Chapter II

Nuclear South Asia

From the security and strategic dimensions, South Asia, the Asian Sub-region, is an integral part of the international system. With the nuclear weapon programme of India and Pakistan, the region has become a major area of security threat not only to the region but also to the international community. The countries in this region were the colonies of the erstwhile British Empire. And the geo-political landscape of the region to a greater extent remains on the relics of the British reign. The sub-region is known for its diverse and distinct culture, common colonial legacy, economic and political turmoil. The nations in South Asia have been engaged in domestic turmoil, civil and military strife, inter-state border disputes and migration that snow balled into conflicts and wars in the region (Malviya; 2007: 83). The states in this developing or underdeveloped area have been facing several social, economic and political problems since their formation. “Five decades after the end of colonial rule, the states of South Asia are still faced with problems related to democratic governance, social identities, development and welfare, and territorial security” (Shastry, 2001:1). An important and projected feature of the South Asian region is its great diversity. There exists a great level diversity of people, races, customs, system of governance, domestic and foreign policies, economic and strategic interests, political and military affiliation in the region (Rasgotra; 1988: xiii). The cross-cutting and overlapping effects of these differences provide South Asia a unique culture that has a profound influence on the socio-economic and political dimensions of the region.

As an Asian sub-system, many have placed South Asia as a smaller unit of SAARC. But from the strategic perceptions what could be more acceptable is, the South Asian system extends beyond SAARC, bringing in China and Afghanistan into the sub-regional system. The South Asian security is directly influenced by the events taking place in China and Afghanistan especially due to the geographical proximity. In terms of the geo-strategic space, the sub region is not confined to South of Asia. Rajan Harshe says that “It is not easy to resolve the problem of defining Southern Asia in terms of its geo-strategic space. With the formation of regional grouping like the
South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) in the 1980’s, the Southern region is being identified with the seven member states of the SAARC, namely – India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri-Lanka, Maldives, Bhutan and Bangladesh. However, a more inclusive view of the region could include, countries like China, Myanmar and Afghanistan” (Chari & Rajain; 2003: 46). South Asia in its geographical stretch would correspond to the Southern half of the total land mass of the Asian Continent. In its Geographical location South Asia extends from the 38’40 North degree latitude to the Indian Ocean in the South and from Istanbul in the West to Tokyo in the East (Sing, Jasjit, 1988: 1). The longitudinal stretch nearly extends from 60’5 degree east. South Asia is a region that stretches from Afghanistan in the West across to Bangladesh and Bhutan to the East. The region is home to more than one-sixth of the world’s population. It is an area of varied geography and endowed with diverse natural resources. The countries in the region still depend heavily on agriculture, with the majority of their populations relying on it for their livelihood (Sahni; 2006: 155). Traditionally, the sub-system is treated as a unified entity. Rasul Rais views that “in a geo-strategic sense, the South Asian region has traditionally been looked at as a unified entity. Neither the heterogeneity of its members nor their conflicts and rivalries have altered its traditional identity” (Rais; 1993: 21). Phukon observes that ‘South Asia is a political geography than natural geography. It consists of British Indian Empire with its satellites’ (Phukon; 2002). In fact this political geography has been drawn by the colonial powers. British colonial rule and the cold war geopolitics have shaped the South Asian regional socio-political milieu. But this legacy of the British regime and cold war could not effectively unite the south Asian region. South Asia lacks the potential to become a "region", because there is no successful pursuit of common economic goals to bring coordination of policies and foster more amicable relations (Raghavan; 2004: 99).

Economically, the South Asian states are regarded as developing or underdeveloped. However international political analogy depicts that the South Asian nations are weak, failing or failed\(^1\). Pakistan is a weak state, and government policies are making it weaker still. Its disastrous economy, exacerbated by a series of corrupt leaders, is at the root of many of its problems. Yet despite its poverty, Pakistan is spending hundreds of millions of dollars on weapons instead of schools and public
health. Ironically, the government's "cost-saving" measures are even more troubling (Jessica; 2000:124). Social unrest, political instability and insecurity in the states of this region point to the weak and failed nature of the states. Bangladesh is very weak, Sri Lanka is weak India is ‘strong-weak’ nation (Paul; 2010: 3).

The Regional Players and the Domestic Security Complex

South Asia is increasingly referred to as the most volatile area of the world, as the epicentre, the ‘new locus’ of terrorism, as the venue of a resource – sapping and futile arms race and of a possible and devastating nuclear confrontation (Vijaykumar; 2009:74). Analysing the players at the core and peripheral levels, the Indian strategic role is highly significant. Most of the scholars argue that South Asia can also be characterized as an Indo-centric region due to India’s overwhelming superior power in relation to its neighbours (Harshe; 2005). Two important characteristics of the South Asia as viewed by Prasad Singh are South Asia is an Indo – Centric region and South Asia has an unbalanced and asymmetric power structure (Singh; 2009: 217). The inclusion of China into the South Asian system may perhaps uphold the Chinese role. Palcing china in the top of the regional power structure Sushil Kumar finds that the levels of relative power remain approximately unaltered, with China at the top, India in the middle, and Pakistan at the bottom (Kumar; 2003:117). This strategic triad has become very significant as these powers have nuclear capability. But the geographic significance along with many common shared historic and cultural features, place India at the core. India shares a boundary with most of the nations in the subsystem.

Pakistan is a key player in the strategic stability of the region. As a link and participant of the Central Asian subsystem and South West subsystem Pakistan also has a vital role to perform. ‘Pakistan maintains a strong affinity with the Muslim world of Arabia, Persia and the Middle East by virtue of this historical link, their sense of kinship and moreover due to Pakistan’s significant geographical position at the threshold between the two security complexes’ (Davies; 2004). Each and every event taking place in Pakistan has direct as well as indirect impact on the South Asian sub system. From this perception, the political instability and insecurity of Pakistan has been viewed as a major threat to the security of the subsystem. Many of the
internal security problems of these states are trans-national in nature. The South Asian States encounter a host of traditional and non-traditional security issues that emanates from their domestic insecurities such as internal strife, political instability, lack of civil society, communal, ethnic, racial and regional aberrations. These security complexities pose daunting challenges to the state craft and governance in the states in the region (Malviya; 2007). A civil disturbance in Pakistan will have direct and indirect impact in India and Afghanistan, the immediate neighbours. The most of the intrastate conflicts in South Asia have a deep connection with the ethnic, religious or cultural factors. The ethnic and cultural link among the people of these states further enhances the cross border effect of the issues. The Indian link with the Tamils in Sri Lankan has brought about deep concern among the Indian people on the civil war in Sri Lanka. Tamil separatists in the southern Indian province of Tamil Nadu fiercely defend their association with the Tamils of Sri Lanka (Davies; 2004). The former Prime Minister of India Mr. Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated as a result of this cross-border effect of the domestic disturbances. This would further worsen the security complex of South Asia.

The political system of South Asia experiences different polities and the failures of some system cause instability and insecurity in the region. “Politically, South Asia is not a homogeneous system. The internal characteristics of the politics comprising the region range widely from democratic, ie; federal and parliamentary to monarchical and unitary” (Rais; 1993: 22). Exempting India to some extend, the scholarly observation argues that the political systems remain underdeveloped in the sub-region. Civil war in Sri-Lanka and Bangladesh, Military coups in Pakistan and Bangladesh, political instability in Nepal and Bhutan are certain facts that show the political turmoil in the sub system. The process of democratization is not yet completed in the region. As Williamson points out “the South Asian nations show a rise of democratic governance and dictatorships (Williamson; 2003). The crisis in governance, as pointed out by many scholars, is the major cause of the political decay in South Asia. And these political instabilities have a very adverse impact on the South Asian security system.

Bangladesh has been fraught with political crisis and mutability since its inception (Murshid; 1998). As Ziaur Rahman’s military regime discarded the secular
foundations of the state, Islamist tendencies rose up and democratic values fell off. Bangladesh witnesses severe crises especially in the maintenance of law and order. Despite the economic development the state has achieved, the state has failed to provide safety and security to its citizens. Rias Ali pictures Bangladesh as weak state with predatory nature, unable to prevent militancy and extrajudicial killings (Riaz; 2010). Hugh Evans contents that the democratic failures in Bangladesh are due to the continuing lack of executive accountability to the legislature, centralisation of power within the rival political party, and unwillingness of the party leaders to play by accepted parliamentary rule, whether in government or in opposition (Leo & Evans; 1997). Analysing the crisis of legitimacy, Shastri exposes the fact that no regime in Sri-Lanka has successfully used constitution making, a political resource to establish a political system that would win legitimacy (Shastri; 1998: 173). The problem of legitimacy, made Sri Lanka a victim of continued civil war. The savage violence of the Tigers and the equally brutal response of the Sri Lankan armed forces have turned this once peaceful country into one of the notorious killing fields of the world (Surynarayanan; 2009:1). In 2003, there was a “constitutional coup” in Sri Lanka as President Kumaratunga suspended the parliament and took over the key ministries (Clarance; 2007: 221). The problem of legitimate authority was raised again as the president dismissed the parliament in 2004. Bhutan has been ruled by autocratic regimes from 1907, but the feudalistic system of governance is changing slowly into democratic line now (Prajapati; 1998). Political instability and cohesion are still haunting Nepal. Though there has been some significant change in the political culture since 1990, the political struggle for power is still continuing. Rebellion and militancy are frequently disturbing political stability and social security in Nepal. Though Nepal has transcended from monarchy to parliamentary democracy, the presence of the Maoist militants in the state poses perpetual threat to the political stability and legitimacy. Maya Chadda Points out that Nepal is the least developed, economically smallest and poor state with the Maoist rebels challenging the legitimacy (Chadda; 2010: 266-268). Leo Rose finds that the political struggle for power in Nepal. This struggle is a result of the confrontation between the old Brahma-Chhettri-Newari elites and the local ethnic elites (Leo and el.; 1997: 213). There are
reports about ethnic violence between majority Drukpa of the Buddhist culture and minority Nepalese (Phukon; 2002).

