CHAPTER V

REGIONAL SECURITY AND
INFORMATICS: THE SOUTH
ASIAN PERSPECTIVE
Introduction

Most analysis of the future of regional security or South Asia underestimate the potential role of informatics. The nuclear shadow on the security environment of South Asia and the failure of SAARC to deal with political issues has rendered many existing theoretical investigations and empirically oriented researches in security studies obsolete. This chapter suggests the need for fresh answers to regional security questions which cannot be tackled by conventional approaches which ignore the learning process associated with information and communication. The key issues on the agenda of policy-makers in the sphere of regional security can only be tackled if complex processes which are related to sources of regional strength and competitiveness are identified. SAARC cannot hope to achieve a "coordination equilibrium" without informatics and this requires a paradigmatic change in the theory of regional conflict analysis. It is now counterproductive for the SAARC countries (and especially India and Pakistan) to exploit the vulnerabilities of each other. Trust has been described as the "precondition of social life", and it is clear from the experience of other regional groupings that for SAARC it is now imperative to share information about economy flows in each member state in order to utilise opportunities for coordinating policies for science and
technology with industrial policies, education policies and employment policies on a region wide basis. The need for a sophisticated approach to regional security policies is equally evident so that a regionally harmonised regulatory framework can be developed which would be free from extra-regional intervention and also avoid unilateral Indian imposition or hegemony. Monitoring as a form of regional security coordination points to the essential nature of informatics which can address the security needs of society. SAARC can also establish an order of priorities as a guide to regional security and protective measures can be inbuilt into the command, control and communication systems of member countries. Informatics can also help in promoting cooperation among the intelligence agencies of member nations for avoiding false alarms and for providing policy makers with data to fully explore new options. Informatics have both a practical and theoretical relevance for developing confidence-building measures and to arrive at common courses of action while maintaining the social, cultural and political characteristics of each society.

Despite we are still required to be prepared to deter any attacks and be ready to defend ourselves if deterrence fails.

There remains a need for dedicated attempts to achieve arms control. The level of armaments has meanwhile reached
truly staggering heights, ever more money is being spent on arms, designing even more sophisticated machineries for killing, piling up evenmore engines of war. The truth however remains, that for all this tremendous efforts, no one has gained in security: in fact one probably feels less secure today than ever before.

Thirty years ago it was impossible to foresee such a predicament. Nuclear weapons were altogether new then, their promise of peace plausible, the follies and dangers of an interminable arms race still hidden in the distant future. Now one is stuck per-force in a dead-end street. The new generation is demanding a new moral justification and a new political legitimation for the monopoly of nuclear weapons. If it can be provided at any cost, this will be by an unstinting, honest and purposeful effort to make arms control work and bring about total disarmament.

The 1990s is marked for ideas on alternative security - notably common security, nonprovocative defence and above all denuclearization. It is believed that these alternative ideas do provide the basis for a shared practice and even theory of coexistence in the world. Historic opportunities would be lost without such a long term scope of direction and determination to act.\(^1\)

In late nineteen-eighties developments have taken place at an unprecedented speed. Well-established structures of the cold war collapsed. The arrival of a multiparty system in Hungary, a non-communist government in Poland, direct elections in the Soviet Union and glasnost almost everywhere, opening up of the borders and political system of the erstwhile GDR and symbolic breaching of the Berlin Wall and subsequent German Reunification marked a time of radical choice. The old structures disintegrated. There was no clear idea about alternative models

THE CONTEXT

Forty seven years ago, the cold was seemed perfectly rational . Conflicts of interest still exist between some powers, but the confrontation produced by decades of short term vigilance, exacerbated by fear and mistrust has been rendered irrational and obsolete. The cold war thinking and behaviors, mutual threat inflation, high levels of military power, intrabloc discipline, implicit enemy imaging and so on are now out of touch with the new world of complex interdependence, giving way to a general desire to live together in far more relaxed conditions rather than perpetrate a dangerous and wasteful confrontation. The accumulation of nuclear overkill has increasingly come to be seen by a growing number of experts as well as the general
mass, as a problem, rather than a solution.²

Power in world affairs is now diffused after a period of overstretch of military and political clout by the then superpowers. There has been a decrease of regimentation in international affairs and a shift in orientations throughout the world. A breakdown of bipolarity has taken place in Europe and even more quickly elsewhere. In its place has emerged a multipolar, multidimensional structure wherein security economic and political matters are no longer determined by East-West confrontation. The challenge of the second post-war era - that of living together indefinitely, free from the fear of war, and with energies to deal with all the serious issues require new fresh strategic thinking.

The Nuclear Deterrence and its associated habits of mind are incapable of promising a long term answer to the problem of managing global security. Nuclear deterrence certainly breeds prudence but does so accompanied by worst-case forecasts and arms race theory which sustains and thus heightens tensions.

