CHAPTER: IV

THE REGIONAL DETERMINANTS OF SRI LANKA'S SECURITY

The region/sub-systemic level is one of the most important levels of analysis for understanding the security issues that determines the behaviour of states as it plays an important and significant role in the security of a state, especially small and weak state. The process of decolonisation had in fact made the regional level of security more autonomous and more prominent in international politics. Furthermore, the ending of the Cold War and super power rivalry has reduced their intrusion into the region leaving local powers with more rooms for manoeuvre. Globalisation and the success of the EEC and ASEAN have further accelerated the process of regionalism in the Third World countries.

The roots of the idea of regional organisation can be traced to the formation of the League of Nations. The international system being Euro-centric saw such association in the form of alliance groupings, which however is not a feature of present form of regionalism. The end of World War II witnessed a proliferation of regional organisations. The increasing lack of self sufficiency experienced by the states in satisfying the basic needs of its citizens because such needs have come to depend on economic, scientific and technologies advances which do not represent sovereign boundaries. Interdependence thus accentuated the need for regionalism as a mean by which states could satisfy the needs and requirements of its citizens.

Various analytical and empirical tools have been use by scholars in their attempt to study the regional dynamics and security issues of states. The sub-system analysis attempts to project a ‘regional identity’ on the basis of historical and geopolitical consideration. In a sub system the power structure is differentiated into three sectors; core, periphery and intrusive. According to this analysis India occupies the core in the South Asian power structure because of its potential as against the peripheral state. The potential of the power states influences the perception of the ruling elite who in the process fashion the political environment and the political system.
Security complex also offers useful guidelines to understand the security issues and determinants of relationship between states. A security complex is a subsystem of the international community of states that for reasons of geography, history and culture are intimately related to each other. It enables us to understand the subsystem interplay of lesser power whose main security issues arise from the local regional environment. In South Asia some of the factors that exert pressure and influence on the security complex are deep rooted in historical evolution of the political system. The ill defined concept of nationhood, disputed boundaries, overlapping ethnic loyalties, unstable political system, weak and vulnerable economies and asymmetrical power relations are some of the crucial security issues of the post independence era. The conflict arising from this process have resulted in divergent security perception and defence mechanism. Furthermore, there is an intermeshing of domestic and regional dimension of security, as state making in Third World is not created in a vacuum. The arbitrarily drawn colonial boundaries and inadequate statehood leads to proliferation of contested demographic and territorial space and interstate conflicts impinging upon the state making process of neighbouring state, especially those in contiguous to each other. Most regional conflicts have been inextricably intertwined with domestic issues of state making, state breaking and regime legitimacy. The example of interstate dimension of conflict can be seen from the internal crisis in Pakistan in 1971 and also the Tamils problems in Sri Lanka in 1980’s.

**Defining Regionalism**

The term regionalism has a multifaceted connotation. It has different perception in the international and national contexts. In international relations it is used in its foreign policy dimension, i.e., the creation of supranational unions based on technical and functional bonds as well as shared interests that would inter-link various sovereign states usually having geographical proximity. Nations would aim to search for common goals and needs and this would lead to co-operate and overcome the constraints of competition and conflicts, evenmore it would protect the region form power politics and dominant powers in the system. Thus it refers to intensifying political and/or economic process of co-operation among states and other actors in particular geographical regions. Raimo Vayrynen contents that a regional
sub system is characterised by a certain distinctiveness and proximity not only in geographical but also in economic and political sense. Louis Contori and Steven Spiegel adds the social dimension and organisational factors to also be relevant. Thus geographical propinquity and intensity of interaction, which includes co-operation, competition and conflicts form the core variable that defines region.

For student of political theory or government and politics the concept regionalism falls in the disciplinary boundaries of geography. It is perceived as a region within a sovereign state, having distinguishing cultural, social, linguistic, historical characteristic. Regionalism and the demand for autonomy has indeed weakened the nation building process in most post colonial countries, which is a multi-cultured, multi-lingual kingdoms.

Regionalism is sometimes seen as an alternative to globalism or the principle of universality. It covers loosely all kinds of non universal associations of states like Commonwealth of Nations, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Arab league and the like. In other words its a formal association of independent states with some sort of permanent organization. Unlike international organization which is based on global scale, regionalism is based on regional basis although at times it crosses the limits of geographical proximity.

Similar urge was felt among Third World states, in the Cold-War era to overcome their isolation in order to benefit form the advantage of joint action, by establishing certain structure, and make their presence felt in the international system. Moreover, these efforts were made to solve their economic dependency and control the constraints of development while keeping the power at bay. The success of ASEAN and EEC proved the relevance and importance of the functional approach to integration and provided the stimulus towards regionalism. Many Third World countries attempted to adopt similar means, but the model didn't augur well with the structure of Third World countries because of the social, economical and political conditions were not favourable. The colonial legacy and the varied asymmetries in the geographical size, population, gross national product, per capita income, religious and cultural difference were some of the factors and forces that tended
these process unfavourable. The process of integration in Third World is also affected by external force or intrusive system and internal domestic factors. 

South Asia consists of seven nation-states of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Maldives. It can be defined as a sub-system/region on the basis of its historical and geo-political characteristics. They share common historical heritage, and commonalties in ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious sphere. Besides, members of the international system recognise South Asia as a distinct congeries of states. All South Asian states can be considered as post colonial states, even though Nepal and Bhutan were not formally under the colonial rule, and they all share similar problems of state formation, state building and national integration. Furthermore, members of a subs-system project a ‘notional regional identity’ with manifestation of loose regional cooperation during exigencies. Further, regional sub-system is defined in terms of patterns of amity and enmity as well as the interdependence of rivalry rather than shared interest is also a feature of South Asian states.

This chapter attempts to understand the regional determinants of Sri Lanka’s security within the South Asian region/sub system. It discusses Sri Lanka relation with its neighbours while also discussing the attempts, success and failure of the regional organization (SAARC) in South Asia and its impact on Sri Lanka.

South Asia and Sri Lanka

Since the birth of South Asia as a separate political entity there appeared fundamental differences in political and security perception among the various states reflecting a deep sense of insecurity. Issues like culture, religion, ethnicity and language that transcend territorial boundaries have strongly influenced intra-regional relations especially when it has a tendency of a spill over effect.

India perceives its security to be coterminous with those of the region as a whole. Assuming that the South Asian neighbours are located within the parameter of its strategic frontiers any threat to the security or stability of neighbouring countries have been viewed as a direct threat to India’s security. This view has been
articulated by Nehru, Menon and Pannikar and continues even among the subsequent generation of leaders and strategic thinkers. India maintains its basic perception to keep away extra-regional powers and influence. It fears that any alignment or foreign policy postures that the smaller state undertake could be inimical to India interest and security.16

However, India’s desire to keep away external influence and presence in the region has been viewed by its neighbours as India’s strategy for asserting its dominance and hegemonic intent. This motive of a pax-India generated apprehensions among the smaller neighbours who perceived India to be a major source of threat to their security and survival.

Sri Lanka’s location at the southern tip of the Indian peninsula is separated by the Palk Strait, which is barley 20 miles wide, has continued to be a determining influence on Sri Lanka’s policy vis-à-vis the region. Furthermore, it possess the strategic harbour of Trincomalee, which the British regarded as a prerequisite to the defence and security of India was made an important bastion in their defence network, has a been covetous possession and its use still remain a matter of international concern, particularly to India.17

This geo-political location is an important factor that compels India’s to be concerned of any development in the island, especially its relation to any external power, whereas Sri Lanka continues to hold apprehension of Indian motive. After Independence India Sri Lanka relations was marked by a love hate relationship. “India was the Land of the Buddha, of Mahatma and of Hinduism but it was looked upon as Jennings said, as a mountain, which might at any time, send down destructive avalanches”.18 Such divergence in perception has dominated Sri Lanka’s policy towards the region as well as intra regional relations. Thus Sri Lanka relation with South Asia is influenced and is defined to a large extent by its proximity to India, particularly it’s the manner in which its relations with India have evolved, as well as its geo-political location. The subsequent part will discuss Sri Lanka regional policies while emphasising the issues that determines the security perceptions.
The UNP Government and South Asia - (1948-1956; 1965-1970)

The first Prime Minister D.S. Senanayke also based his country's security on the assumption that the most likely threat to her independence and sovereignty would come from India, while also perceiving threat from communist China. The fear of Pax-Indiana loomed large, despite India's foreign policy goal of protecting the autonomy of small countries and promotion of regional peace and cooperation dominated the security perception of Sri Lanka. In fact the conflictual relationship between India and Pakistan and other unresolved bilateral issues between India and neighbours such as Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan as well as Sri Lanka kept Sri Lanka's apprehensions alive. As far as Sri Lanka was concerned two issues – Kachcha Thivu island in the palk strait and the issue of citizenship of the Indian Tamils formed the core of he problem between India.19