Multi-ethnic social order of South Asia has caused a number of ethnic clashes in the sub region. South Asia had had more complex identities than any other region of the world (Mayaram; 2004: 21). Many scholars have demonstrated the resilience of ethnicity as a decisive factor in South Asian politics. Despite the positive impact of preserving the cultural diversity, ethnicity has paved the way for a number of conflicts in South Asia. Moreover, the overlapping effect of the diversities is a crucial element that escalates these conflicts. “Except Maldives, which has been an ethnic and historic linkage with Sri Lanka and is wholly Muslim, all the South Asian countries have strong ethnic cultural divisions” (Phukon; 2002). Ethnicizations of politics and politicizations of ethnic identities have sharpened the ethnic consciousness in South Asian countries.

The socio-cultural complexity of the region is further intensified by extensive linguistic diversity and ethnic minorities. India’s secular culture alone encompasses 23 national languages, 80 primary dialects and six major religious affiliations with many castes and sub-castes. Pakistan’s social and linguistic diversity is equally complex, with Pushto dominant in the North, Sindi and Punjabi spoken widely in the South and an Urdu minority in Islamabad (Davies; 2004). Very often ethnic divisions are overlapped with religious or linguistic divisions. The conflict between Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri Lanka, Baluchis and Pashtoons in Pakistan and Hindus and Muslims in India show how the ethnic diversities existing in South Asian sub system moulds in to complex security issues.

The crises situation in the South Asian region is further extended with the socio-economic backwardness of the region. South Asia accounts for nearly 22% of the world’s population but in terms of per capita income, it is the poorest region of the world. It produces only 1.3 per cent of the world’s income (Saber; 2004). When compared with the other economies, the South Asian economy looks really pale. Low economic growth rate, poverty and indebtedness are common in the South Asian nations (Williamson; 2003). However, Muchkund Dubey presents a different picture that the economic recession has not affected the South Asian economies much.
Moreover on the economic side there exists a high degree of stability in South Asia. The countries in South Asia have attained self-sufficiency in food and there is adequate skilled manpower (Dubey; 1988: 19). The poor socio-political development can further be understood by the marginalised role of the civil society in the nations of South Asia. The role of the civil society in the region as observed by many scholars, fails to articulate the humanitarian needs. Many scholars have opined that the civil society organizations of South Asia face significant constraints. The civil society, which ought to be vigilant against the anti-social activities, remains dormant. ‘Most anticorruption groups in South Asia are localised and led by middle-class activists. In Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan there is a widespread perception that civil society is ‘donor-driven’, unaccountable and financially non-transparent’ (Singh; 2002).

The security system of this region is very much interwoven with its socio-politico character. The socio-economic backwardness has also caused the rise of militant groups in the South Asian region. The IDSA seminar reiterated that socio-economic grievances such as lack of development and low standards of living in the three regions of India such as Jammu and Kashmir, North East and the Naxal-belt, have witnessed persistent insurgent activities and account for the main causes of many conflicts. Though these regions are not necessarily poverty-ridden, they are certainly low on human development indices (IDSA; 2008). Widespread incidence of corruption, crime and international terrorism leading to poor governance in a region is one of the major causes of the highest concentration of mass poverty here (Singh; 2002). In fact these domestic factors, at large, have destabilized the region.

The countries of South Asian region face the constant threats of irredentism and internal fragmentation arising from unresolved disputes over nationalist, ethnic, religious, cultural and secessionist issues within and between their territories. The most enduring examples of these are: the civil war in Sri Lanka, sectarian violence in Pakistan and the Kashmir conflict. Around 3000 people lost their lives in the Sindh province alone, between 1985 and 1992, as a result of ethnic violence between the indigenous Sindhis and the minority Mohajines (Haleem; 2003: 469). This highly conflicted scene of Pakistan within a short span of seven years and between two sectarian groups is one among many such incidents. The ethnic and cultural outrages in Sri Lanka helped in the germination of militancy which later became a formidable
challenge to not only to Sri Lanka but also to other nations in the region (Clarance; 2007: 41). Analyzing the stability of the South Asian security system, Sushil Kumar finds that the system is less stable. He says “If systemic stability is absence of major war, or absence of threats to territorial security, combined with peace, or peace based upon the acceptance of a legitimate political order, then what has been witnessed within the South Asian region is less than systemic stability. Implied instead within the region—reinforced by the evidence regarding the dynamics of change on state power cycles—is political conflict, territorial insecurity and a contested political order” (Kumar; 2003).

Configuring South Asian Security in inter-state relations

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the most part of South Asia was under British colonial rule. The new boundaries drawn after the British departure in the 20th century have led to complex inter-state relationships in the region. As a result of these artificial boundaries, many regional disputes have occurred in this region. The South Asian region has been bogged down by conflicts. Inter state relations in South Asia have been shaped under the influence of a host of historical, geographical, ecological, socio-economic and politico-cultural factors of highly contradictory nature. While some of them warranted close ties, others created severe conflict of interest (Sabur; 1993). The states in the region are facing several conflicting issues on the conduct of their external relations. Territorial border disputes, water disputes, infiltration, migration, cross border terrorism and the interference of the external powers into the region are a few among them.

South Asia has been viewed by many scholars as a highly conflicted region, especially with the advent of nuclear weapons to the region. This conflicted situation arises from a number of socio-political issues with in both internal and external circumstances of nation states of the region. Unresolved disputes within the states and between the states cause a great threat to the security environment in South Asia. The central nations of South Asia, India and Pakistan, have not yet resolved the disputes commenced with their birth. This dispute has led to almost four wars and many conflicting situation in the sub continent. Disputes and disagreement between India and Pakistan come from several sources. The conflicting nation-building
philosophies of the two countries stand as the prima-fascia of theses conflicting sources. This philosophical disagreement, between Indian secularism and Pakistani communalism, has resulted in prolonged conflict in the region. India's larger size and power develops a feeling of insecurity in Pakistan. In addition, migrations, ethnic rebellions, communal violence, disputes over water, economic inequality, narcotics, and the spread of small arms have contributed to regional instability (Vajpayee; 1996). Therefore, the exigencies of the Indo-Pakistan tensions have been pointed out as the major source of threat in South Asian Security. The biggest security threat in the region, and an impediment to regional collaboration, is the territorial dispute over Jammu and Kashmir, the main cause of the conflict between India and Pakistan (Sahni; 2006: 154). The historical sources of the contemporary Indo-Pakistani rivalry are rooted in age old ethnic, cultural and religious differences that have troubled the subcontinent from the very ancient time onwards. At the centre of this conflict is a severe clash between India’s predominantly Hindu population and the mainly Islamic peoples of Pakistan (Davies; 2004). Therefore the religious backing of the Kashmir conflict further escalates the security threat in the region. Militancy and the emergence of the nuclear power in the region intensify this conflict.

The geographical proximities and socio-cultural ties among these states would help to cross the domestic crisis to the neighbouring states. The sectarian violence in Pakistan can easily spill over to the neighbouring states particularly India and Afghanistan. Geographical proximity and ethnic linkages are two important factors that help in the spread of this security problem. Nepram rightly points out that “with no proper border vigilance, massive migration takes place along the borders with serious social, political, economic problems and increases security consequences in the region” (Nepram; 2002: 34). Along with the threat of uncontrolled migration these ethnic issues can lead to social unrest in other south Asian countries. For example the Sri Lankan sectarian crisis had significant influence in India particularly in the state of Tamil Nadu. Dwivedi observes that the conflicts in Sri Lanka have attracted the support from the Tamilians in Tamil Nadu in India. He says these ethnic conflicts tend to have an impact across state borders as influx of refugees, illicit weapons and illicit funds tend to have a destabilizing impact on the socio-politico and economic fabric of the south Asian states. For instance the conflicts in Sri Lanka have
tended to create sentiments for the Tamil sub-original in the Tamilians in Tamil Nadu in the Indian union (Dwivedi; 2009:23). These sentiments got converted into strong violent forms endangering the security of India.

