ussr relationship had its impact in this volatile region, the deteriorating situation in east Pakistan was fast turning into a flash point between traditional rivals, India and Pakistan. In the 1970 general elections in Pakistan, the East Pakistan based Awami League won an absolute majority in the parliament (167 seats out of 317). However, the military ruler, Yahya Khan, paid scant regard to democratic tradition and put off convening the parliament. Despite its major, internal problem, Yahya sought to utilise the prevalent international scenario to the hilt, by acting as

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messenger between US and PRC. Yahya Khan visited China in November 1970 and met with Maozedong and Zhou Enlai. Pakistan was warmly praised by the Chinese and was provided with 200 million dollars as additional economic aid. The visit concluded with a joint declaration voicing Chinese support for Pakistan on the Kashmir question and Pakistan's reaffirmation of support for a one China policy. It was clear the policy of close relationship with Pakistan would be pursued by China in the decade of Seventies.

Meanwhile the situation within Pakistan deteriorated substantially. The failure of Pakistan's political and military leaders to break the deadlock brought the country to the brink of civil war. Awami league backed by India, openly demanded secession as an independent nation-state and called for a general strike in March 1971. The tragic events in Eastern Pakistan naturally aroused wide concern and sympathy in India. The Yahya regime, however, continued its policy of military repression.

Realising that a confrontation with Pakistan was imminent, India negotiated a Friendship treaty in August 1971 to neutralise the threat of China's intervention. In addition to its promise of new military assistance, the treaty's most important feature for India was Article Nine which stipulated that neither party would provide any assistance to a power engaged in armed conflict with either of

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the signatories. This had the practical effect of stopping all Soviet assistance to Pakistan.31 Pakistani rulers saw the gravity of the situation and in early November, Foreign Minister Z.A. Bhutto, led a Pakistani military delegation to Beijing to secure military support. China held that the Indo-Soviet Treaty was actually a military alliance and India was encouraged by massive Soviet military aid.32

The Indo-Pakistan war broke out on December 3, 1971. It was waged on two fronts: in the east and in the west. Following the war, China took a consistent hostile stand against India. China consistently condemned India as having committed "aggression" on Pakistan with the help of Soviet "Social imperialism". In the United Nations, China worked for Pakistan and actively supported the U.S. moves in the Security Council.33

The Chinese government demanded that India should be declared aggressor, all countries should support Pakistan and armed forces of both the countries should withdraw to their original position 'so as to create conditions for a peaceful settlement'.

China also sent a note to India accusing it of having sent seven Indian soldiers across the Sikkim border on December 10 to survey Chinese territory; this infiltration was described as severe infringement of Chinese sovereignty.

32 Beijing Review, no. 46, 12 November 1971, p.5.
China pursued a policy that would show all-out support for Pakistan without commitment to military involvement. This led to a policy mix of strong verbal support coupled with material assistance and necessitated keeping a careful watch on the development of the military situation. The verbal support meant virulent pronouncements on different occasions, in particular an active pro-Pakistan, anti-Indian, and even stronger anti-soviet show in the United Nations. Simultaneously, China also provided much needed material assistance to Pakistan. After the suspension of arms supply by the United States, China became Pakistan's main source of arms and ammunition and, according to some sources even sent 200 instructors to train Pakistani troops in counter guerrilla warfare.34

Following the 1971 war, China had to cope with a new situation in South Asia. Its staunchly, Pakistan, had been cut down to size, completely defeated and India had emerged as the predominant military power in South Asia. The new state of Bangladesh, was oriented toward India and the Soviet Union. China was particularly worried about the possible consequences of India's emergence as the major power in South Asia. Considering this as part of the soviet plan to 'foster India and turn it into a sub-superpower on the south Asia sub continent.35

34 J.P. Jain, China, Pakistan and Bangladesh (New Delhi, 1974), pp.165-67.
35 Survey of Chinese Mainland Press (Hong Kong, hereafter SCMP), 12 December 1971, no.5042, p83.
The immediate task ahead for China was to restore a semblance of balance to the regional power structure which had changed after victory of India. When Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, now President of Pakistan visited Beijing in February 1972, Pakistan received generous economic assistance.

In the diplomatic field, the foremost task facing Bhutto was the negotiations with India to secure the repatriation of 93,000 prisoners of war and the evacuation of Indian forces from occupied areas in West Pakistan. In adverse circumstances for Pakistan, the fact that China was stranding firmly behind it was a significant asset. China exercised its first ever veto in the U.N. by barring the admission of Bangladesh to the United Nations on 25 August, 1972.36

China's determination to prevent India supremacy in the subcontinent entered a new phase with India's nuclear test on 18 May 1974. In the wake of Indian nuclear test, China assured Pakistan of its "full and resolute support in its just struggle in defence of its national independence and sovereignty against foreign aggression and interference, including that against nuclear threat and nuclear blackmail." China reiterated her consistent position that nuclear weapons should be completely prohibited and thoroughly destroyed and as first step, countries in possession of nuclear weapons should undertake the obligations to be not the first to use

36  *Beijing Review*, no.49, 8 December, 1972, p.11.
nuclear weapons pledging in particular not to use them against
non-nuclear weapons countries and supported nuclear weapons
free zones.37

India’s External Affairs Minister, Swaran Singh made a
statement in the Lok Sabha on India’s Peaceful Nuclear Explosion
stating:

The peaceful nuclear experiment which took place on May 18,
1974, represents a step forward on the road to peaceful uses of
nuclear energy for the welfare of our people – It is singularly
unfortunate that the peaceful nature of this nuclear experiment of
ours should be misconstrued and mis-read in Pakistan.
Apprehensions aroused in Pakistan are unfounded. We value our
commitment under the Simla Agreement to settle all our differences
with Pakistan by peaceful and bilateral ream. India has always
supported development of cooperation amongst countries of this
region on the basis of sovereign equality. Pakistan’s allegations of
hegemonistic designs have no basis at all, and are, to say the least,
uncharitable. 38

China gave full and consistent support in the United Nations
for Pakistan’s proposal for a nuclear free zone in South Asia since it
had been brought up in October 1974. The proposal had obvious
advantages for China. Firstly, China could demonstrate its support

37 ibid.

for Pakistan's security. Second, a nuclear free zone would have assured a long run Chinese monopoly of nuclear arms as for as South Asia was concerned. Finally, going beyond its diplomatic assurances on the matter, china probably agreed at a later stage to supply some support to Pakistan's nuclear programme. India was unwilling to accepted any comprehensive nuclear non proliferation arrangements, limited to the Indian subcontinent. A restricted regional arrangement did not address Indian concerns about China or about Superpower nuclear weapons in the Indian Ocean. For this reason, India rejected Pakistan's proposal for a South Asia nuclear weapons free zone comprising just the subcontinent.39

In 1976, to consolidate Sino-Pak relations president Z.A. Bhutto visited China. Notwithstanding a thaw in Sino-Indian relations since 1976, China concentrated on Pakistan as a counterweight to the Soviet Union and India. Even after the death of chairman Mao Ze dong, the post Mao leadership continued to seek close relationship with Pakistan. The change of regime in Pakistan, bringing Gen-Zia-Ul-Haq to power did not affect the course of Pakistan's China policy. His decision to make his first journey outside the Islamic nations to China in December 1977 was also a clear indication that the military regime would continue Bhutto's policy of maintaining close links with China.40

39 Strategic Digest (New Delhi) IV, no.8, August 1974, p.55.
40 Times (London), 15 December 1977.
The Chinese vice premier Keng Biao's visit to Pakistan in June 1978 at the inaugural ceremony of the 616 Kilometers all-Weather Kara Koram Highway linking Pakistan with China via Gilgit Khunjerab pass and Xinjiang. Underlined the continued closeness between Pakistan and China.41