The excessively militarized image of contemporary international politics is sustained due to a regressive

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mindset as follows. 3

Ethnocentrism:

Ethnocentrism is a sort of distorting mechanism which prevents empathy; it renders people unable to appreciate the fears of others, and the extent to which almost all the nations see themselves as more threatened than threatening. It also magnifies misperception, stereotyping and nationalistic rivalries while obstructing understanding of the objective nature of contemporary security interdependence.

Secondly doctrinal realism exaggerates the Hobbesian character of interstate relations. It stresses the propensity for war and the struggle for raw power. 4 Ideological fundamentalism propagates the most basic beliefs and doctrines in any society and so tends to heighten one's sense of 'friends' and 'enemies', and makes people intolerant of diversity. And finally strategic reductionism


tends to reduce all questions of international relations to a strategic numbers game.

Nuclear deterrence has become a compulsive addiction to people who have the aforesaid mindsets. It is believed to 'work' by inculcating a novel degree of prudence into international relations through the crystal ball effect. Nuclear deterrence has its own unprecedented fears and dangers, it institutionalizes cold war ways of thinking and behaving and stimulates a set of interlocking strategic cultures. The future will be created out of our images. The reality of the strategic world is closely bound up with our image of it.

A 'legitimate international order' or 'security regime' requires that all the major powers agree on the permissible aims and methods of foreign policy. The possible outcome will be one of international security that is a condition in which all states have a justifiably high expectation that there will not be a major war, and that in the peace that prevails their core values will not come under threat. The


institutionalisation of international security becomes possible only when the members of international community reach common consent about the rules of behaviour between them and the practical implementation thereof.

An imaginable ideal situation without any radical change in the nature of nations and the international system - a conceivable utopia - is encapsulated in Kenneth Boulding's phase, 'stable peace'. This underlines a condition in international relations in which war is thought unlikely not because of a threat of mutual annihilation but because of mutual satisfaction with the prevailing situation. Wherein peace is based upon a political relationship rather than of cosmic fear. In practice, stable peace can exist between conglomeration of countries, including those who were formerly enemies. Their conglomerations have been categorized by Karl Deutsch and others as 'security communities'. The states within these communities do not have each other targeted in a military sense: they have a high degree of interactions and there is a confident expectation of peace.


8. The concept was defined by Karl W. Deutsch et al., in Political Community and the North Atlantic Area (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1957).
It is not impossible to conceive such a security community across the globe although the early security communities that presently exist did not develop between the first two military powers of the day, nor did they have to cope with the people of 'nuclear weapons'. Although the problem of 'disinventing' nuclear weapons will remain a major obstacle to the full development of stable peace, it is not difficult to relegate these systems of mass destruction to a merely symbolic role more particularly since we have survive three generations of the nuclear age yet with a progressive commitment to denuclearization.

The Approach: 'Process Utopian'

When old structures are creaking and the shape of distant ones are far from being discerned, at such times of rapid change process assumes more importance than the structure. It is time we concentrate on those processes that seem to promise more security than at present. Joseph S. Nye has emphasised the distinction between 'end point utopias' and 'process utopias' to be kept in mind when confronted with such a situation. 9

Most utopian visions, according to Nye, point to what are considered to be a better set of future conditions.

Ideas about general and comprehensive disarmament are examples of this sort.

Nye has defined 'process utopias' as benign or pacific trends with the end point being uncertain. The process-utopian taxes modest, reformist steps in order to make a better world somewhat more plausible. This is the most progressive yet pragmatic approach to the problem of security at large. For the time being, the urgency of reducing the danger of nuclear war seems to have declined somewhat though it still remains a major threat. If gradually we are able to lower the risk a little more, we would be able to wipe out the threat completely.

From the viewpoint of process utopian approach, movement towards a legitimate international order is incremental and across a broad front. This approach is social, cultural and educational as well as diplomatic and strategic. The goal would not be achieved unless there is consciousness-raising as well as changes in policies. The approaches range from trying to negotiate crisis prevention centres in each others', to encouraging cooperation through trade to cultural and educational efforts which seek to reduce stereotyping.

The pattern of post war years has generally been that the growth of national strength on the part of one power merely provokes insecurity and countervailing strength on
the part of the other. The evergrowing irrationality of the nuclear arms race has been recognized and admitted by a significant body of former insiders including famous scientific advisers.\textsuperscript{10} It is also recognized that these weapons may be deployed in some country as a result of technological inertia rather than political calculation, and are counter-productive to security needs.\textsuperscript{11} The enormous nuclear stockpiles has since become dysfunctional and the size and character of the forces targeted against each other breeds feelings of insecurity and a potent source of instability among nations renders the evolution of peaceful world order rather difficult. The only way out of such predicament is to move to more recognizably defensive military postures.

