Chapter I

IMPORTANCE OF SOUTH ASIA IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

(A) South Asia as a strategic region

Asia occupies more than one-third of the entire land surface of the earth. It is inhabited by more than half of the world's population. The South East part of the Asian continent is washed by two oceans, namely, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. This vast landmass of Asia has within it two of the most ancient and yet living civilizations. Asia also is the source of all the religions which history of human-kind has created. Apart from this, the entire region today has within it the largest variety of political and economic structures. A very large part of the territory of the Soviet Union lies within Asia. Then there is China. There are the three countries of Indo-China, namely, Kampuchea, Loas and Vietnam. There is of course the socialist state of North Korea. Apart from these states, there is India. There are other states some of which are monarchical and some of them are even reminiscent of medieval times.¹

South Asia is a sub-system of the globular international system. Among the various sub-systems, South Asia is particularly well-endowed with the qualities that protect autonomy from the intrusions of global system, at least in political and strategic terms. The region contains vast human and material resources. Several regional countries possess

impressive political skills and military establishments to back them up.2

The location of South Asia is favourable — it is well defined, defensible, and somewhat out of the line of fire of East-West hostilities. It also has, potentially at least, two of the most important structural elements stimulating autonomy — a significant but manageable external threat and a set of regional power dynamics that has been effectively clarified by the 1971 Indo-Pak War, most important, perhaps, both India and Pakistan have developed considerable skill in dealing with the super-powers, and each has developed a healthy degree of skepticism about close relationships with a super-power patron.3

When the British withdrew from South Asia in 1947, they had established their strategic frontiers which included Tibet, Western Sinkiang, Pamirs, Afghanistan and Iran. Pakistan inherited the geopolitical and geostrategic frontiers of the British-Indian government, in Iran, Afghanistan and Western Sinkiang. India inherited the North-Eastern frontiers entirely contiguous with China. Jammu and Kashmir became a conflict zone between the feudal prince who ruled Kashmir and 80 per cent of his Muslim subjects. The Raja's army was unable to deal with the fight for political and social justice of his people. This army was defeated by the freedom fighters of Gilgit and it has to withdraw from large chunks of the state in Poonch, Mirpur and Muzaffarabad. When the Raja saw his tiny force dispersed over vast distances and increasingly ineffective, he decided to ask for Indian assistance while fleeing from Srinagar, although according to the principles on which India was partitioned, viz., geographical


3 Ibid.
contiguity and the population composition of the local population was to decide if a state could accede to India or Pakistan. 4

All these conditions had kept India and Pakistan in a state of undeclared war and also disabled them to play an affective part in international affairs. Ever since the liquidation of British colonialism in the subcontinent, the Soviet Union has treated South Asian region as strategically and politically quite important. Therefore, it took no time for the leaders of Moscow to reverse their Stalinist policy of isolation. Soviet Union was directly involved in the intraregional affairs in South Asia in the mid-fifties and this reached its high water mark in the Tashkent Declaration of 1966. The Soviet Union is generally perceived as the dominant external power in South Asia. The Soviet intervention and presence building in this Asian Region has proved to be more effective and durable than those of its two rivals, the United States and China. 5

In the mid-1950s, the United States and the Soviet Union became involved in South Asia with different objectives but similar motivations. Perhaps the most important distinction between Soviet and U.S. involvement in South Asia since the mid-fifties concerns the intensity with which the two superpowers pursued their interests in the region. 6

South Asia, specially India, has occupied an important place in Soviet strategy. The interests of the U.S.S.R. are

6 Ibid.
perceived by Moscow to be strongly affected by developments in South Asia. However, this has not been the case for Washington, except for relatively brief period of time and under special circumstances.

For the most part, the American leadership has viewed South Asia with a sense of equanimity, even when developments there conflicted with the U.S. objectives in surrounding areas. The assumption has been nothing is likely to happen in South Asia that will seriously affect vital U.S. interest elsewhere in Asia.7

At the end of World War II there was only one super-power, the U.S.A., possessing both nuclear weapons and strategic mobility. Although the Soviet Union had massively powerful land and air forces, it still remained essentially a mighty continental power. By acquiring nuclear weapons and ICBMs Soviet military power achieved global dimensions. The 1950s and 1960s witnessed a rapid build up of the Soviet Union's naval and maritime fleets. Although the U.S.A. today can probably deploy more powerful military forces practically anywhere on the high seas, the Soviet Union has acquired a worldwide interposing capability enabling it to deploy one or more of its seaborne units in the path of any U.S. fleet seeking to intimidate or attack a littoral country. The danger of unacceptable escalation, resulting from an open clash with the Soviet Units, has in effect severely curtailed the initiative and advantage that its strategic mobility had previously conferred on the U.S.A. A side effect has been that gunboat diplomacy has now become much less effective than in the past. China, despite its nuclear weaponry, still remains a continental power and presently lacks the capability to undertake large scale military operations much beyond its borders.8

7 Ibid.
There are three great powers, Soviet Union, U.S.A. and China whose relevance for the security of South Asia is unquestioned. All the states of South Asia suffer from a measure of domestic instability. All the South Asian peripheral states tend to fear the core nation — India. The complimentary economics inherited as a legacy of a colonial past rapidly assumed a competitive character. Political friction and regional disputes accentuated this trend.

The super-power interests in South Asia are basically converging. Occasionally they become competitive for tactical considerations and motivational military aid fans considerable political controversy. Indian diversification of her military shopping to U.K., France, U.S.A., after the F-16 announcement is significant. Indian government became much more dependent upon the goodwill of the Soviets after defence purchases. The strings are implied and long term nonalignment being an elastic principle.

According to Prof. S.D. Muni, South Asia as a region has two characteristics. The first is that South Asia is an Indo-Centric region. This means that India is central to it geographically and in terms of the socio-cultural and economic infrastructure of the region, India occupies a central place. Countries of the region like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, Nepal and Pakistan have a common border with India. They are also related to India separately and individually in terms of their cultural identities, economic patterns, philosophical trends, and historical experience. Conversely, there is a bit of India in every other country of South Asia.  