Speaking at the state banquet on 16 June 1978, Keng Bio praised the completion of the Karakoram Highway as 'a crystalization - and outstanding example of close friendship and cooperation between China and Pakistan'. The most important feature of his speech was the declaration that 'What ever the vicissitudes on the international arena, the Chinese government and people will remain your reliable friends in your just struggle to build and defend your country'.42 Further the close defence relations continued between Pakistan and China. According to the SIPRI Arms Trade Registers, the Chinese deliveries of military equipment to Pakistan in 1972 included 60 F-6 jet fighter bombers, 6 Shanghai II motor gunboats and approximately 100 T-59 tanks worth US # 61, 568,000 (1968 constant prices). In late 1974, Pakistan received another instalment of 159 T-59 tanks and one squadron of F-6 air craft worth US # 27,135,000. China helped Pakistan to make up the war losses suffered by it in 1971. It helped Pakistan build up a capability for increasing production of arms. Pakistan was the biggest recipient of Chinese military biggest

41 Beijing Review, no. 27, 7 July 1978, p.42.
42 Times of India (New Delhi), 10 July, 1978.
recipient of Chinese military aid amongst non-communist countries.43

The latest research indicates that the break up of Pakistan in 1971 may have been in the long run the decisive factor in the emergence of Pakistan as a state with nuclear weapon capability. It is possible that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was able to extract a heavy price from the Chinese for their failure to save Pakistan in 1971. Many analysts of Sino-Pak relations believe that Bhutto was referring to a secret agreement with China regarding assistance to Pakistan's nuclear weapon programme when, in his death cell testimony, he mentioned an agreement which he had signed in 1976 after "an assiduous and tenacious endeavour spanning over 11 years of negotiations" and which he describes as "my greatest achievement and contribution to the survival of our people and our nation."44 Therefore, from India's security point of view the growing relationship of Pakistan and China was undoubtedly a dangerous development.

The growing Sino-Pak defence relations deeply concerned India. Members of Lok Sabha participating in the discussion of the demand for grants of Ministry of Defence noted Chinese arms transfer for the last six or seven years to Pakistan. The members whole spoke included Shri Anant Rao Patil, D. Basumatari and Shri

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44 Quoted in C.V. Ranganathan and Vinod C. Khanna, n. 11, p. 139.
R.B. Singh. They cautioned the government about the dangers to Indian security from two fronts. The Minister of Defence assured the members that Government is preparing to face dangers of Sino-Pak military nexus.45

Two developments in 1979-80 had important consequences in South Asia: firstly, the Islamic revolution in Iran and the overthrow of the Shah in early 1979 disturbed the strategic balance in the region. Secondly and more importantly developments in Afghanistan had a deep impact in the entire region. The Soviet presence on the border of Pakistan, also posed threat before China and it has to devise means of coping with this threat. In South Asia, China pursued two pronged strategy, firstly, it supported Pakistan to the hilt to counter soviet threat and secondly, in an attempt to draw India away from Soviet Union, China began to make moves designed to conciliate India.

The decade of eighties saw China developing close relations with Pakistan. As stated early, the Chinese leadership believed that the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan was part of a carefully planned step-by-step scheme for world hegemony.46 Sino-Pak relationship and Pakistan's geostrategic importance committed China to be responsible for Pakistan's defence.

45 Lok Sabha Debates, vol. 60, 1976, Col-166.
India was concerned about the massive arming of Pakistan "as a frontline state", India stated that transfer of sophisticated weapons was far beyond Pakistan's legitimate defence needs.\textsuperscript{47} The Chinese Premier, Zhao Ziyang paid an official visit to Pakistan in June, 1981. At a press Conference in Rawalpindi on 3 June the Premier said that Pakistan faced a grave military threat because of the hegemonists (USSR) invasion of Afghanistan and that China would fully support Pakistan to strengthen its national defence capability.\textsuperscript{48}

In July 1984 Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Sahab Zada Yakub Khan visited Beijing and pointed out that friendship between Pakistan and China was not directed against any country\textsuperscript{49}. In May, 1986 Pakistani and Chinese official opened the highest border crossing i.e., Khunjerab Pass in the world to tourists.\textsuperscript{50} India regarded this step as illegal because the pass belonged to Pakistan occupied Kashmir.\textsuperscript{51} In September 1986, Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan visited Beijing. During this visit, both sides signed an agreement for Sino-Pakistani cooperation in the area of nuclear energy.\textsuperscript{52} Though both sides termed it for the peaceful use, this


\textsuperscript{49} ibid, no. 36, 6 August 1984, p.8.

\textsuperscript{50} China Daily (Beijing) 2 May 1986.

\textsuperscript{51} Steven I. Levine, China and South Asia in Strategic Analysis, no. 10, XII, p. 1116.

\textsuperscript{52} China Daily, 16 September 1986.
generated renewed fears in India of covert Chinese assistance to Pakistan’s nuclear weapons programme.

India’s views were articulated by Ministry of State for External Affairs, Shri Khursheed Alam Khan during Calling Attention Motion in the Lok Sabha. He stated that:

The non-peaceful dimension of Pakistan's nuclear programme has been a matter of concern for India. Pakistan has been pursuing the objective of acquiring the wherewithal to manufacture nuclear weapons. Reports which have appeared in media have reinforced our apprehensions. We cannot but take into account these developments in our neighbourhood which have grave implications for our security. I wish to assure the House that Government have been keeping, and will continue to keep, a constant vigil on all developments having a bearing on the country’s security".  

The new Prime Minister's first visit abroad in 1989 was to China in a bid to keep the special link intact. She stated that Pakistan viewed its relations with China as the corner stone in its foreign relations.

In the aftermath of the Tiananmen massacre of June 1989, when China’s relations with many countries suffered, Pakistan stood by China. Premier Li Peng’s visit to Pakistan in November 1989 also demonstrated Islamabad’s support for Beijing at this particularly difficult juncture, Pakistan was the first country

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54 Gargi Dutt and V. P. Dutt, China After Mao (New Delhi, 12990) n. 159, p. 409.
to receive one of China’s top leaders following the Tiananmen massacre.\textsuperscript{55}

Given the predominance of the strategic factor in the relationship, defence was the key area of Sino-Pak cooperation in the eighties. For over two decades Pakistan remained a regular and one of the largest markets of Chinese military hardware. Joint and licensed production of select Chinese weapons in Pakistan and the high level military exchanges and contacts were now well established.\textsuperscript{56} According to a study, ‘in the twenty five plus years since Beijing began exporting arms to Pakistan, the People’s Republic of China became Pakistan’s most reliable and extensive supplier of military hardware, transferring military related exports of virtually every description and destined for every branch of the Pakistani military-personnel equipment, ammunition, small arms, mortars, ammoured personnel carriers, tanks, naval vessels, aircraft, missiles and missile technology. Included in this largesse were 1500 tanks, 350 fighter aircraft, and 30 naval vessels. Most recently, China provided short – to- intermediate range missiles, capable of carrying a nuclear warhead , as well as active assistance in developing Pakistan’s nuclear weapons capability.\textsuperscript{57} According to Mushahid Hussain, from 1980, bilateral military transactions were worth over $500 million. The free aid and friendship prices involved