The showfix strategy: Non-Provocative Defence:

This rather radical idea of non-provocative defence has been gaining support under the banner of 'common security' since the early 1980s. In contrast to the overblown security through-strength beliefs of the early Reagan Presidency, the Palme Commission Reoport of 1982 offered

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{10} See for example, Lord Zuckerman, Starwars in a Nuclear World (London: William Kimber, 1986).
\end{itemize}
backing to the notion of common security, states can no longer attain security at each but only through cooperative efforts. The notion of common security is best expressed by provocative defence. This strategy which the process utopian approach, very well ands of the new condition of security and also attempts to deal directly with the of the security dilemmas. Provocative defence certainly seems to rescue in the 'security dilemma': that is the by what one state does to enhance its own fears on the part of others, thus military efforts. Provocative defence also emphasises rather than nuclear deterrence from battle-gic system. The second element is that of of achieving non-provocative military lows the retaining of defensive forces to esigns more expensive (thereby thus making 

ity: A Programme for Disarmament, Report of ent Commission on Disarmament and Security the Chairmanship of Olaf Palme (London:

the benefits of occupation not worth the cost), but rules out any offensive strategies and weaponry as far as possible. Herein, security is ensured by way of 'capability' or 'mutual defensive superiority') together with the policies of political and economic reassurance. The defence postures of the countries having so adopted this strategy, do not threaten their neighbours; they do not have dangerous retaliatory and escalatory doctrines and weapons; and they do not provoke suspicion and threat inflation among those who might challenge them. But these countries nonetheless maintain a strong defence capacity, their forces threaten to put up the costs to any aggressor, their doctrines and equipment carry military conviction and their governments speak from strength.

The establishment of a legitimate international order requires not democracy but moderate external behaviour, which is when attempts are being made to develop political detente, the military agenda should not be pressed ahead with threatening modernizations. What the states do with their military power feeds the insecurity of other countries and undermines the efforts to achieve some political accommodation.

The maintenance of the central role of nuclear weapons and deep strike tactics only results in the continued distorting of relations, the undermining of economic
potential, the delaying of progress in arms control and deflecting of our intellectual and other energies from dealing with a plethora of social, environmental and economic problems. No strategy be it either flexible response or non-provocative defence is entirely free from any risk but this alternative defence ideas is a slow fix solution to the traditional problem of the security dilemma we encounter unlike that of technological quickfixes like star wars which are unworkable and wasteful ideas in the least.

If we are able to reject the static thinking of the ideological realists and strategic fundamentalists and generate political support to back these processes which make constructive engagement predictable and encourage moves towards a legitimate international order, stable peace would then become a reality, reducing the risks of war.

The alternative defence notions are a slowfix out of what Stanley Hoffman described as the central problem of international politics - that of turning the traditional vicious circle of relations between states into one of trust and peace.14

South Asian Scenario: Challenges

The developing countries of the South as are faced with

economic and infrastructural underdevelopment, unstable political systems, which are most part post-colonial and ethnic or other social cleavages, are per force put to suffer from these security threats which nonetheless underline the autonomy and survival of the state from within. These internal dilemmas form the main security challenges to most of these countries or at least constitute main cause of vulnerability to external military threats.

This vulnerability and penetrability of these developing countries is exacerbated by the reasons of political and historical legitimacy, social composition and economic reality which makes the task of managing security and goals of development and their state building a more daunting one. In other words 'the crisis of statehood' form the connecting link between the problems faced by these countries in achieving social, economic and political progress and those posed by the problems of managing their external environment.

It is such that the very process of development proves to be destabilizing as progress in a particular field such as political liberalization or economic growth may cause upheaval in another - such as intercommunal relations. On the other side, action taken to alleviate the burden of underdevelopment or to improve competitiveness of the economy may lead to even more debilitating consequences such
as indebtedness and ecological degradation.

The challenge of achieving security has been complicated with the speed with which technological advanced and information revolution are rapidly altering the structure, patterns and content of world economy and of interstate exchanges. This strains their capacity to evolve within the international system and to master new forms of management and control of their environment while absorbing the destabilizing effects of these changes and reforms. These pressures have been felt sufficiently strong as the last few decades have not sufficiently been helpful in completing the process of state building and post war social, economic and political reforms.

The task of securing national values as consisting of safeguarding the political and territorial survival of the state, ensuring the organic (physical and collective) survival of the population establishing the conditions for economic welfare and achieving and preserving intercommunal harmony: these economic and social factors effectively constitute the definition of security since they affect the 'national values' or directly can influence political and military decision-making in a given country and region too.

The developing countries including that of SAARC member states have yet to reach internal consensus on their respective identify and viability unlike the advanced
industrialized countries who have broad societal stability and cohesion. Hence they have had to suffer from a number of security threats—many which have their origins from the resultant clash of state, nation and community within one country and from the consequent instability of regional relations.

