ABSTRACT

South and West Asia has come to occupy added strategic significance in international relations especially after the Second World War. Various factors have been attributed in enhancing the strategic significance of this region. The onset of Cold War in the immediate aftermath of the conclusion of Second World War and its tangible outcome in the form of rivalry between Soviet Union and United States to win over the newly independent countries to their respective spheres of influence played a significant role in this regard. The United States in its pursuit of the policy of global containment of communism under Truman doctrine paid special attention to countries which were geographically contiguous to Soviet Union or could be vulnerable to Soviet influence;

In South and West Asian region, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait and initially Iraq, responded favourably to US overtures and either entered into bilateral defence pacts with the United States or joined Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and South-East Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO) under the US patronage. Another concomitant factor that attracted US strategic interest in the region, especially in West Asia was the availability of large reserves of oil, uninterrupted and continuous supply of oil from the Persian Gulf to Washington was very vital for the US economy. Besides, the West Asian
region was the biggest market for American arms. The US commitment for the security of Israel was another contributory factor that enlivened American interest in the region. The cumulative impact of these factors had been that the United States had developed vital strategic states in South and West Asia and henceforth US policy towards the region was directed to preserve its strategic interests.

The present study deals with US strategy towards South and West Asia during 1970s. The decade of 1970s was most crucial for the United States foreign policy. The Arab-Israel conflict of October 1973, use of oil as political weapon by Arab oil producing countries and its resultant impact on American economy, growing Soviet influence in the region and US strategy to contain Soviet influence while preserving its strategic interests and the challenge to American states in the wake of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 were some of the crucial developments which wielded tremendous influence in shaping US strategy towards the region. All these developments have been analysed in the present study which has been divided into five main chapters besides introduction and conclusion.

The introductory chapter endeavours to briefly analyse the main factors which have been instrumental in the evolution and sustenance of US strategic interest in South and West Asia. Then it proceeds to make a review of
representative selected literature in the form of books and research articles on the subject. An endeavour has been made to ascertain as to how far the available literature has been sufficient to present a dispassionate and indepth analysis of US strategy towards South and West Asia particularly during 1970s. It has been found that the available literature on the subject sheds ample light on American policy towards the region prior to 1970s and there is really a paucity of serious academic study which can present detailed assessment of the role played by the United States during 1970s in the region vis-a-vis the response of the countries of the region towards the United States.

The chapter further proceeds to point out that the present study is an humble endeavour to fill up the gap by presenting a dispassionate, objective and indepth analysis of United States strategy towards South and West Asia during 1970s. It also refers to the methodology and sources relied upon during the course of the completion of the present study.

In the first chapter, an attempt has been made to envisage the strategic significance of the countries situated in South and West Asian region for the United States. The chapter proceeds with the theoretical analysis of the concept of "strategic significance". With a view to have perceptive, crystal-clear and indepth assessment of the strategic significance of the region, the chapter envisages
two sub divisions. The first sub-division deals with South Asia and its strategic significance for the United States. South Asia comprises seven countries - India, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives.

Since main thrust of the present study is on US strategy towards South and West Asia from the advent of Nixon administration till the closing years of Carter administration hence an endeavour has been made in the first chapter to deal with US strategy towards the region from the onset of cold War till 1968, with an avowed objective to have an indepth assessment of historical background which would render valuable help in having deeper insights into the US policy towards the region during 1970s.

India and Pakistan had been prominent countries of South Asia towards which the US policy remained directed prior to 1968. The chapter deals with the contemporary developments that ensued in the wake of cold War and eventual US strategy of wooing both India and Pakistan to its sphere of influence. While analysing broad US objectives in the region during the Cold War period, the chapter also refers to the response of India as well as Pakistan to American overtures.

The mutual distrust, suspicion and antagonism mainly over the question of Jammu and Kashmir (J & K) were the main highlights of estranged relations between India and
Pakistan. India had declared its opposition to "power-politics of great powers" and refused to join military pacts sponsored by either superpower. However Pakistan in its antagonism against a formidable rival - India - responded favourably to American overtures. The resultant outcome was that Pakistan entered into a bilateral defence pact with the United States and also joined American sponsored regional military alliances CENTO and SEATO. Thus between 1954 and 1965, Pakistan received massive economic and military assistance from the United States.