\textsuperscript{55} FBIS-CHI, 21 November 1989, p.6.
\textsuperscript{56} Sujit Dutta, China and Pakistan, China Report, 30.2.1994, p.138.
in the Chinese arms transfers to Pakistan make a correct assessment of the value difficult. Western estimates are substantially higher. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in its 1992 estimates said that between 1987 and 1991 the total Chinese arms transfers to Pakistan were worth $1,027 million at 1990 constant prices. M. Hussain’s study makes this point very clear. After 1980, he wrote: 'The free aid concept of furnishing arms to Pakistan was replaced by supply through purchase from various semi-autonomous Chinese corporations. However, the Chinese were considerate in matters of cost and prices, when it came to dealings with the Pakistan army.'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Aircraft</th>
<th>Armour/artillery</th>
<th>Naval vessels</th>
<th>Missiles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980-83</td>
<td>20 F-6 Fighters</td>
<td>150 T-59 MBT</td>
<td>2 Hainan PB</td>
<td>8 ShshM/SSM</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50 t-60 lt</td>
<td>4 Hengue FAC</td>
<td>54 SA-2 SAM</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50 122 mm MRS</td>
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<tr>
<td>1983-85</td>
<td>42 Q-5 Fighters</td>
<td>150 T-59 MBT</td>
<td>4 Hwang Fen FAC</td>
<td>16 ShshM 20 CSA/SAM</td>
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<tr>
<td>1986-88</td>
<td>98 Q-5 Fighters</td>
<td>200 T-59 MBT</td>
<td>20 Romeo Class Sub</td>
<td>200 portable</td>
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<tr>
<td>1988-89</td>
<td>60 F-7 Fighters</td>
<td>200 T-59 MBT</td>
<td>Sub marines</td>
<td>SAM</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td></td>
<td>125 T-59 MBT</td>
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<td>M-11 Short Range Ballistic Missile 100 portable SAM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Mutually beneficial cooperation in the development of modern weapons system was another component of Sino-Pak military relationship. The two countries were cooperating in the production of F-7p fighter aircraft at Pakistan's Kamra aeronautical complex. It involved fitting U.S. General Electric F404 engines and U.S. designed avionics and fire control system in an updated air frame of a MIG-21.\textsuperscript{59} With China's assistance, Pakistan established indigenous capacity to produce a modern version of the T-69 main battle tank with computerised fire control system, enhanced armour and engine capability.\textsuperscript{60}

Reports about China's assistance to the Pakistani clandestine nuclear weapons programme and the supply of M-11 missiles that can carry nuclear warheads revealed the lethal character of the Sino-Pakistani military relations. It created insecurity for the entire region and this issue emerged as a problem in Sino-Indian relations. Throughout the decade there were been regular reports in the media about the Chinese support to Pakistan's weapons programme. These included reliable reports of Chinese technicians being present at Kahuta, Pakistan's first gaseous-uranium-enrichment facility Southeast of Islamabad. There were reports of China's supply of ring magnets and other components to Pakistan. The most serious of these reports was that China transferred to

\textsuperscript{59} Asian Recorder, 24-31 December, 1989, p.20934

\textsuperscript{60} For details see, Aabha Dixit, Enduring Sino-Pak Relations: the Military Dimension, Strategic Analysis, 12(9), December, 1989. pp.1067-1080.
Pakistan a design based on its fourth nuclear explosive device as well as tested or allowed a Pakistani nuclear explosive device to be tested at Lop Nor in Xinjiang.61

China supported the overall Pakistani nuclear programme in many ways. In September, 1986 the two countries signed an agreement committing Chinese assistance to Pakistan's nuclear energy sector. Under this arrangement, China sold two mini research reactions to Pakistan in November, 1989 an February, 1990. In November, 1989 China also agreed to sell a 300 megawatt pressurised water nuclear plant. Further in August 1990, Beijing agreed to supply enriched uranium to Pakistan.62 It is clear from the foregoing that Chinese assistance enhanced Pakistan's overall nuclear weapons programme.

India was justifiably concerned with these negative trends in the region. Even in Lok-Sabha during discussion on the Demand for Grants of Ministry of Defence for the year 1988-89, a ruling member Shri R.S. Sparrow stated that:

You have to be geo-militarily alert. A Damocles Sword is hanging on the head of India. Coming from China, it is not fair; it is not correct. Why are modern weapons supplied to Pakistan? Why is Sophisticated training being given to Pakistan at Kahuta? This is something which we have to very carefully watch".63 Another member, Shri E. Ayapu Reddy said that "Contrary to our expectations, the National Security Environment has become more Sensitive today than it was during the last year or the previous year. After

61 For details see, R.R. Subramanian, India, Pakistan and China (New Delhi, 1989).
the signing of the INF Treaty and Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, every one of us expected the de-escalation of tensions, but on the other hand that is not the result. Pakistan is undoubtedly getting sophisticated weapons from America and also from China, almost free of cost. Pakistan is strategic allies of both America and China. Apart from that, China and Pakistan have got a common objective so far as India is concerned. Both of them have got territorial ambitions on India". 64

Therefore, we see that Sino-Pakistan relationship continued to evolve into an autonomous relationship irrespective of India’s grave security concerns arising out of Sino-Pak enduring military relations visible in the field of nuclear and missile cooperation. India security analysts maintained that there was a Sino-Pakistani nexus against India, which sought to cap Indian power and influence in the region. The reasoning is that China has supported Pakistan in its core national interests and helped make the latter a formidable military power only to check a potential Indian challenge to Chinese preponderance in Asia. Taken to its logical conclusion, such a line of thinking tends to argue that, as China wants to assert its presence more in the Northeast and Southeast Asian regions, it makes perfect strategic sense to “build up” Pakistan not only to contain and neutralize Indian power, but also to tie India down in subcontinental concerns. 65

64 ibid, Cols. 290-91.

As India's parliamentary standing, committee on Defence, a non-partisan body composed of all the political parties stated in its first report in July 1989, “Nearer home, China is a major Missile power and is also the main source of Missiles and allied technologies for Pakistan. With both these countries we have unsettled boundary disputes and hence there is the need for great attention to this aspect of our Defence preparedness”.

III

China also played an active role in the Himalayan region, particularly in Nepal with a view to limit India's influence. In China, Nepal found a balancing force. India did not relish China's presence in the sensitive area which lay within her defence zone. From 1963 onwards, in the context of 1962 conflict India realised the necessity of reaching an understanding with Nepal. Nepal's policy towards China was marked by caution and sophistication. King Mahendra realised that the post 1962 regional environment held dangers and pursued a policy of balanced relationship with both giant neighbours i.e., India and China.

China, on its part, tried to broadbase its relations with Nepal by giving aid to various projects and emphasising on economic relations. On 19 May 1964, Nepal and China signed a two year trade agreement in Kathmandu. Both countries agreed that the

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traditional barter trade between Nepalese and Tibetans living within 30 Kilometres of the international boundary would continue. On 2 May 1966, a new agreement on trade and related questions between Nepal and China was signed in Beijing by the Chinese foreign Minister Chenyi, and Nagendra Prasad Rijal, visiting Minister for Industry and commerce of Nepal.68 The agreement was concluded on the basis of the 1956 agreement, which it replaced and was to remain in force for a period of six years. It, interalia, provided for the establishment of consulate - General by China in Kathmandu and by Nepal in Lhasa.69 However, all these agreements could not succeed in substantially increasing the volume of trade between the two countries.

Meanwhile, once India-Nepal relations eased, Nepal felt encouraged to enter into a defence arrangement with India in January 1965.70 Nepal agreed to receive all of its requirements of arms and ammunition from India and training facilities for Nepalese army was entrusted to India.71 In 1967. Commander-in-chief of Nepali army and Defence Minister of Nepal made separate visits to India and Nepal obtained most of the desired military equipment.72 Furthermore, Indian army technical personnel were stationed at

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71 Leo E Rose, Nepal-Strategy for Survival (Delhi, 1973), p. 273,
72 ibid.
checkposts and other strategic locations along the Nepal-Tibet border until 1970. An Indian military liaison group continued to function at Nepali army headquarters in Kathmandu.73

With the beginning of cultural Revolution in 1966, the Chinese personnel in Nepal engaged themselves increasingly in political affairs. Chinese construction teams on the Kodari road and other aid projects started showing Chinese propaganda movies to surrounding villages and distributed communist literature and Mao buttons.74 The worst incident of this period which caused public dispute occurred on 17 June, 1967. On that day, approximately 200 Chinese Embassy Officials and project technicians, gathered at the Kathmandu airport to welcome two of 'Mao's warriors' who had just been expelled from India, they shouted anti-Indian and pro-cultural revolution slogans. This was repeated on 24 June when another batch of Chinese diplomats reached Kathmandu. The Indian government lodged a strong protest against this demonstration and Nepal assured that such incidents would not be repeated.75

China on her part, left no stone unturned to discredit India even as it made overtures to Nepal. A commentator of the People's Daily stated that "the Chinese people support the people of Nepal in their just struggle against the Indian expansionists, and resolutely

73 ibid, p.274.
74 T.R. Ghoble, n. 69, p.54.
support the struggle waged by the people of all countries, that have been subjected to aggression, intervention to bullying by U.S. imperialism, Soviet revisionism and the Indian expansionism.\footnote{China Report, September-October 1969, p.24.} It may be noted here that the Nepalese Prime Minister, Kirti Nidhi Bista lost no time in demanding that Indian operations should ease at Nepalese border checkposts. He also demanded the withdrawal of forty members Indian military liaison group in Kathmandu and Indian wireless personnel along Nepal's northern border attached to checkposts.\footnote{Quoted in T.R. Ghoble, n.69, p.58.} On 21 July, India's External Affairs Minister, Dinesh Singh told Parliament that India had agreed in principle to the withdrawal.\footnote{Lok Sabha Debates, 21 July 1969, Cols-230-40.}

Thus, in Nepal, China's main aim was to support Nepal's King, provide economic assistance and thereby reduce Nepal's dependence on India. China operated in Nepal in the context of its broad South Asian policy to contain India's influence in the region and indulged in anti-Indian campaign.