Thus, in order to protect its security from any external threat, particularly India, and acquire a balance vis-à-vis India, Sri Lanka entered into a defense arrangement with Britain, wherein Britain was made responsible to protect Sri Lanka's sovereignty, and security while maintaining control over the air base at Katunayake and naval base at Trincomallee. D.S Senanayake also acquired membership to the Commonwealth which he considered to be essential for Sri Lanka's security. This also provided Sri Lanka with a better bargaining capabilities vis-à-vis India who was also a member of the Commonwealth. Senanayake had already begun to look West ward to develop diplomatic relationship. By the mid 1950s it had already established relations with fourteen other countries, while using Britain good office to conduct its relation with this countries.20

With regard to the region Sri Lanka steered clear from the bilateral conflicts between India and Pakistan and tried to maintain cordial relationship with all its neighbours. It joined India in the promotion of South Asian as well as Afro-Asian cooperation. This policy, which was initiated by D.S. Senanayake, was pursued by his successors Dudley Senanayake and more rigorously by Sir John Kotelawala.21

Sri Lanka pro-West attitude and the citizen issue were matters of concern to India. Furthermore, Sir John Kotelawala attempt to enter the SEATO and ASEAN had
generated much concern as it could adversely affect the security of India as well as that of the region. However, this attempt did not succeed due to opposition within Sri Lanka. The opposition was made on the grounds that it would drag the country into the vortex of the Cold War. Sri Lanka continued to be committed to the idea of NAM and in many occasion, especially on international issues like the Independence of Indonesia, Suez and Hungary issue of national liberation, disarmament and resistance to military pact it shared common view with India. During the reign of Kotelawala issue of Indo-China was discussed with India and other participating countries at what came to be known as the Colombo Power-1954, and played a leading role in the subsequent Bandung Conference of 1955.

D.S. Senanayake was able to initiate talks with Nehru on issues of Indian Tamil migrants workers and pressurised India to relocate them. Nehru, however held the view that they had emigrated during the British time and should be granted citizenship on the base of their long duration of stay and contribution to the country’s social and economic development. Discussion on the issue continued and it was only in 1964 with the signing of the Indo-Ceylon Agreement.

In 1965 when the UNP, under Dudley Senanayake came to power the relations between India and Sri Lanka had been normalised and the perceived threat from India had also been minimised following the shared views and international role played by S. Bandranaike and Nehru. Further, the Sino-India war of 1961, brought the UNP closer to India because of its reservation towards communist China. Sri Lanka had restrained from close relationship with China because of China’s suppression of Buddhism which was a dominant religion in different parts of China. Such favourable attitude was reflected in the bilateral discussion in attempting to resolve the territorial problem with regard to Kachcha Thivu island as well as the Tamil ethnic problems. With the signing of the Srimavo-Shastri Pact in 1964 and improved relation with India that continued, Dudley Senanayake tried to strengthen the bond by his visit to India in 1968. He also welcomed Shastri’s attempt to improve trade relations with Sri Lanka. Due the good relations he was able to enact the Indo-Ceylon Agreement Implementation Act, which was to grant Sri Lankan Citizenship in the ratio of 4:6 to register person in Sri Lanka.
Sri Lanka however, did continue to boost its interaction with Pakistan with which it had a common outlook towards the West and fear of India. Its interaction with Pakistan revolved around aid and trade. When in opposition he had been critical of the SLFP’s when Mrs. Bandranaike negotiated the Maritime agreement with China. Despite his anti-Communist stand he did not abrogate the agreement with China as he did not want to jeopardise the Rice-Rubber pact with China which was due for renewal. In fact to balance China he did contemplate improving ties with ASEAN, which was formed as a security devise to check potential Chinese expansionism. Despite, Dudley Senanayke’s attitude and inclination towards West and ASEAN, China too did not wish to rupture its relationship with Sri Lanka because of its politico-strategic interest in the island.

The SLFP Government and South Asia (1956-1965; 1970-1977)

The SLFP led United Front came to power in 1956 under the leadership of Mr. Bandranaike. A season diplomat and statesmen he shared much of Nehru’s national and international vision and idea. As an ardent advocate of Non-alignment and South Asian regionalism he furthered the friendship with India. He also developed close relationship with China and other communist countries and through this achieved a balanced of power with regard to the security of Sri Lanka. He also maintained cordial relation with Pakistan on the common quest for seeking a counter weight to India as well as promotion of national identity.

During the Delhi Conference in November 1956 on issue of Hungary and Suez the common political outlook shared of Nehru and Mr. Bandranaike was quite visible. The improved relationship after 1956 was seen in political relations as well as at the personal and cultural level. Nehru visited Sri Lanka to participate in the Buddha Jayanti Celebration in May 1957 and both reaffirmed their faith in the principles of Panscheel. This change in attitude in Indo-Sri Lanka relations lead Sri Lanka to no longer perceive India as a threat and it no longer looked upon the Commonwealth as an instrument to redress the balance against India. Mr. Bandranaike considered India to be a friendly power and the atmosphere of mutual confidence surrounded the relationship between the two countries.
He adopted a practical attitude on the Indian Tamil issue. He shared Nehru’s view on the problem of the Indian Tamils and that it should not be treated exclusively on as legal political ground but also from a humane point of view. However, the negotiation could not be pursued further due to his untimely death. Mrs. Bandranaike who took over the mantel from her husband Mr. Bandranaike, continued with the policy followed by her late husband. The close relations between India and Sri Lanka developed by Nehru and Mr. Bandranaike was further strengthened. Nehru was invited to Sri Lanka in 1962 by Mrs. Bandranakie to inaugurate the Bandranaike Memorial Ayurvedic Research Institute.33

Mrs. Bandranaike maintained close ties with China and this assured Sri Lanka of Chinese economic assistance and that too on generous term. However, during the 1962 Sino-Indian war the government of Sri Lanka was put under severe test. Mr. Bandranaike resisted pressure from the opposition as well as from the party to brand China as aggressor nor did she openly side with India as her government professed close relationship with both the belligerent states. This was a delicate situation, but she showed considerable dexterity in managing the situation. She took the initiative in summoning a conference of the Colombo Powers and attempted to explore ways and means to bring the two parties on the negotiation table and settle the boundary dispute. She visited Peking as well as Delhi to discuss the matter. India accepted the conference proposals in toto, while China did the same with some reservations. However, although no concrete result was attained the mediation did prevent further escalation of hostilities. This move by Sri Lanka enhanced the its status in diplomatic circles.34 This clearly indicated the Mrs. Bandranaike was concerned about peace and stability of the region as instability in the region, particularly when it involved two major player India and China, would definitely have affected the island. Furthermore, the clash between the two had shown sign of turning into a global drama as the US, the UK and the Soviet Union had already entered the fray indirectly.35

The move by Mrs. Bandranaike were appreciated by both India and China. This could be seen from the concrete deal she was able to signed with India on the long contentious and pending issues related to the Indian Tamil problem. Under the Indo-Ceylon pact also referred to as the Sirima-Shastri Agreement Sri Lanka agreed to grant citizenship to 300,000 of an estimated 975,000 person of Indian origin and
India agreed to repatriate to India 525,000 person. The 150,000 person not covered under the agreement were to be subject for further negotiation.\textsuperscript{36} Latter in 1974, during her second term, Mrs. Bandranaike and Mrs. Gandhi agreed to take equal responsibility for the remaining number of persons. Sri Lanka was to grant citizenship to 75,000 person, while the same number of person were to be repatriated to India in addition to the number agreed earlier on.\textsuperscript{37}

During her visit to China in 1963, she was received with great warmth and appreciation. In the Joint Communiqué issued by the two Prime Minister it was affirmed that the two are bound by ties of friendship, economic cooperation and cultural and religious exchange. They also affirmed their determination to strengthen economic cooperation and work for the cause of Afro-Asian solidarity and world peace. Subsequently, the visit culminated in Sri Lanka entering into a Maritime Agreement with China giving Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to China in respect to commercial vessels engaged in cargo and commercial services. This agreement, however, was a subject of great concern to India who alleged that Trincomalee was handed to China and it was using for its warships.\textsuperscript{38}

Sri Lanka maintained neutrality on the Indo-Pak issue of Kashmir. It sought to maintain cordial relation with Pakistan. This helped Sri Lanka maintain the existing balance of power in the region as well as maintain its capabilities vis-à-vis India. Sri Lanka’s also tried to improve its relation with Nepal and other smaller states in the region. This also proved successful as the other states were also looking for friends that would enable them increase their bargaining capacity vis-à-vis India. However, it should be noted here that the capabilities were mainly for diplomatic purpose and not for military-strategic purpose. India also nurtured such efforts as it prevented them from seeking extra-regional counterweights.

Indo-Sri Lanka relations suffered a setback during the Indo-Pak war of 1971. Sri Lanka permitted the refuelling of Pakistani Plane carrying military personnel to East Pakistan (Bangladesh) to suppress the liberation struggle.\textsuperscript{39} It did not yield to Indian request to ban the use of airport facilities by Pakistan. Further, to circumvent India’s objection it justified its stand stating that the PIA flights were carrying
civilians. However, did not recognize the independent status of Bangladesh for fear of offending Pakistan or China and its policy posture towards it too was ambivalent.  

This however, did not strain the relation between the two. Latter in 1971, when Sri Lanka faced the problem of the JVP insurrection, Mrs. Bandranaike approached India along with other countries. India promptly responded by sending five frigates to seal off the approach to Colombo. In addition it also provided assistance in term of military equipment and personnel. The other countries that came to Sri Lanka's help were US, UK, USSR, Yugoslavia and Pakistan. However, Mrs. Gandhi quick response also arose not only from the fact that India national interest was to protect democratic system and maintain stability in Sri Lanka but also that the JVP had communist backing from China and North Korea.  

