CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
A nation's foreign policy has a vital link with its defence policy. In operation, they are complimentary to each other. While defence remains a primary concern of an effective foreign policy, a successful foreign policy in turn ensures the defence of the nation.

The concept of national security is defined in terms of maintaining territorial integrity (1). Besides territorial integrity, sovereignty is considered as an essential element in the conception of national security (2).

It may be pertinent here to look at some of definitions of national security. According to one definition, national security is considered as an achievable position, from where a nation feels secure to enjoy the stability of a given order without

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(2) J. Bandhyopadhyaya, The Making of India's Foreign Policy (New Delhi, 1980) p.10
hindrances to cope with the threats, internal or external\(^3\). As per another analyst, national security includes not merely territorial integrity but also a cohesive egalitarian and rapidly industrialising society.\(^4\) Another outlook emphasises "development" as a crucial element, besides military force and hardware, in the constitution of national security.\(^5\)

A recent study observes that national security is a society's capability to protect all the elements in the nation from the physical and socio-economic dangers created by systemic conditions. This study measures this capacity in terms of the society's ability to control both "the individual, specific incidents and the grinding nature of violence"\(^6\).


This representative selection of definitions of the concept would tend to imply that national security means the above conditions which a nation seeks to acquire and to retain. This also implies that national security is a means toward another end. Conversely, national security can also be seen as an end in itself.

One notable lapse in these definitions of national security is the ignorance of the difference in the nature of national security between a developed and developing country. The contextual differences in the emergence of nations are vital in comprehending and analysing a nation's security. The colonial legacy, the mass-elite differences, the burden of developmental tasks and the demands of social reconstruction -- all provide a different context to the analysis of national security of developing countries. The present study takes into account this vital distinction. The present study, while giving

(7) Here the developed country means a nation with a well advanced economy and which has not experienced the drudgery of colonial rule. Mostly this category covers the West European nations. Most developing countries belong to the Third World and still suffer from the burden of colonial legacy.
due attention to the intra-state dimensions, wherever necessary, mainly emphasises the inter-state dimensions of India's security.

II

The study of India's security must note the context of India's emergence as an independent nation, its outlook on world order and its geo-political perceptions. This is necessary as the legacy of past history influences the shape and substance of the perceptions of a nation. The resultant images play a decisive role in the formulation of security considerations of a nation. (8)

Colonial legacy is a dominant factor in affecting the security perceptions of India. India, a subject of colonial rule for more than two centuries, cannot easily get away from the resultant legacy. It is significant that the entire South Asian region,

in which India is a focal point, as a whole had been under the yoke of colonialism for a long time. So it is a starting point for the present study to examine the extent of British rule's influence on India's security, its threat perceptions and defence strategy. India acquired an in-built structure of security and threat perceptions from the British rule.

The British strategy of India's defence was based on the geo-political importance of India. The Indian peninsula was considered as the fulcrum of British rule from Hong Kong and Singapore in the East to the Suez Canal in the West. The British


security perception was dominantly land-based as their naval supremacy implied the Indian ocean as a "British Lake".

Lord Curzon succinctly illustrated this security perception when he observed that India was "a fortress with the vast coast of sea on two of her faces and with mountains for her walls on the remainder; put beyond these walls, which are by no means insuperable height and admit of being easily penetrated, extends a glacis of varying breadth and dimension; we do not want to occupy it but we can not afford to see it occupied by our foes; we are quite content to let it remain in the hands of our allies and friends but if rival and unfriendly influences creep up to it and lodge themselves right under our walls, we are compelled to intervene because a danger thereby would grow up that one day menace our security; ..............

He would be short-sighted Commander who merely manned ramparts of India and did not look beyond. (12)

(12) Quoted by J.C. Kundra, India's Foreign Policy, 1947 - 1954; A Study of the relations with the Western Block (Groningen, 1955) pp. 32.33.
Significantly here the stress in terms of security importance remained on the land frontiers.

The main elements of British defence strategy can be summarised by the doctrine of the "three pillars":

(a) security of north-west frontier, (b) the control of India's periphery from the threats of unfriendly powers; and (c) protection of the Indian Ocean environment, probably in the same order of priority. This doctrine clearly reveals the importance attached to land features and the low level of attention to the sea-lanes. (13)

By and large, India stuck to this doctrine and adopted the British perception, in the immediate context of its independence.