In the wake of outbreak of Sino-Indian hostilities, when United States and U.K. provided "nominal" military assistance to India, then Pakistan lodged strong protests with the United States arguing that arming India would further endanger Pakistan's security. Pakistan started befriending China. In the wake of Indo-Pakistan war in 1965, when the United States imposed embargo on supplies of military equipments to both India and Pakistan, the latter looked towards China for military assistance and it did get.

An attempt has been in the chapter to show the quantum and type of weapons acquired by Pakistan from the United States during 1954-1968 period with the help of tables. Pakistan's strategic location and its own readiness to accept American arms assistance to attain strategic parity with India, proved instrumental in prompting United States to use Pakistan as "an ideal base" for the execution
of the American foreign policy objectives of "containing" Soviet Union and China as Pakistan lay below Soviet Union and shared contiguous boundary with China.

The chapter further proceeds to analyse the factors responsible for enhancing the strategic significance of West Asia for the United States. The region assumed strategic significance for Washington mainly on four counts: (i) presence of Israel in the region and American commitment to defend it; (ii) availability of petroleum and its immense strategic significance for the United States and its Western allies, (iii) vulnerability of the region to Soviet influence and geographic contiguity of countries like Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan to the Soviet Union; and (iv) strategic significance of sea lanes of communication (SLOCs) like Suez canal, Straits of Hormuz and Persian Gulf for the United States to counter Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean.

Strategic significance of Gulf oil for American economy is evident from the fact in 1950, oil accounted for about 30 per cent of the combined energy requirements of North America, Western Europe and Japan, by 1973, the figure was about 53 per cent. However, by 1979, 45 per cent of the United States, 55 per cent of the EEC's and 70 per cent of Japan's energy consumption was through oil. The chapter also examines the impact of rise in oil revenues of the Persian
Gulf countries on the domestic and external developments.

During the pre-1968 period Israel in West Asia and Iran in the Persian Gulf region developed special relationship with the United States. Therefore the chapter examines the nature and extent of US-Israel and US-Iranian relations briefly. The continued American support to Israel had been the single most potent factor influencing US policy towards West Asia. Washington played crucial role in the establishment and subsequent sustenance of the state of Israel.

Though during the early years of Cold War, US maintained a low key profile vis-a-vis Israel but when Soviet influence started increasing in Syria and Egypt, US-Israel axis also grew steadily. During 1950s, the quantum of US economic assistance to Israel was about $ 55 million on an average every year which rose to $ 126.8 million in 1966 of which $ 90 million was in the form of military equipment. Thus Israel was one of the important decisive factors in making West Asia strategically significant for the United States.

Iran proved to be another important pawn in the Chess board of US strategic game in the region. Because of its vast oil reserves, geographic contiguity with Soviet Union and Shah of Iran's dependence on United States for his political survival, were some of the main factors that proved helpful in forging special relationship between
Tehran and Washington. The United States had played significant role in dislodging the Mosdegh's government and restoration of throne to Shah of Iran. Subsequently Shah of Iran's appetite for acquisition of sophisticated American arms continued to grow. It was coupled with Shah's desire to strengthen his own position domestically and to make Iran as the "police man" of the region.

It has been shown in the chapter with the help of table that Iran received massive economic and military assistance from the United States. Between 1953 and 1961, Iran received $1027.7 million from the United States of which military component was to the tune of $410 million. Until 1960, the military component of total US assistance to Iran was 40 per cent whereas in subsequent years it grew to 60 per cent and above while economic component declined. The main reason for this reverse trend was due to increase in Iranian revenues from oil exports which Shah of Iran used for building up Iran's military muscles.

The analysis of developments make it clear that presence of vast oil reserves in the region, growing market for American arms and trade, US investment, fear of Soviet expansion and politico-strategic implications of continued Arab-Israeli hostilities rendered the region acquire pre-eminent significance for the United States in political, economic and strategic terms.
The US policy towards South Asia assumed new dimensions with the advent of Nixon administration in 1969 and following the fall of Shah of Iran in January 1979 and Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, the region of South Asia was linked to West Asia by the American strategists and christened it as South-West Asia. Keeping these aspects in view, the second chapter endeavours to analyse the political, economic and military policies of the United States towards Pakistan and India between 1968 and 1980.