Mrs. Bandranaike was also successful in settling the maritime border issue. The problem had arisen in the 1956 and 1957 when India unilaterally extended its territorial waters. In 1974 the demarcation of the maritime border in the Palk Strait was agreed between India, Sri Lanka and Maldives.  

The establishment and development of naval base and communication centre in Diego Gracia by the US was a matter of concern to the Sri Lanka as well as littoral states. Sri Lanka's concern about the presence of super power in the region and the scope of the Cold War beckoning at it doorstep was bound to affect its security, economic as well as political interest. Mrs. Bandranaike immediately responded to these developments and vociferously articulated the demand for declaring Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. India and other littoral states concerned about presence of the super power in the region supported the move.  

This concern and need was further accentuated by the changes the regional security environment witnessed during 1971. The year was marked by the signing of the Indo-soviet treaty, Indo-Pak war and the creation of Bangladesh and the JVP insurrection in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka's domestic environment was affected by the youth insurrection, which seemed to have linked with China and aimed at adopting Chinese philosophy of agrarian revolt. These factors threatened the security of Sri Lanka concomitant to the presence of the super power Cold War rivalry which
entered the Asian continent lead Bandaranaike to propose for Peace Zone in the
Indian Ocean.\textsuperscript{43}

The proposal was first formally presented at the third Non Align Summit in
Lusaka in 1970. The declaration would entail the exclusion of great power rivalries,
bases, and their armed forces as well as nuclear weapons from the region and to allow
the littoral and hinterland states of that region to live in an atmosphere of peace where
they could cooperate constructively for mutual development. Its main intention was to
protect the states form foreign intrusion contributing to international peace and
security by removing a vital strategic area form the arena of Super Power rivalry.
Since, the proposal was not received very well at the Commonwealth Head of
Government meeting, Mrs. Bandaranaike, submitted the proposal to the General
Assembly of the United Nation. After a first committee discussion the subject was
adopted by the General Assembly on 16\textsuperscript{th} December 1971 as an agenda item for
a formal resolution. The resolution embodied the following terms:\textsuperscript{44}

1) Call upon the Great Power in conformity with the Declaration to enter into
immediate consultation with the littoral states of the Indian Ocean with a
view to:
   • Halting the further exaltion and expansion of their military presence
     in the Indian Ocean.
   • Eliminating form the Indian Ocean all bases, military installations,
     logistical supply facilities, the disposition of nuclear weapons and
     weapons of mass destruction and any manifestation of Great Power
     military implementation of this Declaration.

2) Call upon the littoral and hinterland states of the Indian Ocean, the permanent
members of the Security Council and other maritime users of the Indian Ocean
in pursuit of the objectives of establishing a system of universal collective
security without military alliances and strengthening international security
through regional and other cooperation to enter into consultation with a view
to the implementation of this declaration.
The declaration did not augur well with the interest of the great powers, especially the Western bloc for it deprived them of the vital strategic location which was used to keep a check on USSR and China. Countries like France, UK, USA, Japan and the USSR had some reservation and ostensibly charged that it interfered with freedom of navigation provided by international law. With the break of Middle East war in October 1973, and the subsequent OAPEC oil embargo and price hike, the US declared that the Indian Ocean, particularly the Persian Gulf, was vitally important to the security interest of the United States. This response marked a departure to the restrained policy of the US towards the Indian Ocean.45

However, Mrs. Bandaranaike continued to relentless campaign to garner support. In this regard Mrs. Gandhi wholeheartedly supports Mrs. Bandaranaike and worked along canvassing for support. It was then during the 27th. Secession of the United Nations that the decision to appoint an adhoc committee to study the practical measures for its implementation was taken. However in July 1979 with much efforts the final Document was adopted with the majority participant agreeing on the parameters and principle of implementation, which can be classified as follows:46

- Limits of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.
- Halting the further escalation and expansion and eliminating the military presence of the great powers in the Indian Ocean, conceived in the context of great power rivalry.
- Elimination of military bases and other military installations of the great power form the Indian Ocean conceived in the context of great power rivalry.
- Denuclearization of the Indian Ocean in the context of the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.
- Non use of force and peaceful settlement of disputes.
- Strengthening of international security through regional and other cooperation.
- Free and unimpeded use of the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace by the vessels of all nations in accordance with the principle of international law and custom.
After 1974, Sri Lanka’s psyche and fear was intensified following India’s nuclear test in Pokharam, Rajasthan. Although India reiterated the fact that these were for peaceful use the nuclear test did lead to the neighbours believing that India was once again portraying its dominance in the region. Pakistan immediately suggested that one way of achieving Indian Ocean Peace Zone was through the establishment of Nuclear Free Zone in the sub system in a piecemeal manner. Taking the lead Pakistan introduced the proposal in the UN General Assembly in 1974 for South Asia a Nuclear Free Zone. India opposed an international agreement in this regard and introduced its own resolution urging South Asian countries to take its own initiative towards Nuclear Free Zone. Further it stated that the states must agree among themselves about the basic conditions of a Nuclear Free Zone before bringing the question to the UN. Thus the question of denuclearization were on loose footing for each state viewed the security in its own terms and state like Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh were leaning towards the West and China aiming to increase its own power and status, benefiting economically and trying to counter- India dominance through means of alliance. These differences in attitude and perception hindered the move of the proposal for denuclearisation and Indian Ocean Peace Zone.47

The harmony in perception in Congress (Nehru and Indira) and the SLFP under the Bandranaiikes saw the maintenance of closer ties between India and Sri Lanka. Although, the period was marked by a low level of suspicion, Sri Lanka was able to achieve a degree of manoeuvrability with regard to dealings with Indo-China and Indo-Pak war. It evolved a regional policy that enable it to serve its own security interest by balancing relationship with the three main regional actors – India, Pakistan and China, and played a major role in preventing the eruption of any major conflict in the region which could jeopardise its security and independence.

The UNP Government and South Asia - (1977-1994)

The UNP under Dudley Senanayake (1965-1970) had witnessed closer relationship with India. This trend continued even after Jayawardene came to power in 1977. The early phase of J.R. Jayawardene saw a regime change in India when the Janata under Moraraji Desai and later Charan Singh became Prime Minister. The good relation that continued was because of the identification of interest between the
UNP and the Janata. Both had been successful in toppling strong government in their respective countries and wanted to depart from the policy of their predecessors. They look towards the West as friends. During this period India too was leaning towards the West as it needed Western aid to meet the demand of food shortage and economic difficulties. In 1978, J. R. Jayawardene undertook a state visit to India and Nepal which was followed by Desai visit to Sri Lanka in 1979. However, this period did not last long as the Janata government tenure came to an end following instability within the party.

J. R. Jayawardene was critical of India military built-up. The relation between Gandhi and Jayawardene cooled off particularly when Mrs. Gandhi did not take kindly to the move by J. R. Jayawardene to impose ban on Mrs. Bandaranaike civic liberties. The relations further soured with Jayawardene pro-West policy orientation following open economic policy and liberalisation of the economy opening the doors for Western investment. The pro-West policy was also visible from his soft-pedalling the issue of Indian Ocean Zone of Peace and refusal to condemn US presence in Diego Garcia. Further, he rejects India’s and USSR tender for repair and modernisation of the oil tank farm at Trincomalee, and instead gave the contract to a Singaporean Consortium allegedly supposed to have Western connection. He further antagonised India by providing facilities to Voice of America (VOA). India’s concern grew with the prospect that Jayawardene would grant base facilities to the US at Trincomalee.

This trend in Sri Lanka foreign policy and their security implications for India continued to dominate the Indo-Sri Lanka relations till the early 1980’s and it witnessed its nadir point after the ethnic crisis of July 1983 when India begun to take keen interest in the island development till finally from playing the role of a mediator it intervened in its attempt to resolve the problem undermining the security and sovereignty of Sri Lanka.