China's Nepal policy in the seventies was to use Nepal, both the monarchy and the communists to put pressure on India and also to wean Nepal away from India. This helped Nepal in projecting an image of a separate entity, an ideological and strategic buffer between India and China. Encouraged by King Mahendra's tacit support the Chinese continued their anti Indian campaign. In

\footnote{China Report, September-October 1969, p.24.}
\footnote{Quoted in T.R. Ghoble, n.69, p.58.}
\footnote{Lok Sabha Debates, 21 July 1969, Cols-230-40.}
February 1970 Chinese Premier, Zhou Enlai praised Nepalese monarch for his pro China policy and reiterated China's firm support to Mahendra for his just struggle against foreign interference and for the defence of national independence of Nepal.\(^7^9\)

By this time, Mahendra began to put some to pressure on New Delhi for a new trade treaty on his terms to replace the 1960 agreement. He endeavoured to mobilise China to pressurise India. In October 1970 he sent Prime Minister Rudra Prasad Giri to China to seek China's assistance. He also appealed to China to help develop transport facilities and industries in Nepal as well as to carry out cotton growing survey at Butwal, 25 kilometers from the Indian border. When New Delhi protested the Nepalese leaders defended the decision to permit the Chinese near the Indian border stating that Indian fears were 'without justification and that India should appreciate the need of other sources of economic assistance to Nepal'.\(^8^0\)

The new king, Birendra noted the emergence of confident India and new geo political realities in South Asia. The inability of China to prevent the emergence of Bangladesh had aroused concern in Nepal. India under the leadership of Indira Gandhi adopted a more realistic attitude towards it. While it refused to give

\(^7^9\) Xinhua, 27 February 1970.

\(^8^0\) Patriot (New Delhi), 7 June 1971.
encouragement to anti-monarchy forces, it expected that Nepal should have due regard for India interests in the Kingdom and should recognise that economic benefits offered by India dependent on reciprocity. In November 1972, the Nepalese Premier visited Beijing to assure the Chinese leaders that Nepal would continue its policy of friendship towards China. Both sides signed a new economic and technical cooperation agreement.\textsuperscript{81} China continued to give economic aid to Nepal. Later, King Birendra described premier Bista's visit had enhanced mutual understanding and enlarged the 'areas of cooperation so happily existing between Nepal and China'.\textsuperscript{82}

The developments in Sikkim provided the anti-Indian lobby with an opportunity to open a new campaign of vilification against India. India's decision to grant Sikkim the status of an associate state created apprehension in the royal coterie. They perceived the change in Sikkim as a threat to the Nepalese Monarchy. The Chinese press declared that Nepal was the 'next target' of India's 'expansionism' and cited the presence of opposition leaders of Nepal in India.\textsuperscript{83}

Nepal and China subsequently began to consolidate their relations.\textsuperscript{84} Both sides also signed a new economic agreement

\textsuperscript{81} Xinhua, 15 November 1972.
\textsuperscript{82} ibid., 23 June 1973.
\textsuperscript{83} \textit{Beijing Review}, no.47, 22 November 1974, p.17.
\textsuperscript{84} ibid, no.9, 28 February 1975, p.4.
providing China to build the 407 kilometre Surkhat road in Western Nepal. Meanwhile Birendra intensified his efforts to gain India's acceptance of his foreign policy of equal friendships with India and China. He suggested that Nepal should be recognised as a 'Zone of Peace.' China welcomed his proposal because for years Nepal has given China powerful support in international affairs, and 'has always tried to be friendly to China'. But India preferred to remain silent on the issue, quickly knowing the evil purpose behind the proposal.

India also did not support Birendra's proposal of a 'zone of peace' because it ignored the geopolitical realities. India's presence in Nepal did not threaten China's interests, while China's presence in Nepal was detrimental to India.

China continued to encourage Nepal to internationalise Birendra's proposal of a 'Zone of peace' in order to pressurise India. At banquets in honour of king Birendra, Premier who visited China, Hua Kuofeng, on 1 June 1976, declared that 'the proposal to declare Nepal a zone of peace reflects the strong desire of the people of Nepal to safeguard their national independence and state sovereignty. The Chinese government firmly support this just proposition. This visit also marked opening of direct air passage between China and Nepal.' Further, Birendra visited Tibet and

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85 *People's Daily* (Beijing), 1 August 1975.
became the first foreign head of state to visit the Tibet Autonomous Region of China.86

Therefore, we see that king Mahendra throughout the decade of seventies used links with China to put pressure on India. Several steps were taken to encourage contacts with China, i.e., regular mutual visits by dignitaries and delegations and direct air link with Beijing. The Chinese government on its part strongly supported the proposal of a 'zone of peace and encouraged Nepal's efforts to weaken its ties with India. It extended a fair amount of economic and technical aid and encouraged Nepal Tibet border trade. But towards the end of the decade of seventies, the Chinese attitude in South Asia was gradually guided by its improving relations with India.

In May-June 1981, the New Chinese Premier Zhao Ziyang, went to Nepal. This was the first visit by a Chinese Premier Since Zhou Enlai's visit in 1960.87 Zhao repeated his country's support to Nepal's proposal for declaring the area as a zone of peace. During Li's visit to Nepal in 1984, China announced its agreement to construct the first sector of a high way that would link the west Nepal resort town of Pokhara with the border of Tibet. Beijing undertook the construction of the Pokhara - Mustang road as a

'token of friendship and close understanding' between China and Nepal.\textsuperscript{88}

China agreed to provide assistance of 50 million Renminbi for the construction of an international conference centre in Kathmandu. On 26 August, 1987, China and Nepal signed an agreement on air service between Kathmandu and Lhasa, the capital of Tibet.\textsuperscript{89}

Once again, from late eighties, 1987 to be precise, it appeared that the Nepalese ruling circle were getting closer to China and distancing, themselves from India. The Chinese advance in participation in projects closer to the Indian border began to cause security concern in India. A specific instance was the contract given in November, 1987 to the Chinese to rebuild a 44-kilometre portion of the Prithvi highway, the main road linking Kathmandu to western and southern Nepal and India. The Chinese were asked to reconstruct the winding mountain road from a point 26 kilometers west of Kathmandu.\textsuperscript{90}

While these developments were causing concern in New Delhi, of much greater alarm was the purchase of arms by Nepal from China. In March 1988, the North China Industrial Corporation agreed to sell some $20 million worth of light arms, ammunition,

\textsuperscript{88} Gargi Dutt and V.P. Dutt, n. 54, p.405.
\textsuperscript{89} Beijing Review, no. 39, 28 September 1987, p.12.
\textsuperscript{90} Gargi Dutt and V.P. Dutt, n. 54, p.406.
boots and informs and 16 anti-aircraft guns to Nepal. China defended it. From its perspective, military relations were part of normal state-to-state relations. Sovereign independent country such as Nepal had the right to acquire such materials as it deems necessary for its defence, and China had the right to sell such materials. Moreover, China argued the materials sold to Nepal could not in any way be construed as constituting a threat to India. In the Lok Sabha members during a general discussion expressed concern over Chinese exports of arms in India’s immediate neighbours including Nepal.