The territorial limitations or boundaries in short, of modern state and original nation (where such existed) do not coincide as political borders of these countries were arbitrarily drawn by the external colonial masters. This has consequently weakened the sense of identification of certain communities within the new state especially where the individuals belong to a 'nation', that now lies partly across the interstate border. In addition to this the problem of division of political power between groups of varying ethnic and sectarian origins persists. If minority rule is established in any country in the name of Islamisation or Islamic rule, then alienation of other groups from the state becomes an inevitable threat. Further on account of colonial inheritance, these state structures as embody alien concepts and mechanisms of societal mobilisation and control stand to have less and less practical effectiveness, reduced legitimacy to govern, which appear to be imposed from above or outside.

The tensions generated by the nation/state dichotomy
have often taken varied, usually violent forms. Separatism as evidenced in intermittent internal wars such as those in India (sikhs), Sri Lanka (tamils), Pakistan (sindhis), Bangladesh (chakmas). In each and every such case, the dissenting community has not shared a common concept of the wider notion that citizenship has failed to earn it as equal place in the state and society.

The Past Dimension:

These countries have in the past been subjected to the commercial and political military predominance of the industrial powers, the financial dominance of Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the colonialism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and superpowers confrontation and its corollaries in the cold war period. Consequently the state structures in these countries stand the considerably weakened by this perceived imbalance in the patterns of relations between them and the North. Hence they remain vulnerable to various forms of external pressures, manipulation and intervention. In short, they are marked by the penetrability of their economies, societies and political processes as much as by their physical vulnerability. In the extreme cases, this vulnerability or penetrability have proved to be an allurement for external military involvement either for reasons of superpowersnalry
or in pursuance of private commercial or strategic aims. These factors have had in the past limited national sovereignty of these countries. These countries have built up centralised or authoritarian systems to safeguard their sovereignty. Moreover, the tendency to protect state independence by creation of such closed societies ironically clashed with the need of the same states for greater domestic openness and expanded exchange with the outside world at such time of growing integration and competitiveness in the international economy.

In recent times, with the rapid spread of consumerism and the transformation of many luxury items into basic commodities the governments of these countries have come under strong pressures to increasingly integrate with the world economy for capital and technology. Further the proliferation of information technology and mass media has reinforced demands for greater social, cultural and political liberalization in step with administrative and economic reforms as that in the world outside.

The cause of economic backwardness and consequently unfinished process of building state structures have often contributed towards the phenomenon of domestic conflict and political instability that these states have experienced in this region. Crucially they also lack political predictability; assurance that systems of government and law
will be extant and upheld into the foreseeable future. It is largely because of these factors that these countries have remained weak as states even though some of them may be strong in terms of military power, internal security apparatus and even apparent wealth. 15

In other words, late in the twentieth century, their state structures still face the challenge of legitimacy and viability. They would fast need to achieve cohesion or at least convergence of core interests through their societies political participation, security and defence and economic well-being. The states are faced with the problem of how to establish assured, constitutional rule in the absence of a sustainable consensus on the identity and nature of the nation-state on the one hand; and how to develop guaranteed and effective notions of civil society in heterogeneous populations and under controlled conditions in such situations where the structures and concepts being upheld tend to supplant or even oppose the ones which are traditional, communally or religiously based.

The linkage between political military, social and economic issues is more direct and of immediate concern as much as the use of state power to advance sometimes these

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15. The theme of 'Weak and Strong' states in developed extensively by Barry Pouzan, People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations (Brighton: Wheatsheaf Books, 1983).
narrowly defined goals of state development result in the exacerbation of domestic tension and instability. The tendency to expand the social role of the state has often exacerbated social divisions, in particular, centrifugal forces (like regionalism, tribalism and sectarianism) have been reinforced in heterogeneous societies as ours, threatening them with fragmentation.

Some states suffer from ethnic divisions while others do not; some have registered strong economic growth while others have induced stagnation; some manage with small civil services and token armed forces, while others have lost efficiency despite (or sometimes because of) massive investments in both. Yet in each case, the main criterion of success or failure has been the ability of the state to consolidate itself and achieve legitimacy, establish and reflect consensus and demonstrate viability.

State reconstruction that is, the reform of existing structures and processes, as distinct from state building has also entailed potentially major risks. The relaxation of central control and achieving political reforms have unleashed centrifugal forces threatening underlying social cohesion and national unity. Economic reforms opening these countries to external commercial competition and investment threaten to have drastic repercussion on the local economy while shifting the domestic political and social powerbases,
even as without reforms these countries are faced with loss of legitimacy, damaging social consensus and economic viability, threatening security and stability.

Breakdown of State Spirit:

The crisis of the state that these countries face at present are a dramatic expression of the encroaching breakdown of statehood. It is almost impossible to end civil wars in these states once stated, given their internal and structural weaknesses a prospect borne out in Sri Lanka as the 1990s opened. Other countries have had to face civil conflicts and erosion of state authority either due to the inability of any party at war to gain upper hand or to the eventual collapse of social and political institutions.