Prior to the 1983 riots, Tamil militants were present in Tamil Nadu and used it as its base to carry on their struggle towards Tamil Eelam. There were further allegation that the Indian agency RAW was assisting the separatist movement with equipment and training. However, there is difference of opinion with regard to the
involvement of RAW prior to 1983, but some report do confirm that RAW got involved in the movement after the 1983 riots.\textsuperscript{50}

Furthermore, the Tamil Nadu connection to the separatist movement had begun to surface. The DMK leader Karunanidhi called an all Party Conference and while expressing solidarity with the cause of the Tamils also pleaded the Indian government to provide asylum to the Tigers. The then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, M.G. Ramachandran was also concerned about the fate of the Tamils in Sri Lanka but desisted from commenting on the problem and asserted that Tamil Nadu will not interfere in Sri Lanka’s internal problems. Such sympathy on the other side of the Palk Straits was a matter of great concern to Sri Lankans, particularly the Sinhalese. Their aroused fear that Indira Gandhi might consider the option of a military offensive against Sri Lanka and also while trying to destabilise the country attempt a la Bangladesh. However, Indira Gandhi conveyed that although India was concerned about the developments of Sri Lanka it would not interfere in the internal matter of any neighbour.\textsuperscript{51}

The dimension and magnitude of the July 1983 riots was unprecedented. It was directed at Tamil’s life and property. It’s reported that the violence had the support and involvement of the government, Buddhist clergy and Sri Lanka security force (police and armed). It infact affected the Indian nationals (Tamil of Indian origin) and establishments.\textsuperscript{52} Furthermore, Sri Lanka approached friendly countries like USA, UK, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Maldives for military and political support. India was excluded because of the connection of Tamil Nadu with the problem. The USSR was also excluded because it identified itself with India’s regional concern. This move to involve foreign force was inimical to India’s regional security concern and interest. Mrs. Gandhi disapproved this move and cautioned all powers to stay away from it. Furthermore, this attitude of J.R. Jayawardene implied that he was looking for a military solution to the crisis.\textsuperscript{53}

Although, Jayawardene had earlier (1981 and 1983) asserted that the Defence Pact with Britain remained intact, Britain did not openly come to Sri Lanka’s rescue. However, the organisation called Keenie Meenie services helped train the Sri Lankan antiterrorist forces. The US also did not support Sri Lanka probably because it was
influenced by the, although small, influential Tamil diaspora in the US. Furthermore, during this period it was also building closer economic and strategic relations with India and implicitly recognised that the management of the region should be left to the regions’ predominant power. Besides China, South Africa, Singapore and Malaysia provided Sri Lanka with arms and military equipment. Pakistan and Israel actively helped Sri Lanka fight the Tamil Militants. Pakistan reciprocated to Sri Lanka’s call by providing arms and training to the Sri Lankan troops, while Israeli secret service Mossad provided counterinsurgency training to the Sri Lankan security forces.\textsuperscript{54}

Indira Gandhi was quick to respond to these developments. He sent her emissary P.V. Narasimha Rao to Sri Lanka to access the situation and on his return called on J.R. Jayawardene to convey her disapproval of Sri Lanka seeking foreign assistance and that the situation calls for a political and not military solution. Mrs. Gandhi offered India’s good office to bring the conflicting parties to the negotiation table and find a solution to the problems, while asserting that India stood for the independence, unity and integrity of Sri Lanka. Mrs. Gandhi also announce the setting up of a Sri Lanka Relief Fund Committee and contributed an initial amount of Indian Rs. One Crore for the same. Subsequently, J.R. Jayawardene also sent his brother Hector Jayawardene to India to hold discussion with the Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi. Gopalswamy Parthasarati was to represent India in the talks and draw plan of action for settling the issue and implement the District Development Council.\textsuperscript{55} Following various rounds of talk a broad framework for political settlement within a united Sri Lanka emerges under India’s good office. However, the proposal necessitated that the TULF give up its demand for a separate Eelam in place for a new setup of Regional Council after the merging of the District Development Councils within a Province. The Tamil groups reject it the offer of formation of Regional council as ‘too little’ and demanded for total regional autonomy in the absence of an Eelam.\textsuperscript{56}

It should be noted here that the Sri Lankan government was not really enthusiastic of India’s involvement in, what it perceived to be its internal matter. In fact the Western countries whom Sri Lanka had approached for assistance did not respond very encouragingly. Furthermore, the ailing economic condition was further deteriorating with the fall in export as well as tourism the island major foreign exchange earner. The international aid donors, particularly the World Band and IMF,
which had stepped up aid following the open economic policy of Jayawardene, cautioned the government against the deteriorating domestic instability and worsening economy. Thus the pressure from within and from outside compelled Jayawardene to agree to negotiate with the Tamils as well as accept India as a mediator.  

Following the agreement by the two countries to find a solution to the problems, talks and discussion between Parthasarathi and the Sri Lankan's continued. In the meantime Jayawardene also held talks with Mrs. Gandhi during the Commonwealth Head of States meeting held in Delhi during the last week of November 1983. It was during the Delhi talks that the final shape of the draft proposal, which subsequently became the controversial Annexure ‘C’, was drawn.

The Annexure ‘C’ contained fourteen proposals providing for more extensive devolution of powers to the province. It was similar to the one provided by the Bandranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact of 1957. The proposal was not received favourably by the Sinhalese as well as his government and Jayawardene also disowned it stating that the proposal was not his neither of his government but suggestions for the formulation of an agenda for an All Party Conference. This disowning of the proposal of indeed a grave mistake. According to A.J. Wilson, Annexure ‘C’ was the best compromise that any Sinhalese government could ever have obtained given the determination of the Tamils militant to seek a military solution and achieve the goal of a sovereign state.

However, Jayawardene summoned the All Party Conference (APC) to discuss the ethnic problem and seek a solution to the same. After a series of meetings and deliberations the APC on 14, December 1984 putforth two bills to effect decentralisation; the Draft District and Provincial Council Bill, and the draft bill of Pradeshiya Sabha (village level local bodies). R. Premadasa, then Prime Minister did not support the move and demand a referendum on the proposal. He felt that India was interfering with the internal matter of the island, while sheltering and protecting the terrorists. On the other hand the TULF leader Amirthalingam stated that the two bills did not embody the scheme of autonomy and was not accepted by the Tamils. Following the statement Jayawardene dropped the APC proposal. Thus India’s role as a mediator and its attempts to bring a settlement to the crisis failed, although it was
able to pressurise Sri Lanka and bring it under its influence. This also indicates that Mrs. Gandhi two tract diplomacy that is of harbouring the terrorist and pressuring Jayawardene failed.

Rajiv Gandhi, who succeeded his mother Indira Gandhi after her assassination, showed keen interest to establish peace and stability in the island. Like his mother he continued the effort to establish a good working relationship with Jayawardene as well as attempts to bring peace in the island which witnessed in the culmination of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of July 29, 1987. However, India’s role from a mediator took a sharp turn when it took the form of intervention and latter actively participated in implementation of the proposal.

It should be noted here that prior to the 1987 accord, violence had escalated in intensity and magnitude. In the backdrop of this a meeting between Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lanka Minister for Internal security Lalit Athulathumudali was held in Delhi in February 1985 to discuss the ongoing violence in the island. The meeting was described as ‘most constructive’ and Indian government took two important steps that convinced Sri Lankan of Rajiv Gandhi’s genuine interest in resolving the problem. First G. Parthasarthi, who himself being a Tamil was not favourably accepted by the Sinhalese was replaced by Romesh Bhandari; and secondly steps were taken to curb Tamil Militants in India. This steps was the major confidence building measure adopted by India. Romesh Bhandari visited Sri Lanka and after discussion with Sri Lankan officials was able to draw a new Peace Package.62

Consequently, a summit level meeting between Rajiv Gandhi and Jayawardene was organised in June and both agreed to defuse the situation and create a conducive atmosphere for finding political solution.63 The efforts culminated into the agreement of a three month cease-fire by the five Tamil separatist group and under India’ initiative it was agreed that fresh round of negotiations would be commence at Thimpu, the Bhutanese capital. Rajiv Gandhi also made it clear that India the did not support the Tamil demand for a separate state and did not expect the Tamil to be given more powers that that enjoyed by Indian states at the same time it would not support any solution that undermines the liberty of the Tamils.64
The Thimpu talks concluded with the proposal being tabled by both the Sri Lankan delegation and the Tamil groups* and it was further agreed that the meeting would be reconvened on August 12. There was much expectation that the second round of talks - Thimpu-II would hail much success. The Tamils continued to adhere to the four cardinal points/principle – Tamil nation, Tamil homeland, self determination and fundamental rights of all Tamils in Ceylon. On the other hand the Sri Lankan delegation presented the proposal for devolution based on formation of district and provincial councils, which was analogous to what was offered at the All Party Conference in 1984. While the Tamils did not accept the proposal put forth by the Sri Lanka, the outright rejection of the four points by was marked by a walk out by the Tamil groups. Thus the hard-line taken by both the party led to a total collapse of the Thimpu Talks. The Tamil Groups were also antagonised by the report of the killings of 200 innocent Tamils in Vavuniya and stated that it was ‘farcical’ to talk peace when there is security for the Tamil people.65

India’s efforts to revive the peace process continued. Following, the Thimpu-II Talks, Hector Jayawardene undertook a trip to India in late August and with India assuming a more proactive role they were able to draw a ‘working paper’ dealing with the terms of accord and understanding. However, the differences over the decentralisation of power continued to be the main stumbling bloc to bring about a settlement of the issues. While the TULF continued the demand for the merger of the Northern and Eastern province, Sri Lanka as well as India did not favour this demand. During the SAARC summit in Bangalore in November 1986, the matters were further discussed between Rajiv Gandhi and Jayawardene. Jayawardene proposed to divide the Eastern Province into three separate provincial council areas – Tamils, Sinhalese and Muslim.66

Further when Jayawardene expressed his willingness to meet Prabhakaran, the LTTE Chief, Prabhakaran declined the offer. India on the other hand appreciated Jayawardene's latest proposal as ‘good’ and was convinced that it would form the base for further negotiations. Prior to the SAARC summit India exerted pressure on the Tamil Militants and arranged a meeting between the Indian cabinet ministers, Tamil

* The six Tamil groups included the moderate TULF and the five militant groups were, EPRLF, EROS LTTE, PLOTE, and TELO.
Nadu Chief Minister, M.G. Ramachandran and the Tamil groups in Madras and assured that Tamil militants would not jeopardise the talks between the TULF and Sri Lankan government. Subsequently, to India’s decision the Tamil Nadu government mounted ‘operation tiger’ to disarm the Tamil Militants and approximately 1000 militants were disarmed and some prominent leaders placed under house arrest for security reasons. The LTTE talks with India centred on the homeland issue, it also rejected Sri Lanka’s proposal to retain Trincomalee as a Sinhalese district.