As against this, there is hardly anything of significance

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which is common between one of India's neighbours and another. If anything, it is India that is common between them. The emergence of Bangladesh in 1971 altered this situation a little, but the identities between Pakistan and Bangladesh fall within the overall Indo-Centric nature of the region. Particularly notable in this respect is the fact that Islam, as professed and practised in Bangladesh and Pakistan, is of Indo-Islamic cultural stock. Further there was something unnatural about the economic links between the eastern and western wings of Pakistan in the year prior to 1971. This is now evident from the fact that they can never be reforged into their original form. The result of this Indo-Centric nature of South Asia is that no step towards cooperation and collaboration can be taken in the region without India acquiring the central place in the scheme of things.  

The second characteristic of the South Asian region is that it has an unbalanced and asymmetric power structure. The nature of this imbalance and asymmetry is such that India stands as a dominant power in the region. In terms of size, population, resources, base, potential for economic growth, military strength and viability of the constitutional and political system, India is far too superior to any of its neighbours.  

Pakistan brought the super-power influence for the first time into the subcontinent, when they entered into military pacts which they now make no secret of, was done to get free arms against India. The Pakistani leadership wanted to play the role assigned to them by the external powers in the subcontinent. Given the history of the last  

11 S.D. Muni, 'South Asia', in Mohammad Ayoob, ed., op.cit.
many centuries when the local rulers had invoked the intervention of external powers for their own parochial interests and thereby contributed to the subjugation of the subcontinent to foreign rule, it is totally unrealistic to expect the people of the subcontinent to take a charitable view of the role of the Pakistani leadership to serve the interests of neocolonialism. The Indian attempt to observe restraint evoked no response. Between 1947 and 1962, India expanded its forces vis-à-vis Pakistan only marginally. On the other hand, the Pakistan expanded its forces almost to reach parity with India. Neither in 1965 nor in 1971 India fielded disproportionately large forces against Pakistan on the Western front.  

But when India was in great difficulties and faced the Chinese in 1962 and the U.S. President wrote to Field Marshal Ayub Khan asking for an assurance that Pakistan would not move against India, the American President got a rebuff from the Pakistani President.  

Relations between India and Soviet Union also improved after 1954. The United States felt that if India could not join the western camp, it must not join the communist block either. Thus India's policy of nonalignment became acceptable to Washington, Moscow and Peking, while Pakistan's policy of alignment antagonized the communist countries, especially the Soviet Union.  

During the Indo-China war, 1962, the United States and

Britain prevented Pakistan from doing anything that might hurt India in its moment of despair. The British Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs, Mr. Duncan Sandys, and the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Averell Harriman visited the subcontinent. They urged Pakistan to stay scrupulously neutral in the India-China conflict and in return, they made India agree to start negotiations with Pakistan on Kashmir. But the matter did not end there. While the India-Pakistan talks on Kashmir were going on, the U.K. and the U.S.A. started sending consignments of military equipment to India. Pakistan protested but in vain.

In December 1962, the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan and President Kennedy of the United States met in Nassau and decided to give $120 million worth of military assistance to India on an emergency basis. It was followed, a year later, by a further chunk of aid to the tune of $60 million. Another sixty million dollars worth of aid was committed in 1964, and at the same time, it was announced that India would receive long term military assistance from the United States of the value of $100 million a year. The Soviet Union also supplied $131 million worth of military aid.

This massive military aid to India tilted the balance of power in South Asia to India's advantage. In fact, the United States aid to India, was a part of the former's strategy to contain China and to win India on to its side in the power game. Selig Harrison in his article pointed out that the U.S. was thinking more in terms of helping East and South East Asia and was losing interest in this region. He seemed to suggest that this was a kind of punishment which the U.S.A.

15 Z.A. Bhutto, Foreign Policy of Pakistan, A collection of speeches made in the National Assembly of Pakistan, 1962-64, Karachi, Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, 1964, p. 105.

wanted to met out to India and Pakistan for their quarrelsome nature. The fact, however, is that the U.S. while taking a direct interest in the defence and economic development of East and South East Asia, has never taken more than a marginal interest in South Asia. The same might be true of the Soviet Union. She first came to India's aid largely for coldwar reasons. As Pakistan had moved under the U.S. influence, the Soviet Union decided to support India. Another reason perhaps was that the Soviet Union was not happy with India and China moving closer and wanted to compete with China, in winning over India's good will.  

In China's security calculations, Pakistan still holds a key position, and India has already entered into an agreement of peace and friendship with the Soviet Union — in other words, has entered the Soviet version of the Asian collective security system. 

Like the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union, China's role in South Asia is also of a limited character. It has a more direct role in South East Asia from Burma to the Phillipines and playing a vital role in the trade as well as politics of these countries; each one of these countries is bound to take note of China's presence in some way or the other, though one might doubt how far China can be regarded as a dominant power in the sense in which the U.S.A. or the Soviet Union are treated as dominant powers. As long as China is interested in maintaining disequilibrium and disharmony in the South Asian region, she has a great deal of nuisance value, but hardly anything more.

18 Agha Shaukat Ali, op.cit.  
According to Geoffrey Wheeler, the Soviet Union has diplomatic relations with all countries in the region, considerable military and economic aid projects operating in most of them, a naval presence in the Indian Ocean with shore facilities in India, South Yemen and East Africa, overt or clandestine communist activities, and the economic, social and cultural development of Soviet Central Asia on a scale so far unequalled in the countries to which it lies adjacent and most recently the invasion of Afghanistan.  

The Soviet government may now have reached the conclusion that Soviet communism cannot now be effectively established in Asian countries unless supported by a visible military presence in Afghanistan, only to find that the coup itself carried no weight in the country as a whole. Once this is certain, the consequences of this new venture will be far reaching and will profoundly affect Russian future political status in South and West Asia, concludes Wheeler.

From Pakistani's view on South Asian Security all the complicating problems surrounding South Asia, a comprehensive Indo-Pak concord is a strategic necessity for the peace and security of South Asia. The need for greater opportunities for travel, trade, scientific, cultural and technical cooperation has often been stressed. The one sector that would give content and meaning to this process would be pooling of all scientific and technical resources and crash programme of total collaboration between India and Pakistan in the field of nuclear development.