Another vital element in the study of India's security is the Nehru factor. Nehru and his world outlook had a major influence on the evolution of India's security considerations.

(13) For an elaboration in this context, see Shelton Kodikara, Strategic Factors in Inter-State Relations in South Asia (Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, Canberra, 1979), pp. 13-16).
Despite being branded "pacifist idealist" and "Romantic utopian", Nehru was keenly aware of India's security needs. As early as in 1931, Nehru strongly advocated the need to prepare India "for all contingencies" and for "the speedy reconstruction of our defence forces". (14)

Nehru intentionally kept low-profile of the security issues in the agenda of India's foreign policy. He was keenly aware of the need to meet socio-economic and developmental demands of a developing country, recently freed from two-century old colonial rule. He further emphasised that given the prevalent conditions, India could ill afford to adopt an aggressive posture of "offensive defence".

Nehru's main thrust therefore was to achieve the security of nation, evolving a cost-efficient approach with a "minimal investment" in the defence sphere. He felt that given the peculiar domestic compulsions and the immense socio-economic problems

(14) J.L. Nehru, "Defence of India", in Young India (Ahmedabad), 24 September 1931, p.276.
of India, assigning undue priority to the security needs would in the long run only prove counter-productive. (15)

So, to serve the security needs of India, Nehru advocated and practised the principle of "security through peace and preventive diplomacy", instead of military alliances and heavy arms-buildup. (16) Nehru's concept of security was dovetailed into the framework of national development on socio-economic fronts. For him, security was not an insignificant element in foreign policy. But his stress on non-military approach was to provide "breathing space" for the growing and newly independent India. (17)


To sum up, Nehru perceived security more as a "means" for a larger purpose of "development", rather than an "end in itself".

As a result of Nehru's vision non-alignment emerged and remained as the basic feature of India's external relations. It would be useful to analyse India's option for Non-Alignment as its foreign policy and the underlying security rationale of this policy.

It is generally held that non-alignment does not give due attention to the problems of national security. However, this policy has an inherent logic of security. Non-alignment is neither ignorant of security considerations nor negligent of the unavoidable implications for a newly independent nation in the context "block and power politics.\(^{(18)}\)

Given the post, second World war context, non-alignment certainly provided a newly independent

nation like India the much needed manoeuvrability both in the immediate context and long run. This way non-alignment dissociated India from the consequences of entanglements of military alliances and the prevalent block-based politics at the global level. But for non-alignment, India's freedom of action would have been crippled in the international politics. (19)

The most vital feature of non-alignment in security terms is that of enabling a country to keep its foreign policy options "open". Even though termed as opportunistic, non-alignment beyond doubt yielded more flexibility than any other foreign policy choice in the light of "scarce influence resources" at the disposal of a newly independent nation. Non-alignment provided security to India even in the 1962 war, when India could muster support both from the Soviet Union and the United States. (20)


Nehru himself summed up the utility of non-alignment as a foreign policy choice by observing that "there is no other policy for the country to adopt with slightest advantage" compared to non-alignment. (21)

The present study would seek to explain the evolution of India's security concerns in three broad areas i.e. Pakistan, China and the Indian Ocean.

III

Perhaps, the relationship between India and Pakistan represents one of the deepest security divides in the history of international relations.

The security relationship between India and Pakistan was not a natural growth. It was a product of accumulated history, the legacy of colonial politics, the divergence of politico-ideological factor, the mutual misperceptions of threats, suspicions aided by the manipulation of external forces and vitiated atmosphere immediately following the British departure. (22)


(22) U.S. Bajpai, India's Security: Politico-Strategic Environment (New Delhi, 1983), pp. 115-18, 129-30;
Given this environmental conditions, it is natural that both these nations had three armed conflicts in 1947-48, 1965 and 1971, within a span of 24 years i.e. from the attainment of independence in 1947 to the end of 1971.

