CHAPTER VI
India's security environment deteriorated continuously from the mid 80's to 90's due to the sophisticated weapons acquired by Pakistan and China. Pakistan's nuclear programme was also a matter of serious concern to India. India's security was threatened by Pakistan's support to militants in Punjab and Kashmir. The growing influence of People's Republic of China in the Himalayan Kingdoms was demonstrated by Bhutan when it expressed its desire for updating the treaty of 1949 and its willingness to establish friendly relations with Bangladesh and other countries. Nepal's support to Gorkhaland movement in Darjeeling Hill area and its import of arms from China caused serious concern to India for the protection of its borders from the side of Himalayan region.

In Punjab, the terrorism and violence have been perpetrated since 1984 and in Kashmir, it was since 1988 with Kalashniko assault rifles and similar weaponry. There has been irrefutable evidence of Pakistan support for infiltration, training and command and control of the militancy in India.¹ It was reported that Pakistanis were working on "K-2" (Khalistan-Kashmir) plan to use every

---

possible means to encourage recessionists movement in India.

By 1984, Pakistan has made significant progress in nuclear field. Pakistan's capability to produce nuclear weapons was disclosed by its scientist Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan when he said in 1987 that Pakistan's Kahuta Plant had succeeded in producing enriched Uranium. President Ziaul Haq subsequently confirmed the progress that Pakistan had made in the field of nuclear technology. In 1986, a Special National Intelligence Estimate of the US confirmed that Pakistan had produced weapons grade material and it had tested the nuclear trigger device. These developments were of serious concern to India because they posed a direct threat to India's security.

Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, expressed India's concern at Pakistan's nuclear armament programme and requested the United States to exercise its influence on Pakistan to prevent it from embarking on such a dangerous course. Rajiv Gandhi said that India would be constrained to revise its nuclear policy in the event of the production of nuclear weapons by Pakistan. He unequivocally rejected President Zia's proposal for nuclear free zone in the Indian sub-continent.

3. For detail see, Strategic Digest, 17(12), December 1986, p.1847.
India rejected Pakistan's weapons free zone proposal because it was mainly directed against India. Its main purpose was to disarm India and to close its nuclear option. Pakistan also proposed to sign NPT provided India too sign it simultaneously. Nawaz Sharief the then Prime Minister of Pakistan requested the USA, Russia and China to hold a five nations (India, Pakistan, USA, Russia and China) conference for the declaration of the "Nuclear Weapons Free Zone" in South Asian region.  

It was against this background that Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, the Prime Minister of Pakistan declared on 10 November 1993 that Pakistan had capped its nuclear programme. She further added that Pakistan's nuclear programme has been of peaceful orientation. Actually, there was no change in the nuclear programme of Pakistan. Pakistan wanted to acquire US support for its nuclear programme by making such statement. This is evident from the statement of Nawaz Sharief, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan when he said in a meeting in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir that 'Pakistan possesses an atomic bomb and is ready to use it in defence against India'.

India reacted against Pakistani nuclearization programme because of its security. There was a demand in the

7. Iqbal Khanam, n.5, p.11.
Parliament to counter the threat from Pakistani nuclear weapon, India should also produce nuclear weapons. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao assured the Parliament that all necessary steps be taken for the defence of the country. He said that the report of possession of a nuclear bomb by Pakistan, should not cause undue alarm in India. 8

Although India has the potential to make nuclear weapons, over the years, it has followed a dual track nuclear policy, i.e., the development of nuclear technology and capability for peaceful purposes and at the same time keeping the option open for possible military uses to protect the country's security. 9

The growing Chinese armament programme and its support to anti-India movements in India's neighbouring states has been one of the major causes of tension between India and China. China deployed an array of ballistic missiles—from the 80 km version to the 3,300 km range SLBM and the 12,000 km range DF-5 ICBM armed with nuclear weapons, many reportedly stationed in Tibet. 10 The Military Balance: 1989-90 reported three missiles Divisions in the Chengdu and Lanzhou Military Regions. During 1992-93, China according to its official data allocated Yuan 37 billion (US $ 6.76 billion) for its defence. China's

8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
official defence expenditure has increased by 10-15% every year as per the official figures. China has acquired top-end military technology and weapon system and continued its efforts to modernize and upgrade its nuclear arsenal. It has developed a close strategic and military relationship with all countries around India. China's such strategic has threatened India's security in the north-eastern region.

