CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS
During the last two decades South Asia had witnessed a massive arms build up by its constituent units. This has been the result of the perception of potential or real threat to national security emanating both from external and internal milieu in the context of individual countries in the region. There has been a lack of any regional consensus on security matters in the light of a common external enemy. While India perceived threat both from within the region and outside, for its neighbours, the security threat from within the subcontinent originating out of inter-state rivalries was felt rather seriously. The divergent perceptions had led to the adoption of conflicting strategies by the regional actors to cope up with national security problems. It has been India's policy to keep the region free from external influence and intervention, whereas others did not hesitate in the past to invite great powers with the basic motive of neutralising their sense of insecurity vis-a-vis India. The roots of conflict in South Asia lay in mutual mistrust and suspicion which in its turn emanated from distortions of history, wrong interpretation of asymmetry, and geopolitics. The unresolved issues like demarcation of land and maritime boundaries, sharing of natural resources and above all the colonial experience, had accentuated bilateral conflict and discord in South Asia.

As India lies at the centre of the region and is tied up with other countries by geographical, historical, cultural and social experiences, it viewed its security as being closely interlinked with that of its neighbours. From Chinese occupation of Tibet, Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, and the US naval deployment in the Indian Ocean, it had learnt that the region was not free from great power intervention. It was India's view that the security of the region could only be ensured by evolving a common regional strategy wherein India, because of its sheer size, population, resources and military might, should be given by others
a pre-eminent position. But any endeavour on its part to get that status of a regional power has been interpreted as an attempt at attaining hegemony by the small states. India has been accordingly dubbed as a regional bully. There was also little effort on India's part to understand the psyche of small neighbours and to dispel their fears and apprehensions. In fact, it was not the threat, but the fear of the threat that had influenced the perception of these small countries (except Pakistan) towards India's overwhelming preponderance in South Asia.

The danger to India's security from its neighbours arose not from their strength but from their internal weaknesses, and the unstable conditions prevalent in those countries. Being susceptible to external pressure and internal fragility, none of these countries are strong as states, and all of them had experienced violence and internal strife in the process of nation-building. The real threat that these countries had confronted originate from within their territories. The exodus of ethnic minorities to India during the East Bengal crisis of 1971 and from Sri Lanka during the post-1983 period demonstrate India's susceptibility to demographic threat.

Another important reason for insecurity in South Asia was systemic divergence. Even at times when India's relationship with countries like Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka had deteriorated in the past they never perceived any direct Indian military intervention. The perception was one of political pressure wherein it was viewed probable that India might destabilise any undemocratic regime if they allowed anti-Indian sentiments to grow in their countries or if anti-Indianism was used as a tool to gain legitimacy in the domestic front. Absence of popular support had forced the military dictators and autocratic kings in the subcontinent to equate regime security with national security. So any
threat to the regime has been interpreted as a national security problem and that had necessitated defence build-up in Bangladesh and Nepal. That such a policy was in fact being adopted by these countries is evident from the fact that their threat perception has changed with the revival of democracy.

Democracy may prove to be an important force to tie the South Asian countries into a common whole. But the state of affairs in India's neighbourhood can be called a period of transition before true democracy with its institutional structures and participatory culture could be established. In these infant democracies authoritarian forces have long remained institutionalised. Pakistan's case shows that the army has chosen to stay out of politics because of the western impatience with their political intervention. Nevertheless it dictates policy guidelines for the civilian rulers to follow.

For all South Asian countries, threat from inside now appears to be more important than outside threat. Domestic crises in countries like India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bhutan are approaching the critical point. The terrorist violence in Punjab and secessionist movement in Kashmir have opened gaps in Indian security, sufficient for subversion (and even military intervention) by Pakistan. A politically unstable, economically backward and socially chaotic India may find it difficult to play its legitimate role in the global politics. Ethnicity-based strife has become a common feature now and South Asia has its due share from it. Sri Lanka's case is unique in this part of the world. For almost a decade the whole state, and the military force at its disposal, are being directed against internal forces challenging the unity and integrity of the country. The outcome of this civil war may prove to be the trend setter and its fall out may be felt in the subcontinent.
We have highlighted in this study that the problem between India and Pakistan is the classic example of a 'security dilemma' in which any increase in military capability of one state has been viewed by the other as adding to its insecurity and vulnerability. Though both countries had confronted multiple threat scenarios which had domestic and international dimensions, the threat that each perceived from the other was viewed as more grave and had drawn the immediate attention of security decision-makers. The main reason why their relationship continue to remain locked up in "old values" has been the different organising principles of the state and the divergent paths for nation-building adopted by both. The Indo-Pak conflict is neatly institutionalised in the territorial dispute over Kashmir. While this Muslim dominated state has long remain integrated to India and is being viewed as a symbol of India's secular and federative principles, Pakistan, perceives that its state-building process would remain incomplete without incorporating Kashmir in its territory. Pakistan has tried to establish its claim over Kashmir by means of war on two previous occasions and is currently engaged in 'low intensity warfare' by financing and directly supporting militancy in the Kashmir valley. India has reacted by massively deploying regular and paramilitary troops in Kashmir to thwart any Pakistani manoeuvre. If the present state of affairs are allowed to linger on the possibility of yet another war cannot be ruled out.