The very circumstances in which India and Pakistan emerged as independent nations, put them in a very hostile environment. The creation of Pakistan on the basis of "two-nation" theory was much to the chagrin and reluctance of the leaders of Indian National Congress. The differences, the mutual suspicion, the divergence of ideology and outlook between Indian National Congress and Muslim League continued unabated in the event of partition of sub-continent and partition further strengthened the evolving images and consolidated the existing perceptions of each other. (23)

Following partition, there was spate of diverse problems that faced India and Pakistan ranging from the settlement of evacuee property and Indus Water dispute

to the question of accession of erstwhile princely states to the respective unions and above all adjusting themselves to the existence of each other in the neighbourhood. (24)

As rightly observed by K.M. Panikkar, "it is obvious that the creation of two independent states on the sub-continent had itself brought into existence, new problems of defence for both these countries. But the circumstances following the partition made the problems more acute". (25)

It may be enough to state that, Pakistan right from its inception, occupied a vital position in India's foreign policy considerations. The relations between the two nations were ridden with tensions, deep-rooted differences, divergent perceptions and most of the problems could be easily traced to the conditions surrounding the fateful partition or break-up of India. (26)


The first element that concretised the nebulous security relationship between India and Pakistan, was the principle of "lapse of paramountcy" in the context of formation of independent nations and the accession of erstwhile princely states into India and Pakistan. The most contentious issue that emerged in this context was Kashmir. Besides the geo-strategic location, what complicated the Kashmir imbroglio more was the politico-religious divergence between the two nations. (27)

The Kashmir issue resulted in the first confrontation between India and Pakistan and brought to fore the vital issue of India's security.

A participant in the war from India's side commented on the relevance of this war to the general context of Indian security in the following manner: "It has been a long road from 1947 to 1969 and India has had to face many crises in safeguarding her rights ...... In the perspective of history, it is a pity that these crises were allowed to develop by the first place. Had their genesis in Kashmir in 1947 been dealt

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27. For a wider and historical analysis of Kashmir issue in Indo-Pak relations, see, Sisir Gupta, Kashmir: A Study in Indo-Pakistan Relations (Bombay, 1966).
with firmly and in time, India could have avoided what has proved to be a very costly legacy". (28) (emphasis added)

Besides the first armed conflict, the disputes in various other matters like evacuee property, handling of sterling reserves and such other related issues narrowed down any scope of cordiality between the two nations. By the 1950s, the political differences and divergent perceptions came to prevail and played a decisive role in the security equation between India and Pakistan. (29)

Whatever may be the causative factor, Pakistan has proved to be a constant source of concern for India's security considerations. Primarily, the obsession with the "Hindu-dominant" India and the concomitant element of "fear-psychosis" of Pakistan led to its continual search for the outside alliances


that could counter India's dominance and capabilities.\(^{(30)}\)

While by itself and on its own, Pakistan would not have been much of a security threat, its expanding external connections and military linkages with the outside Powers, posed a challenging task to the India's foreign policy and security considerations. In other words, Pakistan alone, could be, at best a passing threat, at worst an irritant to India, but when it became part of wider alliances sponsored by the Western Powers, it created a real and persistent threat for India's security both in the short and long run.\(^{(31)}\)

Pakistan's alliance build-up is a source of regular security concern for India. While India felt that the build-up of alliances was paving way for external machinations, Pakistan asserted that these alliances were necessary and essential to ensure its security.\(^{(32)}\)

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\(^{(30)}\) Pran Chopra, *India's Second Liberation* (New Delhi, 1972, p. 16; Sangët Singh, n.29, p.45.


the U.S - Pak Mutual Defence Agreement Pact (MDAP) of 1954. This pact ruled out any easy settlement of problems between India and Pakistan.

Pakistan's membership of SEATO and CENTO in 1954 and 1955 respectively also had negative influence on the settlement of Kashmir issue. (33) India viewed Pakistan's involvement in these two pacts as marring any chances of smooth settlement. To quote Nehru, "it is Pakistan, not India, that has taken a new step which changed the situation entirely and brought new factors which add to the complexity of problem". (34)

Yet another factor which posed a serious threat to India's security was the forging of close links between Pakistan and China.