Following the SAARC summit two Indian Minister Natwar Singh and P. Chidambaram visited Sri Lanka in December 1986 and after dissection formulated a new proposal, which came to be know as the 19 December Proposal. The government of Jayawrdene was not able to evolve a consensus over the proposal and hence did not push it very hard. The Tamils also did not seem to be convinced with the proposal. This development along with the continuing violence and attacks on Sinhalese by the LTTE saw Sri Lanka slowing moving towards finding a military solution.

However, in the mean time the Sri Lankan government tried to have direct talk with the LTTE. This process begun with the returning of bodies of soldiers killed by the LTTE. Sri Lanka was under the impression that if they could hold direct talks with the LTTE and find a solution then India could be bypassed and it could circumvent India’s role. Thus by holding direct talk with the LTTE (until then the TULF represented the Tamil groups) Sri Lanka recognised the LTTE as the de-facto representative of the Sri Lankan Tamil.

This policy plank of the government failed when in early 1987 confrontation once again emerged with the LTTE leader returning to Jaffna and taking control of civil administration in the North. Thus unilaterally declaring independence of the region. Simultaneously, Jayawardene government begun to exert economic, political as well as military pressure to force the LTTE to come to the negotiation table. The government imposed a fuel embargo, economic and communication blockade on the Jaffna peninsula. Finally, the government took to military offensive and the army was despatched to the East and North with clear instruction to clear the areas.
India was critical of the move while sending a strong message to Jayawardene indicating that the military solution would prolong and escalate conflict. Indian further announced the suspension of its good office and demanded that the Sri Lankan government should stop military offensive, lift economic blockade and affirm the 19 December proposal. Heeding to the tough posture taken by India the Sri Lankan government in April unilaterally declared a cease-fire and offered to consider the lifting of economic and communication blockade. Despite, the cease-fire and offer to lift the ban the LTTE declined the offer and continued with warfare. On 17th April three buses were stopped and after separating the Sinhalese from the Tamil, 127 person in all were shot dead. This was followed by a bomb explosion in Colombo claiming 200 death. With such ongoing massacre and series of attacks the government was left with no option but to commence the military offensive more intensely. In May the security force launched ‘operation liberation’ and were able to bring Vadamarachchi, which included the birth place of Prabhakaran, was captured and the strong hold of the LTTE had fallen into the hand of the advancing army.

India warned Colombo of the danger of military offensive and condemned the act. It latter offered to send relief supplies to Jaffna by sea. The Indian flotilla carrying relief supplies were intercepted by Sri Lanka navy and sent back. In response to this, on June 4, five Indian AN-32 transport plane, escorted by four Mirage 2000 fighter plane in clear violation of Sri Lanka sovereignty and air space para-dropped 25 tonnes of food supplies. Thus India attempted to show its predominance and indicated that if Sri Lanka did not tow in it line then it could further adopted more stringent measures of coercive diplomacy which it had overtly displayed. The airdrop was also a warning to the rebel group that if India had not stood in the way they could have been wiped out. It also gave a clear signal to the LTTE that India was prepared to go ahead to impose a settlement to the crisis with or without them.

Following the airdrop episode Sri Lanka and India worked out modalities for organising relief supply. In the mean time Foreign Minister A.C.S. Hameed carried out discussion with Indian leaders on resumption of talk and stated that India’s mediation is valid and necessary and the 19 December proposal could be the base for negotiation. The Indian High Commissioner J.N. Dixit on an invitation from president Jayawardene visited Sri Lanka and held meeting with 12 Cabinet Ministers to discuss
the proposal formulated by the president. After a series of consultation between Jayawardene his Minister and Dixit on the other, the President sent a message to Rajiv Gandhi with the content of the proposal for creating autonomous province comprising Northern and Eastern province. He further stated that if the proposal was acceptable he wanted India to underwrite the Accord.\footnote{74}

The proposal was found to be favourable to the Tamil groups. However, the LTTE announced the rejection of the accord and affirmed his resolve to continue with the armed struggle. He alleged that the accord was drawn ignoring the aspiration of the Tamils and described Gandhi’s decision as disappointing and shocking. Despite the rejection of the proposal by the LTTE, the two country went ahead and signed the accord on 29\textsuperscript{th} July 1987.\footnote{75}

The signing of the accord envisaged ending the civil war by establishment of a cease-fire within 48 hours, cessation of hostilities and disarming the militants. India was to guarantee the implementation of the accord and ensured that the Indian territory will not be used for activities prejudicial to the unity, integrity and security of Sri Lanka. Further the accord inscribed a clause where an Indian peace keeping contingent may be invited by the President of Sri Lanka to guarantee and enforce the cessation of hostilities, if required.\footnote{76}

With the signing of the accord the Indian Peace Keeping Force landed and Jaffna to augment the capability of the Sri Lankan army as well as divert Tamil resentment against Sri Lankan authority. Initially the IPKF was able ensure cooperation among the Tamils and the surrender of arms by the smaller groups and even by the LTTE seemed to be quite impressive. The arm surrender process turned out to be illusory. The LTTE continued to procure arms from Singapore and continued with hostilities against the Sinhalese. The truce collapsed and the IPKF, whose role was non combative, was engulfed in direct confrontation with the LTTE. This situation was not expected and from a guarantor for implementing the accord India got directly involved in military conflict.\footnote{77} However, during the three years of its presence in Sri Lanka it was successful, thought limited, to restore peace and order and maintain some level of stability. It was able to bring many Tamil parties as well as the population to the electoral process and conducted three successful elections.
For Sri Lanka the accord assured the preservation of its unity, territorial integrity and peace and political stability. On the other hand India met its security need of involvement of any extra regional power in the region. Besides from the security perspective India got assurance from Sri Lanka that Trincomalee or any port would not be made available for military use in any manner prejudicial to Indian interest; the oil tank farm would be an Indo- Sri Lanka joint venture, the broadcasting organisation would be used only for public broadcasting facilities and not for any military or intelligence purpose and the two would reach for an early understanding about employment of foreign military personnel in Sri Lanka. In this regard Sri Lanka had to pay a high price while conceding to Indian demands. India brought Sri Lanka into its security fold and displayed its role predominant regional power.78

For Jayawardene securing peace and stability of Sri Lanka was imperative for both political and economic reasons. The economy was deteriorating with 17 per cent of the national budget being allocated for defence. Furthermore, Tourism which generated foreign exchange and employment had been tremendously affected. Donors were not willing to provide more aid and those available was likely to be curtailed, because of the ongoing ethnic strive. These development further crippled the policy of open-economy and liberalisation initiated by him. Jayawardene had to find a solution to the ongoing problem and with foreign assistance not forthcoming he had no other option left but to agree to India’s role as mediator and signed the accord.79

The Indian rationale to get deeply involved into the Sri Lanka internal crisis stems from two imperatives. The ethnic problem witnessed the influx of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees and this was coupled with illegal movement of goods too. Further, after the 1983 riots mass exodus of Tamil civilians became a matter of major concern. Between 1983-84 50,000 refugees sought asylum in India and by 1987 the figure had reached to 1,50,000. The influx of refugees was coupled with the mounting pressure from Tamil Nadu and they asserted their sympathy through strikes, public meeting. India could not ignore their feeling and also feared that the Tamil nationalism could also set the pace of separatist tendency in India which was seen in the 1960s. Furthermore, both the parties DMK and AIADMK were then separatist outfits. From the security perspective India did not want the involvement of any extra regional
power in the regions problems and it wanted to circumvent Sri Lanka attempt to secure assistance from the US, UK, China and Pakistan.\(^80\)

It was during the tenure of Jayawardene that the idea of SAARC was mooted by the Bangladeshi President Zia. Jayawardene showed keen interest and supported the proposal. He even agreed to host the first meeting of foreign secretary in Colombo in 1981. The South Asian regional cooperation was seen as a platform where the smaller neighbours could increase their bargaining power as well as balance the power vis-à-vis India. Jayawardene however, was not happy with the policy to keep away bilateral and contentious issues out of the deliberations of SAARC. He strongly felt that bilateral issues should be the core of the forum.\(^81\) During the Dhaka summit in 1985, he urged members to work ‘hand in hand’ to promote the ideals of the organisations and hoped that ‘there would be no mutiny aboard the SAARC ship’.\(^82\) He envisaged the organisation role as working for the welfare of humanity and would be able to solve the problem of poverty, hunger, unemployment for the countries South Asia. However, he exploited the forum to discuss bilateral issues and during his tenure bilateral issues became a major part of his deliberations.\(^83\)