It was against the background of such Chinese threat that India made several efforts to find a solution to the boundary problem with China. But due to lack of unwillingness on the part of China the border problem between the two countries has remained unresolved.

It may be pointed out that India's Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to China in December 1988 made a breakthrough of a qualitative kind. During his visit it was decided to setup a Joint Working Group on the boundary question. A Joint Committee was setup to promote trade, economic relations and scientific and technological cooperation between the two countries. It was also decided that both India and China will work together in regional and world affairs. A joint press communique, while highlighting the common interests, made it clear that all political objectives of the visit had been met and that the visit had been a success.

During the next two years there was a distinct improvement in Sino-Indian relations. This change was reflected in China's stand on Kashmir. In December 1988, China declared that Kashmir was a bilateral problem left over by history which had to be resolved through peaceful mutual consultations.

A series of high level exchanges of visits between the two countries also contributed to the building up of trust. In December 1991, the Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng paid a visit to India after a gap of 31 years and held fruitful talks with Indian counterpart for effective South-South consultation and cooperation. The border issue, however, remained unresolved. He expressed the need to resolve the problem through 'mutual understanding and mutual accommodation'. The Indian stand was that while "adjustment" were possible, but any "accommodation tempering the Line of Actual Control (LAC)" was not possible. The efforts by India and China for the resolution of disputes and to improve relations between the two countries continued and P.V. Narasimha Rao, the Prime Minister of India visited Beijing from 6 to 9 September 1993. During his visit, an agreement was signed on 7 September which called for the maintenance of 'peace and tranquility' at LAC. The two sides also agreed on some confidence building measures to improve their relations. A meeting of Chinese and Indian

13. Ibid.
diplomatic and military experts was held in Beijing from 21 to 23 April 1994 which focussed on the implementation of the agreement on maintenance of 'peace and tranquility' along the LAC.\textsuperscript{15}

The bilateral talks between the two countries continued and meetings were held in New Delhi in February and August 1995 to discuss 'peace and tranquility' at LAC. This brought back the relevance of the "five principles of peaceful Co-existence" and the "Panchsheel"\textsuperscript{16} for the improvement of Sino-Indian relations.

Despite the above developments several causes of friction between India and China still exist. But the improvement of their relations has certainly reduce India's dependence on its neighbouring states for its defence.

India's response to perceived threats to its security forced it to divert its resources into defence preparedness. India increased the number of its armed forces from 29,000 (in 1949) to 1,265,000 (in 1992), making it the fourth largest in the world.\textsuperscript{17} The major India's arms production projects underway the Main Battle Tank, the Light

\begin{flushleft}
\begin{enumerate}
\item ibid., p.17.
\item The Times of India, (New Delhi), 22 April and 19 August 1995.
\end{enumerate}
\end{flushleft}
Under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP), launched in July 1983, India has already tested five different missiles. They are Trishul (a 9 km surface to air missile), Akash (a 27 km medium high altitude SAM), Prithvi (1989—a 205 km tactical surface to surface missile), Nag (a third generation anti-tank missile) and Agni (1989 and 1992)—a 2,500 km intermediate range ballistic missile. According to A.P.I. Abdul Kalam, the man behind the missile programme, India has also developed the technical expertise to make long range ballistic missile.

India's naval buildup is a result of indigenous progress. India has indigenously developed German—designed HDW—type submarines, British designed Leander class frigates, coast guard patrol boats, GE-LM 2500 marine adopted gas turbine engines and indigenously designed Godavari class missile frigates.