India is itself threatened, albeit on a lesser scale, by Sikh separatism and by Muslims dissent in Kashmir. The resurgence of regionalism in Pakistan shows that these countries remain vulnerable to security threats despite having been successful in the diffusion of historic internal conflicts. The insecurities and vulnerability to external penetration that these countries are threatened which can effectively be tackled by faster economic development and building up a societal consensus with political participation permeating a shared concept of statehood.
Economic and Social Dimensions of Insecurity:

Achieving security in the developing economies of South Asia entails modernization of their economic systems. The need for fast economic growth has obvious implications far beyond the economic realm as investment in social and economic development raises local expectations, especially creation of high profile projects.

The second significant feature of the development process of these countries is that it is uneven. It encourages — indeed often intensifies rural-urban divisions and national discrepancies in income. More often uneven development results from the fact that certain communities receive a lion's share of the benefits as their members dominate the state apparatus. In Pakistan, Punjabis have enjoyed a disproportionate share of government investment in development projects leading such communities as Pathans to seek income through migration to the oilrich Gulf-states. On the other hand certain communities have left out of resource allocations, as money is scarce whose unresolved economic and other grievances have the potency to fuel an armed rebellion any time.

The development process as has been undertaken in these countries has prominently created economic disparities. The more successful development is, the stronger the concomitant tendency for the rise in living standards to prompt greater
demands for public participation in political system and
government process, in other words, for further
democratization, and increase in economic and political
freedom.

The social and economic development carries the risk of
political instability. The choice before them is either to
turn to increased repression or to embark on substantial
internal reforms, threatened with the risk of security of
the regime. The national security too comes under risk as
in the first case repression diverts resources and raises
the prospect of internal strife and foreign interference
while in the second, liberalization involves change or loss
of political control and directly affects foreign or defence
policy-making as during the transition period new social
cohesion and political consensus have to be attained which
potentially leaves the country a whole loss united in the
face of external threats and thus unable to initiate
ambitious development plans.

These countries are caught in a dilemma: development is
essential to security (both internal and external) but the
process of development itself is also a potent destabiliser.

International Debt:

Indebtedness of the countries pose a serious challenge
to the survival of the countries with internal and regional
security implications. The massive financial burden of
servicing and repaying of capital threatens to undermine any developmental achievements already attained by these countries and increase their dependence on the donor countries. In many cases anywhere between half and the totality of new loans are only taken to pay off old ones, thus setting up a continuing, self-debilitating cycle.

This indebtedness appears to afflict these developing countries regardless of surrounding regional conditions and specific political, security and economic circumstances. A large portion of international debt is spent on imports of armaments and military services. The amount spent on such imports involved a major drain on hard currency reserves. Some of these countries although experience distinct security threats but are not major weapons producers, have perforce tended to risk high levels of indebtedness in the search for greater security. Pakistan and India are good examples of countries facing serious internal and external threats and relying heavily on arms imports funded by foreign loans with resultant aggravation of economic problems. The dilemma is even more acute for the most countries with weak economy or without a readily convertible surplus such as oil. The generosity and willingness of outside powers to provide these countries with grants or long term loans for military purchases has only postponed the economic and political consequences of their
This phenomenon of indebtedness raises other problems of special nature too. For one, as always it involves international agencies such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) more clearly in the economies of the developing countries. The negotiations for rescheduling of debts with these agencies have regularly required the imposition of austerity measures such as the lifting of subsidies on basic commodities, removal of trade barriers and exchange controls and the privatization of national industry. Whether or not such mechanisms are indeed the best to regulate the world economy and stimulate development, their actual and potential impact on these developing countries are detrimental to their immediate and long term security. The recent reforms measures and past Pakistani economic reforms are examples of such impact.

The flight of capital to the OECD nations has primarily been responsible for overall indebtedness and general lack of resources for investment and development in these low income countries. This capital which often consists of locally generated income and external credit extended to assist development or alleviate the burden of previous borrowing doubles up the debt burden. It is essential to carry out a reassessment of existing development thinking and introducing economic policies and investment
opportunities for ensuring the return of capital and prevent further flight of such scarce resources which would help in reducing the indebtedness and setting up of mechanisms to eliminate corruption and lack of public accountability.

The second problem of these Low Income National Economies is their dependence on the export of one or two major commodities. Given this fact of high degree of reliance on single exports, any change in world prices have a fundamental impact on these economies frequently with security implications. The drop in prices of the commodities and changing international market conditions cause major upheaval in domestic sectors of their economy.

This internal damage is far more greater by such dependence, when increased production is used to compensate for incompetent development strategy which lead to deeper impoverishment, indebtedness and dependence. This single export reliance reduces their political independence by endowing outside powers with a degree of leverage for manipulation.