The territorial water disputes among the states of this region have created a number of conflicts and confrontations. This is true in South Asia, as an extensive network of rivers cuts across national boundaries in the region. The region’s water issues have been highly politicized, compounding the complicated inter-state conflicts. Therefore co-operation has been limited and disputes have gone unresolved (Sahni; 2006:163). The unscientific division of the territories by the British colonial regime is pointed out as the founding cause of this water dispute. One of the confronting issues between India and Pakistan is the dispute on the sharing of the water of the rivers that crosses the boundaries of these two states. The role of the non-state actors in emanating the security threat can’t be neglected. Cross-border terrorism has been a major challenge encountered by the states in this region. Often the ethnic and sectarian violence have cross-border effects. Also illegal trade and activities of the international criminals give rise to disputes between the states.

**Extra-Regional Actors**

The absence of a central mechanism to control the strife-torn security environment invited the interference of the external powers into the region. Mutual rivalry among the South Asian states invited the big powers to meddle with the affairs of the region, not only obtaining their military equipments but also providing place to their military to operate within the South Asian geography. Pakistan reciprocated by allowing the United States to set up a seismic station in Chakwal to monitor any possible nuclear tests in several neighbouring countries, including China, Iran, and India (Raghavan; 2004: 97). Until the former Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, there wasn’t any direct military intervention by the external powers in the region in the post world war era. Analyzing the external dynamics of the South Asian security system it could be found that the cumulative integration of the triangular system (US – Russia – China) has been playing an important role. Until the end of the cold war, the American interest in the region was limited as it was economically and militarily irrelevant to the USA (Ganguly; 2008). But at the same time the US was
hopefully observing the developments in the region as the conflict between India and Pakistan prolonged. The U.S. interest and involvement in the region until the end of 1990’s were overwhelming centred on the fear of spread of communist, ideologies in the region. This, on the other side, lessened the commitment of the U.S. to reduce the conflicts in the region. Though the U.S. actively supported the South Asian states against China and Soviet Union, it refrained from actively involving in the settlement of conflict between members of the South Asian System (Rais; 1993). Now the U.S. policy in South Asia accommodates wide range of global concerns. Now, in dealing with the Indian sub continent, the U.S. is faced with all the key post cold war foreign policy concerns like regional instability, preventive diplomacy, prevention of war, promotion of democracy and human rights, countering terrorism and the smuggling of narcotics, encouraging economic reforms, free trade and open markets. The September 11 terrorist attack and the U.S. policy of combating terrorism, especially as South Asia is being identified as the core of terrorist activities, have strengthened the U.S. role in the sub region. Though the US established a new and stronger relation with Pakistan after the September 11 incident, it still maintains a good relation with India. The US always regarded the relation with India as the one with world’s leading countries and oldest civilizations. India is considered as strategic partener in the South Asian policies of the US and the US expects a strong and cooperative strategic relationship between India and the United States in the future (Foreign Policy Bulletin; 2003: 4). In the past cold war era, the U.S. involvement in the sub system were largely centred on – India Pakistani nuclear threats, the Kargil War, regime change in Nepal and Bhutan, combating of terrorism and the Sri-Lankan crisis. The US India relationship is considered to be in the nascent stage. However this growing relationship is going to help India in dealing with neighbour Pakistan, to settle its disputes. During the Kargil crisis, the combination of India's military posture and U. S. diplomacy persuaded Pakistan to draw back and enabled to melt down the Indian tension (Bajpai; 2003: 124).

Another notable aspect of the U.S involvement in the region is the military training programmes. Military-to-military co-operation has been an important component of US diplomacy with all the countries of the South Asian region. In the South Asian context, such military training programmes have played a useful role in a
number of situations and contexts. They have been the most visible indicator of the strategic nature of the relationship between India and the United States. In the case of Sri Lanka and Nepal, these programmes have been used to improve the capabilities of the military forces of these countries and also to warn the militants about the US support to the duly elected governments. These military exercises intend to counter Chinese influence in the strategically important region (Samuel; 2009: 225). From the U.S. perspective, the main security issues in South Asia are the region’s status as the focal point in the war on terrorism and the periodic tensions between the two nuclear rivals India and Pakistan (the two largest countries in the region). Realizing the growing importance of the region, the United States has built up a bilateral relationship with each of the South Asian states. The priority of the relations varied from time to time according to the domestic circumstances of South Asia and the US economic and political targets. U.S. policy goals also aim to achieve regional stability by encouraging the states to resolve their differences and disputes peacefully (Sahni; 2006: 153).

Strategically, with its geographical lowness and as an emerging world power, the Chinese role in the sub system should be counted as very significant. Chinese potential, as a major nuclear power in the world, has shaped the contours of interstate ties in South Asia (Harshe; 2005). The geographical proximity of China to this region is the reason why China has been treated as a part of South Asian sub system by many scholars. The Chinese approach to the regional issues by and large were lop-sided, most of them favouring Pakistan. During the 1960’s China was formally and directly involved in South Asia through its border dispute with India that led to the Indo-China war in 1962 (Basheer; 2009). The major conflicting issues of China in the region are the territorial dispute with India and the Tibetan crisis. The Chinese hegemonic view of extending its territory may be found as the real cause of these conflicts. It has been reported that there is hidden blessing of the Chinese government to the minority movements by the Nagas and Mizos against Indian Government (Blinkenberg; 1998: 80). The triangular relationship among China, India and Pakistan has been considered as very detrimental for the South Asian Security. As a big and close nation, China has attempted to manipulate its interest by involving in the social, economic and political spheres of the small and weak states of South Asia. In fact the
Chinese interest in the region is viewed by many scholars as the one aimed to challenge the Indian hegemony. China has sought to engage Nepalese political spheres, primarily to secure the border with Nepal. Also with the Maoists in power, China also hopes to use its ideological commonalities to suppress the Tibetan movement in Nepal (IDSA; 2009).

While configuring the South Asian Security environment, the Russian role as major nuclear power and permanent member of the Security Council can’t be minimized. The Russian involvement in region, to some extent, can be limited on the direct participation in the Afghan war, Indo – China war of 1962, India – Pak conflict and global combating terrorism. The Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan (1979) was another case of its intrusion and active participation, not only in the domestic politics of the South Asian system, but also in the security of the system itself. The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 marked the start of the current phase of U.S. policy toward South Asia. In 1990, after a massive, decade- long assistance program and close operational relationship in support of the Afghan mujahedeen, all U.S. economic and military aid to Pakistan was stopped (Raghavan; 2004)

From 1965 onwards, to the end of the Cold War, the region experienced maximum structural change largely under the impact of extra-regional tie-ups. American military assistance to Pakistan and the use of Islamabad in the US-China rapprochement has given rise in India to fears of a US-China-Pakistan axis emerging. Such fears were expressed by both the former USSR and India (Kumar; 2003: 118). Keeping in view of the nuclear ambition and its virtual expression through test the US offered a good number of assistance to Pakistan. In October 1995, Congress approved the Brown Amendment, which allowed the release of all military equipment purchased between 1986 and 1989, with the exception of the F-16s. The package included P-3C Orion maritime reconnaissance aircraft, which India regards as a threat to its naval superiority in the Indian Ocean. The F-16 issue remains unresolved while the United States reviews its options (Raghavan; 2004: 97). From the strategic calculus this extra-regional interdependence has a very significant role to play in defining the power structure of the region. The power balance in the region would be redefined by this involvement of the external powers. When, therefore, strategic interdependence extends beyond the region to encompass power centres in other
regions, sometimes even the major players in the central system, there occurs power-role disequilibrium. Rather than aligning role with the level of relative power, the interested extra-regional actors often encourage only strategies of power balance within the region. Until the end of the cold war, the US and China supported Pakistan in the strategic power balance, but with the end of cold war Pakistan was so encouraged by China (Kumar; 2003:119).

The Non State Actors and the Security Threat

The South Asian security can’t be thought only on the interaction among the state actors of this region. The activities of a number of militant groups have been a notable threat to the South Asian Security system. In fact, South Asia has been remarked as the abode of many militant groups. Around 75% of the terrorism casualties take place in Asia of which the southern region is more prone to terrorist violence. To Brahma Chellaney, this southern part of Asia, encompassing Afghanistan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Chinese-ruled Xinjiang and Tibet, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Burma, is wracked by terrorist, insurgent, and separatist violence in a manner unmatched elsewhere in the world (Chellaney; 2001: 96). Pakistan which has been called by the U.S. President Barak Obama as ‘the cradle of terrorism’ is a central nation of the South Asian system. “The rugged mountainous terrain dividing Afghanistan from Pakistan provides a hiding place for Taliban terrorists, who, because they cross the border at will, are an equal headache for Pakistan” (Ali; 2006:). There is no exception that, almost all the countries of this region have been facing the dreadful deeds of the militants. LTTE in Sri-Lanka, ULFA, Maoist and Naxalites in India, Maoists in Nepal and a number of terrorist groups operating in Pakistan, show that this region is highly vulnerable to militant threat. South Asia has dealt with conflict-generating terrorism for more than 20 years. The experience has been marked by state sponsorship of terrorism and, in other cases, controlled by elements outside these two rival nations. Pakistan finds terrorism as a more capable weapon than the nuclear weapon that could be used against India to persuade India on its Kashmir policies (Bajpai; 2003: 118). But to India terrorism is the most savage deed to threaten its security. Even though terrorist groups are operationally separate, they share many similar dynamics and goals (Raghavan;
2004). Issues related to ethnicity and cultural assertions are among the other factors contributing to the rise of non-state actors and militants in the South Asian sub-region.