India is surrounded by a nuclear weapon environment. In such an environment it needs to be emphasised that nuclear weapons are essentially political rather than military weapons and their usability really lies in the threat of use rather than actual use itself. India

19. Harish Kapur, n.17,p.40
has been advocating and supporting nuclear disarmament as the only viable solution to the threat posed by nuclear weapons. And, India's refusal to sign NPT has also been advanced as additional evidence of its determination to maintain the nuclear option. This became evident with the detonation of a 12 kiloton nuclear explosive in Pokhra reactor, with the operationalization in 1985 of the 100 magawatt unsafeguarded Dhrurva reactor at the Bhabha Atomic Centre, which has the ability to produce unrestricted weapons grade Plutonium, and finally with the successful testing of Agni in 1989 and 1992. Thus India has strengthened its defence capability to meet any challenge to its security.

In addition to strengthening the country's defence capabilities, India in the immediate past had also adopted the strategy of seeking external support against any possible threat to its security. For instance, the military alliances with the former Soviet Union served India well in the 70's and first-half of the 80's, but after the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, Russia was not in a position to help India for the defence of the country.

Therefore, India, in a new international order, begun to open up its relationship with United States and the US responded favourably. High level contacts were initiated between the two countries including annual visits by the US.

22. Harish Kapur, p.17, p.43.
Secretary for Defence. Regular Strategic dialogue from both sides was initiated from 1989 to 1993. In 1992, India and the United States carried out joint naval exercises.

Despite all these efforts by the Government of India for the defence of the country, more and more emphasis was given to maintain intimate relations with Bhutan and Nepal for the security of the country from the side of China.

It is widely accepted that India's small neighbours are vital for its security. It is in India's interest to ensure that they are stable and not rendered susceptible to manipulation by third powers (China or Pakistan) in ways hostile to this country. While each one of our neighbours would require the formulation and implementation of policies directed to solve their problems.

The beginning of direct talk between Bhutan and China to settle the long-time border dispute may be regarded as the most significant development in the former's foreign policy. The opening of Bhutan-China boundary talks in April 1985 was an important event for having a direct impact on India's security. Therefore, India also opened an observation post in the Sumsorong Chu area. In doing so, India appeared to unilaterally alter the status quo in its favour.

---

24. Ibid.
It seemed that China would bargain hard on its two claim lines and refuse to accept the Bhutanese stand. The object was to eliminate the strategic advantage that India and Bhutan enjoy with regard to the Chinese positions in the Chumbi Valley instead of gaining strategic heights within Bhutan. So, China while framing up the fundamental criteria to settle the boundary dispute was brought in the principle of 'existing reality' to that of the 'watershed' and 'traditional practices'. But Bhutan did not accept the 'principle of existing reality'.

India felt that solution of the Sino-Bhutanese boundary dispute would strengthen the pro-Chinese lobby in the Kingdom which would endangered India's security and its interests in Bhutan.

In South Asian affairs Bhutan's position has been different from that of India's stand. For example, on the question of declaring the South Asian region as a nuclear weapons free zone, it supported Pakistan. In apparent support of Pakistani Prime Minister M.K.Junejo's efforts at the third SAARC Summit at Kathmandu in November 1987 for "regional non-proliferation", which he saw as "inherently achievable", King Jigme Singye Wangchuk expressed "serious concern at the prospect of nuclear weapons development in South Asia". He said that "We can hardly call upon the major powers to

26. Ibid.
curtail their nuclear weapons programme if we ourselves are not prepared to prevent its development in our own region. In my view, SAARC can provide a forum to conduct a meaningful dialogue among our countries on this vital issue\textsuperscript{27}. But India's stand is global non-proliferation in which there is no scope for any regional non-proliferation because such arrangement would endanger India's security.

During the mid 80's Bangladesh and Nepal moved under the influence of China to group the India's small neighbours together to build up a bulwark against India. Nepalese were advised by the Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh, Shams Doha in June 1983 to persuade Bhutan to move away from the India's sphere of influence and to cultivate friendly relations with the People's Republic of China. This was the only certain way, Bhutan was advised that the smaller nations could maintain a relative safety for themselves and would seek guarantee for a relative independence from being 'pressurized by India'.\textsuperscript{28}

On ethnic problem of Bhutan, India has always expressed its keen desire for the resolution of the problem between Nepal and Bhutan through the bilateral talks. Indian Express published from New Delhi reported on 22 August 1993 that the Prime Minister of India, P.V. Narasimha Rao paid a 2 days 'good will' visit to Bhutan in August 1993. In an interview to Bhutan's National newspaper Kuensel, Rao said,

\textsuperscript{27} Hindu, (Madras), 3 November 1987.
\textsuperscript{28} Major A. Avtar, "Bhutan-A Geographical Survey" in Sharma and Nagar, n.25, p.197.
"I am confident that our friends in Bhutan and Nepal have the wisdom and ability to tackle and solve ethnic question of Nepali settlers in Bhutan."