Clarke and Pyne have noted in this context of under-development and indebtedness of these countries, 'an increase in political weakness, instability and secession'.

consequences of underdevelopment and still struggling to consolidate their statehood, managing the vicissitudes of global economic and trade conditions, in the context of structural dependence on the western industrialized countries, has tended more to deform than to bolster existing state structures. 17

Social Factors:

These states are often faced with formidable challenges of a social nature more than that of economic ones. It is through social movements that economic concerns are expressed most. The strength of the link between economic weakness and social dissent and of the consequent threat to security still felt by all these developing countries in the late 1990s is best enumerated by President Suharto who warned his country that unless economic prosperity was achieved in the next five years, the nation would be 'torn apart'. These countries have had to cope with demographic imbalances rapid urbanisation and migration which are structural in nature and ideological ones such as ethnic/tribal divisions and 'moral' or religious sectarianism. The categories are closely related as structural crises have

often been expressed in terms of ideological dogmas. The social problems are also connected to the competition for economic resources and political power as economic and political inequalities often emanate from existing social divisions.

These LDCs also have had to suffer from a structural problem - the presence of expatriate communities - migrants workers, exiles and refugees which have an impact on their stability. The threat to their security is perceived to be there at migrants may be used as external forces for political ends in the host country.

The presence of large expatriate communities becomes at times, intolerable burden when local recession occurs, in these structurally weak economies. The presence of refugees has also at times, accelerated existing internal conflicts. The illegal activities of these refugees across the borders have often invited military retaliation by third party and created border security problems besides exacerbating internal security situations. The influx of Afghans has assisted a resurgence of Pathan unrest in Pakistan. Indeed Pakistan offers one of the more recent examples of this sort of exacerbation of local tension with the outbreak of clashes in 1989 between indigenous Punjabis and Mohajirs community of Muslim former inhabitants of India - reminiscent of the problems associated with the repatriation
of refugee Biharis from Bangladesh to Pak’s province of Sind.

Military Dimensions:

The remarkable feature of the evolution of these countries over a period of time has been that of gradual militarization: violence, conflicts, inter-state arms transfers, massive military development, expansion of the armed forces. The role of the military in these societies has been viewed alternately as a modernizing agent, pillar of national security and guarantor of security and stability essential for the fast socio-economic development. The spectra of communal conflicts, competition for resources by various ethnic communities, disputes over territory insecurity and suspicions in these nations has further spurred rapid military development for achievement of security and consolidation of state building.

The consequence of this process has been militarization of these societies besides unwelcome imposition of severe financial and structural pressures on these poor economies. The lack of political stability and social cohesion has also at times encouraged the military to maintain a high profile and even to assume active political power.

The second consequence has been to encourage a network of military relationships between these developing and industrialized countries involving the transfer of arms,
services and forces and the provision of training for indigenous forces. These processes have gone hand in hand with regional military buildups and allowed at times introduction of foreign power into local conflicts.

Moreover some of these countries have gone for additional programmes of military development besides the buildup of conventional arms in response partly to perceived 'security needs' and partly to sudden developments in the regional and international balances of power. The major examples are the establishment of local arms industries in India and Pakistan and the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the region.

Patterns of Conflict:

Since the days of 1947, most of the armed conflicts have taken one form of another of 'internal war' with only a small number of them being inter-state wars. The incidence of internal conflict - especially tribal and ethnic ones - has risen markedly. This underlines the significance of social heterogeneity in these countries and the crisis of their state structures.

The other pattern is the increase in military intervention by these states in local conflicts, particularly replacing the role of west. While on the one hand this has reflected growth of self-confidence and
physical capabilities of some of these countries, on the other this increase in local interventions has highlighted the transitional nature of regional power balances and gradual emergence of regional hegemonies. The indigenous motivations and causes of military conflict in the region are lasting ones since they reflect ongoing local and regional processes due to certain important local countries' security interests and objectives. This calculation of a regional balance of power forces them to acquire arms and intervene in local crises to ensure that their regional positions are duly taken care of.

Regional Military Buildups:

These developing countries have witnessed a continuous upward spiral in military spending since the time of their independence. Three factors mainly seem to have fuelled arms races within the region.

The pervasive sense of insecurity both internal and external, faced by these countries has forced them to undertake massive armament campaign and military development programmes even in this 1990s. It is argued that these governments invest heavily in building armed and public security forces to confront internal threats but these purchases of modern weapons have often been geared to defend against external threats or other regional objectives. The
import of such large scale weapons has also been egged on by western industrial powers with liberal loans for their purposes of securing long production runs to achieve economies of scale and reduce costs of procurement for their own armed forces.

The perception of insecurity in these countries, the operational momentum of military technology, the strategic or commercial interests of the western powers, build up an arms race while the local factors domestic or regional threats create a lasting demand for purchase of modern weaponry. This is strongly borne out in South Asia where Indo-Pakistani conflicts have been highly volatile in nature.