(B) South Asian Security

In South Asia, the emergence of India as a leading power has not been quite to the liking of some of the

20 Quoted by Agha Shaukat Ali, op. cit.
21 Ibid.
countries, specially the U.S.A. in view of its nexus with Pakistan and newly formed alliance with China and some of India's smaller neighbours. The vast disparity with India's geographical size, strength, population and resources is conveniently forgotten when the security environment of the region is discussed. How else could Pakistan even think of proposing mutual reduction of armed forces as one of the solutions for bringing about peace in the subcontinent. Pakistan leaders tend to forget that India—a much larger country—has common borders not only with Pakistan but also with a number of other countries. In the present context the situation along any one of them can hardly be termed as peaceful. It is imperative that India realises her position of importance, and her leaders and planners start thinking in terms of global security environment rather than China and Pakistan only.22

According to K. Subrahmanyam, within the subcontinent there is considerable dissonance between India and her neighbours, and the seven South Asian nations do not form a community with shared values and political systems. India, a democracy, is surrounded by two monarchies, three military dictatorships and one democracy under a state of emergency whose future appears uncertain. One of the major complications is divided ethnicity across the borders like the Mohajirs in Pakistan, people of Bangladesh origin in Assam and West Bengal and the Tamils in Sri Lanka.23

In South Asia the main security problems are between India and Pakistan. Pakistan consisted of two parts separated by foreign land—India. Thus, genuinely it had to be afraid

of India. Besides, India had never accepted the religious basis of partition, which the Pakistani leaders sought to justify. So since its inception Pakistan was in search of its separate identity and wanted to establish its distinct individual personality. It is because of this that Pakistan has been shuttling between South and West Asia, identifying itself with either according to its convenience. The lack of democracy and passing of powers directly into hands of military bureaucratic elite further complicated problems for Pakistan. Since dictatorship is inherent in every military rule, the military rulers in order to gain popular support and to keep themselves in power took foreign help, mainly from the U.S. by painting India as the villain of the piece. It is to be noted that security interests have taken precedence over Islamic fundamentalism and Pakistan, in order to assert its parity with India, attacked it three times starting as early as 1947 and ending up in 1971 with the creation of Bangladesh. In all these wars it was Pakistan which attacked India first and started the war.

It is generally acknowledged that it was the initial relationship of the United States with Pakistan that soured any prospects of improving relations with India. It is generally recognised in the U.S. that this did not imply antagonism towards India so much as a strategic need to support those states willing to ally themselves with the U.S. In India the choice is not always seen as reluctant; at times it has been suggested that the U.S.-Pakistan relationship was aimed specifically at India (implying that the Soviet Union was a lesser consideration). U.S. arms sales to Pakistan were, according to this view, designed to cut India down to size as an independent centre of power and to contain her influence by a built-up of her chief antagonist.  

24 Baldev Raj Nayar, India's Security In A Plural World, 1977, p.12; also see by the same author, American Geopolitics and India, Manohar, New Delhi, 1976.
The U.S. arms connection with Pakistan is said to be the prime cause of many of the problems of the subcontinent, reflecting the thesis that the security threats to the subcontinent come from outside powers and from the military build up of local states. The former leads to an incessant search for bases to gain a presence.\(^{25}\) This intrusion by outside powers (and especially the U.S.) constituted an interference in the natural order of things, a tempering with the balance of power. As the relationship between the United States and Pakistan grew, India became concerned that the U.S. would seek to make the smaller power a real threat to India, and that by providing Pakistan with technically superior equipment, it might make Pakistan into an Israel.\(^{26}\)

Since 1979-80, outside power interests in South Asian security have undergone a dramatic reappraisal in reaction to the Soviet expansion into Afghanistan and the fragmentation of the Northern Tier. In terms of Indian perceptions and reaction concern has been expressed less with respect to the direct consequence of the Afghan crisis — the projection of Soviet power into an area directly adjacent to the subcontinent — than to the adverse chain of events involving a broader set of factors which stem from it. The heightened strategic importance according to South Asia by the great powers in the wake of Afghanistan has stimulated renewed fears in India that the region may be transformed into an area of super-power competition.\(^{27}\)

Soviet intervention in Afghanistan caused serious threat to South Asia particularly Pakistan. The Rand Corporation study on the "Security of Pakistan" mentions the following security

\(^{25}\) Ibid., p.32.

\(^{26}\) Ibid., p.33.

(1) Afghanistan Soviet support for separatist movements along the Baluch and Pathan populations of Pakistan.

(2) Soviet air and artillery strikes at refugee camps across the border.

(3) An attempt by Soviet or Afghan forces to seize a salient portion of Pakistani territory in the frontier.

(4) A Soviet sponsored attack by India against Pakistan.

(5) A coordinated Indian-Soviet-Afghan attack designed to fragment Pakistan along ethnic lines.

Despite Soviet presence in Afghanistan, Pakistan's main preoccupation is still with India. Dangers from India continue to be the main pretext for Pak-US military relationship and import of huge military equipments from U.S. Though United States has given $3.2 billion worth of aid to meet Soviet threat, yet the stationing of Pakistani troops clearly indicates its preoccupation with India. The Rand report says thus: "of the Pakistani Army's Six Corps headquarters, only one (with two infantry divisions) is located along the Afghan border. The remaining five, which control all of the country's armor, face India". The Pakistani government even refused United States National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinshi's plea to change the deployment from east to west to meet the Soviet threat.

The main threat to India's security comes from not only the overwhelming military machines and dynamic social concepts but also by the "lengthening shadows of the Russian bear and


29 Ibid., p.8.
the Chinese dragon looming large on the country's horizon" India's security is not threatened by Pakistan. India is worried about the U.S. supplying arms to Pakistan and by other powers. Experience shows that whenever Pakistan acquired arms from outside, it has used them against India.

As far as China is concerned, it is to be noted that Chinese leadership right from 1949 has been interested in making China at least an Asian great power if not a superpower. Accordingly it has been their ambition to curb India's growing influence and power in the region by either supporting Pakistan or by aiding and helping the insurgents in the Indian frontier states along Indo-Burmese border. It can be suggested, for example, that the Mizo insurgency could not be checked by India because of Chinese help to them.