On India's relations with Bhutan, Rao said, "the close ties between the two countries will grow in stature and strength". He further said that India and Bhutan were close friendly neighbours with a depth of understanding, warmth and mutual sympathy which was probably without parallel in the world.

Regarding the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, Rao said, India has always regarded SAARC as complementary to and supportive of its bilateral policies with regard to neighbouring countries and was committed to furthering the objectives of the SAARC charter.

On state sponsored cross-border terrorism, he said, it was a "global menace of a particularly vicious kind" and its combination with another dangerous element like separatists have wracked democratic and secular societies.

Bhutan's King, Jigme Singye Wangchuk on the occasion of SAARC Summit in New Delhi in May 1995, adopted the realistic approach about the prospects of cooperation. He voiced the view that "unless the countries of the region are willing to discuss their bilateral political controversies in a rational and practical manner the SAARC
can not take off."\(^{29}\)

At that time it was decided that India should also take the initiative of persuading all its neighbouring countries for regional security arrangement in which they would commit themselves to the security and territorial integrity of each other and should adjure the use of force in resolving issues between themselves. The security arrangements should go beyond the non-proliferation dimension.

Among the Himalayan kingdoms only Bhutan has succeeded most in conciliating its objectives: sovereignty preservation of cultural heritage, special relationship with India and broadening its foreign relations. Bhutan has been able to maintain a balance between its age old policy of protectionism and the demands reaching out to the international community. Under no circumstances, it was ready to sacrifice its cultural ethos for the benefits of international diplomacy even in changed international scenario.

Having been almost totally dependent on India for foreign policy decisions under the 1949 treaty until just a few years ago, Bhutan was increasingly asserting its independence in its relations with other countries. The China factor has been causing a lot of constraint to Bhutan in its relationship with India.

30. Ibid.
There has been irritants in the bilateral relations between India and Bhutan, for instance, their style of establishing relations with immediate neighbours and the interpretation of the 1949 treaty. However, the thrust of India's foreign policy has been to improve the existing relationship and to give greater economic aid to Bhutan to curtail the influence of People's Republic of China and other regional powers.

The demand for a separate 'Gorkhaland State' by the Gorkhas of the Darjeeling-Kalimpong, and Sino-Nepal support to secessionists were the most irritant issues between India and Nepal during Rajiv Gandhi regime.

In the northern district of Darjeeling, the ethnic Nepalese emerged as a strong political group. Constituting 90 percent of Darjeeling's population the Nepalese have a stranglehold on the city's life. The Gorkhaland slogan for a separate state of the Nepalese living in Darjeeling and Kalimpong areas led by the GNLF leader, Subhash Ghising became strident and its protagonists lose no opportunity to hold the cities to ransom whenever Nepalese interests were affected. The demand for a separate state by GNLF posed a serious threat to India's territorial integrity and also posed serious challenges to the authorities of the West Bengal Government and the Central Government in New Delhi. Ghising's strategy alternated between aggressive postures and conciliatory gestures.

He projected a military image by ominously hinting at the fact that there were 40,000 retired soldiers in the district and also pleaded for autonomy for Gorkhaland within the Indian Union. "We are not secessionists or anti-Indian. We want Gorkhaland because we want an Indian identity", explained Ghising.

The Gorkha agitation became increasingly militant and its confrontation with the West Bengal Government assumed serious proportions. On 27 July 1986, the West Bengal Government had to take recourse to police firing in Kalimpong killing thirteen and injuring many. The incident triggered off the agitation and seemed to unite the Gorkhas on one point separation from West Bengal.