That these members continue to register heavy military growth is reflection of a general sense of insecurity towards their regional environment. This has also given rise to depending sense of dependence on external powers as the global powers remain the main sources for military hardware and expertise. According to Alden Mullins, this fact of western nations as suppliers of military aid has often made the client-patron relationship a more important determinant of security than indigenous military preparation made possible by progress in development.18 In his view the

patron support is the only external force driving the growth of military capability. It is nevertheless very clear that the very process by which these countries have sought to improve their security and reduce their vulnerability to outside intervention itself depends to a large degree on the continued role of those same foreign powers.

**Arms Control and Regional Security:**

The possibility of slowing down interstate conflict in the region is remote even with the cutting off the external arms supplies. The attempts towards local weapons production and South-South trade has often compensated through partially for arms embargoes. This expression of their military industries in the region made out principally has been motivated by local factors like facilitation of technology transfers, with added potential for interaction between the civilian and military industrial sectors and thus achieving reduction of overall costs and saving of hard currency. Nevertheless it is held, that the principal incentive to embark on such military industrialization has been the desire to strengthen national security by guaranteeing of such supplies of necessary combat material, which has had a massive impact on the existing precarious regional security in the South Asia.

The growing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the region has only sparked the need for
further military industrialization and increased the spurt in regional arms race. India and Pakistan both have established nuclear infrastructures with actual or potential military capabilities since the NPT came into force in 1970, which has serious implications for future arms control or crisis management. The spread of delivery systems including medium range ballistic missiles has also increased the threat in these conflict zones, since the nuclear proliferation has a gradual but growing effect on regional security.

The general diffusion of these nuclear technologies per se increases the likelihood of nuclear arms proliferation and ultimately the risk of nuclear war in the region,¹⁹ even though some experts argue that such proliferation may result in local balances of power that in fact may stabilize regional relations,²⁰ or like Barry Buzan and Gowher Rizvi, also have suggested that nuclear proliferation may tend to undermine hegemony by any single regional power in this region.²¹ But this has not so far been yet evident in the


case of India and Pakistan in this region.

The context of regional security of these countries in the 1990s is dominated by the emerging patterns of the late 1980s. The shift in US-Soviet rivalry is a major development which resulted in virtual diffusion of East-West rivalry in this region and like that of in the third world. It also has facilitated a desire for cooperation between the major powers on regional disputes and nuclear arms proliferation. The apparent emphasis now seems to be on negotiating settlements to any local conflict in the region while arms transfers to local protagonists would probably have scaledown effect and subjected to stricter political conditions on usage.

However, as seen from above, the key to preserving security for these states in South Asia would strictly depend on its ability to manage its environment at three levels: domestic, regional and international. The first (domestic) of these would be determined by the indigenous resources and capabilities available to the state, which are no doubt, affected by the existing degree of economic development and social cohesion and by the mechanisms employed for its mobilization. The attainment of required rate of growth is of paramount importance in the times of information revolution and the pervasiveness of contact with the international economy.

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## South Asian: Military Expenditure in current price, figure 1982-91

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South Asia: Military expenditure as percentage of GDP 1981-90

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Regional Security: Regional Cooperation

Since the external threat to state security arises from more the conflict between the nation and state in neighbouring countries of the region, the regional level cooperation represents the primary arena for cooperation and mutual security arrangements. It is also by such integration within their external environment that they can only attain the maximum possible level of security without so much as risking insurmountable social dislocation and political destabilization, through higher states of development.

The South Asian region is still being torn by conflicts. These conflicts are not based upon ideological antagonisms nor rivalries between two military blocs. The new tensions result from the long economic stagnation, differences in development and associated disintegration and growing ethnic and national conflicts.

The serious threats to the South Asian security are territorial claims, as between India and Pakistan. Frequently these claims are many decades old. The main cause is that the power elites as are unable to solve social and economic problems, attempts instead to divert social attention from them and to gain support. It does not mean that all borders between the new states are just. Some of these are legacies of the region's colonial past.

The economic situation in all these countries is going
from bad to worse. The causes are of a structural nature. The cumbersome militarized economy requires an enormous injunction of capital in order to convert to a highly civilized one. The diminishing living standards, as well as growing unemployment and inflation are bound to compound the sense of insecurity and corresponding social frustrations. As a consequence there seems to be a risk of massive migration movements, political instability and the increased appeal of authoritarian, nationalist and populist slogans and solutions. The outcome can be attempts to define and forge nationally oriented policies of security directed against neighbours; in the absence of option of seeking guarantees within the multilateral structures designed to build cooperative or collective security.