**Sri Lanka during Premadasa Period**

Following Jayawardene decision to retire from politics, Ranasinghe Premadasa then Prime Minister, took the reign of the country executive in 1988. He was critical of India’s role in the internal affair and accused it as being a stumbling bloc in the realisation of peace as it nurtured and sheltered the terrorists. As Prime Minister in 1984 after the presentation of the APC proposal he had demanded a referendum on the proposal and he had opposed the accord with India. The presence of the IPKF was already turning to be a contentious issues between the two countries. It has already hurt the pride of the Sinhalese and the JVP made the agreement and the presence of the IPKF the main issue of their election campaign. Premadasa was not able to avoid the sentiment of the masses and made the withdrawal of the IPKF a major plank of his election campaign.\(^84\)

As president he was critical of India’s contention that the IPKF was linked to the devolution and made a unilateral decision and set deadline for the withdrawal of
the troops. He did not consult the Indian counterpart and when enquired about his
decision he stated that the presence of the IPKF was on request of the president of Sri
Lanka and so also their withdrawal. He also expressed his inability to hold the
SAARC summit in November 1989 because of the presence of the IPKF in Sri
Lanka.\textsuperscript{85} His stance was to keep India away from influencing Sri Lanka policy and
hence wanted to minimise its role in the peace process too. In this regard he begun to
initiate the strategy to engage the LTTE as well as the JVP in discussion and dialogue.
Furthermore, he was keen to pressurise India to replace the Letters of Exchanges that
followed the 1987 accord with a friendship treaty, since this letters were criticised as
being a comprise of Sri Lanka sovereignty and independence in foreign policy
decision making.\textsuperscript{86}

India conceded to Premadasa’s demand and the IPKF left Sri Lanka in June
1990. Following this the separatist movement entered a new phase and the war
became more fierce and the opportunity to crush the rebellion was lost largely due to
Premadasa anti Indian policy.\textsuperscript{87}

During this same period the international scenario witnessed momentous
changes due to the end of the Cold War and East-West conflicts. The international
system was in a flux as new alignments were being crystallised. India’s foreign policy
also was adjusting to the new changes and it left India without concern of US
presence in the region as its interest in South Asia no longer was dominated by the
policy of containment of Communism. The growth of regional blocs led countries to
lay much emphasis on trade and investment opportunities and trade was to play a
major role in relation among countries internationally as well as regionally.\textsuperscript{88}

P.V. Narsinma Rao was not keen to play the role of a guardian of the Tamil
people nor did he accept the demand of the LTTE to equate it with the aspiration of
all Tamil. However, India was concerned of the growing activities of the LTTE as it
could impede the stability and security of India. It was under the direction of I.K.
Gujral that India pursued a foreign policy of developing better relation with
neighbouring countries. Gujral identified regional integration and globalisation as the
two main element of post Cold War world and SAARC as the main foci of regional
cooperation. The Gujral doctrine is it came to be widely known gave prominence to
trade and investment and paid more attention to South Asia. This change in the foreign policy was clearly reflected in India's effort to strengthen SAARC. Sri Lanka realised the growth potential of India policy reforms as well as the need to attract foreign investment and access joint market. Premadasa was keen to strengthen SAARC to meet the demand of the changed environment and enhance its trade and boost its ailing economy.

The PA Government and South Asia - (1994-2004)

When Chandrika Kumaratunga assumed power in 1994 she based her policy toward India on 'real politick'. She continued the legacy of her parents, the Bandranaikes, to maintain cordial relations with India and did not perceive as a threat. Kumaratunga also realised the mistake of the earlier president – Jayawardene policy which antagonised India leading to intervention and Premadasa anti-Indian policy and hence shaped Sri Lanka's foreign policy to be palatable to India. She engaged in constant dialogue with India on major foreign policy decision.

The nuclear test in Pokhran by India was criticised by many countries, but Sri Lanka supported the right to test nuclear device. This open support by Sri Lanka was a clear deviation from its earlier stance of disarmament, which it had championed since the 1970s'. In fact, the cornerstone of its policy had been disarmament and it was Sri Lanka who had put forth the proposal for the Indian Ocean Peace Zone, global disarmament and nuclear free zone. However, after Pakistan conducted the test following India, Sri Lanka called the two nations to restrain themselves. Kumaratunga felt that toeing the Indian line was more beneficial despite Pakistan, China and US being close friends and a source of military assistance.

Chandrika Kumartunga attitude towards SAARC was positive and has been advocating for SAPTA and SAFTA. Sri Lanka and Bangladesh first mooted the idea of SAPTA during the SAARC summit in Delhi. Sri Lanka had realised the threat terrorism pose to security and stability and supporting Sri Lanka stand on terrorism, Sri Lanka was the first to adopt domestic legislation to give effect to the SAARC Convention on Suppression of Terrorism. During the Delhi summit she called on all SAARC countries to adopt similar legislation.
While stressing the need for free trade and regional cooperation, Sri Lanka rejected the idea of sub-regional cooperation within the framework of SAARC, which was mooted by Gujral. Prime Minister A. Vajpayee visit to Sri Lanka in June 1998 saw the two countries building closer ties by agreement for trade and close military ties in intelligence sharing. Sri Lanka was the first to sign bilateral preferential trade arrangement with India even before the process of SAPTA was completed. The Indo-Lanka free trade pack is seen to an instrument that would further cement the ties between the two countries. Furthermore, despite Defence Minister George Fernandes pro-LTTE stance, the Indian Navy has been helping the Sri Lankan force in locating and destroying LTTE vessels and also keep check on illegal trafficking and smuggling activities in the Indian Ocean.

After the signing of the agreement to establish bilateral free trade India Sri Lanka relation witnessed a renewed impetus and export of Sri Lanka to India show a sharp rise. The import export ratio improved from 16:1 in 1998 to 5:1 in 2002. The export of Sri Lanka good to India made an impressive growth of 158 per cent with value of Rs. 16,153 million (US $ 167.7 million) in 2002 exceeding the Rs. 6,266 million (US $ 69.4 million) in 2001. Furthermore, a number of Indian industries, particular cooper have been looking for avenues in Sri Lanka. To further boost trade the Indian government in 2003 granted 90 to 100 per cent duty exemption on 2799 more items, while Sri Lanka increased exemption on 4150 items.

The achievement of this development have made them venture in considering arrangement that covers investments, services and intellectual property rights. They have further agreed to negotiate a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) which will provide wider areas of economic cooperation.

During her election campaign Kumaratunga had promise a 'war for peace' meaning that the LTTE would be defeated decisively. She was successful in restoring government authority in Jaffna in 1995 after a period of almost five years. Jaffna was under the control of the LTTE since 1990 when IPKF left Sri Lanka. The government offensive made the LTTE retreat to the jungle of Vanni but continued its operation and by now had acquired more sophisticated weapons and armaments. Although India
maintained its neutrality, the continuation of the guerrilla warfare was a major concern for India. The growing exodus of refugees and pressure from Tamil Nadu could once again lead India toward a proactive decision to end the crisis as it would not like any other power to fill the vacuum. As far as security issues are concern both have agreed to enhance defence cooperation, which would include training to Sri Lanka security personnel by India and consultation between the defence chief to the two countries. Thus while India seeks to protect its security as well as economic interest, Sri Lanka is toeing India lines while it aims to restore peace and stability and enhance economic growth.

Thus the Indo-Sri Lanka relation, during the past few years has been dominated by economic imperatives. The reciprocal trade relations and evolving bilateral security linkages have brought the two nations closer. However, the resolution of the ethnic crisis only can assure economic growth in Sri Lanka and stability in the region.

**South Asian Regional Security Environment**

Before we embark on the discussion of the regional issues and determinants of Sri Lanka's security, a brief discussion on the overall security environment of the region is worth undertaking to provide the background as well as lend clarity to the understanding of the factors and forces that determines Sri Lanka intra-state relations and policies.

Although South Asia is a well defined region in the international society there have been little linkages between them. The South Asian regional security environment has been dominated by the unfolding events in the international environment and also relations between states within as well as outside the region. During the colonial period the entire region, except for Nepal and Bhutan, were under the British colonial administration or the Raj. Britain also perceived the security of the entire region as a whole. However, with the process of decolonisation and the emergence of new states, the independent states sought to enhance their capabilities as well as protect their security by looking for allies outside the region. The Indo-Pak conflict led most states to follow the global divide and relations between them became
more complex. India floated the idea of NAM as well as Asian unity to keep the Cold War politics out of the region. Although, most states adhered to the principles of NAM they continued to look for extra-regional sources for economic assistance and security needs. It was only in the 1970's that the changing regional dynamics led Bangladesh to put forward the proposal of South Asian Regional Cooperation. Such move drew the attention of the West, particularly the US and they responded favourably by even extending economic assistance, as it would keep the communist from the region and enable them promote their interests.97

The changed international environment has provided opportunities to the South Asian states to consolidate the regional organisation as the end of the Cold War has reduced the importance of military-strategic security concerns, and liberalisation and globalisation has drawn attention for the need of economic cooperation and developments.