The Soviet Union has become a permanent factor in India's strategic thinking and has much the same position which the U.S. occupies in Pakistan's thinking. According to Rajan Menon, "In terms of India's security concerns the Soviet Union plays a dual role as a direct supplier of arms and a licensor of certain classes of military hardware produced in India." Again the Soviet Union stood by India when this country was under heavy pressure from the West — on the Kashmir issue and decolonisation of Goa. When the West failed to assist meaningfully in the defence preparedness of India following the Chinese aggression it was the Soviet Union which helped India both by arms transfer on terms which would not impose any significant burden on the Indian economy and technology transfer in certain sophisticated areas. Again, according to Subrahmanyam, when India faced the Washington-Peking-Rawalpindi axis during the Bangladesh

crisis, the Soviet Union provided the counter-vailing power which enabled India to liberate Bangladesh. The mutuality of strategic interests in South and South East Asia between India and the Soviet Union continues to be a basic plank of the foreign and security policies of both nations in spite of differences over issues like Afghanistan.31

The presence of Soviet forces in Afghanistan had an adverse impact on the security of the sub-continent, just as the moving of Chinese forces into Tibet and those of the United States based at Diego Garcia have. But Pakistan has little credibility in talking about external threat to the subcontinent when it had been seeking Chinese help, and constructed the Karakoram highway.32 Further there was news of signing of a protocol between China and Pakistan for the opening of the Khungerah pass in Karakoram highway in Pakistan occupied Kashmir. India lodged protest against this. India is wary of Chinese designs in the region which consist of "an attempt to weaken the central government to encourage centrifugal forces, and to look for eventual creation of a number of separate states on the Indian subcontinent at least some of which would move into close alliance with Peking."33

There is one and only one way, feels K. Subrahmanyam, of ensuring the security of the subcontinent — that is to keep the influence of all three powers — the United States, China and the Soviet Union — out of the subcontinent. It is necessary for all the South Asian countries to maintain their non-aligned status and independence of foreign policy.

32 Ibid., p.166.
India's objection to the U.S. proposal for the supply of $400 million worth of arms to Pakistan was not because it constituted a large induction of arms, but it would mean active U.S. involvement in the subcontinent. In the past, Pakistan had been led into disastrous misadventures because of its over confidence that the U.S. and China would haul it out of dangerous situations in which it landed itself. The Pakistani leadership, says K. Subrahmanyam, should not repeat that kind of mistake again: "If the influence of distant United States is brought into the subcontinent, the neighbouring Soviet Union will have every justification to seek to intervene in the affairs of the subcontinent which abuts on its southern borders, and therefore, has greater relevance to its security." Observers of India fail to understand why the Pakistani leadership should persist on such a perilous course.  

Speculation about the future of South Asian security, says Thomas P. Thornton, can be discouraging because the range of this future seems to be between the undesirable and the unacceptable.  

Despite its lack of formal institutions or even shared objectives, South Asia definitely constitutes a system.  

Nations are drawn into mutual relationships by geographic proximity, shared problems, and even mutual hostility, and South Asia has all of these in abundance. The South Asian subsystem, according to Thomas Thornton, is highly vulnerable to outside intrusion or intervention because of the splits within it, indeed, in some regards its internal situation is about as bad as it can be since the two major members are in  

especially dangerous imbalance. Pakistan is neither strong enough to assert itself effectively against India nor it is so weak that it can readily acquiesce in a subordinate position. 36

The result of this combination of regional tensions has been a remarkable demonstration of how the global (East-West) polarization can impose itself onto a regional polarization. The outcome, says Thornton, has been the classic interaction between the two systems and has presented opportunities to the super-powers to intervene in their own interests. There have been ups and downs in this relationship that are familiar, but it is necessary to focus on the fact that (i) these vulnerabilities have led to very high levels of outside intervention in the past, and (ii) the potential for renewed high levels of intervention persists.

It is also necessary to bear in mind, adds Thornton, that the intrusion of global issues upon the South Asian system and its individual members is not limited to the traditional problems of security and political tensions associated with the U.S.-Soviet rivalry, but also includes many of the new global issues such as non-proliferation, human rights and ecology.

(C) Superpower Involvement in South Asia

China, India, Pakistan and the Soviet Union constitute most of the sprawling Asian landmass and embrace more than a third of the earth's total area and some 40 per cent of its population. Geographically, the real Asian triangle is formed by China, the subcontinent and the U.S.S.R., though politically, it is a quadrangle, the subcontinent being shared by two unfriendly sovereign states. The U.S.S.R. as well as China tend to treat the subcontinent as one geographical

36 Ibid.
entity, which enables them to exploit the contradictions between Pakistan and India. Pakistan's obsession is India, and India's obsession is India, which in an esoteric way, means Pakistan too. Pakistan casts its shadow on India's relationship with the U.S.S.R. and China, India dominates Pakistan's relations with either communist giant. 37

The U.S.S.R. has always ranked the Indian subcontinent below Europe and East Asia in terms of its interests and concerns. The West has been the principal source of modern Russian culture under the Czars as well as their communist successors. At least since the time of Napoleon the principal threats to the security of Russian State especially its European heartland have originated in the West, although the rise of first Japan and then China in the twentieth century have increased Soviet apprehensions about the security of their position is Siberia. 38

The search for peace, stability, and security in South Asia is a subject of global importance in our independent world. The Asian continent has several reasons to address itself to the problem of security and to the problem of bringing peace and tranquility in Asia. In this view of the matter, says P.N. Haksar, we should not develop Pavlovian reflexes on the question of Asian security just because of the Soviet Union's interest in the matter. 39

During the last four decades, peace and security have been primary goals in South Asia. War and insecurity have resulted in frequent outbreaks of armed conflict, lingering territorial disagreement and deepseated enmities.

Armaments have increased in the quest for security; the result has been higher political stakes and increased feelings of insecurity due to greater threats from adversaries. The presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan, the danger of big-power confrontations, and the potential for nuclearization of conflict further underline the need to search for effective strategies for resolving the major conflicts of the region.