The challenge is to reduce the level of armaments to diminish external threats and to establish common institutions in the area of military security. The shaping of these institutions should by no means be subject to ready made blueprints or theoretical concepts but as a starting point must take into account the different and heterogeneous situations in various parts of the region. It is to be borne in mind that the existence of common problems is not a guarantee of regional cooperation however. The attitude of each country towards collective security arrangements is based on its own perception of the national interest. And
any state will place its own policy preferences first, and will promote regional agencies to the extent that they accommodate or even 'enhance' its individual security. It is in this context that the challenge becomes truly problematic. The significance of such a body consists chiefly in handling the problems of preventing and resolving conflicts.

Political rather than military factors will play an increasing role in maintaining security. The threat of armed aggression has substantially reduced. Whereas the sources of instability are of a political and economic and not military character, new means and mechanisms must focus on political, ethnic and economic problems rather than on military ones. The aim needs to be not to form one all-embracing security institution but the effective operation of the interlocking system of institutions. The standing points in building a new system in the military field are multilateral agreements, treaty and regulations concerning arms transfers and non-proliferation. The foundation of new system will be among others, the already agreed principles: openness and transparency of military activities; restraint from threatening activities; limitation of armed forces; and a permanent dialogue on security. One of the ways of consolidating the new security order might be the conclusion of a General Treaty on Security and Cooperation.
This may require a departure from the classical academic interpretation of sovereignty and a new definition of matters which fall within the discretionary internal competencies of states. It also pre-supposes perhaps above all the repudiation of the view that the SAARC is mainly a debating club or a forum of never ending discussions and adoption of decisions backed by sanctions (i.e. collective actions to ensure the effectiveness of the decisions).

This General Treaty on Security and Cooperation would be in a position to contribute to a new security system by creating the necessary political, economic and security conditions that may immensely help in diffusing conflict. It would also have systems to warn of political dangers, mechanisms to attempt to mediate them and ways to engage other countries to help resolve them. It would fulfil the noble aim of preventing a course of development that could get out of control and lead to a war.

**SAARC Initiatives:**

Thus SAARC through an effective communication system would provide a complementary role. A strong defensive alliance allows for lower levels of military forces and provides a framework or foundation of stability within the South Asia as a whole.

Bhupendra Jasani and colleagues have in their book on the subject have argued persuasively for the use of
satellites for arms control and crisis monitoring and for thus giving such satellites a major additional peace keeping role. As Jasani suggests in this pioneering work:

Observations from satellites offer a unique opportunity for the verification of compliance with international agreements and for the monitoring of crisis throughout the world over, mainly because of their non obtrusive nature. Whereas the most advanced technology for reconnaissance from outer space is classified because it is used on board military satellites, the level of detail and accuracy in remote sensing by civilian satellites has in recent years increased to the extent that a new potential emerges for international cooperation in the verification of arms control treaties and in crisis monitoring.22

Although this study points out an obvious approach to this matter through the creation of a United Nations sponsored satellite monitoring agency for the world which lies in stalemate for the time being because of the opposition of ex-Soviet Union and the United States since it would impose on their quasi-monopoly of military satellite data. It could be for the SAARC like regional organizations to break down such irrational insistence by national powers,

to propose the establishment of a regional satellite monitoring agency either by owing a satellite or leased by them that it could keep a close watch on adherence to arms control treaty provisions and on crisis situations.

The new goals could be to move beyond the concept of balance... to establish the basis for cooperative security. It would thus solidly lay foundation for openness and transparency in military affairs, to be enhanced through the treaty on open skies, and a regular dialogue about military forces, budgets, defence plans and doctrines.

To overcome the present era of so much marked by mutual mistrust and suspicion, tension and confrontation, the establishment of such conflict prevention mechanism in the SAARC would greatly help us in creating institution and formulate principles that embrace all these countries which is, of course, the basis for creating 'a true community of values'. It would further emphasize

a) the need to continue efforts to make detente a lasting, continuing, all-embracing and universal process;

b) the solidarity among nations and common pursuit of goals to develop better and closer relations between them in all fields and thus overcome the confrontation stemming from the character of their past relations and to better mutual understanding; and

c) the search - fully taking into account of the diversity
of individual positions and views - for the possibilities of joining efforts with a view to overcoming distrust and increasing confidence, solving the problems that separate them and cooperating in the interest of mankind. The challenge of proliferation - stopping the spread of nuclear weapons as well as missiles need to be addressed. In addition cooperation in the development of national policies to exercise restraint in the import of conventional weapons is essential. The desirability of making use of and adapting the existing organisation and structure like SAARC in addressing new realities hardly need to be doubted. But it would be a misunderstanding, however to look upon, what is called 'security architecture' as a remedy for present and future challenges. The key question is the political will of states and the corresponding security concepts as well as the new principles and norms.

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23. As a confidence building measure, the two countries pursuant to their agreement not to attack each other's nuclear facilities, exchanged lists of these facilities before the end of 1991. Nuclearies Week 7 Nov. 1991, p. 10's Nuclearies Week, 9 Jan. 1992, p. 10.