As has been revealed now, affinity between China and Pakistan was evident even during Bandung Conference of 1955. China had made efforts to befriend Pakistan and other Afro-Asian nations and Pakistan


(34) Gupta, n.32, quoted in p.18.
was only too happy to respond to the anti-Indian sentiments of China for its own interests. With the out-break of the sino-Indian war of 1962 and the eventual outcome, there was considerable change in the sub-continental position of India. The sino-Indian war was significant in the security equation between India and Pakistan in two ways:

(a) The diminution of India's stature as an influential nation, in the sub-continent in particular encouraged Pakistan to take advantage of India's considerably altered position. (b) Second, India became a "rallying point" for the growth and development of Sino-Rak relationship. (35)

In another way, the outcome of 1962 war created significantly new conditions for India's security. Notably, the invincibility and the myth of "Himalayan Security" of India's northern borders was completely shattered in the wake of 1962 war. (36)


(36) As China is separately discussed elsewhere in this Chapter, here this dimension is analysed only in the Indo-Pak security context. For a detailed analysis of Sino-Indian War of 1962 see the next section of this chapter.
In the present context, the notable fact is that the humiliation of India both on political and military levels in 1962 proved to be a fresh opportunity for Pakistan, in terms of building up itself. Instead of seeing through any chances of friendly settlement of disputes, Pakistan thought otherwise. To quote the words of a keen analyst of Pakistan's foreign policy, "the events leading to 1965 were strongly influenced by Pakistan's belief that India had been revealed as weak and underling (in the post-1962 situation).... The Pakistanis also thought they would have got more help from Peking in anti-Indian hostilities than they did." (37)

In 1963, the agreement between Peking and Islamabad about Karakoram - Sinkiang road confirmed Indian suspicions that Pakistan was trying to build up an anti-Indian front through Sino-Pak collusion. Further the 1963 agreement contained a special clause mentioning the further proceedings of

agreement were to be "pending the settlement of Kashmir issue". By implication, this clause, entitled China also to be a third party in the Kashmir dispute. (38) After the agreement, Bhutto made a significant statement on 17 July 1963 in the National Assembly of Pakistan, saying that, "In the event of war with India, Pakistan would not be alone; Pakistan would be helped by the most powerful nation in Asia". (39)

Pakistan obviously assumed that: (a) India was not in a position to wage another war with Pakistan immediately and hence could be coerced (b) Pakistan after securing arms aid and military assistance from west was stronger than India in terms of material resources. (40) But the 1965 war disproved the assumptions of Pakistan and while the military side of the conflict proved to be indecisive


for either of the two parties, the outcome of the war failed to help Pakistan gain its objectives. While Pakistan lost its potential chance to "grab back" the disputed Kashmir, the virtual impasse out of the war ensured that the Kashmir issue was slipping away from Pakistan's hands as the integration process of Kashmir into Indian Union was being completed.

The United States imposed arms embargo on both nations, even though Pakistan expected that USA would pressurise India by aiding Pakistan. What annoyed Pakistan more was not the arms embargo per se, but the fact that despite Pakistan's alignment with the United States and in spite of India's 'non-aligned' policy, both nations were treated by the United States in similar manner. Further, Pakistan despite the

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(41) For details of the war, see H.R. Gupta, India-Pakistan war 1965 Vol.I and II (Delhi, 1967); D.R. Mankar, N.41; For Pakistani version, see M. Asghar Khan, The First Round: Indo-Pakistan War 1965 (London, 1979).

(42) Jain, N 33, pp. 56-59.
constant arms flow and sophisticated weaponry of Patton tanks, sabre Jets and the like did not gain much advantage over India on the military front. (43)

One major point of concern for India was the Chinese moves in this war time. China had taken some significant steps that evidently endangered the position of Indian security. Some of them were like deploying armed forces on the Sikkim border and vital support to Pakistan. (44) The Chinese actions underlined the threat, that India had to face simultaneously from China in the North and Pakistan in the West. The threat from Pakistan now assumed an added dimension due to concerted Sino-Pak moves.