Superpower involvement in South Asia has been, and continues to be a matter of some concern and controversy, specially since the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979. There is a great amount of disagreement over the perceptions and intentions of both the Soviet Union and the United States. While Soviet actions and perceptions are obviously more crucial to the outcome of the war in Afghanistan, it is nonetheless important to attempt to delineate American views on that conflict and on other potential threats to peace and security in the region.  

American South Asian policy is shaped by the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. Pakistan has been threatened by the Afghan conflict in at least three ways. First, care of nearly three million Afghan refugees in camps in N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan has created a heavy economic burden. There is also the potential social or demographic task of assimilating the refugees if the conditions for their return to Afghanistan cannot be created within a reasonable period of time. Secondly the presence of refugee camps in Pakistan has prompted some Soviet intrusions and remains a potential stimulus to more extensive military confrontation. Thirdly, continued Soviet military presence in Afghanistan implies the threat of Soviet

diplomatic pressure upon Pakistan and involvement in Pakistan's international affairs. 41

Six years of sustained attention to Pakistan and its neighbours, says Selig S. Harrison, have brought about a degree of maturity in America's understanding of South Asia. 42 Yet the dilemmas, says Stephen P. Cohen, that faced the U.S. in its initial response to the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan in late 1979 remain.

The happenings in Afghanistan and the developments in the United States-Pakistan relationship necessarily affected the trilateral relationship Indo-U.S. relations entered a difficult phase. Americans were disappointed that New Delhi had not taken a harder and harsher stand on the question of Soviet troops in Afghanistan, and India protested vocally and vigorously against U.S. supply of the most advanced and lethal armaments to Pakistan.

The immediate American reaction viewed the occupation of Afghanistan as part of wider pattern of Soviet assertion in Africa and Asia. The Afghan move was viewed as an extension of earlier Central Asian conquests which would probably not have taken place if the American strategic position in Iran and elsewhere had not fallen so low. The American response was an immediate cooling of relations with the Soviet Union, including the Olympic boycott, the shelving of the SALT II treaty, and the embargo of grain shipments and technology to the U.S.S.R. A programme of low level arms support to the Mujahideen groups operating in Afghanistan was also apparently initiated. 43

Washington being blamed for introducing relatively more sophisticated military hardware into the region is understandable. But, ironically, it is also credited with both intentions and capacity to bring about an India-Pakistan accord against the best interests of either country. Undoubtedly in this perception is the equally erroneous assumption that the Soviet Union has a stake in regional discord and an arms race between India and Pakistan.

On the contrary, there is a growing body of enlightened opinion in Pakistan that the U.S. wants to foist Indian leadership on that country. According to Dr. Rais A. Khan, the purpose of American leverage is to persuade Pakistan to share American perceptions of regional cooperation and India's leadership in South Asia.

There is a tendency in India to look upon our national security only in immediate terms. Hence the supply of a particular weapon to Pakistan or China is exaggerated in no uncertain terms but the question of the Super Powers intentions, the continued cold war vis-a-vis Indian Security are played down as questions of secondary importance. F-16s or Harpoon are criticised, protests are made in the Parliament but the factors behind the questions of these weapons by the neighbouring state, and its Super Power connection is easily forgotten.

Efforts to bring India and Pakistan closer were a feature of U.S. involvement in the region. But the question arises: will the United States allow Pakistan to befriend India and to lose its most important ally in this region? Will

the Soviet Union allow India to befriend Pakistan which is constantly encouraging Afghan Mujahideen? The basic question, says Abhay, is: shall relations between India and Pakistan become friendly if Ziaul-Haq's proposals are accepted? Generalists may have a positive answer but Pakistani analysts deny this by saying that the proposal can create one more bone of contention like the 1972 Simla Agreement. According to Abhay, if no treaties are to be signed, Super Powers would not allow us to be friends, are we then to sit idle and see the Super Powers play their game.46

United States is very often prompted by a desire to see India reassured that military supplies to Pakistan are not meant to injure India's interests. But more than such diplomatic gestures which failed in every case, India was reassured by the United States' ability to use its influence in Pakistan towards restraint and avoidance of a military solution to Kashmir and the U.S. willingness to lend money for India's economic development.47

The India-China Border Conflict 1962: brought new U.S. pressure on India to make concessions to Pakistan and led to a widespread view in U.S.A., sedulously fostered by Pakistan also that in order to effectively meet the Chinese challenge India should make up with Islamabad. While fighting with China, India was being asked to give away the strategic and populated area of Kashmir. The United States strategic interests at that time demanded that the Sino-Indian conflict should not be enlarged and made more complicated.

It is interesting to note in this context, that the two constants of the India-Pakistan-U.S. relationship have been:

46 Ibid.
Pakistan's preoccupation with the perceived threat from India and U.S. security concern about the Soviet Union. The mutual incompatibility between these two interests has not affected the relationship between the United States and Pakistan. 48

On the other hand, the Soviet Union, since the moment, China rebelled, gave all possible assistance to India to counter the Chinese hegemonism. As a result India became more and more close to the Soviet Union. The presence of pro-Soviet communists and other parties in India encouraged the ruling party to join hands with the Soviets.

After the fall of Shah's regime in Iran and Soviet invasion in Afghanistan Pakistan has become an important country for the United States. It has been able to get among other things $3.2 billion military and economic aid. Further news of joint intelligence sharing between United States and Pakistan cannot but force India to join further hands with the Soviets to ensure Indian security, even if it suits the Soviet strategy interests.

Some Indians have argued that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, coupled with the restiveness of Pakistan's ethnic minorities, primarily the Baluchis, poses a threat to the integrity of that country that augurs ill for India as well. They have suggested that India take the initiative to create a regional centre of power by reaching an understanding with China and Pakistan. 49 If this plan has not been pursued with any great vigour, there are two explanations. The first is that the complex disagreements that India has with China and Pakistan cannot be quickly settled. The suspicions, entrenched perceptions and domestic complications in all three countries pose formidable obstacles to speedy diplomacy.

48 Ibid.
In addition, India's primary concern is that the Soviet move into Afghanistan will lead the U.S. to arm China and Pakistan. To cope with this eventuality, India will not impair let alone jettison, what it regards as a tried and trusted friendship with the Soviets, who have provided arms and political support on the Kashmir issue and during the Bangladesh crisis, at crucial junctures.