From India’s perspective, this was an effort by China to alter the military status quo in the Himalayas. Moreover, Nepal was obligated by the terms of the 1950 Indo-Nepali Treaty of Peace and Friendship, letters exchanged at the time of that treaty, and a further set of letters exchanged in 1965 to purchase arms only from India or from third countries only with India’s permission.

Nepal not only refused to heed India’s warning no to go through with the purchase but also refused to give guarantees that there would be no further purchases of arms from China and that the weapons already purchased would not be used against India.

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When Nepal turned insensitive to Indian security, India refused to extend the trade and transit treaties that had expired in March 1988. When those treaties finally lapsed – after two six month extensions – in March 1989, 13 out of 15 border crossing points were closed down.94 These dealt a severe blow to Nepal’s economy.

Nepal expected to be bailed out by China. But Chinese leaders told their Nepalese counterpart not to expect from it to provide an economic alternative to India, saying geographic and financial constraints on China were too great to permit that. But the real reason was subtle change in China’s South Asian Policy. By the late 1980s China had moved away from Constant encouragement to Nepal to stand up to India. There was greater realisation in Bnot to unnecessarily provoked eijing conflict in South Asia. Therefore, China advised Nepal to seek a reasonable resolution of its problems with India.95 Nonetheless, when the crunch came, Beijing gave modest economic support.

China also gave low – key political support. Shortly after the Indian blockade began, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman expressed concern about the serious difficulties facing the Nepalese people and called on Nepal and India to ‘iron out their differences... and resume their normal trade at an early date. He also maintained

94 John W. Garver, n.91. p.77
95 Gargi Dutt and V.P. Dutt, n. 54, p.407.
that land locked countries were entitled to transit through neighbouring countries'.

In the entire episode, Beijing's response was however, mild. The main reason for the Chinese restraint could be the desire to sustain the momentum in Sino-Indian relations resulting from Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi's December 1988, China visit. After investing a decade of diplomatic energy in Sino-Indian rapprochement, China did not want to risk the still fragile relationship by upholding too forcefully the right to conduct relations with Nepal as it and Kathmandu saw fit.

At the same time, China was not willing to totally give up on the linkages built with the other South Asian countries. During his visit to Kathmandu in November 1989 Chinese Premier Li Peng, reassured his hosts in Kathmandu:

> It has always been China's steadfast policy to develop good neighborly and friendly relations with every country in South Asia. No matter what happens in the international situation, China will always support Nepal and other South Asian countries in their efforts to safeguard independence and sovereignty. Referring specifically to the Indian-Nepal confrontation, Li said that 'as a major country in South Asia', India should be 'more magnanimous and generous' in handling issues with Nepal.97

The victory of the democratic movement in Nepal in April 1990 and the acceptance of India's terms by the new Nepal Congress Party led government in June represented a major blow to

Chinese influence there. The interim government under K.P. Bhattarai called for the restoration of 'natural' ties with India. India responded by opening the earlier routes on the Indian border for the flow of trade. Even the proposal of a zone of peace was buried.\(^98\) In the joint communique signed in New Delhi by Indian Prime Minister, V.P. Singh and Nepali Prime Minister, K.P. Bhattarai on 10 June, 1990, Nepal pledged to have 'prior consultations with a view to reach mutual agreement on such defence-related matters which in the view of either country could pose a threat to its security'.\(^99\)

However, on balance, Sino-Nepal relations remained close throughout the period under study. The close Sino-Nepal relations had security implications for India.

IV

With Bhutan, China's strategy was to pressurise it to open direct negotiations on the disputed area northwest of Tawang. In 1966 a crisis erupted near the trijunction of Bhutan, Chumbi valley and Sikkim, when Tibetan graziers and Chinese troops entered the Doklam pastures and refused to heed the admonitions of Bhutanese officials to leave. Bhutan stated that the traditional border ran along the water posting Batang La to Sinchel La and asked the government of India to make representations to China.\(^100\)

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On 30 September, 1966 India sent a note to the Chinese government about 'intrusions' into Bhutanese territory by Chinese herdsmen and patrols and lodged a protest with the Chinese government. An official Chinese statement on the subject denied Indian Government's outcry about Chinese 'intrusions' into Bhutanese territory. It stated that the China-Bhutan boundary had never been formally delimited that China would like to do so 'through friendly consultations' but it was a matter that concerns China and Bhutan alone. The Indian government has no right whatsoever to intervene in it.

The infamous cultural Revolution was at its climax at the time of the Doklam episode and Xinhua news agency went on to accuse India of tightening its control of Bhutan 'under the guise of protection'. There were internal troubles within Bhutan as well. King Jigme Dorji Wang Chuk faced serious coup attempts and his Prime Minister Jigme Dorji was assassinated in 1964. A pro-Chinese lobby that strongly opposed the king's attempts to keep Bhutan closer to India was believed to be involved in Intra-royal family feuds.

Even in Seventies, China pursued its policy of weaning Bhutan away from India. Bhutan joined the United Nations in 1971 and sought to play a more independent role in international affairs.

102 Surjit Man Singh, n. 100, p.179.
China voted in favour of Bhutan's membership of the United Nations. China sent an impressive delegation to attend the coronation of the new king, Jigme Singhye Wangchuk in the summer of 1974. This was a significant event as it was after a period of about a decade and half that Bhutan had sent an official invitation to China along with twenty other foreign countries but China also responded to the invitation by sending a delegation. Naturally the event was played up by Chinese media and was interpreted as having opened a new page in the friendly contacts between Bhutan and China.104

The visit of Chinese delegation was interpreted as beginning of renewed efforts on the part of Beijing "to cultivate its relationship with the Bhutanese Government and people'. The event was also significant from another point of view. The Foreign Affairs Minister of Bhutan, Dawa Tshering stated that Article 2 of the treaty of 1949 under which Bhutan was to seek the advice of the Government of India in the conduct of its foreign relations did not make it compulsory for Bhutan to accept that advice.105

While wooing Bhutan in 1974-75, China's attacks on India for its 'annexation' of Sikkim reached climax. These accusation found muted resonance in Bhutan because it too faced a problem similar to that experienced by Sikkim, where inundation of Nepali settlers

104 Indian Express (New Delhi), 18 June 1974.
105 ibid.
proved so destructive to its Lepcha culture and autonomous princely order. Bhutan's king, however, averted open criticism, personally visited New Delhi and obtained reassurance from Mrs. I Gandhi that India had no design on Bhutan. 106

It was in 1978-79 that some members of the National Assembly of Bhutan called for closer links with China. 107 These members had expressed certain reservation on the full implications of Article 2 of the treaty of 2949 under which Bhutan was only to seek the guidance of India in the conduct of her bilateral relations. 108 To quote Dawa Tsering, Bhutanese Foreign Minister, 'some National Assembly members felt that if China and India became friends Bhutan would lose all importance to Beijing and New Delhi. They thought we should make our own efforts, to develop ties with China or be left out in the cold'. 109 During the Non Aligned summit in Havana in 1979, Bhutan for the first time took an independent stand on the Kampuchean issue, different from that of India. Bhutan favoured the seating of the ousted Pol Pot regime of Kampuchea while Indian stand was in favour of leaving the seat vacant. The Bhutanese stand went in along with the Chinese stand.

This episode was played up by Chinese media with renewed expression of willingness to establish diplomatic relations with

106 Surjit Man Singh, n. 100, p.179.
107 Tribune (Chandigarh), 5 November 1979.
Bhutan and assist its development. However, soon Bhutan again officially stated that it had decided to maintain policy of not seeking diplomatic and trade ties with China.\textsuperscript{110} Thus, Chinese attempts to wean Bhutan away from India did not fully succeed in the Seventies.