Although, in geographical term South Asia remains essentially an Indo-Centric region. India’s dominance and centrality stems from both its geographical location and power potential which is one of the important features of the region. While all states share land borders and are contiguous to India, except for Sri Lanka and Maldives which is connected through the Indian ocean, no state in the region have any common borders.98 Co-operation has not followed despite the commonness of history and civilisation. In fact the shared ethnic, religious and cultural linkages create tension as the domestic crisis has tendencies to spill over across boundaries. India’s predominance in term of its size and power has been seen with apprehension and threat perception. To counter this imbalance Pakistan sought to join the CENTO and SEATO, while other neighbours have also flirted with extra regional powers like US, Soviet Union and China to maximize their security vis-a-vis India.99

There is much dissonance in the political system of the state in the region. While India follows a secular polity the other state accord primacy to religion in politics. The Indian federal system drawn on linguistic line afford much autonomy to its units/statse while most of the states have a centralised regimes dominated by major ethnic groups. Moreover, two functioning democracy (India and Sri Lanka), two military regimes (Pakistan and Bangladesh), two traditional monarchies (Bhutan and
Nepal) and authoritarian one party state (Maldives) characterise the political system among the South Asian states. These organising principles is viewed as a threat by another state and reduces the scope of regional co-operation.100

The most problematique issue of the region has been the Indo-Pak rivalry which begun with partition and continues over the disputes on Kashmir and dominates much of the security environment concern of the region. The friendship treaty of India with the Soviet saw Pakistan move closer to US and later China. This not only invited the extra regional powers to the sub-continent but also exacerbated the arms race between the two. The disengagement of the super power from the region, with the end of the Cold War, is likely to intensify the problem and inject new realism in the region.101 Thus despite adhering to the principle of NAM, all states have sought alliance outside the system. Thus their perception on global balance and its effect on the sub-continent is also diverse. Thus the politico-strategic variable necessary for successful regional co-operation, present in ASEAN and EEC, are not present in the South Asian case.102 However, despite these divergence South Asian states have attempted to evolve a co-operative arrangement and the informal steps during the late 1970s led to the crystallisation of SAARC.

SAARC Origin and Evolution: A Brief Background

Regional cooperation has become a world wide phenomenon and an important dimension of international relations where states attempts to maximise its economies through intra-regional linkages and search for regional security and stability.

The post World War-II saw the world divided into two ideological blocs marked by competition. New alignment and strategies were sought by the super power to expand their sphere of influence. Based on the politico-strategic consideration a number of regional organisations were initiated though ostensibly for economic development. To contain the influence of Soviet Union and protect its politico-strategic interest the West promoted groupings like the Rio Pact, OAS in Latin America, NATO in West Europe, CENTO and SEATO in West and central Asia and ASEAN in East Asia. On the other hand, to counter the move of the West
the Soviet supported the formation of Warsaw Pact, a regional organisation of its allies in Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{103}

To counter the super power rivalry and keep them at bay from Third World politics initiative were taken by India, Egypt and Yugoslavia to form a neutral organisation under the banner of Non-Alignment Movement. Most Third World countries, including Sri Lanka, were a party to the movement. Despite, their neutral stance that NAM was aimed at, all countries sought financial as well as military assistance from these blocs. However, NAM played a significant role in bringing many nation-states into a mutual benefit relationship and was instrumental in the formation of OAU, ASEAN and G77.\textsuperscript{104}

In South Asia, efforts towards regional cooperation begun with the phenomenon of ‘Asian Identity’. In 1947, Nehru organised the first Asian Relation Conference in New Delhi advocating for cooperation among Asian countries.\textsuperscript{105} The other smaller neighbours also took interest and Sri Lanka proposed for a permanent organisation structure for regional cooperation and major steps in this regard was put forth in the Bandung Conference of 1955. However, the apprehension of India’s role and aspirations cast its shadow on all such efforts.

The period of the 1970s marked a departure from the earlier trends. The emergence of Bangladesh in 1971 as an independent state, Pakistan’s erosion of a counter balance and the Indo-Soviet treaty placed India in a dominant position. Besides, India’s relations with Sri Lanka and Nepal too had been normalised. In fact the development in the late seventies (1977-79) led to the crystallisation of SAARC. The change in regime in the sub continent in India from Mrs. Gandhi to the Janata, in Pakistan from Bhutto to Zia-ul-Haq, in Sri Lanka from Mrs. Bandaranaike to Jayawardene and in Bangladesh the consolidation of General Zia-ur-Rahman provided a more congenial atmosphere as all the regimes were keen to depart from the policy adopted by their predecessors and legitimise their position.\textsuperscript{106} They thus tended to be inclined to the West and laid greater stress on mutual understanding and harmony in approaching bilateral and multilateral issues. Furthermore, the victory of the Janata in India saw a brief two year period of improved India’s relation with her neighbours. “The new Indian leaders termed their South Asia policy as one of
The atmosphere generated by India enhanced mutual trust and increased diplomatic contacts provided the stimuli for institutionalisation of regional cooperation.

The establishment and development of naval base and communications centre in Diego Gracia Island by the US witnessed the presence of the super power rivalry in the Indian Ocean. This was a cause of major concern for the littoral states. The Indo-Soviet friendship treaty and the growing Pakistan-US-China axis further pushed these concerns. Sri Lanka’s growing concern could be clearly seen when it presented a resolution for declaring the Indian Ocean as a ‘Zone of Peace’ at the 26th Session of the UN General Assembly in December 1971. The security environment of South Asia further changed with the military intervention in Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in December 1979. This development underlined the significance of a new source of common concern and even security threat. The US for obvious strategic reason also highlighted the security implications of the Soviet presence in the region.

Along with these developments the states of South Asia was also bequeathed with deepening economic crisis, poverty, unemployment and declining growth rate concomitant to the growing stalemate in the North-South dialogue and worsening of world economy. Such situation compelled the leaders of the region to reformulated their policies and make efforts at exploring avenues of cooperation. Furthermore, the demonstration effect of such institution in other parts of the world raised the hope that economic cooperation would enhance their capacity for collective bargaining.

It was in fact the smaller states who took the initiatives towards the creation of regional cooperation in South Asia. The first concrete step was taken by the President of Bangladesh Zia-ur-Rehman, who put forth and pursued the proposal of SAARC for promoting economic development and generating intra-state mutual confidence and cooperation in the region. For the smaller states the proposal severed two objectives. First it could increase their bargaining capacity vis-à-vis India, and secondly it would enable them accelerate the pace of economic development. Such move by the smaller states was received with speculations. India’s apprehension was that the smaller states are ‘ganging up’ against it, but it did endorse the move as it did not want to be
labelled as the one to forestall the idea. Similarly, Pakistan was reluctant as it carried the fear that this would strengthen India’s dominance in the region. But the feeling that it could be left out and be isolated in the region prompted it to also accept the proposal.111

The acceptance of the initiatives by Bangladesh resulting from the exploratory talks culminated in the preparation of a ‘Working Paper’ which provided a framework for the institution of South Asian regional cooperation. Subsequently, the first formal foreign secretary meeting was held at Colombo in April 1981 to consider the proposal and formulate the basic principles for guiding further interactions. Two important principles was accepted; one the principles of unanimity was accepted giving veto to all states; and second it was agreed that bilateral and contentious issues would be left out. Thus the Colombo conference separated political and economical issues.112 Besides, the foreign secretaries of the South Asian states set for themselves certain task: to define the objectives of regional cooperation; identify the practical areas of beneficial cooperation; to recommend suitable programme of action for cooperation; and, spell out appropriate modalities for implementation of the programme. They thus identified nine area of cooperation.113

From 1981 to 1983 five such meetings at the foreign secretaries levels were held in various countries. In August 1983, it was for the first time that foreign minister of the region met at Delhi. “In her inaugural address, Mrs. Gandhi described South Asia as a ‘troubled region’ and said, ‘I am glad we are making a beginning. We have our political differences but economic cooperation will give a strong impetus to closer friendship and greater stability in South Asia’”.114 The foreign ministers meeting gave concrete shape to and provided a structural framework for the formation of SAARC, which so far was being discussed at the official level only. Subsequently, during the first Summit of SAARC head of states and government held in Dhaka in December 1985 the Charter for the establishment of SAARC was signed. The objectives and guidelines for cooperation adopted under the Charter can be summarised as under:115
1. to promote the welfare of the people of South Asia and to improve their quality of life and to promote and strengthen collective self reliance;
2. to promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in socio-cultural, economic, technical and scientific areas;
3. to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development;
4. to strengthen cooperation with other developing countries and also among themselves in international forum on matters of common interests; and
5. to cooperate with international and regional organisation with similar aims and objectives.

It also set up institutional structures like the annual SAARC Summit of head of states, the Council of Foreign Ministers, The Standing Committee, the sectoral Technical Committee and the secretariat besides other committees to facilitates and promotes cooperation in various areas.116

Although, SAARC made a late start it has made significant headway in many areas and its activities have been increasing. The Integrated Programme of Action (IPA) which was initially being implemented in nine areas of cooperation has been increased to 12. These areas constitute areas of economic and social development, which benefits the people of the South Asian countries. Besides, IPA, SAARC activities include cooperation among the National Planning Organisations and academic institutions of the region. The SAARC activities namely the SAARC Aviation Services, SAF Games, SAARC Audio Visual Exchange Programme (SAVE), agreement on South Asian food security and suppression of Terrorism have certainly opened up opportunities for greater cooperation. The displeasure expressed at the outcome of the June 1984 London Summit of the industrial countries adds to the spirit of unity and common concern of developing world.117

However, progress in the stipulated area of cooperation has not been very impressive. The objectives of the IPA activities has been modest ranging from exchange of data, training and research, establishment of regional institutions,
institutional linkages and infrastructural support. Areas of trade, industrial ventures and tourism having tremendous potential have not been included.