The demand for a separate state for the Gorkhas also found expression in the demand for recognition of Nepali as an Indian language. It was urged that once this was achieved the battle for a separate state would be virtually won because in India the states had been recognised on a linguistic basis. Growing public pressure compelled Prem Allay, the President of the Akhil Bharatiya Nepali Bhasha Samiti (ABNBS) to send a telegram to the Prime Minister requesting immediate intervention as the "People have lost faith in the West Bengal Government".

34. Ibid., p.26
The Government of Nepal tried its best to internationalize the GNLF demand for a separate state. It was evident from the letter which Chising wrote to the King of Nepal on 23 December 1986. Sixteen copies of the letter were endorsed to various government and international agencies including the super powers, the United Nations and the government in South Asian region. The letter cited historical evidence to prove how gross injustice had been done to the Nepalis of India and invoked justice for "the unpardonable historical crimes against humanity or still unresolved question of the very political existence or future status of ... Gorkhas in the Indian Union". It sought "fresh new treaties for a permanent political settlement of the ... victimized Gorkhas as per ... the provisions of the Charter of the United nations" taking into account "the future status of their ceded land and territories". 35

Darjeeling of course, is strategically important for India's security. Darjeeling bandh for six-days organised by the GNLF in April 1987 had completely cut off the north-eastern state of Sikkim from the rest of India. China and Nepal were encouraging the GNLF agitation by supporting the supply of arms, money and other materials. It was reported that China was using the GNLF to make India militarily vulnerable in the highly strategic Darjeeling area while Nepal's aim was to swamp the Darjeeling hills with 36. For the Complete Text of the Letter see Hindu, 24 December 1986. 36. Ibid., 19 April 1987.
Nepali immigrants so that eventually they could demand its merger with Nepal. Both China and Nepal, however, denied the report as "baseless". 37

The Gorkha problem, however, was settled after the signing of an accord between the GNLF and the West Bengal Government with mediation of the Central Government on 22 August 1988. The accord provided for the creation of a Hill Council covering the three sub-divisions of the Darjeeling hill areas—Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong and some territory in the Silliguri sub-division contiguous to it. The Council will have powers, subject to central and state laws regarding settling, and economic and political rights of the inhabitants38 of all three divisions.

It was against this background that Nepal started to receive arms and ammunitions from China. Indo-Nepalese ties were jolted by the Nepal's first-ever weapon imports from China in 1988, which consist of anti-aircraft equipment. India considered this to be contrary to the 1965 treaty between these two countries whereby it undertook to help in equiping and modernizing the Nepal Army. Nepal had justified its acquisition by saying that India had been unable to provide the anti-craft guns in 1971 when Nepal had asked for them. New Delhi's action was seen with its suggestions that

Kathmandu was violating the 1950 Treaty. India had to maintain a delicate balance between retaining a leverage over the Himalayan kingdom and at the same time allowing it to adopt a more non-aligned posture between New Delhi and Beijing.

India's position with regard to the peace zone proposal had remained unchanged. The Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi during the second SAARC Summit held in Bangalore in November 1986, said that "Some progress has been made" but he did not specify the nature of the progress. Again on the occasion of the third SAARC Summit held in Kathmandu in November 1987, he reiterated the Indian position with regard to South Asia Peace Zone proposal which meant both 'Nepal's Peace Zone' concept as well as Pakistan's idea about a 'Nuclear Weapons Free Zone' of South Asia. It may be noted here that the Soviet's had endorsed India's stand on the issue. They agreed that an endorsement of the proposal would dilute the 1950 Treaty between India and Nepal in Moscow's reckoning a small country like Nepal would hardly make any impact in international relations as a zone of peace.

In the aftermath of the expiry of 1978 trade and transit treaty in March 1989, Indo-Nepal relations deteriorated. Nepal was willing to get renewed the transit treaty and not the trade treaty, while India insisted on having a unified treaty. It maintained that no trade could be conducted with a neighbouring country like Nepal without transit treaty as the two were interlinked. Under the transit treaty Nepal was provided concession to port facilities and with the expiry of 1978 treaty Nepal enabled itself to trade with a third country.