A number of terrorist attacks have taken place in this region. South Asia is a fertile land for terrorism and terrorist activities. It is in fact the culprit as well as the victim of many terrorising events. The state sponsored terrorism helps Pakistan to challenge the Indian strength without involving greater efforts. The US government estimates that India has 400,000 troops in Indian-held Kashmir. This is a force more than two-thirds as large as Pakistan's entire active army. The Pakistani government thus supports the irregulars as a relatively cheap way (terrorism) to keep Indian forces tied down (Jessica; 2000:116). Pakistan’s jihad culture has created a plethora of radical Islamic groups, many of them involved in the export of narcotics and terrorism. Fundamentalism and militarism feed on each other, with the Islamists and the military serving as partners in drug and gun running, protection of domestic bandits, and export of terror (Chellaney; 2001: 103). The terrorist activities have caused several security challenges both within and outside the nation states of this region. In the last decade, the South Asian Region faced several bomb blasts carried out by the militant groups. Indeed this militancy has challenged not only the security domestic circles of each state, but the security of the entire region, especially by creating international disputes. There are many such incidents that have deteriorated the India –Pak relation. “On the evening of July 11, seven bomb blasts on five separate commuter trains killed more than 200 people and injured more than 700 in Bombay, India. The government accused the banned organization Lashkar-e-Toiba, reportedly based in Pakistan and the disputed Kashmir territory, of having placed the bombs” (Ali; 2006). In 2000, U.S. Department of State, analysing the Patterns of Global Terrorism has pointed out that the mounting terrorist violence in Asia already accounts for 75 percent of all terrorism casualties worldwide (Chellaney; 2001: 96).

The most dreadful problem is that the Pakistani militant groups are exporting their version of Jihad to all over the world. Most of the states in the south Asian region are victims of this cross border danger (Jessica; 2000:123). This has induced arms race and violence to the other parts causing severe security crises. The arms race in the region, whether small or large has been a great threat to the security and peace. The role of small arms, especially used by the militants, has made the South Asian
security really panic. South Asia had only minimum of 45 regular military to military wars in the region. But it doesn’t mean there is peace. There have been over 42 wars of irregular type by 1995, besides a much larger number of armed conflict going on due to terrorist acts” (Kant; 2003).

Nuclear South Asia: The genesis, strategies and implications.

It has been well agreed by many scholars that the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan in 1998, has brought about a noticeable shift in security environment in South Asia. The nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan in May 1998 bought an ‘equilibrium change’ rather than a radical transformation of the existing regional strategic environment (Tellis; 2003: 19). “On May 11 and 13, 1998, India conducted a series of five nuclear tests. On May 30 and 31” Pakistan followed it by six tests of its own (Ganguly; 1999: 45). This may provide a numerical parity in the nuclear explosions conducted by these states. Both of them conducted six nuclear tests each. The nuclearization of the South Asian Region by these central powers of the region received both bouquet and brickbats at the national and international realms. Many scholars had argued that the South Asian security is found to be at its worse with its nuclearisation. On the contrary, many considered it as a security shift which would be beneficial to the South Asian security environment. In fact the region was brought into the international concern with an active involvement of the big power into the sub systems.

The nuclearistaion programme by India and Pakistan can’t be treated as something odd. As Kissinger points out the nuclear challenge is inescapable. “The challenge of the nuclear age is not only enormous but also inescapable. Within a generation the peaceful uses of atomic energy will have spread across the globe. Most nations will then press the wherewithal to manufacture nuclear weapons. Foreign policy henceforth will have to be framed against the background of a world where the “conventional” technology is nuclear technology” (Kissinger; 1957). Though India and Pakistan have different geographical environment, both these nations perceived the nuclear weapons something indispensable for their security. Indian interest in nuclear bomb was grounded in security consideration relating to China and Pakistan and its vision of becoming a major power (Alagappa; 2009). Indian military modernization is
aimed at building a strategic deterrent capability against China and a regional force projection capability in support of its major power stations (Gill; 2005) The nuclear weapon programme by these nations may be observed as a reaction. The Indian nuclear programme was a response to the Chinese and the Pakistani nuclear programme was to that of the Indian. Vernon Hewitt finds that the Pakistani bomb was evolved in the regional context of growing Indian conventional superiority and Pakistan’s cynicism in the 1970s over US nuclear guarantees. India’s nuclear ambition was a result of its wider rivalry with China (Shastry; 2001: 229) It seems logical within the frame work of deterrence thinking that if a rival or an adversary has nuclear weapon power, then one must build up a retaliatory capability (Bajpai; 2007). For India, the nuclear weapon would provide retaliatory capability against nuclear China and for Pakistan against India. Pakistan conducted the nuclear explosions in a sudden retaliation. It took only two weeks after the Indian nuclear explosion for Pakistan to retaliate with one more than the Indian explosion. It was retaliation not only in the same manner but also in a more powerful way.

The Indian nuclear science had its origin before its birth as an independent nation. Developing nuclear bomb was delayed due to the Indian disarmament policy, particularly during the regime of Nehru. However, many factors had driven the Indian nuclear weapon ambition. The most significant factors that influenced India were its quest for great power status, the security environment involving the bloody engagement in Kashmir, the existing world order, and the Bharatiya Janata Party’s commitment to acquiring nuclear weapons. Similarly, the factors that motivated Pakistan to go nuclear included security considerations for its survival, ineffective sanctions imposed on India, pressure within the domestic circles and threatening statements issued by some B.J.P. leaders (Jetly; 2009: 48). The Chinese factor as a driving force behind the Indian nuclear ambition can’t be discarded. India viewed Chinese conventional and nuclear supremacy a great threat to the Indian security. The humiliation in the 1962 war with China, the border disputes, the Chinese pro-Pakistan policies and the Chinese threat to the Indian hegemony in the sub continent were certain factors that forced India to go nuclear. The Indian nuclear weapons programme began shortly after India’s failure to obtain a nuclear guarantee from the great powers following two events that had a profound impact on national security
concerns. The first was India’s disastrous defeat at the hands of the People’s Liberation Army in 1962. The second was the Chinese nuclear test of 1964 (Kapur; 2005). India had really feared the Chinese supremacy and the Indian subordination if it lacked the nuclear power. Over the years, Indian and foreign analysts have revealed that Pakistan and China co-operated on nuclear matters. Pakistan has allegedly received a substantial amount of both intellectual and material help from China in building its nuclear programme. It is a fact that China sees in Pakistan a strategic counter weight or balance to India, and that a nuclear Pakistan is therefore, is Beijing’s interest. The Indian pro-nuclear argument to a greater extent was based on this China-Pakistan nexus.

The Indian factor marginalises all other factors in case of the Pakistan nuclear ambitions. The 1974 Indian nuclear explosion of 1974 had placed a decisive impact on Pakistan’s ambition for nuclear weapons. The Indian nuclear explosion reinforced Pakistan’s sense of urgency and its determination to build a nuclear deterrent potential to counter Indian nuclear threat and intimidation (Chakma; 2009: 22). The prolonged enmity with India always resembled in the security policies of Pakistan. Feroz Haisan Khan and Peter R. Lavoy contended that since the early 1970s, Pakistan leaders have consistently seen nuclear weapons as very crucial to deter the existential threat from India (Alagappa; 2009: 218). Pakistan perceived the Indian superiority in all respect, a challenge to its very survival. So, it considered nuclear weapons as a means to compensate for Indian conventional superiority and to deal with Indian nuclear forces (IISS; 2007).

Albeit it was a genuine mistake, the fear of an Indian attack on the Pakistani nuclear sites like the Israeli attack on Iraq accelerated the nuclear explosion by Pakistan. The Israelis had used an air strike to destroy Iraq’s Osirak nuclear plant just outside Baghdad in 1981 added to Islamabad’s fears (Jones; 2002). After the second (1965) and the third (1972) Indo-Pakistan wars with their continuing conflicts, the political rationale for a Pakistan bomb was obviously India, and India alone (Vanaik; 2001). To some extent, fundamentalist idea also influenced the nuclear ambitions of Pakistan. It was expressed by the late Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto “we know that Israel and South Africa have full nuclear capability. The Christian, Jewish and Hindu civilizations have this capability. The communist powers also possess it. Only
Islamic civilization was without it, but, that position was about to change” (Bhutto; 1979). So Pakistan viewed itself to be a dominant power in the Islamic world. To some analysts it was also to gain support from the Islamic nations for the nuclear weapon programme.