However, because of the Chinese intrusion of Bhutanese border in 1979 the Druk-Gyalpo stated that “to leave the border undemarcate do would be to the disadvantage of Bhutan in the long run”, this was a clear hint that Bhutan was ready to negotiate with the Chinese on the question of the boundary settlement.\textsuperscript{111}

With Bhutan, China's relations improved steadily in the eighties. China always questioned India's special relations with Bhutan and expected Bhutan to conduct its own foreign affairs.\textsuperscript{112} Chinese misplaced apprehensions about India's special relations with Bhutan proved wrong when Bhutan and China agreed for boundary talks in April 1984 without participation of India.\textsuperscript{113} Thus, in April 1984 the first official delegation from Bhutan visited China since the establishment of People's Republic of China in 1949. The Chinese delegation leader, Gong Dafei, Vice Minister of Foreign affairs and the Bhutanese delegation leader Om Pradhan,

\textsuperscript{110} Tribune, 5 November, 1979.
\textsuperscript{111} Indian Express, 11 September, 1979.
\textsuperscript{112} Dong Ping, India's Special Relations with Bhutan, Beijing Review, No. 15, 12 April, 1982, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{113} China Daily, 12 April 1984.
Bhutanese ambassador to India attended the talks. Chinese Foreign Minister, Wu Xueqian met with the Bhutanese delegation and spoke highly of Bhutan’s policy of independence and self reliance, he said, ‘China and Bhutan have been friendly to each other since ancient times and there is no conflict of interest between the two countries’. He added, ‘so long as the two countries continue their friendly negotiations on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence the boundary question would certainly be settled’.

In April, 1985 the second round of boundary talks were held in Thimphu. During the talks the two sides discussed the principles that should guide the settlement of the border issue. The joint communique said that the second round of talks have made the two countries know each other better and reinforced their friendship. The third round of boundary talks was held in June 1986 at Beijing and both sides continued the process of exchange of views on guiding principles for settling the boundary question. Tashi Tabgyal leader of the Bhutanese delegation said the only problem with China is undefined boundary. Earlier Chinese Foreign Minister, Wu Xueqian told the delegation that the important content of China’s foreign policy was to preserve developing good neighbourly relations with adjoining countries and to maintain equality among nations,

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114 ibid, 19 April 1984.
115 ibid, 21 April 1984.
The delegation also met with Chinese Premier, Zhao Ziyang, who said, "It is China's sincere hope to settle the Sino-Bhutanese boundary question at early date. Our boundary question is not so complicated and can be resolved easily'. He further added 'China sets great store by its friendship with Bhutan and will not interfere in its internal affairs'. In 1987 both sides held fourth round of talks in Thimphu.

The fifth round of boundary talks between China and Bhutan was held in May, 1988 at Beijing. In the talks the two sides reached an agreement on the guiding principles for the settlement of the boundary issue, which stipulated that both countries should observe the Five Principles of Peaceful coexistence, treat each other on an equal basis and enter into friendly consultation on the basis of mutual understanding and mutual accommodation with a view to reach a just and reasonable settlement.

The sixth round of talks was held at Beijing in October, 1989. Bhutan’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dawa Tsering arrived in Beijing and held talks with Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen, who described relations between China and Bhutan as 'very good all along' though the two countries have not yet established diplomatic relations. Tsering said Bhutan cherishes its friendship with China and hopes to further bilateral relations. In a friendly and cordial atmosphere, the two sides consulted each other on the

\[\text{ibid, 16 June, 1986.}\]
Sino-Bhutanese boundary. The seventh round of talks was held at Thimphu in August, 1990. The meetings were secret and the participants on neither side talked about them in precise terms. On boundary issue, both sides had considerably narrowed down their differences.

Thus, we can safely conclude that Sino-Bhutan relations from 1980 to 1991 had come a long way and had matured. China and Bhutan started official level talks from 1984 and both sides held several round of talks successfully\(^{117}\). Though there was no Indian participation in these talks, much to the delight of Chinese, it is worthwhile noting to assume that king Jigme Singye Wang Chuk did not offend against Indian interests or border security and kept the Indian government informed about talks with the Chinese.\(^{118}\) Thus, Bhutan cared for Indian interests and started negotiations to resolve boundary difference with China.

\textbf{V}

Developing close bilateral relations with Sri Lanka was an important element of China's South Asian policy. The Sri Lankan Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandarnaike visited Beijing in 1963 to explain the Colombo proposals. She was cordially welcomed by the Chinese leaders and effusively praised by the Chinese media for her role as a peace maker. However, the main opposition party, United

\(^{117}\) Surjit Mansingh, n. 100, pp.184-85.

\(^{118}\) ibid.
National Party, criticised the government for not branding China as the aggressor in India-China conflict of 1962. Similarly the maritime agreement signed between China and Sri Lanka, in July 1963, which gave most - favoured nation (MFN) status to each other, also became a serious issue in Sri Lankan domestic politics. The UNP termed it as an evidence of the government pro-China tilt; and since most of the China trade passed through Trincomalee, there were also accusation that Trincomalee has been handed over to China.119

When Dudley Senanayake became Prime Minister in 1965 there was a downturn in Sri Lanka-China relations. The UNP government had leanings towards west, it was but natural that relations with China should take backseat. During that period China was in the throes of the cultural revolution and the compulsion conclusions had its effects in bilateral relations.

China's Sri Lankan policy appears to be determined by the Chinese perception of Sri Lanka's place in its global strategy to oppose 'imperialism' and 'social imperialism i.e., the USA and USSR. We have seen earlier, Sri Lanka was one of the earliest countries to recognise the People's Republic of China and next to Britain, China was the biggest trading partner of Sri Lanka. Among the noncommunist governments of Asia and Africa, Sri Lanka is one of the few countries with which China, except for a few brief periods

of low key relations has had excellent diplomatic intercourse. China constituted the principal counter-weight for Sri Lanka against India.

Beijing welcomed the SLFP's return to power in 1970 election as a major partners in United left Front. The radical policies adopted by the Sirimavo Government came in for un stinted praise when a Sri Lankan economic delegation visited Beijing in September 1970.

China's Sri Lanka policy faced a temporary crisis when the first JVP (Janata Vivukti Perumuna) revolt broke out in 1971. Beijing initially adopted a policy of studied silence and Colombo suspected Chinese machinations behind the revolt, lending credence to the suspicion of China's complicity. India was the first country to response favourably to Sri Lanka's appeal for military assistance during the JVP insurrection. Later, China made it clear that it was completely an internal matter to be tackled by the United Front Government.

In a letter to Sirimavo Bandaranaike in May 1971, Zhou Enlai condemned the self styled Gueverists. He added that China was opposed to both 'ultra leftism' and right opportunist in revolutionary struggles.120

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After this episode, Sri Lanka China relations began to expand. Soon after the revolt in 1971, S. Lanka received $25 million hard currency from China to tide over the balance of payments difficulties. In June 1972, Sririmavo Bandaranaike made a highly publicised state visit to China and met with Chairman Mao. She said that Sri Lanka was particularly gratified to have the assurance of China of its continued support for Sri Lankan proposal for a peace Zone in the Indian ocean. Both sides also signed agreement on economic and technical cooperation.121

Sino-Sri Lankan relationship in the 80's had a strategic dimension considering the geostrategic location of Sri Lanka. Its close proximity to India and the presence of a large Tamil ethnic minority in Sri Lanka, a strong sense of discrimination felt by the Tamils, evoked support from the Indian province of Tamil Nadu, created a strong sense of insecurity. India’s support for the Tamil separatists particularly since 1983 aggravated the insecurity. Sri Lanka looked towards China for assistance and support. However, the constraints of China's foreign policy and its limited naval power capability combined with India's formidable military strength, precluded a direct intervention by China on behalf of Sri Lanka. Further, there was a pragmatic realisation in Beijing that a high profile policy would only adversely affect the ongoing process of normalisation of Sino-Indian relations. hence, an analysis of

121 Beijing Review, no.27, 7 July 1972, pp.3-4.
Beijing's reactions on the ethnic conflict makes it clear that China's support to Sri Lanka was on a low key and Chinese media gave a balanced coverage on this issue.\textsuperscript{122}