Great powers had contributed no less in precipitating Indo-Pak rivalry, and as the study shows, had indeed directly assisted them in
to both West Asia and Southeast Asia had made it a playground for their covert operations in the past. The U.S. military aid to Pakistan was widely perceived in India as a form of hostile intervention and that is why India justified its own arms build-up and its reliance on Soviet arms. During 1954 - 1990, the United States had alone supplied military equipment worth US $ 5.1 billion to help Pakistan emerge as a counterweight to India. The strategic significance of the US-Pak-Chinese military "axis", and the U.S. "tilt" towards Pakistan in the wake of the 1971 India-Pakistan war was neutralised by India with its Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation with Soviet Union. External patronage had not only affected the growth of democratic institutions in Pakistan but had made any effort towards evolving a regional security consensus a nonstarter. The Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan had added many disturbing elements to regional security, but given the global power equation and its regional fall out, India could neither condemn nor condone the Soviet action. No country could have shouldered the responsibility to meet India's defence requirements (because of its resource constraint), the way the Soviet Union did, in the aftermath of the pumping of military aid and high-tech American weapons into Pakistan.

The rapid build-up of India's military power during the 1980s should be viewed in the light of increased military might of its two principal adversaries - Pakistan and China, the growing defence links between them and with the United States, the super power involvement in Afghanistan and in the Indian Ocean. Now the strength of the Indian army is 2.3 times greater than that of Pakistan, India has 1.8 times as many combat aircraft and tanks, 1.6 times as many APCs, ICVs and artillery and 2.4 times as many ships. But at the same time one has to look into the fact that India has nearly 15,000 kilometers of land border (Pakistan has one-fourth less territory), 7,000 kilometers of coastline (ten times more
then that of Pakistan), 2.5 million sq. kilometer of Exclusive Economic Zone (Pakistan has one per cent of Indian total), and above all, the Indian population is eight times more compared to its western neighbour. Any attempt on the part of Pakistan to strive for military parity is sheer defiance of this geographical and demographic reality.

The notable features of the India-Pakistan defence build-up during the previous decade were their emphasis on mobile warfare in a future battlefield, sophistication of armour and artillery, possession of advance combat aircraft, increase in surface ships, formation of maritime attack squadrons and acquisition of helicopter gunships, anti-ship missiles, and upgradation of their ballistic missile capability. The areas where India remained ahead of Pakistan are its long-range maritime reconnaissance aircraft (P-3 Orion American maritime surveillance and anti-submarine warfare planes are in the pipeline for Pakistan), aircraft carriers, amphibious ships, marine troops and its superior strategic airlift capability. These are basically defensive weapon systems, though they could effectively contribute to the outcome of any war. The sophistication of weaponry makes it very clear that the future conventional war between these two countries would become more intense. Whether they would afford to go for another war at this juncture is a different question.

Countries in South Asia were accustomed to higher defence expenditure during the period under survey. It was also observed that Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bhutan had taken policy decisions to divert funds from much needed development of the socio-economic infrastructure of their countries to meet the increasing demands of the armed forces. Similar efforts were also made by Bangladesh and Nepal to fill the gaps in defence with generous Chinese assistance. Since the early 1960s, it has been Nepal's endeavour to tap western sources to meet the
requirements of its armed forces and reduce its reliance on such supplies from India. However, during the last couple of years defence expenditure of these countries (except Sri Lanka) has gone down sharply partly because of their efforts towards restructuring the economy and partly due to the pressure from western donors. In gross terms India's defence budget has fallen by more than 25 per cent especially during the last three years and also as a share of GDP it has come down from over 4 per cent to 2.5 per cent. This negative growth rate has belied the western perception that Indian military build-up has a momentum of its own and the country is in search of an enemy to justify its military strength. Continuous reduction in defence allocations necessarily implies scaling down of the militarisation process and arms capability because a very clear message is emanating from the new global order (characterized by end of bipolar confrontation and reduced involvement of major powers in the affairs of Third World in their search for clients) that, to maintain the previous level of arms procurement, scarce foreign exchange is required that would entail a hike of the defence budget. During the last five years India has not signed a single major agreement to procure arms from abroad and as such none of the services had received any new offensive weapon systems during this period.