The 1965 war had three major implications for India's security: (a) militarily, it disproved that an externally aided Pakistan would outmatch India and remain as a menacing threat to India's existence, (b) It demonstrated the growing linkages between China and Pakistan mainly on the political front, (c) It made

(43) Mankekar, N 40, p. 154; Brines, N. 37, pp. 348-52.
(44) For some more details see, Kavic, N 10, p. 190; Woodman, N 38, pp. 306-13; Brines, N 37, pp. 371-81.
also clear that India would not hesitate to open the western front, in pursuance of its declaration that "any attack on Kashmir" would be construed as an attack on India's territorial integrity and that India would choose its own time and place to counter the Pakistani aggression - this proved psychologically the illustration of political will and capability of Indian leadership even in the post-Nehru period. \(45\)

Another vital factor in India's security perspectives \textit{vis-à-vis} Pakistan was the nuclear dimension, becoming evident in the later half of 1960s. \(46\)

It is now well-established that Pakistan had begun its nuclear programme by 1950s itself, but this became a factor in Indo-Pak relations only after 1964 and the nuclear factor gradually acquired a vital slot in the security debate between India and Pakistan in the seventies and eighties. \(47\) The demonstration of

\(45\) Chopra, N 30, p. 48.

\(47\) For a survey of Pak's nuclear programme, see D.K. Palit and P.K.S. Namboodri, \textit{Islamic Bomb} (New Delhi, 1979); P.K.S. Namboodri "Pakistan's nuclear posture" in K.Subramanyam (ed), \textit{Nuclear Myths and Realities} (New Delhi, 1981) pp.139-63.

Chinese nuclear capability in 1964 made India sensitive to the Chinese threat in the nuclear field. But the intentions and genuine concern of India's actions about Chinese nuclear threat and capability did not alter Bhutto's stand vis-a-vis India's nuclear programme. He declared that if India was going to have a bomb, Pakistan "will eat grass" and try to acquire the nuclear capability. Bhutto further told the National Assembly on 20th November 1965 that "Pakistan would not lag behind, if India goes into the making of a bomb". He further asserted that "even if we have to make sacrifices, we will proceed to manufacture atomic bombs, if India did so." (48)

While the conditions preceding the 1971 Indo-Pak war, are of secondary concern for the present study, it must be noted that the basic problem between India and Pakistan is that even the domestic politics of one country would influence the actions, decisions and moves of the other. (49)

With the elections of 1970 proving a failure

(48) Quoted in Mirchandani, N 46, pp. 178-79.
(49) Jayant Kumar Ray, "India, Pakistan as Factors in each other's Foreign Policies", International Studies, vol.8, nos 1-2, July-October 1966, pp. 58.
in the wake of Mujib-Bhutto's uncompromising approaches, the autonomy movement, under way for a long time, gained very swift momentum. The use of brutal force by Pakistan Government led to an unprecedented refugee influx into India. While the refugee problem definitely troubled India, it needs to be added that but for that, India would not have any *locus standi* to tackle the turmoil in its precincts. India mainly felt that any ramifications of the movement and consequent troubles if the movement was mismanaged, would expose its entire north eastern region to external manipulations, quite opposite to India's aspirations. (50)

The course of 1971 war was shorter in terms of time and broader in terms of involvement of armed forces compared to 1965 war. For the first time, the three wings of military—naval, air force and army of both nations were put into actual operation. (51)

(50) Chopra, n.30, pp. 67-70.

The build-up of a favourable international public opinion, the restriction of the conflict areas, and the ability to preclude the intrusion and intervention by external powers in the course of war— all showed India's capacity to achieve the security objectives by the "tactical diplomacy". The symptomatic culmination of this capacity was the conclusion of Indo-Soviet treaty before the outbreak of 1971 war. Despite the Soviet Union's overtures for such treaty from 1969 onwards, India chose its own time and context, thus showing the tactical awareness and strategic shrewdness. (52)

The Indo-Soviet treaty proved to be a shot in the arm for Indian security management. In two ways, the treaty functioned to be a bulwark of India's security: (a) It reduced the possibility of external intervention to negligible levels in the event of Indo-Pak war. The treaty's "immediate military purpose was only to discourage China from jumping into the fray" (53) (b) Second, by the preclusion of external

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(53) Chopra, n. 30, p. 115.
involvement, the treaty paved way for India's emergence as a dominant power in the region. By linking itself to the Soviet Union, India warded off the threat of external powers that might have impeded its actions on the battlefront. As an analyst put it "by bringing matters to a head, India forced the Soviet Union to accept an Indian position .... In other words, she forced the Soviet Union to take sides as between India and Pakistan to accept the implications thereof." (54)

From the strategic-security point of view, there were various changes that impinged directly on India's security. In fact, the emergence of Bangladesh gave a new scenario and changed the direction of the Indian security considerations. (55)

The following can be accounted as the major changes in the present context.