Chinese Foreign Minister, Wu Xueqian visited Sri Lanka in January 1985 and had extensive talks with the Lankan leadership. Wu said that 'the ethnic problem is an internal problem of Sri Lanka and should be solved by the Sri Lankan people themselves'. In November 1985, a 3,000 ton Guided Missile Destroyer and supply ship paid a 'friendly visit' to Colombo after a similar visit to Karachi. This was the first time Chinese naval vessels had gone to visit foreign countries since the founding of the People's Republic of China.\textsuperscript{123} Li Xiannian, Chinese President visited Sir Lanka in March 1986. He was the first Chinese head of state to visit Colombo since the two countries established diplomatic relations in 1957.\textsuperscript{124}

When the India-Sri Lanka confrontation escalated in the summer of 1987, Premier Ranil Wikrama. Singhe visited Beijing to mobilise Chinese support. Beijing again preferred a political solution to the problem. However, it continued to pump arms into Sri Lanka.\textsuperscript{125} In one official statement, without naming India, China expressed its disapproval of the bullying actions of big powers and

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{122} See, "Sri Lanka: Roots of recent ethnic violence", in \textit{Beijing Review}, no.33, 15 August 1983, pp.11-12, see also \textit{China Daily}, 29 July 1983.
  \item \textsuperscript{123} \textit{China Daily}, 18 November 1985.
  \item \textsuperscript{124} \textit{Beijing Review}, no.12, 24 March 1986, p.8.
  \item \textsuperscript{125} S.D. Muni, \textit{Pangs of Proximity: India and Sri Lanka's Ethnic Crisis} (New Delhi, 1993), p.100.
\end{itemize}
‘interference in internal affairs’ of other nations. President Jayawardene summed up China’s role as follows: 'They were good friends and gave us military equipments, guns, etc. at reasonable terms. But what could they do? I could not ask them to start a border war in the north to keep the Indians busy. Even if I had, I doubt if they would have done it.

In July 1987, India and Sri Lanka signed a peace pact. Sri Lanka agreed to the introduction of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to maintain civil order, without setting a date for its withdrawal, and the two countries exchanged letters spelling out Sri Lanka’s security obligations to India. China did not react. It could not criticise because Lankan government itself agreed for the terms. Privately, however, China’s leaders were critical of India’s actions. One internal study by the Chinese Academy of social sciences argued that India intervened in Sri Lanka’s internal affairs and forced Colombo to sign the various agreements so as to ‘control’ Sri Lanka and achieve ‘regional-hegemony’ in South Asia. The article said ‘India carved up Pakistan and created Bangladesh. It annexed Sikkim. It has purchased aircraft carriers. It has done every thing to

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126 V. Suryanarayan, n.119, p.212.
127 S.D. Muni, n.125, p.100.
128 For Chinese view point on this issue, see Beijing Review, no.36, 7 September 1987, pp.12-13.
accomplish this objective'. But such views were not expressed openly.

China continued to give Sri Lanka low keyed political support in the conflict over the withdrawal of the IPKF during 1989. From China's perspective, a friendly neighbour such as Sri Lanka, strategically located in the Indian ocean, would be a useful ally in their future activities in the region.

In December, 1990, Chinese Premier Li Peng visited Sri Lanka and held talks with Lankan leaders. Li acclaimed Sino-Sri Lankan relations as a model for developing ties between countries of different social systems and ideologies. In 1991, the gross receipt of foreign loan from China was Rs. 74.2 million and repayment was Rs. 52.5 million. The completion of the Chinese aided Ginganga Flood prevention project in 1982 and the Supreme Court complex in 1987 were two accomplishments in the bilateral relations.

Even Sri Lanka-China military relations continued. Sino-Lanka relations in this crucial area increased in terms of value quantity and quality. According to a recent study, 'since 1989 China's arms transfer to Sri Lanka has risen dramatically. In the 1970's and early 1980's China supplied such weapons as artillery and patrol boats. In the last three years, shipments have included

129 Zhen Ru, Sri Lanka-Indian peace agreement and its influences, in (Materials on South and South East Asia) Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (Beijing), 1989, no.28, p.31.

three Y-8 and two Y-12 transport aircraft, a number of Q-5 ground attack jets, regiment of tracked T-85 infantry fighting vehicles, a regiment of Type 59/1 130 mm long range artillery guns, and two advanced Shanghai class gunboats. This surge in its weapon exports to Sri Lanka is thought to make China the largest supplier of arms to that country.¹³¹ Thus, Sino-Sri-Lankan relations, were expanded in political, economic, cultural and military spheres.

VI

Bangladesh emerged as an independent country in South Asia in December 1971. China's policy towards Bangladesh did not change till the fall of the Mujibur Rahman's government. It was only after Mujib was killed on 15 August 1975 and the new government demonstrated its clear anti Indian tilt, that there was a total change in the Chinese policy. The People's Republic of China recognised Bangladesh on 31 August 1975, fifteen days after the assassination of Mujibur Rahman.¹³² This was followed by a joint communique of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Bangladesh.

Gradually, Sino-Bangladesh bilateral relations became quite close. From China's point of view, the importance of Bangladesh arose from the basic geographical fact that the latter provides a useful, if not the only useful, territorial over bridge in reaching out

¹³² Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 1 September 1975.
to Myanmar and the adjacent areas of south east Asia. A trade route via chittagong, could as well be an added advantage for China's expanding external market. With worsening of relations with India. Bangladesh was constrained to look for diversified sources of assistance and thus reality drove it to build close ties with the western donor countries and the Muslim world as well as China. A perceived threat from India soon became the primary factor in the convergence of interest between Bangladesh and China. Hence, Bangladesh gradually embraced China closely as the source of political economic and military support.

During Ziaur Rahman's era, China was being cultivated as a counterbalance against perceived hegenonistsic design of India. It was during Zia's regime that the foundation of close ties between Bangladesh and China was laid and cooperation began in all spheres political, economic, military and cultural.

China began to spoke in extremely assertive tones about regional controversies involving India. In February 1976, China 'condemned India's hegemonic action' regarding Farakka barrage and sharing water of the Ganges. It blamed India's unreasonable Stand for this issue and termed India's action as arrogant and hegemonic'.133 Later on India and Bangladesh concluded an agreement on Sharing of the Ganga waters at Farakka in November,

133 *Beijing Review*, no.9, 27 February 1976, p.21.
1977. In October 1976, the Chinese Foreign Minister stated in United Nations that: We firmly support the reasonable position taken by Bangladesh on the question of sharing the water of the Ganges.

President Ziaur Rahman's visit to China was reciprocated by Chinese vice Premier Li Hsiennien's visit to Bangladesh in March 1978. Bangladesh supported Chinese positions on many international issues. At the nonaligned conference in Havana in September 1979, the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, M. Shamsul Huq, emphasised the right of the Kampuchean people to freely choose a government without any external interference of foreign military presence or intervention.

Bangladesh government recognized the Pol Pot regime and opposed Heng Samrin's government. This strengthen the mutual ties between the two friendly nations who continued to share common views on growing number of regional and international issues.

It was during the regime of Ziaur Rahman that enduring relations in the economic field also began to develop. The first formal bilateral contact on economic assistance was made in April 1976. During Zia's visit to Beijing in January 1977, an agreement on Economic and Technical cooperation was signed. Two other

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136 Bangladesh Observer (Dhaka), 3 September 1979.
agreements were signed when Chinese vice premier Li Hsienien visited Bangladesh in March 1978. The First one was the Economic and Technical Agreement under which China provided 850 million Taka interest free loans, repayable in ten years with a twelve years grace period for the purpose of a Urea factory, a water conservancy plant and some commodity procurements. The second one was a scientific and technological agreement valid for five years, providing for the exchange of expects and expertise on these fields.137 Further Chinese aid was pledged in the fields of road building, agriculture and rural electrification. In November 1978, a shipping Agreement was also signed.138 During the period 1974 to 1979, Chinese foreign aid commitment to Bangladesh was US $ 65.80 million.139

Trade relations between Bangladesh and China also began to develop during Zia's regime.140 During the period, Bangladesh's import from and export to China constituted approximately 3 percent of the global import and export trade respectively.