These considerations explain India's gingerly response to the Afghan crisis. This has ranged from Indira Gandhi's initial suggestion that 'other's interventions' in Afghanistan explained the Soviet action and Indian abstentions from the two condemnatory General Assembly Resolutions, to "innocuously worded" calls for the withdrawal of 'foreign troops' from Afghanistan. Nevertheless, India has not, unlike Cuba, Vietnam, and Ethiopia, supported the Soviet invasion and, during the many recent visits exchanged by Indian and Soviet officials, has privately but persistently expressed its unhappiness with the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. During the visit to New Delhi of Gromyko and Brezhnev (February and December 1980) the two sides simply agreed to disagree and the communiques omitted any direct reference to the matter.  

The Civil War in East Pakistan which began in March 1971, had by that summer settled into a war of attrition. Immediately, United States moved to supply Pakistan 100 M-47 tanks through Turkey. The reported move was bound to create concern in India. An authoritative source in New Delhi pointed out that Pakistan's armed forces were nearly half the size of India's forces. Pakistan's armour was already comparable to that of India and the addition of M-47 tanks would confer superiority on it.

51 Asian Recorder, 8-14 Jan., 1969, p.8707
Defence Minister Swaran Singh told the Rajya Sabha on 2 November 1968, that an agreement had already been reached in principle that Turkey would supply 100 Patton tanks to Pakistan in exchange for more modern tanks for Turkey from the United States. India had pointed out, he said, to the countries concerned that such a deal had grave implications both in regard to India's own defence responsibilities and to the objective of maintenance of peace in this subcontinent. India had also pointed out to them that these military supplies would make Pakistan more intransigent in its attitude towards normalization of relations with India.52

On 7 October, 1970, the U.S. Government officially announced its decision to resume the supply of lethal weapons which induced B-58 bombers and interceptors. The U.S. Ambassador in India Keating called a press conference to explain that the objective behind the "limited" arms supply was to reduce Pakistan's dependence on China and Russia.53

A new situation was emerging in South Asia. A U.S.-China-Pakistan relationship was beginning to emerge, while in East Bengal an elemental resistance to West Punjab dominance was brewing which was to draw the Soviet Union and India much closer, establishing a new relationship of trust and confidence and awareness of the identity of interests of the two.

The U.S. and China were equally interested in protecting

52 V.P. Dutt, India's Foreign Policy, Vikas, Delhi, 1984, p. 99.
53 The Times of India, 14 October, 1970.
the territorial integrity of the Pakistani State. Neither country could ignore the Bengali demand for self-determination, but for their own reasons, they found it impossible to support the separatists. Moreover, after the Indo-Soviet treaty of August 1971, both the U.S. and China were convinced that the conflict in East Pakistan was being perpetuated by outside forces. The civil war in Bangladesh therefore had ramifications far beyond the frontier of the Pakistani State. Indian authorities perceived collusion between Pakistan, the U.S. and China. China and the U.S. were no less certain that India and the Soviet Union were determined to dismember Pakistan. 54

The U.S. administration took the ostensible position that the East Bengal revolt was a secessionist movement and, therefore, justified Yahya Khan's attempt to suppress it. The U.S. was willing to extend sympathy and material support for the relief of the refugees and to bring about a dialogue between India and Pakistan to defuse the tension and strive for a settlement. India's plea was that it was not an Indo-Pak issue. The military regime in West Pakistan had defied the will of the people expressed in the elections held under the auspices of the military regime itself, denied the majority party in the National Assembly the right to form a government and clamped behind the prison its leaders, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and many of his colleagues. The military regime had thus forfeited legitimacy and had no mandate to violently suppress the majority of the country, which resided in East Bengal. 55

When the Indian army crossed into East Pakistan in December 1971, all these perceptions were confirmed. The

54 Lawrence, Ziring, The Subcontinent in World Politics - India, Its Neighbours and the Great Powers.
55 V.P.Dutt, India's Foreign Policy, op.cit., p.101.
U.S. felt the Indians would not have violated Pakistan's sovereignty had it not been for the support guaranteed it by the Soviet Union. In the U.N. India was pressured to desist and withdraw its forces behind its own frontier, but the Soviet Union sided with India and blocked any action in the Security Council. While Pakistan waited in vain for the Chinese to open a front along the Himalayan chain China, the U.S. government decided to show its flag in the Bay of Bengal, and a small naval task force led by the nuclear carrier 'Enterprise' steamed into Indian waters. Undeterred by the American manoeuvre the Indian armed forces made short work of the isolated Pakistan garrison in East Pakistan, and, with no real sign of tangible external support, Bangladesh was recognised as an independent sovereign state both by India and the Soviet Union, and in the days that followed much more attention was given to the fact that Bangladesh was the first country to achieve its independence since World War II through the instrument of civil war. Even those countries that usually displayed sympathy for Pakistan held the view that the Pakistani government got what it deserved and that justice had finally been done to the Bengalis, though international law had been mangled in the process.  

More interesting, during the 1971 Bangladesh crisis when the notorious Nixon-Kissinger 'tilt' occurred, Pakistan invoked the 1959 Agreement of Cooperation but the U.S. would not go beyond despatching the Seventh Fleet Task Force into the Bay of Bengal. Although it was perceived by India as a U.S. threat to intervene in the Bangladesh war, in Pakistan it was dismissed as symbolic. Henry Kissinger himself admitted that "over the decades of our relationship with Pakistan there had grown a complex body of

56 Lawrence Ziring, op.cit.
communications by the Kennedy and Johnson administration going beyond 1959 pact, some verbal, some in writing, whose import was that the U.S. would come to Pakistan's assistance if she was attacked by India.  

It was Soviet prodding rather than American threat which made India declare a unilateral ceasefire. Thus the stated U.S. reservations towards Pakistan's efforts to include India in the orbit of its security agreements with the U.S. and its role in the 1971 crisis underline the fact that the Pakistan-U.S. relationship has been both partial and asymmetrical from the beginning. For the U.S., countering the Soviet Union was more important than siding with Pakistan against India. In case of Pakistan, participation in the anti-communist alliances was only a means to fortify itself against the perceived threat from India. Pakistan is dispensable for the U.S. especially in the larger global context but successive Pakistani regimes have depended heavily on the U.S., especially for military hardware.