Nepal differed with India to re-negotiate a single treaty. Nepal's Government then wanted as stated by its Foreign Minister S.K. Upadhyaya that the country's dependence on one country should not grow and the new trade treaty should include no special concessions but only the most favoured nation status putting relations with New Delhi on a more equal footing. He asserted that if India insisted on one treaty Nepal would like to have one treaty—that of transit. He added that "trade is a matter of periodic bilateral convenience. Whereas transit is a permanent need of any landlocked country."  

The impasse in India-Nepal relations came to an end when a treaty was signed in June 1990 between Nepalese interim Prime Minister, Krishna Prashad Bhattarai, and the

44. Telegraph, 17 April 1989.
erstwhile Prime Minister V.P. Singh, India finally agreed to restore trade and transit concessions to Nepal which it had withdrawn in March 1989. A communique restoring trade relations was signed by Mr. Bhattarai during his visit to India in June 1991. 45

According to official sources, there had been a qualitative improvement in relations between the two countries since the Nepal's Prime Minister, G.P. Koirala visited New Delhi in December 1991 and signed treaties and agreements covering several areas. Mr. Rao's visit was also expected in early October 1992 to carry forward this process and underscore the importance attached by India to its ties with Nepal especially on Tanakpur hydel projects. 46

On his visit, Rao said that the two sides had agreed to maintain contacts at the highest level to contain terrorism and extremists indulging in cross-border criminal activities. India, he said, had concrete evidence that extremists and anti-social elements were sneaking into India from Nepal and that Rao drew Koirala's attention to reports of Kashmiri militants, ULFA activists and other such elements using Nepal as a corridor for coming into India. He said both sides had agreed to cooperate to the maximum extent possible to prevent the negative activities

45. Keesing Record of World Events, Vol.37, No.11, (Supplement), November 1991, p.38630.
46. The Times of India (New Delhi), 18 October 1992.
of these people. 47.

The coming into power of the Communist, first ever, in Kathmandu opened a new chapter in the political history of the landlocked Himalayan kingdom—Nepal. At a time when Communist ideology had been discredited the world over the victory of the UML (Unified Marxist-Leninist) in Nepal was indeed intriguing for outsiders. For India, the major question was: Would it bring any qualitative change in Indo-Nepal relations, given Man Mohan Adhikary's pre-poll anti-India assertions?.

The question of Indo-Nepal relationship assumed tremendous significance in view of Man Mohan Adhikary's assertions of his party's desire to review and update the Treaty of Peace and Friendship between India and Nepal (1950) 48, which formalizes and institutionalizes the relationship between the two countries. But after the assumption of the office of the Prime Ministership, Adhikary did not make any change in the relations between the two countries. He emphasised the importance of the treaty and said that the Indo-Nepalese Treaty of 1950 will not be abrogated. 49

49. Indian Express, 6 April 1995.
The cordiality in the relations between the two countries was maintained by the leaders of the two countries in the context of their mutual interests. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao emphasised the need of continuing friendship and cooperation with Nepal irrespective of the changed government. He said that India is willing to work with Nepal in exploiting all natural resources in the region. On harnessing water resources, he "stressed on the importance of bilateral projects" like Tanakpur project. 50

Subsequently, Man Mohan Adhikary visited New Dehli in early April 1995. During his 2-days visit, "he assured India that Nepal's territory would not be allowed to be used by anyone against India". He said, the Government in Kathmandu was committed to safeguard the needs of India's security. 51

India relaxed transit and trade access for Nepal by opening up the Kandla and Bombay ports, besides committing itself to continuing 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship. 52

At the end of his visit a joint statement was issued on April 12, 1995 which emphasised that "Both India and Nepal respect and understand each other's security concerns. Neither side will allow activities on its territory prejudicial to the security of the other." 53

50. Ibid., 8 February 1995.
51. Ibid., 12 April 1995.
52. The Times of India, 13 April 1995.
53. Ibid., 3 April 1995.
Thus the visit of Man Mohan Adhikary proved a landmark for the improvement of relations between the two countries. But his government could not live long. However, the relations between India and Nepal continued according to the Treaty of 1950 and also on the basis of good neighbourliness.