The foundation of Bangladesh's close ties on the military front was also laid during Zia's period. Many factors motivated both sides to engage in cooperation in this field. First following the dramatic change in Bangladesh in August 1975, Moscow refused to supply

138 Bangladesh in International Affairs (Dhaka), vol. 1, no.3, March 1978, p.4.
140 Abu Taher S. Ahmed, n.137, p.274.
spare parts for military equipment to Bangladesh in 1976. China promptly stepped in to fill in the vacuum. Chinese consideration was guided by the fact that gradually Dacca and Beijing had developed a common strategic perception on the basis of containing India. Second, the liberal nature of Chinese military aid. The terms of China's military aid we are generous, even when arms have been sold commercially. According to a report until 1979/1980 all China arms were supplied free of charge, either as direct grants or as interest free loans.\textsuperscript{141} Another study shows that between 1975 and 1979 China supplied 78 percent of Bangladesh's arms imports.\textsuperscript{142} This was an incentive strong enough for Bangladesh to be attracted to China's military aid policy. Third for Bangladesh, the Chinese weapons suited the defence forces of Bangladesh. For as a part of Pakistani defence force, they were more accustomed and trained to Chinese brand of weapons than that of any other brands. The inflow of Chinese military aid took place in two forms: weapons and military advisors. China also built arms and ammunication factory in Joydevpur and also took over Bangladesh's soviet built MIG's which Moscow refused to service. Later on China supplied F-6 fighter planes.\textsuperscript{143} Thus, by the end of 1979 Sino-Bangladesh relations in various spheres had matured.

\textsuperscript{141} Bangladesh Observer, 1 December 1978.

\textsuperscript{142} Anne Gilks and Gerald Segal, China and the Arms Trade (London, 1985), pp.168-70.

\textsuperscript{143} Abu Taher S. Ahmed, n.137, p.280.
The geo-strategic position of Bangladesh is marked by three notable facts, which India cannot ignore. Firstly, Bangladesh with a population of 125 million could not be defined as small nation. Secondly, a friendly Bangladesh is important for unhindered access to strategically important north east India, through the narrow Siliguri corridor. Thirdly, China is not a distant neighbour of Bangladesh, because between the north-west corner of Bangladesh and the Southern most point of Tibet's Chumbi valley lies only this very Siliguri corridor. Moreover, as China looks at the possibilities of a naval presence in the Indian Ocean, the long Bangladesh coastline along the Bay of Bengal could be an area of interest to it. 144

In the eighties, China continued to maintain friendly relations with Bangladesh. China in its desire to prove a counter balancing power to India; rapidly improved its relationship with Bangladesh. China also provided Bangladesh with considerable military and economic aid in order to overcome its military weakness and economic poverty.

At politico-strategic level, however, the 'India factor' as a source of unity between China and Bangladesh, seemed to have diluted from mid eighties onwards. A memorandum of understanding was signed between India and Bangladesh in October, 1982 on the question of Ganga water and both sides

144 C.V. Ranganathan and Vinod C. Khanna, n. 11, p. 118.
agreed to work towards a permanent solution. President Ershad was given a clear hint by Chinese leadership during his one of the visits to Beijing that the Bangladesh government could not expect any Chinese support for pillorying India on the issue of river waters. Obviously, that was because in eighties China wanted to improve its relations with India and it no longer wanted to interfere in the bilateral matters among South Asian Countries. Nonetheless, China continued to maintain close relations with Bangladesh.

Of equally great significance, particularly from the Indian standpoint was Sino-Bangladesh linkage in military affairs. During this decade a number of high level military visits took place prominent among these from Chinese side were in January, 1987, Gen. Yang Dezhi, Chief of General Staff of the PLA and again in 1989 and Chinese Defence Minister Gen. Qin Jiwei in February, 1990. Bangladesh got anti-tank guns, anti-air artillery, MIG-21 class fighters planes battle tanks, and AK-47 rifles. Bangladesh also approached China for upgrading its inland and overseas navigation. The PLA Vice-Admiral Zhenglian Zhong reportedly assured his Bangladeshi counterpart of cooperation in sophisticated management of the navy. It was this aspect of arms transfer in India’s neighbourhood which concerned India.

146 Times of India, 11 August and 7 October 1987.
India was concerned with China's military linkages in South Asia. During a debate in Lok Sabha on Demand of Grants of Ministry of External Affairs for the year 1988-89, a member Shri Brajmohan Mohanty stated that

"Everybody knows that Bangladesh is now closer to China, Pakistan and USA. China has built up one Chinese Division Inside Bangladesh. China is supervising one ordnance factory in Bangladesh. It is definitely a distressing situation for us. So far as Pakistan and China is concerned, one analysis is that China is not setting the border dispute simply to create an atmosphere of Strenght for Pakistan. Why this combination is a dangerous signal for Indian security and for India's integrity. We must note this.\textsuperscript{148}

However, from mid eighties, China was cautious not to antagonise India for its ties-with Bangladesh.

\textbf{VII}

A significant feature in the Chinese policy towards South Asia was its unstinted support for South Asia regional cooperation which came into being as SAARC in 1985. China always supported the idea of regional cooperation in South Asia as a mechanism to promote South-South cooperation. Commenting on the inaugural meeting of SAARC Heads of state, held in Dacca, in 1985, Chinese observers remarked: 'Having suffered serious economic dislocation at the hands of imperialists, the South Asia region inhabited by a population of approximately 1 billion, is among the world's least developed, contributing only some two percent to world production.

\textsuperscript{148} \textit{Lok Sabha Debates}, vol. 38, 1988, Col. 378.
The South Asian people are pressing for peace and development in order to improve their livelihood. Regional cooperation is one of the routes through which they may attain goal'. Similar sentiments were expressed by China’s External Affairs Minister, Qian Qichen when he told Indian Foreign Minister, Narasimha Rao, ‘China appreciates and supports South Asia Regional cooperation and hopes that the organisation will play an active role in peace, stability and development of the South Asian region’. This was a note worthy development in China’s South Asian policy.

To sum it therefore, by 1991 China had registered a formidable presence in the South Asia. China began in 1963 from a position of weakness in South Asian, its only ally, Pakistan, being a state with limited capabilities and uncertain stability. Thus it adopted a multifaceted approach towards the region. In order to safeguard the precarious balance of power between Pakistan and prevent the emergence of an India controlled subcontinent, it supplied Pakistan with arms. It managed its alliance with Pakistan skillfully by broadening the base of the relationship to include not only the mutuality of strategic interests but also economic and development interests. China tried the same strategy and developed cordial relationship with other states in the region i.e., Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Bhutan. From 1963 to 1979, China’s stance towards the South Asian countries was primarily determined

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149 Beijing Review, No.46, 15 November 1985, p.11.
150 FBIS-CHI, No.244, 20 December, 1988, p.11.
by its conflict with India. Therefore, Chinese encouragement of
unfriendly and even hostile relations between India and the other
countries in South Asia.

China was acting against India's security interest in the
region. China was actively involved in destabilizing the security
environment in the region. India, rightfully objected to China's high
profile military role in the region. China's arms transfer to its
archrival, Pakistan and other South Asian nationals concerned
India. China continued to indulge as an intrusive power in the
region. Thus, India perceived China's role in the South Asia as
unfriendly.

From early eighties, there was subtle shift in China's South
Asian policy. We can identify some elements of China's new policy
in South Asia. Firstly, China desired to normalise its relationship
with India. Secondly, China now encouraged bilateral settlement of
outstanding problems between India and its neighbours. Third,
China enthusiastically welcomed the process of regional cooperation
in South Asia as a positive development. Fourthly, China decided to
refrain from taking any stand on the internal political crises in any
of the South Asian countries. However, the important point to note
here is that China continued to cultivate India's neighbours in its
quest for its long term interest to counteract India. China did not
wish to downgrade its existing relationships with other South Asian
countries and military ties with them continued unabatedly. China
continued to transfer nuclear weapons and missile manufacturing technologies to Pakistan.

If we review the evolution of China’s policy towards South Asia, it is apparent that China’s policy in South Asia was in a large measure determined its own relationship with India. It devised new means and subtle approaches with regard to South Asia to make Chinese presence felt in the region in the long term.