The embargo on supply of American weapons to Pakistan imposed in the aftermath of outbreak of Indo-Pakistan hostilities of 1965, was lifted by Nixon administration in late 1969. During August 1969, American President, Richard Nixon visited Pakistan and in October 1970, Pakistan President paid an official visit to Washington. The chapter presents an assessment of developments which culminated into Bangladesh crisis.

The Nixon administration adopted ambivalent attitude towards Bangladesh crisis. On the one hand it publicly deplored Pakistan repression on the people of Bangladesh while it continued to supply arms to Pakistan. Though the Foreign Relations Committee of the American Senate through a resolution adopted on 6 May 1971, called for the suspension of all American and to Pakistan until the conflict in East Pakistan was resolved, yet the Nixon administration
continued supplies of arms to Pakistan clandestinely. It was only in early November 1971 that Washington suspended aid to Pakistan.

While analysing the developments leading to the outbreak of Indo-Pakistan war in December 1971, the chapter makes an analytical assessment of "pro-Pakistan tilt" in American policy towards Pakistan during the war period when United States sent its nuclear-powdered Naval Task force to cruise into the Waters of Bay of Bengal to build up psychological pressure on India and to boost Pakistan's morale. Following liberation of Bangladesh, United States offered liberal economic assistance to Pakistan in early 1972.

In the post-Bangladesh period, Pakistan under Bhutto made fraudulent efforts to acquire arms assistance from the United States. It is evident from the chapter as to how Pakistan used tactical ploys to build up pressure on America to lift embargo on supplies of American weapons to Pakistan. India's conduct of Peaceful nuclear explosion (PNE) on 18 May 1974 was used as the main plank by Pakistan to elicit acquisition of American weapons. Haunted by the fear that Pakistan might go nuclear in view of India's PNE and in order to keep Pakistan within its fold, Washington lifted embargo on supplies of weapons to Pakistan and India in February 1975.
The cumulative effect of these developments was the resumption of arms supplies to Pakistan while India was offered only token economic assistance between 1975-76, Pakistan managed to procure sophisticated weapons like A-7 ground attack aircraft, anti-tank missiles "gearing" Type destroyers and armoured personnel carriers from the United States.

The advent of Carter administration in 1977 in Washington and shift in US arms transfer policy with its attendant impact on Pakistan have also been analysed in this chapter. However, during 1977-79, the Carter administration did not adopt a liberal attitude towards Pakistan as far as the supplies of American weapons to Islamabad was concerned. The main impediment in the process was Pakistan's reported attempts to acquire nuclear capability. However the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 led to change in US perceptions about the strategic significance of Pakistan for Washington in the changed power configuration.

The chapter further proceeds to analyse United State's policy towards India during the period under review. The advent of Nixon administration did not augur well for the Indo-US relations which got further estranged in the wake of "pro-Pakistan tilt" in US policy. Uninterrupted supplies of American arms to Pakistan during 1969-70 caused consternations in India. This part of the second chapter
delves into detailed analysis of India's relation to US supplies of arms to Pakistan.

From 1965 to June 1971, India procured American arms of worth $118 million while Pakistan's acquisition/arms from the United States were to the tune of $601 million. While analysing the impact of developments that culminated into Bangladesh crisis on Indo-US relations. The chapter proceeds to describe attempts made by Indian leadership to apprise Washington about implications arising out of Bangladesh crisis and India's concerns over American gun-boat diplomacy during Indo-Pakistan War of 1971.

The post-war period enhanced India's credentials as dominant power in South Asia and by early 1973, Nixon administration conceded India's reckoning as a leading power in the region and expressed its willingness to treat India in accordance with its new stature. The chapter also examines the expressed desire of both sides to bring Indo-US relations on an even heel during 1975-76 but continued supplies of American arms to Pakistan marred the prospects of improvement.