Analysing the incentives for nuclear weapon programme, high degree of similarity, with the global trend could be found in the South Asian case. Like with nuclear weapon states (US, Russia, France, Britain, China), the South Asian states demand for the nuclear weapon was principally based on security threat, emanating from mutual rivalry and upholding prestige. Yoshiaki Nakagawa identifies the nuclear necessity with the strategic capabilities such as ‘to counter a massive conventional attack, to offset any political or geo-strategic superiority and to deter a nuclear attack’. National security concern is the most powerful factor that leads to a nuclear weapons programme, but at the same time political and prestigious consideration is also important (Nakagawa; 1994). It is a fact that the military power and security consideration overrun many other considerations while developing the nuclear weapon. The poor socio-economic fabric of the South Asian region was criticized by many scholars as to be given priority than the nuclear weapon programme. The socio-economic conditions of India and Pakistan, when compared with the nuclear weapon states (US, Russia, China, Britain and France), are poor and need to be focused much. However, military strength and secure environment could foster greater socio-economic development.

Having the desire to become nuclear weapon nation is not enough. It requires the capability to afford the economic cost and technical know-how of manufacturing the weapon. The peaceful nuclear programme is the shield that covers the nuclear weapon programme. In fact, the two South Asian nations began their nuclear programme for meeting the energy needs, which was constructive and peaceful. The clandestine development of the nuclear weapon was carried out by these nations. Both the nation had received foreign assistance in their peaceful nuclear programme. India had received the foreign assistance for development of peaceful nuclear programme from Russia, Canada and France. This was part of the developmental programme to meet the growing energy requirement of this big South Asian nation. However, India used this technology and resource for manufacturing the nuclear weapons which they
claim to be indigenous. The failure of the global Non-proliferations regime has been attributed as one cause of the nuclear development in South Asia. U.S. application of its own nonproliferation policy is found to be inconsistent. Besides, as in the case of Israel, the United States has taken no action to stop Japan, France, Germany, and other countries from extracting plutonium for commercial purposes. This technology is the basis of nuclear weapon proliferation problem (Makhijani; 1999: 149).

After India has proved to be a responsible nuclear power, the co-operation of the nuclear supply group has increased a lot. The Indo-U.S. nuclear deal 2006 is a better instance to this. The 2006 US – India agreement on civilian nuclear co-operation is restricted to the peaceful use of the nuclear energy (Arnold; 2010). “The Manmohan Singh – George Bush joint statement of 18th July 2005 on Indo – US nuclear co-operation resulted in signing of the agreement in March 2006, and followed by legislation later that year under which the United States would supply nuclear fuel to India” (Jetly; 2009: 53). Pakistan is in fact worried about the emerging Indo US relations, especially in the nuclear spheres. Pakistan strongly opposes the Indo-US nuclear agreement. They suspect that the agreement will help India to build a bigger nuclear arsenal, threatening their survival (Ramana; 2011). Unlike Pakistan, what could be noticed is, India is more credible both in the acquisition and use of the nuclear power. India has crossed important threshold and acquired extraordinary range of capabilities in nuclear technology. It has successfully developed indigenous sophisticated technology to sustain the critical nuclear chain; fuels of various kinds, sufficient heavy water reactors of ranging degree of sophistication for both civilian and military use and reprocessing facilities capable of making weapons – grade plutonium from spent fuel (Malhotra; 1997).

Pakistan also began its nuclear programme as part of nuclear energy development programme. From 1954-71 the official policy of Pakistan was to have purely civilian nuclear programme (Srivastava; 2002). It was with the establishment of Canadian plant at Karachi (KANUP), that Pakistan started its nuclear energy programme in 1965. For the Western powers France, US, Canada smelled the possibility of Pakistan using this technology for nuclear weapon programme and cancelled their collaboration with Pakistan nuclear energy programme. Therefore Pakistan had to develop the nuclear weapon by hook or crook. A key scientist in this
process was a young graduate from the University of Leuven in Belgium, Dr A.Q. Khan, who began importing centrifuge technology he had stolen from his job in the Netherlands (Bruce; 2008). Even Pakistan authors have said that, during 1975, A.Q. Khan plundered the Almdo facility to provide Pakistan with ‘blue prints of the enrichment plant, design and literature relating to centrifuge technology and lists of supplies, equipment and materials’ (Jones, 2002: 199). China supplied a nuclear power reactor for the micro reactor at Chasma in 1988 which was put into operation in 1989 (Srivastava; 2002). A sizeble portion of Pakistani scientists were trained in the U.S., Canada and West Germany. Pakistan’s early suppliers of nuclear materials were the U.S. and Canada. Canada provided a small, heavy water type power reactor, uranium and technical assistance. The U.S. initially provided a research reactor and heavy water. Later, however, the number of nuclear supplier countries substantially increased. Among them, there are Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Niger, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey and the U.K. Private firms of these countries have sold Pakistan the nuclear materials (Caldecott, 2002: 420). China has provided assistance to Pakistan in its nuclear and missile programme. In fact, China has supplied weapons grade uranium to Pakistan (Tellis; 2003: 51). The clandestine nuclear weapon programme of Pakistan was either directly or indirectly supported by these foreign assistances.

A very visible fact about the clandestine nuclear weapon programme is that civilian nuclear programme was the shield that covered the weapon programme in these two nations. The strategy of nuclear ambiguity practised by these nations until the nuclear tests in 1998 helped them to carry out the weapon programme behind the curtain. Unlike India, Pakistan had to heavily depend on the foreign support in their nuclear programme. Also Pakistan had to take up the greater challenge as the nuclear non-proliferation by the major powers was very active by the time it had started the development of nuclear weapon programme. Despite the international pressure and domestic socio-economic backwardness these nations could achieve their nuclear power ambition. This nuclear weapon programme further added to the asymmetrical geopolitical environment of South Asia, with India ahead of Pakistan in nuclear weapon venture too. Indeed, this is an important movement in the geopolitical stability of South Asia.
Role of the Nuclear weapon and the Security Environment: Deterrence and stability

It was expected by many that the nuclear South Asia is going to face a new security environment with the advent of nuclear weapons into the region. There was a large volume of articles and scholarly opinion that expressed the danger of nuclear weapon in South Asia. They viewed that any kind of confrontation between India and Pakistan will lead to a nuclear war. The continued enmity between these two nations further escalated the possibility of the nuclear war. South Asia that had witnessed three wars between India and Pakistan is the most likely area of the world to explode and wage a nuclear war in the near future (Malhotra; 1997: 91). Although a major conflict in South Asia is unlikely in the present circumstances, this is one area of the world with the potential for a nuclear exchange between states (India and Pakistan) and such a development would have devastating consequences in the region as well as to the whole world (Raphel; 1995: 222). Several scholars gave an analagical observation on the South Asian deterrence with the cold war period. Majority of them contented that the South Asian scene is different from that of the cold war posture and there is a high chance for the failing of nuclear deterrence. The three significant conditions that the geographical proximity, the religious differences, and the historical animosity existing between India and Pakistan which are unparallel to the cold war, are considered as a suitable situation for a nuclear exchange (Tkacik; 2010:196, Cheema; 2004). Brown and Arnold content the nuclear posture in South Asia is quiet different from the cold war posture that unlike the cold war scene the nuclear risk in this region is really high. The nuclear world now has more pronounced regional tensions in the Indian sub continent where bitter enmities between densely populated, neighbouring states dominated the political landscape. (Arnold and Brown; 2010: 300). Hence the presence of nuclear weapons in South Asia threatens to make regional conflict catastrophically costly. Further, the subcontinent remains volatile, with recent violence ranging from a Pakistan-supported guerrilla war in Indian Kashmir that invites military exchanges between Indian and Pakistani armed forces (Kapur; 2005)

There are a number of factors that distinguishes the South Asian nuclear deterrence from that of the cold war deterrence. Geographical proximity between
nuclear rivals, role of militants, terrorists, religion and extra-regional powers, and the political instability are some of the most influential factors of nuclear stability in South Asia. In a pessimistic perception, Scott Sagan argues that there exists a condition conducive to the nuclear failure in South Asia. He finds the overwhelming role of the military in the region, particularly the organisational behaviour of the military, lack of civilian control over the military and rising military budgets may lead to nuclear fallout in the region. Also he suspects the command and control of nuclear weapon in Pakistan (Ganguily; 2008: 47). India-Pakistan nuclear confrontation cannot be regarded as nuclear rivalry that existed between the US and Russia, the US and China or Russia and China. Rather than a nuclear rivalry, the India Pakistan confrontation is manifestation of the born enmity between them.

The acquisition of the nuclear weapons in the ‘childhood’ by these two nations still escalates the risk. Political and economic turmoil causes great challenge to the operation of the nuclear deterrence. Political stability is viewed to be an important criterion for nuclear stability. Perhaps the Indian political and economical position in this respect may be justified. But it cannot bring nuclear stability as the other power, Pakistan, is a victim of frequent political turmoil. Political stability is inevitable in ensuring a strong and rational command and control of the nuclear weapon. Timothy Hoyt argues that the command and control of the nuclear weapons under the military in Pakistan is safe and efficient. He analyses this from an organisational theoretical frame work. However, the frequent change of civil-military regimes in Pakistan really questions the command and control system of the nuclear weapons. Further there is a tug of war between the political and military leaders in the exercise of power in Pakistan. Moreover the likely chance of the use of nuclear force, whether by misperception or right perception, is really high in praetorian states than under democratic regimes. Nuclear stability existing in South Asia has so far found to have two distinct patterns: a pattern of relative and conditional deterrent stability in the absence of crises and conflicts, and a pattern of recurrent crisis instability in conflict-situations (Cheema; 2006).