(a) The outcome of 1971 war dispelled the myth of India-Pak equation syndrome and the parity claims of

(54) Chopra, n. 30, p. 114.

(55) For a comprehensive analysis of the Bangladesh factor in India's security in the wake of 1971 war, see K. Subramanyam, Bangladesh and India's Security, compiled by D.K. Palit (Dehradun, 1972).
Pakistan: "The parity or equal status was the first death of 1971 war". (56)

(b) The entrance of the 7th Fleet into Bay of Bengal compelled India to feel the importance of sea lanes on one hand and the strategic divergence between India and the U.S. at this point. (57)

(c) The main result of the 1971 war was the fulfillment of India's long-standing claims of being a regionally dominant power. The geo-political order was favouring India's claims. As observed by a study "the geo-politics of the South Asian region have been radically altered. There are now three states ..... with India as the dominant power not only in South Asia but in the entire region, from the Gulf of Aden to straits of Malacca". (58)


At the end of 1971 war, the Simla Agreement gave a new turn to the Indo-Pak relations. Signed on 2nd July 1972, this Agreement was in contrast to the Tashkent Agreement of 1966 in terms of bargaining postures adopted by India and Pakistan at the time of negotiations. But Simla Agreement has been criticised in some quarters on the ground that India was too 'soft' to Pak's demands and lost the pay-offs might have been available from the 1971 war.

Whatever might be long-ranging prognostications, by the turn of 1972, undoubtedly, India attained a dominant position in the sub-continent and put Pakistan on defensive position. This also resulted in the mellowing effect on Pakistan's motives and moves in the later period.

IV

China is another crucial area in India's security considerations and any meaningful discussion of security problems of India would have to take China as

(61) Dilip Mukerjee, Times of India, 26 August 1972.
a major factor. Given the geo-political context, China's strategies, policies, and tactics exercised and continue to exercise a major influence on India's security. (62)

To begin with, China and India had friendly relations. But this relationship towards the end of fifties turned out to be an exercise in hostile co-existence because of the basic power rivalry, strategic divergence and the ideological differences between the two nations. (63)

Broadly three elements have shaped the Sino-Indian security relationship, remaining constant even as the importance of each varies depending on the context of a given situation: (i) from a political point of view, China larger than India in terms of size and potentially the most powerful of the Asian States cuts across India's position as champion of the "Third World". For India, even undermining of its international prestige can be perceived as a threat to its long term interests; (ii) from a

(62) Bajpai, N 22, p. 23.
(63) Rowland, N 39, p. 302-20; Bajpai, N 22, p. 127.
geo-strategic dimension, the departure of the British left a vast line of border ambiguously drawn or demarcated between China and India. So the situation in the wake of India's independence was very ripe with potential conflict, emanating from the border dispute. Essentially, this border dispute became the crux of the Sino-Indian rivalry in the years to come; (iii) finally, the emergence of people's Republic of China (PRC) had an immediate effect on the Indian perceptions of security particularly about its Himalayan border. The maginot line of mentality of India was gradually eroded by the emergence and growth of China. As a scholar pertinently puts it, "India's immediate problem was how to live with its Chinese neighbour. The Chinese communism added a versimilitude to the oncoming conflict between two resurgent nationalisms both infused with a strong territorial imperative". (65)

As K.M. Panikkar pointed out, with the entrance of independent communist China, "the important consideration (for India) is that for the first time the Himalayan


(65) San Gupta, M 34, p.33.
region became a live frontier after having remained dead all through the history.\(^{(66)}\)

Nehru, contrary to the widely held belief otherwise, realised very early that the emergence of China on India's northern borders was a vital development which would go a long way in shaping the Indian security perspectives. He observed in this context, "the possibility of threat from China arose almost from the inception of communist seizure of power in China in 1949."\(^{(67)}\) These words clearly reveal that the threat from China was well recognised very early and adequately appreciated by the Indian leadership.