Proliferation of conventional arms coupled with the problem of nuclearization in South Asia and policy of United States towards it constitute the subject matter of critical appraisal for third chapter of the present study.
In view of unimpeded flow of American arms into Pakistan, India in its quest for attaining strategic parity with Pakistan, also procured arms from Soviet Union, U.K., and France. Pakistan was also provided with sophisticated weapons by China. In this way, an exacerbation in arms race was initiated into the region.

In this regard, the third chapter presents an analytical assessment of Soviet military assistance to India. In view of emerging triangular axis between Washington, Islamabad and Beijing at a time when security scenario in the Indian subcontinent had become precarious in the wake of Bangladesh crisis, India concluded a treaty of peace and friendship with Soviet Union. During the India-Pakistan war of 1971, the Indo-Soviet treaty stood in India's good stead. The United states and China did not dare to involve themselves by the side of Pakistan. India acquired Su-7 Sukhov fighter planes, SA-2 type missiles and other equipment from Soviet Union during 1970-71.

The arms supplied by Soviet Union to India during 1970-79 have been shown in the chapter with the help of a detailed table. India received MIG-21 fighter planes, Ka-4 type and Mi-8 helicopters, Valwons types missiles, main battle tanks, missile boats and other naval vessels from Soviet
Union. Besides, India also procured SA-315 B type and SA-316 type helicopters and SS-11 type missiles from France during the period under review. India's acquisition of weapons from U.K. included Ghat-2 type and Jaguar fighter planes.

The chapter also provides an assessment about Pakistan's acquisition of arms from China which included MiG-19, F-6 Shenyang and P-6 Bis fighter planes, T-59 tanks, gunboats and "W" class submarine.

The problem of nuclearification in South Asia assumed significance after India conducted its peaceful nuclear explosion in May 1974. Reported move by Pakistan to acquire nuclear capability especially between 1978-79 provided serious dimensions to the question of nuclearization in South Asia. The third chapter endeavours to critically appraise this problem from various perspectives with special reference to US policy. India's nuclear programme also came under attack from Washington. The chapter examines the stresses and strains in Indo-US relations over the nuclear issue. It further proceeds to examine Pakistani nuclear programme, American misapprehensions about Pakistan's real intentions and Washington's policy measures to deter Pakistan from acquiring nuclear capability in the form of threats to certain economic and arms assistance. It has also been shown in this chapter that
how Pakistan managed to acquire necessary equipment clandestinely and how China helped Pakistan to acquire uranium enrichment capability. It also deals with the concomitant developments in the wake of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 which thwarted American efforts in dissuading Pakistan from acquiring nuclear capability and resumption of supplies of sophisticated conventional weapons to Pakistan.

The fourth chapter presents a detailed assessment about American policy towards West Asian region between 1968 and 1980. While taking a stock of situation obtaining in the aftermath of June 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the chapter moves towards the pattern of US-Israel relations which grew thick and stronger during the period under review. Washington remained committed to Israel and offered it liberal economic and military assistance. Following the disruption in Egypt-Soviet relations and in the aftermath of October 1973 Arab-Israel war, United States tried to increase its sphere of influence and stem the tide of Soviet influence in the region. The chapter chronicles the development whereby Washington facilitated reapproachement between Israel and Egypt in 1978.

Developments in the political, economic and military realms between United States and Iran during 1968-1980 period have also been critically examined in the fourth chapter. Shah of Iran's quest for modernizing Iranian army by equipping it with latest sophisticated weapons was supplemented by the sudden boom in augmentation of oil revenues after
1974 when the Arab oil producing countries used oil as an effective political weapon against United States and other Western Countries. Besides, Shah of Iran was also inclined to make Iran as the most powerful country in the region.

Washington found in Shah of Iran a viable and ambitions medium who could serve American objectives by thus United States unhesitatingly met Iranian requests for arms and ammunition. This proximity and mutuality of interests was more advantageous to Washington which found a ready market for its weapons. The chapter chronicles in detail the various types of weapons acquired by Iran from the United States. It has also drawn a parallel between Israeli acquisition of American weapons and Iranian procurement of US arms. While Iran paid for its import of arms whereas Washington either gave or loaned at extremely favourable repayment terms, to Israel the money it needed to acquire weapons. The policies pursued by Israel proved detrimental to American interests in the region while Iran served American interests by proxy. However the fall of Shah of Iran in January 1979 and emergence of Islamic revolution in that country not only made America to lose a reliable ally but served a severe blow to US strategic stakes in the region.