The use of the deterrent strategy and the idea of Kenneth Waltz that, the spread of nuclear weapon did not have to be a terrifying project, denounced the danger of nuclear weapons in the sub continent. Analysing the last 16 years of
nuclear South Asia, nuclear weapons were involved to deter or end the conventional war in the conflicted situation between India and Pakistan. Despite the international fear of a nuclear war, the Kargil war in 1999 fought between India and Pakistan was ended soon. This showed the success of the nuclear deterrence in preventing further escalations (Arnold and Brown; 2010: 307). The supporters of the nuclear deterrence in South Asia also argue that the nuclear weapons did succeed in preventing a vigorous conflict between India and Pakistan. There have been no major wars between these two nations in the last 16 years, because of the involvement of the nuclear weapons. What make many to suggest a positive effect of the nuclear deterrent in South Asia is the historic lessons from the US-USSR cold war relation. But it’s a fact that there are many differences in the geopolitical elements of both these conditions. To this reason many scholars have criticized this analogy. The geographical proximity is an important impediment in working out the nuclear deterrence. Neither India nor Pakistan has either the geographical distance that the US and USSR had from each other, nor the prolonged period of time they had to learn from their experience of innumerable false warnings (Vanaik; 1999).

Another differentiating factor that drove to the nuclear option in South Asia is the religious consideration. Some elements of Islamic and Hindu fundamentalism gave incentive to the nuclear progress in Pakistan and India. Pakistan military government too have used religion against domestic foes, especially pro democracy groups. Pakistan used jihad to wage irregular war against India in Kashmir. Finally in the late 1990, India itself began to increasingly use religion as a method of mobilizing the masses. Thus Hindu fundamentalism as manifested in the nationalistic BJP in India, met Islamic fundamentalism (Tkacik; 2010: 178). Though the nuclear weapon programme was more over a political decision, the continued rivalry of Hindu-Muslim elements also influenced the decision making process. Pakistan nuclear weapon is very often remarked as ‘Islamic Bomb’. Analysing the Islamic Bomb Controversy Caldicott finds the revival of Islamic Fundamentalism, deterioration in the U.S. Pakistan relation, Pakistan nuclear shopping in many countries, close military and economic link between Libya and Pakistan and the international conference on the defense of the Muslim World as the reasons for the suspicion of the ‘Islamic
Bomb’ (Caldecott; 2002:). Therefore, these arguments about the religious influence also trace a good position in the nuclear weapon programme of these two nations.

The nuclear threat, in fact, is centred on India and Pakistan. However, it would be more precautious to consider the other nations of this region. There are no clear evidences that the nations other than India and Pakistan have made their quest for nuclear weapons. Also these poor and puny nations can not afford to have the nuclear weapons by themselves technically and economically. But foreign assistance may help them to acquire the nuclear capability. The illegal connections that Pakistan maintains with rogue states such as Libya, Iran and North Korea raise fears of similar network in South Asia. The illegal nuclear trade of Pakistan is reported very often. Bumitra Chakma denotes Pakistan as a ‘horizontal proliferator’ of nuclear weapons (Chakma, 2009: 103). “It seems logical that Pakistan would trade nuclear technology with France and North Korea in exchange for help with missile development” (Tkacik; 2010: 192). Nuclear proliferation by Pakistan, authorized, or unauthorised, has been expressed by many scholars as a growing threat to the nuclear non-proliferation system. Though Pakistan government claims that the illegal trade was held with out their knowledge, it seems irrational. Also considering the nuclear black market as one man industry, Washington has absolved Pakistan of involvement in proliferating nuclear technology. However, the evidence suggests the opposite that Khan’s activities, especially his dealings with North Korea, flowed from state-directed policy with high-level support (Bruce; 2008). “More stunningly, Libya informed the US, the UK, and the IAEA in Cate 2003 that A.G. Khan and his associates had provided centrifuge machinery, components technology, servicing facilities, training to the Libyans in how to operate centrifuges, and even bomb designs” to assist Libya in its drive to build nuclear weapons” (Chakma; 2009: 105). These incidents, in fact, question the credibility of Pakistan in non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in South Asia. The non-nuclear states of South Asia have already expressed their wish to have peaceful nuclear programme to meet their growing energy requirements. However, the possibility of converting these nuclear technology and materials for nuclear weapon programme can not be discarded. Indeed, there are ample evidences in the world, like in the case of North Korea, about the conversion of the peaceful programme to nuclear weapon programme. Basically, a country might
wish to engage in a peaceful nuclear programme to show it can achieve a significant level of technological advancement. However, it is not a big step to move from a peaceful nuclear programme to a programme of weapons development (Nakagawa; 1997: 26).

**Nuclear threat and Terrorism**

Analyzing the security threat in Nuclear South Asia, the concern now goes beyond a nuclear war between the two states. The nuclear danger emanating from ethnic-sectarian violence and terrorism have been repeatedly expressed by many scholars. Brahma Chellaney views South Asia as a “centre of transnational terrorism”. She argues that the fight against terrorism in southern Asia will prove to be a long and difficult one, spurring further instability and violence, before a sustained campaign can bring a satisfactory degree of order (Chellaney; 2001: 94). If there is what is called nuclear terrorism, a high degree of possibility is found in nuclear South Asia. Non-state actors can employ a range of tactics to achieve their goals, including conventional weapons, hijackings, suicide bombings, and the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction. Also a small fraction of these groups seeks nuclear weapons (Jenkins; 2006). An impoverished political administration would definitely lead to unauthorized or accidental use of the nuclear weapon. Then the proclaimed policies, doctrines and the nuclear strategies would no more be in a condition to use. The Indian context does not point to such a political turmoil and the nuclear threat from its effect. However, the Pakistan political instability and insecurity always point to this nuclear risk. This in fact, questions the reliability of nuclear deterrence in South Asia. Terrorism that has its root in Pakistan has turned against itself. The terrorist organizations have targeted the state institutions and rulers. Most of the leaders in Pakistan had to undergo terrorist threats and attacks. After Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, a Sunni sectarian gang, attempted to assassinate the then Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif in early 1999, Sharif proposed to expand the special military courts that try terrorist crimes from Karachi to the rest of the country (Jessica; 2000:124). Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was assassinated by the terrorists. General Parvez Musharaff was attacked repeatedly and unsuccessfully by the militants.
The reality of the nuclear terrorism is reasonable. The measures taken by national and international governments to avert it suggest the possible reality of nuclear terrorism. As long as nuclear weapons are viewed as instruments of power and prestige and as valuable bargaining chips, non-state actors will want to acquire them (Jenkins; 2006). John Deutch observes about the US security complex “over the last decade, the nature of the nuclear threat has fundamentally changed, from large-scale attack to the use of one or a few devices by a rogue nation or sub-national group against the United States or one of its allies. Countering the proliferation of nuclear weapons-by slowing the spread of nuclear capabilities among states, assuring that nuclear devices do not get into the hands of terrorist groups, and protecting existing stockpiles-has thus become as high a priority as deterring major nuclear attacks (Deutch; 2005). These fears expressed by states about nuclear terrorism, to a certain degree, finds reasonable as non-state actors have made attempts to occupy nuclear arsenals and materials. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has documented close to two dozen cases of nuclear smuggling, rising the terrifying question of what might have gone unnoticed (Wolfsthal; 2005). In his mathematic modeling of possibility of nuclear terrorism, Mathew Bunn estimates 30 to 50 percent probability of nuclear terrorism over the next decade (Bunn; 2006). The Challenge that the terrorists are raising inextricably linked to the threat of proliferation of nuclear weapons. The link between the state actors and nonstate actors is to be mentioned here. There are many reports about A.Q Qhan’s network with the terrorist. The nexus between terrorism and proliferation was addressed by Washington immediately after the 11 September terrorist attack (IISS; 2007). Logically many scholars and analysts demand non-nuclear proliferations so as to prevent nuclear terrorism (Wolfsthal; 2005).

Role of the terrorist in escalating the nuclear danger could be perceived from two angles. One is the use of the nuclear arsenal by the terrorist or an attack on the nuclear reactors and the other is the combating terrorist by the state actors. The terrorist may occupy nuclear weapon by theft, illegal trade or by ceasing political power in a nuclear weapon state. Over the years, however, there have been a number of incidents starting from terrorists attacking a U.S. nuclear weapons base in Germany in 1977 to terrorist teams carrying out reconnaissance at Russian nuclear warhead.
storage facilities in 2001 (Bunn; 2006). The efficiency and responsibility of states in safeguarding their nuclear materials from the terrorist is very essential in avoiding nuclear terrorism. Concerns also exist about the level of security of the nuclear weapons in Pakistan (Jenkins; 2006). Political instability and the overwhelming role of non-state actors in Pakistan have been pointed by many as an easy access terrorist to nuclear materials. President George W. Bush is among those who see this acquisition path as the dominant danger. “Rogue states,” he has said, “are clearly the most likely sources of chemical and biological and nuclear weapons for terrorists”. If Pakistan is not considered as rogou state its link with the rogou states raises this threat.