The trouble which the Super Powers are confronted with in South Asia is that in this region there are nations which themselves would like to emerge as power centres. Super Powers, therefore, do not know as to what role they assign to these aspirants in South Asia. The underdeveloped medium powers like India which may eventually aspire to be major powers, are to be afraid of rather than to be welcomed. And therefore, the Super Powers have been pursuing the policy of balancing the various aspirations in South Asia. Arms parity between India and Pakistan which some people advocate, emanates from this feeling. Arms parity may be an understandable

58 G.S.Bhargava, op.cit., p.43
concept; it ensures Indo-Pakistan peace. But the trouble is that the concept of arms parity between India and Pakistan really does not ensure peace.

Such a policy, according to Sisir Gupta, seems to imply that India and Pakistan must coexist but not cooperate, India and Pakistan must live together and yet must not come together, and that they must live on the basis of arms parity, of institutional distrust. This means that they must neutralise each other, and then leave the task of stabilizing this region to others. As a scheme, of course, it is plausible, except for two things: one, that these aspiring nations of South Asia would not be able to play any worthwhile role in the wider world, and, two, that the ultimate responsibility for the stabilization of this region would always rest with the Super Powers. 59

For the Soviet Union and China, Pakistan's international role did not matter. For the United States it was a convenient cover for obtaining and using influence in Pakistan. It worked as long as the U.S. was able to restrain Pakistan vis-a-vis India but the Chinese entry into the picture in the early 1960s wrecked the arrangement. It was now the turn of the Soviet Union to play the role of a mediator in South Asia with the U.S. going quietly along with the effort. The Tashkent initiative was followed by Soviet supply of some military hardware, including tanks to Pakistan.

The Soviet Union seems to be more concerned than the U.S.A. with South Asian affairs, particularly the Indo-Pakistani relations. Moscow's emergence considered as the

59 Sisir Gupta, Role of Major Powers in South Asia; based on the Report of a symposium held on the occasion of the All India Seminar on Foreign Policies of South Asian States held under the auspices of the South Asia Studies Centre, Univ. of Rajasthan, Jaipur, 1 to 6 Feb., 1968, p.335.
most influential outside power in the Indo-Pak subcontinent. With the intensification of the conflict with China and the realization that China was more a rival than an ally, Moscow was confronted with the problem of seeking fresh options and new friends. Moscow's turning towards India was an early move in response to this problem. India was the second largest country in Asia and an absence of national irritants, the border problems or open support to countries with whom India was in conflict as well as a steady convergence of the national interests of the two countries facilitated the fast development of friendship and cooperative relations. Now the Soviet efforts in Pakistan may be linked with the same search for option and friends.  

Moscow's ultimate hope and greater expectation is that the trangular alliance between Moscow, Islamabad and New Delhi would provide a more powerful counterbalance to the ambitions of China and the lures of Washington, Moscow has stepped up in economic assistance to both India and Pakistan. It had adopted a posture of studied but benevolent neutrality and all its efforts are aimed at preventing the eruption of the hot flames of war once again.  

The emergence of Sovereign independent Bangladesh in South Asia has radically altered the physical structure of the subcontinent; India emerged out of the conflict as the prominent power on the subcontinent. It definitely mad India's position stronger in the context of its rivalry with China more specially when the U.S. accepted India as a major country and recognised its special role of leadership in South Asia and promised not to join any grouping directed

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60 V.P. Dutt, 'Role of Major Powers in South Asia', Based on the Report of a symposium held on the occasion of All India Seminar, op.cit.

61 Ibid.
against India. But in actual practise there was very little substance behind these U.S. friendly guestures to India. The United States as a matter of fact regarded the events on the subcontinent tragic and one of the major disappointments for U.S. foreign policy in 1971. It virtually considered the subcontinent an area of Soviet sphere of influence. As an existing balance of power was not favourable to the U.S., it was not happy with existing balance in South Asia, that is why within a short span of time following India's nuclear explosion in February 1975 the United States lifted its 10 year old embargo on the supply of weapons to Pakistan and began to emphasise concern about security of its old ally Pakistan.

The Bangladesh experience has been even more painful, if less expensive for the Soviet. Once it became obvious in mid-1971 that another Indo-Pakistani war was inevitable, Moscow openly threw its support behind India and the Bangladesh freedom movement. This, according to Leo, E. Rose, was done at some sacrifice to the Soviet reputation in West Asia, as the Bangladesh war was widely perceived as pitting Islamic Pakistan, (supported by China and the U.S.) against Hindu India (supported by the Russians). This contributed, if only marginally, to the problems the U.S.S.R. has faced in maintaining credibility in West Asia.

Moscow thus had good reason to expect Bangladesh to demonstrate its appreciation in tangible ways. Yet once again they were disappointed. Soviet efforts to obtain access right to a Bangladesh port, for instance, were eventually rejected by Dacca reportedly on the advice of the Indians. The assassination of President Mujibur Rehman of

63 Indian Express, 11 February, 1971.
Bangladesh in 1975 and the installation of a government that displayed rather strong anti-Indian and anti-Soviet proclivities was another setback. While the new government in Dacca had to exercise caution when dealing with India, its vastly powerful neighbour, it could safely move to limit the presence of the Soviets. The 1977 elections in Sri Lanka, unseating a government in which the pro-Soviet communist party was a partner, has produced similar consequences in that country.\(^{65}\)

Finally, the Soviet relationship with Pakistan that started to blossom briefly in the late 1960s barely survived the 1971 war. Moscow has indicated on several occasions its interests in reviving relations with Pakistan, and the Pakistani authorities have generally responded in kind. But there are some serious obstacles to any significant movement in this direction. Given the importance of the Chinese and Americans both to its domestic and its foreign policy, Islamabad must be primarily concerned with possible reactions in Peking and Washington to any substantial improvement in Soviet-Pakistani relations. For its part, Moscow continues to tilt towards India in its South Asian policy and thus, in the words of Leo, E. Rose, cannot safely ignore the still evident tendency in New Delhi to view the expansion of relations with Pakistan as potentially detrimental to Indian interests.\(^{66}\)

The joint Indo-Soviet declaration signed on 26 October 1977, indicated the various important issues on which India had received, and would continue to receive, Soviet support. It also revealed that the two countries still had many "common purposes", one such purpose and an important one at that is to prevent the spread of Chinese influence in South Asia. If the Soviet need Indian in their plan to

\(^{65}\) Ibid.