The end of the Cold War and the disintegration of Soviet Union and the process of globalisation have changed the external structure of international politics and have had its impact on regional integration process too. In the West the process of globalisation witnessed the formation of new economic grouping and deepening of old ones. By the mid 1990s almost all the countries had attain membership of one or more formal regional arrangement. During 1990-94 as many as 33 regional arrangements were notified to GATT (WTO 1995). Furthermore, the economic force let loose by the process of globalisation and liberalisation have encouraged states to open up their economies to the flow of capital and technology and expansion of MNCs.\textsuperscript{118}

However, globalisation while calling for free market and multilateral arrangements on non-discriminatory base has in fact created an imperfect competitive international market dominated by the developed world. Even, after the birth of WTO in 1995, countries continue to develop bilateral and multilateral managed and negotiated economic relations and continue to enhance and protect their own national interest and competitiveness. Arrangements like preferential and free blocs are discriminatory multilateral regimes. The developed countries have come to term with their internal differences and generated common approach to international economic issues to protect their interests. Such developments have not found had a very negative impact on the economies of the developing world and of late they too have been evolving similar approach to enhance their economic interest and strengthen their capacity for collective bargaining, for instance the G77, G5 or any other regional groups.\textsuperscript{119}

South Asian states also felt the repercussion of such development and recognised the need and urgency for moving towards free and preferential trade agreement inorder to protect and enhance their interests. In 1993 the framework on SAPTA was adopted and came into effect in 1995. It was during the ninth summit in 1997 that importance of free trade was reiterated and the call for rapidly moving towards formation of SAFTA by extending and deepening concession under SAFTA
by 2001 proposed. During 1999-2000 India and Sri Lanka signed a free trade agreement and negotiation with Bangladesh and other countries is going on. However, no progress with regard to Pakistan is seen yet.\textsuperscript{120}

**Why SAARC has not Taken-Off**

Although, SAARC has been able develop strong economic cooperative linkages, mitigate political discord and provide the momentum to development issues of the region, it did create a sense of regional identity, enhanced regional solidarity and has been able to achieve, although low, level of interactions and address mutual problems. The informal talks among leaders have led to reconciliation of many sensitive issues and to some extent diffuse tensions.\textsuperscript{121}

Unlike it predecessors the EEC in Europe and its contemporary ASEAN and GCC in Asia, SAARC movement deviate from the traditional pattern of regionalism. Political harmony and strategic consensus which has been an important factor in facilitating cooperative linkages has been absent in the region. “The EEC, ASEAN and GCC members not only have similar internal and external threat perceptions and security response but also share a regional approach to a broad range of global strategic issues”.\textsuperscript{122} In this regard, M. Ayoob has identifies four vital perceptions which he find is present and is the reason for the success of EEC, GCC and ASEAN. They are as under:\textsuperscript{123}

1. Common and similar threats – congruence in security perceptions;
2. Similar political system – congruence in ideological and political perceptions;
3. Common foreign policy orientation regarding major issues to global balance of power and its manifestation – congruence in strategic perception;
4. A consensus regarding the role of the pivotal power within the region – basis for internal cohesiveness.

The South Asian region is Indo-centric in nature. The vastness of size and its capabilities both economically and militarily have generated apprehension among the
smaller neighbours. The smaller neighbours perceive India as a major source of threat. This fear of India is further amplified by their search for identity which is non-Indian leading them in an anti-Indian direction. Further, to counter balance India’s position they have looked for extra-regional linkages.

Secondly, there is also disparity in the political system adopted by various countries. India’s sympathetic attitude toward democratic regimes has also been perceived by its counterpart as a threat to their survival and legitimacy. India has time and again been accused of encouraging and supporting Pathan and Sindhi demand for autonomy, Tamils demand for separatism, the Nepal Congress and the Awami League in Bangladesh fomenting internal turmoil and meddling in their internal affairs. Thus anti-Indianism has been propagated in most part of South Asia.

The regional divide is further exacerbated by the ongoing conflict between the two major partners India and Pakistan. The antagonism between the two has engaged them in massive militarisation programme and arms race. While for India the Pak-US-China nexus is a matter of concern, Pakistan feels threaten by India’s defence modernisation programme and tend to achieve parity so as to attain a level of deterrence.

The post Cold War developments and the reduced importance of Pakistan for the US raised hope and optimism that reduction of tension would foster mutually beneficial interactions. Contrary South Asia, particularly India and Pakistan, witnessed an increase in arms race and an acceleration of its nuclear programme. In this regard Rizvi states that the end of the Cold War has induced a new realism in the region, where bi-polarity and Cold War has not ended. However, in recent years confidence building measures and various attempts to normalise relations has been initiated by both, particularly India, but it has not yielded much result as yet. Further, there is faint chance that India and Pakistan would share the same feeling of China’s emergence as a common adversary. Even if it happens, the deep divide which is historically rooted would not like Pakistan to share with India a common ally.

The availability of financial resources is another stumbling block to the progress of SAARC. It is not been able to mobilise resources from within the regions,
as most of the countries possess a weak economy. SAARC have accepted assistance only from multilateral agencies and international organisation. Although, individual donors from the West, Canada, West Germany, Australia and even Japan had indicated their interest to be involved with SAARC’s activities, India nurse reservations of involvement of any extra regional power. India perceives that economic channel would eventually develop political and strategic clout and impinge the working of SAARC. In fact, the presence of extra-regional presence could be detrimental to India’s own interest and priorities in the region. But India too is not able to pull the necessary resources because of its own domestic compulsions.\textsuperscript{128}

Economic linkages provides opportunity for regional cooperation. But the economy of South Asian states which is agrarian base and producer of primary products depends heavily on extra-regional linkages for technological support, machinery and export of their primary products. The economy of South Asian states are competitive rather than complementary.\textsuperscript{129} The volume of intra-regional trade in the region is quite low resulting in limited interdependence among them. South Asia intra-regional trades range to about 3 per cent of all foreign trade. Even after the ratification of SAPTA, improvement in trade relations has hardly seen any improvement.\textsuperscript{130} In 1996 the volume of trade amounted to US $ 1.76 billion, 3 per cent of the $ 51.63 billion of all exports from South Asia. Furthermore, the high rate of tariff and non-tariff barriers is a constraining factor for the expansion of intra-regional trade. The operationalisation of SAPTA has brought about agreements among the South Asian countries for the reduction of tariff. India offered tariff reduction on the import of 106 items followed by Pakistan who offered tariff reduction on 35 items, Sri Lanka on 31 items, Maldives 17, Nepal 14, Bangladesh 12 and Bhutan 7.\textsuperscript{131} Although the number of items offered is quite meagre it still is a positive steps as a prelude to the creation of SAFTA.

Moreover, the vastness of the Indian economy restricts the volume of trade because of the much smaller production and absorption capacity of the smaller neighbours. They perceive the domestic economy to be vulnerable to India and fear that free trade with lead to their markets being flooded by Indian goods. It would do well for India if it were able to take some unilateral measures in the field of tariff
reduction for imports from its neighbours to impress upon them that it mean greater regional cooperation but it is not able to do so because of it domestic compulsions.\textsuperscript{132}

With the end of the Cold War and the liberalisation of the economy India is attaching more importance to economics in its foreign policy and developing relations with regional trading blocs. The South Asian countries could take advantage of the aspect and allow Indian industry to trade and invest in their economies. The changed environment demands that South Asian countries make effort to impart economic content and meaning to SAARC and introduce core economic areas such as trade and industry into regional cooperation.

\textbf{Conclusion}

It is thus observed that cooperation is not only desirable but necessary and unavoidable in the emerging scenario. Ayoob has identified common and similar threat perception – politico-strategic- as an important variable for forging cooperation, which played a vital role in the formation of EEC and ASEAN is absent in the South Asian context.\textsuperscript{133} Despite the end of the Cold War, the countries in the region have not moved from the conventional security paradigm. SAARC countries need to look afresh at their political and security issues.

The inter-state politics of the region is dominated by the member states disputes with India. The modest success in conflict management in other troubled spot of the world – the Middle East, South Africa, South East Asia in the post Cold War has eluded South Asia. The many unresolved disputes continue to persist and impede bilateral relations and cooperation. Hence, more Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) need to be undertaken to promote mutual understanding of the problems faced. Bilateralism will remain an enduring feature of SAARC.

The major area of concern is domestic stability. Domestic turmoil in the form of ethnicity, separatist movements, fundamentalism, majoritainism, alienation and the demand for greater democracy if not resolved may lead to collapse of the polity. Such inherent weakness reduces the state capacity to face the challenges of globalisation. The spill over effect of such crisis a stumbling bloc in the effort for regional
cooperation. The continuing problems will also discourage foreign investor from investing in the region which may a detrimental effect for the region's economic as well as political development.
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