Since terrorism has international networks it is likely to invite cross-border military actions by the state victims. In fact there are clear evidences of the state military actions against the terrorist, culminating into war. The US action on Iraq and Afghanistan are better examples of this. Analyzing the involvement of terrorist in Indo-Pak conflicts South Asian security is at stake. India views Pakistan as the centre of terrorist activities threatening the Indian security. In the future, India may use air strikes to take out terrorist bases in Pakistani territory (Raghavan; 2004). If the activities of the terrorists are intensified and become inescapable threat, there is high chance for the Indian military action in Pakistan. This may lead to another war between India and Pakistan perhaps culminating in nuclear war.

The scholarly opinion about nuclear potential in south Asia differs even to paradoxical lines. Some recognize that factors such as the nuclear stability-instability paradox may cause low-level conflict among nuclear-armed states but still argue that ultimately nuclear deterrence would keep the peace (Dinshaw; 2009: 50). To some even the low level wars and conflicts would be averted due to the fear of an all out war. These nuclear optimist perception remains to be relevant so far as the nuclear detonation does not take place. On the contrary the other scholarly debate has evolved to focus on a few key points that depict a dreadful picture about the nuclear potential in South Asia. Amarjit Singh observes that in the Indo-Pakistan context the nuclear weapon has increased the level of conflicts and not brought in good amount of peace in the subcontinent (Singh; 2010: 234). Pessimists maintain that the possibility of preventive war, command and control problems, accidents, the organizational biases
and offensive inclinations of militaries that control nuclear weapons, and the fact that one or both sides do not have invulnerable second-strike forces could cause deterrence failure among nuclear-armed rivals. But the optimists strongly oppose these claims (Dinshaw; 2009: 51). Blacket views, in a similar fashion that the incompetence of the state mechanism would lead to in inextricable security system due to accidental or irresponsible nuclear use. “Clearly, the more nuclear weapons there are in the world, the more nations which possess them, the more will all the defense system become inextricably found up with nuclear weapons, so that the figures on nuclear triggers will grow and risk it the danger of accidental or irresponsible nuclear war” (Blacket; 1962: 143).

The disparity in the conventional military power further escalates the nuclear risk in the sub region. Paul Kapar argues that readers may weigh their strategic options and reasonably conclude that risky behaviour best serves their interests. Nuclear weapons do enable Pakistan, as a conventionally weak, dissatisfied power to challenge the territorial status quo with less fear of an all out Indian military response (Kapur; 2008). This could also be visible in the earlier confrontations between India and Pakistan. Pakistan began to employ, albeit in an ambiguous fashion, a nuclear deterrence strategy against the perceived Indian conventional threat from the early 1980s (Chakma; 2009; 41). If it was in a period when Pakistan had actually not possessed the nuclear bomb, it would have most probably used the nuclear deterrent strategy in the nuclearised stage.

**India- Pak confrontations a special case**

South Asia has undergone some conflicting and confronting conditions in the last 16 years, and many expected that it would invite a nuclear war. Though the two nations had not completely acquired the nuclear weapon capability, Nuclear weapon was involved in the Brasstacks Crisis of 1987. Though the crisis was ended without the use of nuclear weapon, a number of scholars and analysts have claimed that Pakistan delivered a veiled nuclear threat towards the end of the Brasstakcs Crisis (Devin; 1998). Nuclear weapons capabilities were invoked at their militarily incipient stage in the winter of 1986-87 and the spring of 1990 -- both in the first era of non-weaponized deterrence (Cheema; 2009). The Kashmir crisis of 1990 alarmed the
international community about the nuclear war that might occur in South Asia. This was because there were reports about the nuclear capability of Pakistan. Most experts viewed that Pakistan in all probability developed its capacity sometimes in the early to mid-eighties. In 1987, Abdul Qader Khan gave his famous interview to Indian Journalist Kuldip Nayar, when he publicly declared that Pakistan had the bomb, or to be more precise, could assemble it immediately if required (Vanaik; 1999: 110). The crisis originated with the Pakistan support for an indigenous insurgency in the controlled portion of the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir. Most of the Indian and Pakistani armoured capabilities were not mobilized and remained in their peace time deployments. But the growing instability in Kashmir and conflicting statements from both India and Pakistan caused growing anxiety all around the world. This anxiety was doubled as both these nations had made significant efforts to acquire nuclear weapons. Till 1998, a kind of ‘non-weaponized deterrence’ prevailed in the region.

The Kargil crisis of 1999 in fact, reveals the influence of nuclear weapon, though not used, in originating and ending the crisis. The crisis took place immediately after the Indo – Pakistan nuclear test of May 1998. Therefore, there is considerable reason in stating the involvement of the nuclear weapon as a causal factor in the crisis. “Indian and Pakistani officials and leaders exchanged direct or indirect nuclear threats no fewer than 13 times between May 26 and June 30 during the Kargil conflict in 1999” (Hoyt; 1997). Like the earlier plans, the Kargil operation was facilitated by Pakistan’s nuclear capacity. The nuclear tests increased Pakistani leaders’ willingness to challenge India in Kashmir and that the nuclear weapon played a dual role in Pakistani strategy at Kargil. Analysts such as Ganguly, Hegerty, Kapur and Mazari observed that Pakistan would not have undertaken the Kargil operation if it didn’t have the nuclear weapons (Ganguly; 2008, Hegerty; 2008, Kapur; 2008 and Mazari; 1999). On the other side it has been also noted by many analysts that the Kargil crisis did not escalate into a full scale war because of the presence of the nuclear weapons. Pakistan could not easily concede to end the crisis because Prime Minister Sharif had to confront the military if he ordered a withdrawal without obtaining at least some of Pakistan’s objectives. The Army and the public found any kind of yielding to India would demean the Pakistani state. Also elections were to
take place towards the end of the summer. So, the government risked political losses if it yielded to Indian demands. Indian political elites viewed Kargil as a “stab in the back” and were wary of making any concessions to Pakistan in exchange for its withdrawal. Because in February, just a few months before the Kargil crisis, Vajpayee had signed the Lahore peace accord with Prime Minister Sharif (Dinshaw; 2009: 154).

Once again the confrontation between India and Pakistan rose up in the 2001–02 crises which took place in two phases. The first phase began when militants attacked the Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001 and the second one started on 14th May 2002, when tourists killed thirty two people at an Indian Army Camp at Kauchak in Jammu. Outraged Indian leaders formulated a military response considerably more ambitious than the plans adopted in January. Now, rather than simply attacking across the LoC., the Indians planned to drive three strike corps from Rajasthan into Pakistan, engaging and destroying Pakistani forces and seizing territory in the Thar Desert (Kapur, 2008: 81). However, with the active involvement of the international community, especially the US, India avoided the plan to strike Pakistan. But it should be also noted that Pakistan’s nuclear capability did play a role in stabilizing the second phase of the crisis in May 2002. The existence of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons prevented the Indian government from making a major attack against Pakistan. (Ibid: 22). Nevertheless, the international pressure, Pakistan pledge and the US promise against terrorism helped to culminate the crisis and the role played by nuclear weapon in both the escalation and fall of the crises cannot be discarded.

Nuclear weapons played an important role in either commencing or culminating these frequently occurred crises in the region. On the one side it gave impetus to begin the crisis and on the other side it managed the crisis from becoming a full scaled one. Nuclear deterrence “has the ability to not only prevent a major war but also limit the area of conflict while using the threat to avoid it in other areas” (Raman; 2006: 11). Analysing the role of nuclear weapon in these crises it could be noticed that nuclear deterrence worked out to some extent. “The outcomes of the 1999 and 2001-02 crisis show, nuclear deterrence is robust in South Asia. Both crises were contained at levels considerably short of full-scale war” (Ganguly; 2008: 65). The game with the nuclear deterrence was different, especially between unbalanced
powers. The conventional strength of a nation is also important. If it is between balanced powers the game may be a zero sum game. It is observed by many that the strategy of Pakistan had marginal gains. Nuclear weapons “deterred India from all out conventional retaliation against Pakistan. And they sent a message to outside world regarding the seriousness of the Kashmir dispute” (Kapur; 2008: 76). However, this gain is a short-term one. Nuclear weapon if actually employed, the game will end in non-zero-sum game, where no party would make gains.