Pakistan has scaled down its military budget since 1991. The nominal increase in expenditure was only an indication of the level of inflation and not an increase of defence expenditure in real terms. Otherwise, for all previous years the rate of increase of defence expenditure was much higher than the rate of inflation. Again the major task of the democratic government in Bangladesh is to curtail defence budget to give sufficient attention to the country's development. During the military rule new cantonments had developed and new divisions were added to the over-stretched army of Bangladesh. Sri Lanka, on the other hand, is
credited with the highest growth rate in defence spending, a staggering 700 per cent increase during 1983-1990, that has compelled it to divert attention from economic development. Much of the national budget was utilised to oil the military machine for use against the Tamil guerrillas fighting for a Tamil nation in the north and east.

India's defence policy of the last decade was characterised by a shift of emphasis on its regional security interests that has created confusion at home and abroad. In fact, the turning point for Indian defence was the 1962 Sino-Indian war and India's military debacle in it. A major shift from non-alignment and peaceful coexistence as a defence strategy to full military preparedness could be traced to the aftermath of that war. An extra-strategic consideration has influenced future defence planning wherein governments have become sensitive to a charge of lack of defence preparedness. Another major change that has come into security decision-making was that the task of arms build-up was undertaken keeping in mind the capability rather than the intention of potential adversaries. In that ensuing scenario the fact that India engaged in military operations beyond its coastline in Sri Lanka and Maldives (though on invitation) was being viewed in South Asia and outside as evidence of its new defence posture, and an indication of Indian intention to deal firmly with situations impinging on its security interests. In the absence of a coherent national security doctrine it has yet to justify its nuclear policy, the essence of its expanding naval capability and about the role that 'Agni' would play in India's future defence needs.

The essence of Indian security policy lies in excluding other powers from the region if they had anti-Indian intentions in their regional involvements. No government in New Delhi ever harboured the idea of bringing the regional countries under its sphere of influence - the game
that the super powers had played and monopolised - but had disfavoured any attempt on their part to alter the post-1971 power structure in the region with external help. Its policy of 'strategic denial' in Sri Lanka and Maldives led to the deployment of Indian troops there. Being the pre-eminent regional power India made extra-regional security calculations, thus looking beyond Pakistan. The threat that India perceived from China made it necessary that the nuclear option be kept open. The NPT and MTCR were viewed in India as discriminatory because they preserve the monopoly over nuclear bombs and missiles for countries like China that already have them. It has not manufactured nuclear weapons despite the fact that the capacity to do so was acquired eighteen years back. India's nuclear policy and its ballistic missile capability can be justified in the light of its perception of Chinese threat. The Chinese supply of long-range ballistic missiles to Pakistan and countries in West Asia (particularly Saudi Arabia), had provided a new thrust to India's integrated guided missile development programme. A 'missile based defence system' is going to meet the future security needs of this country. Although the Agni missile has won IRBM status for India it has not become a weapon system but is being merely taken as a demonstration of technology. On the other hand, Pakistan has integrated Chinese M-11 ballistic missiles into service. Though the Chinese threat to India during the last couple of years has declined, Sino-Pak military links in the field of nuclear technology, ballistic missiles, arms transfer and production may continue to haunt India till the end of the century.

If countries in the third world, subjected to western arms embargoes in the past, had increased their arms production capacity, their experience of gunboat diplomacy had led these countries to the path of naval modernisation. The arrival of the U.S.S Enterprise into Bay of Bengal during the 1971 India-Pakistan war and the subsequent increase in
super power naval presence in the Indian Ocean compelled India to place emphasis on defence preparedness to operate in an extended security environment. The basic objective of having a strong navy is to protect India's maritime interests. Since three-fourth's of India's trade is seaborne, a limited capability to project power from the Strait of Hormuz in the west to the Strait of Malacca in the east to keep the sea lanes open for merchant ships is in the national interest. Besides that, the navy has to guard an extensive coastline, offshore oil installations and small island territories situated far off from the mainland. The expanding navy provides India sufficient 'deterrent capability' but the idea of projecting India as a major sea power in the Indian Ocean region has never received the government's favour.

During the last three years, the international political and military order has been passing through the most profound and sweeping changes. The previous world order characterised by bipolarity and confrontation has given way to a new unipolar world order where all attention is now been directed to the role of the United States, after such events like the collapse of the Soviet Union, the crumbling of the Berlin Wall and the resultant reunification of Germany, democratic changes in Eastern Europe, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the disappearance of East-West conflict. There is immense speculation on the new world order whose construction is high on the U.S. agenda. While the disappearance of major East-West tensions opens possibilities for conflict resolution in developing countries, the end of cold war in Europe does not mean the end of turmoil and instability in other parts of the globe.