By and large India's China policy was a product of Nehruvian ideas. Nehru estimated that the newly independent India could not afford to have any hostile relations with its neighbouring countries particularly with China. While Pakistan was an unavoidable source of problems, because of

\(^{(66)}\) K.M. Panikkar, Problems of Indian Defence (Bombay, 1960) p. 41.

\(^{(67)}\) Quoted by A.P. Rana, N 19, p. 64.
the peculiar historical development, the addition of China to this scenario would affect India's position adversely. So the solution to Chinese challenges should not be in terms of military or through arms build-up which according to Nehru were short-term means that would ultimately defeat long-term goals.

So Nehru advocated peace diplomacy through the means of actively pursuing a policy of good neighbourliness and friendship as this would serve well India's interests at the same time paving way for building up a stronger India without hurting the Chinese sentiments. This position explains the pre-1962 India's China policy and rationale of India's approach to counter Chinese threat. (68)

One of the elements that made the Sino-Indian relations sore later on, despite Nehru's efforts, was the image of past and the legacy of conflict left by the British policy. The "Great game" played in the British imperialist strategy

(68) Nehru, n.21, p.3.
to counter Czarist Russia spelled a potential conflict source for India and China.\(^{(69)}\) To illustrate the effect of the past on Sino-Indian relations one has to see only the controversy and debate generated by the much disputed "forward policy" which became a bone of contention in the Sino-Indian border clashes.\(^{(70)}\)

The first event that upset the steady Sino-Indian relations was the annexation of Tibet by China. India accepted in principle the suzerainty of China on Tibet but objected to Chinese occupation of Tibet by force.

China's absorption of Tibet by force had two major implications for India's security: (a) the erosion of existing buffer area in the form of Tibet in the immediate context, (b) in the long run, the actions of China in absorbing

\(^{(69)}\) For a detailed explanation of the influence of "Great Game" on India's relations with China, see Stanley Wolpert Roots of Confrontation in South Asia: Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Super Powers (New York, 1982), pp. 55-77; Rowland, N 39, pp. 25-40.

\(^{(70)}\) See Nevile Maxwell, India's China War (Bombay, 1971); Wolpert, n.70, p.61.
Tibet illustrated the extent and effectiveness of threat from China to India particularly in the snowy Himalayan borders and to other friendly Himalayan States like Bhutan, Nepal and Sikkim (the last one existed as Indian protectorate until 1975 when it became a full fledged state of the Indian union). (71)

The erosion of Tibet as a buffer zone between India and China brought the two contenders to the brink of a conflictual relationship.

As a noted scholar puts it "(while)...... the Himalayan regions...... are viewed.... as an inner line of defence for India, protected by a Tibetan buffer region, Communist China today's views Himalayas as its outer line of defence, necessary for the protection of Tibet: Peking which seeks the Himalayan states as irredentist regions to be regarded as soon as possible and also assigns to them an offensive role." (72)

China's activities in Tibet strangely did not alarm much India's security perceptions.


(72) Rowland, N 39, pp. 74-75.
In this regard, India's policy was guided partly by its eagerness to befriend China and of making the Sino-Indian relations as a model and symbol of peace among Asian nations and partly by its championing the cause of world peace. As an analyst observed, "India's posture as an arbitrator between East and West and Nehru's role as champion of peace obscured the true dimensions of Chinese threat to India". (73)

By March 1959, the Lhasa Rebellion in Tibet once more pitted India against China. While India maintained that the use of force and oppression should be forsaken in resolving the Tibet problem, China outrightly rejected the counsel of India and termed it as an "outside interference (in) an entirely internal affair of China". (74) After the Lhasa Rebellion of 1959, the subsequent flight of Dalai Lama into India and India's sanction of political asylum to him only helped in further widening of existing gulf between India and China. (75)

By 1959, the de jure or de-facto autonomy of Tibet was a thing of past and India had to concede