The Pakistan strategy with its inferior conventional power was successful. Analyzing over the last 6 decades of Pakistan’s history, it could be found that Pakistan was less concerned of its international reputation. Of course, the conflict with India had reduced the international status of Pakistan. With a nuclear asymmetry and non-use strategy, it may be argued that, the small nation would have the gains. The Indian gain was limited to raising its international prestige. The pledge and promise what was offered in the crisis resolution was broken. The Mumbai attack on September 11, 2006 reveals the failure of the resolution. The infiltration and the Kashmir issue are still continuing. The same has moreover showed the Indian strategic failure. As Pakistan is not committed to a no-first use of the nuclear weapon and India is committed the non-first use, India should be precautious of a nuclear strike from Pakistan if it is defeated in a conventional war. However, superior the convention power, the nuclear power has a greater role in the confrontation. For instance, despite India’s conventional military superiority, Pakistan’s nuclear weapons complicate India’s security calculus (Rajagopalan in Alagappa; 2009). In the crises before the nuclear explosions in May 1998, the Brasstacks Crisis 1987 and Kashmir insurgency 1990, Pakistan used the strategy of ambiguity to win the game. It was not certain for the Indian whether Pakistan had the nuclear weapon capability. However, the overt nuclear capability proved to be successful for Pakistan in the crisis after the nuclear tests. Analysing the stability/instability paradox in the nuclear South Asia, Kapur argues that nuclear weapons, far from providing stability in the region, have given Pakistan a compelling incentive to provoke India, with the former seizure in the knowledge that its possession of nuclear weapon will limit any Indian retaliatory action (Kapur; 2007).
The stability, what may be found today, may not last long unless the ongoing tensions to some extent may prevent the escalation of these tensions into full-fledged war. However, its role in finding a peaceful resolution to the tensions is very limited. The ugly stability, as denoted by Sumit Ganguly, which always has the threat of a war or a nuclear war can not be relied on much. Nuclear war can easily occur without either side actually intending it, simply because the one misreads the signs or misinterprets the intentions of the other (Windsor; 2006: 57). It may also be noted that the pressure of nuclear weapon may bring in minor crises and limited war in the region because it gives an impetus to smaller nuclear and revisionist power like Pakistan to begin a crisis. But as Kapur contends these Pakistani incursions may eventually lead India to respond with substantial force, thereby contributing to a wider war fraught with the possibility of escalation to the nuclear war (Kapur; 2005). “A qualitative transformation of Indo-Pakistan relations from hostility to cooperation is theoretically possible, but few Pakistanis believe it is within their power to bring it about, and few expect it in their life times. Thus, the second alternative, relying on nuclear deterrence, stands out. That a nuclear posture is dangerous in its own right is appreciated, but it seems the least unpalatable of the alternatives” (Jones; 2000: 68)

Framing the security strategy devoid of the nuclear weapon in sub region perhaps may be expressed by many scholars. Analyzing the stability crisis in South Asia Presslar Larry says that “In the end, the issue really is in the hands of the government of Pakistan. It has the ability to make a dramatic contribution to peace and stability in South Asia by voluntarily dismantling its nuclear weapons program” (Presslar; 1994). However there is a very seldom chance for such a situation. Examining the nuclear aspirations, its development and last 16 years of overt nuclear status of these nations, South Asian Security Environment is highly linked to the nuclear force. Many South Asian experts generally agree that a state of mutual deterrence has been established between India Pakistan and China but what the history reveals is decades of hostility and distrust characterize the relations between India, Pakistan, and China. But it would be irrational to suggest that stable deterrence will inevitably evolve in South Asia as the region rolls from crisis to crisis. Human error, misperception, mis-judgment, and miscalculation could undermine the ragged stability that exists in the region (Ganguly; 2001).
Analysing whether continuing violence in a nuclear South Asia has in fact resulted from the stability/instability paradox, Kapur finds that it has important implications for the regional security environment. If the nuclear stability-instability paradox is responsible for ongoing conflict, attempts to stabilize Indo-Pakistani relations at both the nuclear and the sub-nuclear levels could be futile, or even dangerous. It is because strategic stability allows more low-level conflict that has occurred so far in the region. On the other hand if this stability-instability paradox does not create an ongoing violence then ongoing conflict suggests that danger inherent in current attempts to minimize the likelihood of nuclear war (Kapur; 2005). To put it in another way the unstable peace has danger embedded within it.

The south Asian nuclear risk has been contented by many scholars as emanating from the nuclear triad (India- China-Pakistan) rather than nuclear dyad. China as a geographically close as well as nuclear weapon capable nation has been actively involved in the regional affairs. The recent developments in the Chinese policies towards South Asia are really relevant. In the India-Pakistan-China Trilateral Dialogue held in 2011, China responded positively that the NPT could be amended in favour of India. Also they made it clear that their relation with Pakistan would be brought under international legal covenants (Ramana; 2001). The attitude of China now accepts the Indian stand to the International non proliferation Regime and the failures in their earlier relation with Pakistan, especially in the nuclear field. Here, it may be found that the South Asian Nuclear politics stands in favour of India.

The nuclear risk in South Asia emanates from different circumstances. The prolonged hostility between India and Pakistan, Political turmoil, strategic failures, terrorism, Human errors and natural calamities are the contexts under which the nuclear threat becomes logical. Under the above conditions the application of the nuclear strategies becomes a challenge. Therefore, the advent of the nuclear weapon has further challenged the security of South Asia. The last 14 years stability, which is remarked as many as ‘ugly stability’ may continue. But this can not bring a resolution to the conflicted situation and a peaceful atmosphere in the region. It may also be noted that any kind of confrontation with in this region would invite an active involvement of the big powers so that it will not lead to an all out war. The International community would demand the present condition to be continued
especially in the Indo-Pak frontier because any alteration may escalate into a nuclear wear. Pakistan therefore has to stop sponsoring terrorism in the region as well as claim over Kashmir. On the contrary if Pakistan neglects the international pressure and even take up the risk of a nuclear war, the South Asian Security will be in deep trouble.

Notes

1. “Failed nations have been described as incapable of sustaining itself as a member of the international community and also facing serious internal problems that threaten their continued coherence or significant internal challenges to their political order. Effectively failed and failing states are unable to deliver political goods such as security, education, health services, economic opportunities, law and order and a judicial system to administer it, or provide infra structural facilities to its citizens (Masud Anwarul, 2008). A primary feature of failing states is a fatal weakening of the central authority. A second measure of a failed state is many types of internal conflicts, including sectarian and ethnic disputes. Another commonly accepted distinguishing feature of a failed state is the inability to exercise border control. The principal argument in the literature is that a failing state allows its sovereign territory to become a haven for international terrorism” (Mohan, C, 2004, 118).

2. India and Pakistan fought four wars in 1948, 1965, 1972 and 1999. The Kargil War of 1999 was a minor war and was immediately after the nuclear tests.

3. China shares a long frontier with India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bhutan. This infact increases the role of China in the South Asian regional affairs.

4. The Chinese policies always favoured Pakistan in the confrontations against India. The Pakistani Chinese axis became very bold with the Indo-China disputes. The Indo China relation deteriorated from the late 1950’s due to Chinese invasion on Tibet and boundary dispute with India. As it runs that the ‘enemy’s enemy the friend’, the India conflict with both China as well as Pakistan brought these nations in common platform against India. Also the US
Assistance to India in the Indo-China war moved Pakistan from the Western block closer to China (Linkenberg; 1998: 75-81 & Lahiri; 2010: 4).

5. “India – exploded its first nuclear device, code named (very bizarrely) ‘Bhudha Snile’, on 18\textsuperscript{th} May 1974 at Pokhran” (Chakma; 2009: 21), now the nuclear tests may total to six and Pakistan retaliated with six tests) in the strategic environment of south Asia.

6. The policies concerning the nuclear science in India originated in the 1930s in the context of a changing state form. There was an expectation that the British colonial rule would end soon and India would become free. It was as part of the policies concerning general science. (See Kapur Ashok 2001)

7. Unlike the other nuclear powers USA, France, Britain, China and Russia, India and Pakistan are newly Independent states. India and Pakistan are in the childhood of social economic and political development. This has led many scholars to question the nuclear development as responsible state powers.

8. ‘Non-weaponized deterrence’ is condition where deterrence derives from the power of each to construct nuclear weapons quickly. India and Pakistan negotiated a detailed, largely verifiable settlement based on "non-weaponized deterrence" That is fundamentally distinct from the minimal deterrent in which nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles would be deployed in small numbers under the rubric of a "Nuclear Weapons Safe Zone (Perkovich; 1993: 86).

9. The Pakistani strategy was not to defeat India using its nuclear capability. It was to strengthen their claim on Kashmir with it nuclear weapon capability. It was also a continued strategy of first strike by Pakistan. Pakistan followed this strategy in the commencing the earlier wars with India.

10. The nuclear demand by India and Pakistan is considered as quite different from the other nuclear weapon states. Both these nations lacked coherent and nuclear doctrine to guide their nuclear initiatives. The Western world regarded this nuclear and missile programme as mad arms race without clear policy decision about their repercussions (Perkovich; 1993: 88). On October 1, 2001, Lashkar-i-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed organized a brazen assault on the Kashmir state.
Legislature. These terrorist groups were trained and financed by Pakistan. Then, on December 13, 2001 again came an even bolder attack on the Indian Parliament (Bajpai; 2003: 113).

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