\(^{66}\) Ibid.
encircle China, India too cannot afford to give up its "special" relations with the Soviet Union as long as China is a threat to its security. True, on 15 April 1976 when China and India announced that they were restoring full diplomatic relations after more than thirteen years, it appeared as though a thaw had occurred in their mutual relations, but the improvement in Sino-Indian relations, since then has been painfully slow. The Prime Minister of India had said in 1977 that China had been in occupation of over 14,000 square miles of Indian territory since the 1962 "border operations" and that unless this question was settled, there cannot be complete understanding between our two countries.67

Two things more need to be said here. First, although, during the visit of Z.A.Bhutto to China in May 1976, Peking stated that it desired "peace" rather than "confrontation" in South Asia, continued Chinese political and military support for Pakistan and Bangladesh suggests that Peking is keeping its option open. It should not escape our attention, writes Golam W.Choudhry, that Peking played host to the two Zias of this subcontinent in 1977. General Zia-ur-Rehman, then the Chief Martial Law Administrator received an extremely warm and grand reception during his state visit to China between 2 and 6 January 1977. Subsequently there were reports that China offered as many as 12 sqardrons of MIG-21 jet fighter planes, but that Dacca was unable to accept so many because of "the lack of storage and maintenance facilities". China also agreed to train pilots from Bangladesh.68

67 The Times of India, New Delhi, 1 December, 1977.
The Chinese welcomed the Chief Marshal Law Administrator of Pakistan, General Zia-ul-Haq, later that year, from 14 to 19 December 1977. During this visit Vice-Premier Teng Hsiao-Ping extended the customary "unswerving" support to Islamabad's efforts to safeguard its "national independence, State sovereignty and interference from outside". He also reiterated his country's support for Pakistan's effort to secure the right of self determination for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Besides Chinese military aid to Pakistan continues. Evidently, China has no desire to stop fishing in the troubled waters of the subcontinent in order to improve its relations with India.

Second, when a 5 member delegation of U.S. senators met the Prime Minister of India on 5 January, 1978, Morarji Desai told them that "no matter what any other nations did, India would never have atomic weapons". Earlier he had announced that India would not undertake even peaceful explosions. Whereas the Desai government has thus allowed its hands to be tied on the issue of nuclear weapons, the Chinese army has developed an intercontinental ballistic missile with a range of 12,800 kilometers. According to a U.S. military expert, China now has a stockpile of nuclear weapons amounting to several hundred, that its military planning is shifting from Mao's concept of people's war towards modern establishment, including nuclear capability by land, sea and air, and that its goal is parity with the Soviet Union and the United States by the end of this century. In all probability the Chinese will not accept their existing frontiers with the Soviet Union. Nor are they likely to vacate the Indian territories, occupied by them in the late fifties. India and the Soviet Union need each other's support on these issues.

69 M.V.Kamath, "China Developing ICBM with 12,800 Km Range", The Times of India, New Delhi, 29 November, 1977.
The Soviet Union continued to supply military equipment to India which created an arms imbalance in the subcontinent. The United States did not object to this because it was not averse to the Indian ambition to take over some part of Britain's role in the Indian Ocean and to counter the influence of China in Asia.  

During the Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin's visit to Islamabad in April 1968, Pakistan expressed grave concern about the supply of Russian Arms to India. The Russian leader, it was reported, paid no heed to this matter. It led Pakistan to think that it was a mistake to sign the Tashkent Declaration. Some of the leaders exploited the people's anguish to build up a political movement against the regime of President Ayub Khan. The political agitation eventually led to Ayub's downfall. The chaos and instability that followed in Pakistan created turmoil in the South Asian region, and led, eventually, to the involvement of a number of outside powers in the politics of the subcontinent. In other words, domestic issues became the most difficult, indeed tragic aspect of Pakistan's foreign policy. Hence it is imperative to have some knowledge of Pakistan's domestic problems in order to understand the conditions that affected the relations of the super-powers with the South Asian States.

United States interest in South Asia had subsided, partly as a result of entanglement in Vietnam and partly on account of a new vision of the world formulated by the U.S. President, Richard Nixon and his principal adviser, Henry Kissinger. In July 1971, Mr. Kissinger made a secret trip to Peking which

71 Ibid., p. 69.
72 Mohammad Ahsan Chaudhri, 'Pakistan and the Changing Pattern of Power Relations in South Asia', op.cit., pp. 78-79.
resulted in bringing about a rapprochement between China and the United States. This development alarmed both India and the Soviet Union. Foreign Minister of India, Sawarn Singh, told the Indian Parliament "while we welcome the rapprochement, we cannot look upon it with equanimity if it means the domination of the two countries over this region".

The Soviet Union was also annoyed at Pakistan's role in facilitating Kissinger's trip to Peking and regarded the Sino-American rapprochement as a move to counter Soviet influence in South Asia to cope with this development in world affairs, India and the Soviet Union hastily entered into a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation which had been under consideration ever since 1969 when the Soviet leader, Leonid Brezhnev, had come out with an Asian Collective Security Plan.

It was clear that India could not carry on the conflict with Pakistan in isolation from the great power content. India had rightly calculated that the U.S. after having burnt its fingers in Vietnam, was not likely to commit troops in any other war in Asia, not in the near future at any rate. The U.S. influence in Asia was on the decline, though it was not quite clear whether the U.S. would reconcile to Soviet influence in this area.

However, neither Pakistan nor Bangladesh accept India's domination in the region. And the U.S's determination to keep its own activities in balance with those of other powers has prevented the balance of power in South Asia from tilting solely on the side of India and the Soviet Union.