The earlier conception of security implying military preparedness is going to change in the new global setting. Concepts of economic underdevelopment and global environmental hazards are now viewed as new
dimensions of security. Though the Third World in general and South Asia in particular have a very considerable share of these problems, military aspects of security still carries much weight. The spinning effects of these far reaching developments have forced India and Pakistan to "begin reassessment of their interests and alignments".

During this transitional phase, a whole set of new relationships is seen to be emerging between India and the United States, between Pakistan and United States, between India and Russia, and between India and China. The end of the global military competition has adversely affected the possibility of other small powers in the region playing the great power card against powerful neighbours.

Indo-U.S. relationship is entering into a new phase. Even in the mid-1980s the American decision to transfer dual-use technology and its endorsement of Indian military involvement in Sri Lanka and Maldives had created the impression that the previous U.S. policy of parallelism towards India and Pakistan would change. The present American perception that the Kashmir dispute being a bilateral issue is to be resolved through the mechanism that India and Pakistan had agreed at Simla in 1972, is an indication of their understanding of subcontinental ground realities. Their strong opposition to the Pakistani act of supporting terrorism in Punjab and secessionism in Kashmir is also indicative of that fact. The U.S. is slowly recognising that on the nuclear issue, India's threat perception goes beyond Pakistan, and that India would not accept any regional nuclear nonproliferation arrangement unless the arrangement meets the threat it perceives from both Pakistan and China. The joint naval exercise with the US, makes it clear that the west no longer sees with contempt India's recent naval build-up. India, on its part, seems to be shifting from its traditional policy of viewing the US
naval deployment in the Indian Ocean as a cause for concern and a source of threat to its maritime interest.

On the other hand, Pakistan has failed to convince the Bush Administration that its nuclear programme is not meant for military purposes. The fact is that Pakistan has already adopted a policy of nuclear deterrence against India as is evident from recent revelation by former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. "Pakistan has sufficient nuclear information that in the event of a threat it could rapidly produce a deterrent". Under the Pressler Amendment, the United States has suspended all its military and economic aid to Pakistan excluding those in the pipeline. This, however, does not mean any scaling down of Islamabad's militarisation efforts. The reported US $1.5 billion deal between Pakistan and France for the supply of Mirage 2000 and delivery of two squadrons of Chinese F-7 fighters to Pakistan has generated new alarm in the subcontinent. The recent supply of Russian fighters like Su-27 and Mig-29 to China, and reported Pakistani efforts to acquire weapons from the same source, proves that the global power equation may have changed but the demand for arms by the developing countries is not necessarily affected by the end of the cold war.

After the collapse of Soviet Union, Pakistan's geopolitical situation has changed dramatically. Its loss of leverage on Washington, and its perception that the post-cold war world politics demands individual countries to guarantee their own security, may provide the incentive for producing nuclear weapons. Such a policy combined with its decision to play a key role in Central Asian Republics of the former Soviet Union may help significantly to increase its usefulness to the western world. It could also prove beneficial to China, considering its recent arms transfer relationship with Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq and Iran.
Another significant fall out of the global changes on South Asian security is India's loss of leverage over the Russian Republic, the successor state of the former Soviet Union. India should not expect the same level of military relationship as it had developed with Soviet Union. Even acquiring spare parts for its Soviet made weapon systems looks to be difficult proposition. Moreover, where such things are available it has to invest scarce foreign currency. In spite of India's previous policy of diversification of weapons acquisition, more than 70 per cent of its major armaments are of Soviet origin and one of the main reasons that obstructed further diversification was the economic condition of the country. India's expectations that Russia would agree to joint ventures in the field of defence production appears to be improbable.

Though in this changing atmosphere direct Chinese military threat to India looks unlikely, the former's involvement in South Asian affairs (particularly its military supplies to Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh) may act as major obstacle to the path of genuine Sino-Indian normalisation. So long as this has not happened India would not slacken its security measures against that country.

All said and done, it has to be accepted that the region itself is not vital to the United States or other major European Powers. Their non-involvement in regional security affairs become more pronounced with the end of the cold war. There would be no outside power to guarantee the security of the countries in South Asia unless they themselves do so either individually or collectively. The major lacuna in the region is the absence of a conflict resolution mechanism. This would not emerge in the absence of identical perception toward external threat. For collective regional endeavour to meet the challenges of the post-cold war world what is expected of these countries is regularised cooperative
behaviour in issues relating to national security, and an explicit recognition of the view that collective arrangements in security affairs may prove to be beneficial for all. But, even under this changed environment it becomes difficult to predict that conflict and isolation of the previous years would be replaced by detente and cooperation between India and Pakistan.