The United State's approach to arms proliferation in West Asia forms the subject of fifth chapter. Since the conclusion of second world war, the West Asian including
Persian Gulf region had witnessed a rapid proliferation of arms. It accounted for 48 per cent of the major arms imports during the 1970s. The chapter endeavours to substantiate this fact with the help of detailed tables showing import of arms by various regions.

The continued state of hostilities between Arabs and Israel's had played major role in compelling the countries to envisage increase in military expenditure and arms imports. Besides, various inter and intra-state conflicts which occurred in West Asia especially along the Persian Gulf during 1970s also caused spurt in arms proliferation in the region. Another contributory factor was the phenomenal increase in crude oil price which brought forth quick wealth to same countries in the region which diverted the major chunk of this wealth for extensive purchases of modern arms and equipment. Besides, financial support from some of the richer countries of the region, notably Saudi Arabia, in turn allowed some of the poorer countries to embark upon ambitious arms acquisition programme.

While presenting an indepth analysis of reasons responsible for arms proliferation in the region, the chapter critically appraises the ideological perspectives of Israeli's and Arabs in their historical and political context to ascertain their impact on security perceptions. It also examines the per capita defence expenditures incurred by the
countries of the region and their tentative plans to augment their defence capabilities by procuring arms and raising the strength of armed forces.

Subsequently, the chapter deals with the acquisition of arms by respective countries of the region. It is to be observed from the analysis that Saudi Arabia which maintained a low profile with regard to importing sophisticated arms in the beginning of 1970s, suddenly emerged as one of the largest arms importers between 1975-79. Saudi Arabia's share of arms imports in the total share of West Asia was only three per cent between 1970 and 1974. However, during 1975-79 period, Saudi Arabia accounted for over 14 per cent of the total arms imports in the region. It is further revealed that during 1974-75, United States and France made bulk of the supplies of arms available to Saudi Arabia but from 1976 to 1980, United States remained the largest supplier of arms to Saudi Arabia followed by France, U.K., and West Germany.

Acquisition of arms by Jordan, as analysed in this chapter, was almost negligible in early 1970s but from mid-1970s onwards, Jordan emerged as the third largest importer of arms. Its arms imports were worth $2,615 million which accounted for 13 per cent of region's total arm imports.
Egyptian import of arms showed a variable trend. During the first half of 1970s, Egypt ranked second, after Syria, in importing arms. Between 1970 and 1974, arms imports by Egypt accounted for 23 per cent of West Asian region's total import of arms during that period. During early 1970s, Egypt was largely dependent on Soviet Union for its defence requirements but following disruption in Soviet-Egyptian relations, Cairo sought arms from France, U.K., United States and West Germany.

The chapter also deals about the import of arms by Syria. During the first half of 1970s, Syria had been the largest customer of Soviet arms in the region. Between 1970 and 1974, Syrian imports of arms accounted for 25 per cent of the total arms imported by the region. It is further revealed that during the second half of 1970s, Syria accounted for about 6 per cent of region's total import of arms. Though Soviet Union remained the biggest supplier of arms to Syria yet a trend towards diversification was also noticeable from 1975 onwards when France, West Germany, Switzerland and Italy also entered the Syrian arms market.

The chapter also makes a critical appraisal of the pattern of arms imports by Iraq which accounted for 4 per cent of region's total arms imports between 1970 and 1974, but during 1975-79 period, Iraq accounted for 12 per cent of region's total imports of arms. It is further revealed that
though for many years Iraq had been dependent on Soviet Union for the supply of arms, however, this trend got reversed from 1974 onwards when Iraq diversified its sources including France, Brazil and Czechoslovakia.

The chapter finally surmises that due to above mentioned factors, there was rapid proliferation of arms in the region.

The final chapter in the form of conclusion which is based on the trends emerging out of the present study submits that South and West Asian region occupied pre-eminent position in the overall American global strategy. Though West Asian and Persian Gulf region had retained its pre-eminence while South Asia offered little opportunity for furthering US objectives but following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, got interlinked West Asia to become South West Asia assuming added significance for US strategic interest.