(73) Rowland, N 39, p. 81.
(74) Rowland, N 39, p. 109
(75) For details, see Mohan Ram, Politics of Sino-Indian Confrontation, (New Delhi: 1973) pp. 27-33 and pp. 65-70; Rowland, N 39, pp. 104-14.
the buffer status of Tibet as null and void. Simultaneously a series of border incursions and intrusions by China into the traditionally regarded Indian areas, had taken place almost on the heels of the 1954 agreement. Notable among them were, at Barahoti in 1954, at Dauszan, ten miles away from Niti Pass in 1955, at Nilang-Jadhang area south of Tsang-Chokla Pass in April 1956, at Shipiki Pass in 1956, at the Lohit division of NEFA area in 1957, the confrontation at Longju on 25 August 1958, the construction of Sinkiang-Tibet Highway in 1956-57. (76)

By September 1962, the border clashes turned into an all-out war centering on the mutual claims and accusations of territorial violation while one need not go into the details of the course of events of 1962 war, it would be necessary to look at the implications of this war which affected the basics of India's security and its threat perceptions. The 1962 war turned out to be a revelation for many on

(76) For an account of Chinese aggression on India see S.P. Varma, Struggle for Himalayas: A study in Sino-Indian Relations (New Delhi, 1971) pp. 301-3; Rowland, N 39, pp. 117-32.
various issues of Indian security. (77)

The military debacle of 1962 proved to be costly for India both in strategic and political terms. It could neither counter the Chinese movements nor face the humiliating loss of prestige through repeated Chinese incursions into Indian territory.

The short but costly war had a major influence on Indian defence, internal politics, its foreign policy, international image, the viability of non-alignment, and on the general position of India as such. (78)

As for security imperatives, the outcome of 1962 war, altered the fundamentals of Indian security considerations. The main implications of the war can be explained in the following manner: "With the Sino-Indian frontier war, there collapsed not only the traditional Himalayan walls, protecting India from

(77) For a perspective analysis, see K. Subramanyam, "Khrushchov and India-China conflict of 1962" in Nanda, N 33, pp. 102-30.

external invasions across its land frontiers, but also the delicate balance of power that had kept the peace in the sub-continent for a decade. One of the immediate results of the war was mounting tension between India and Pakistan, in which China was now able to play a major instigative role. (79)

To cite another perspective, "the outcome of this conflict not only shook the Himalayan kingdoms' confidence in India as a protector and defender of their territorial integrity and security but also eroded India's own self-confidence as such." (80)

To sum up, India's security considerations had to face two major changes: (a) For the first time, India had to confront with a power bigger than its traditional rival Pakistan and (b) the scope and domain of India's security considerations assumed altogether new shape with the myth of natural security associated with the Himalayas shattered and further acquired added dimension with the growing menace of Sino-Pakistan relationship vis-à-vis India. (81)

(80) Čuni, N 71, p. 23.
Thus the border clash paved way for a triangular balance of power in which India had to simultaneously cope with other two powers i.e. Pakistan and China, which have a commonality of perceptions about India. (62)

The 1963 Agreement between China and Pakistan—concerning Karakoram, Sinkiang highway and a clause specification maintaining that further acceptance of the Agreement was subject to "the settlement of Kashmir issue"—showed that China was virtually trying to capitalise India's set backs by supporting the designs of Pakistan.

In this critical position India had to face another crisis, the acquisition of nuclear capability by China with Nuclear test of Lop war in 1964. Even in normal times, the nuclear capability of China would have caused lot of concern to India but coming close on the heels of the 1962 war, it caused dismay in Indian circles. While officially India's reactions to Chinese

(62) For a linkage analysis of border clashes between China and India, and Sino-Pak interests thereof, see Ram Narash Trivedi, Sino-Indian Border Dispute and its Impact on Indo-Pakistan Relations (new Delhi, 1977).
nuclear tests were muted, the apprehensions and suspicions were quite apparent.\(^{(83)}\) However, China's growing differences with the Soviet Union in this period, reduced the intensity of India's apprehensions in this regard. Here in this context, it must be noted that the Sino-Soviet rift to some extent acted as a moderating force on the Chinese threat to India.\(^{(84)}\)

Later China's domestic problems, internal political turmoil following the cultural revolution of 1966 and the weakening hold of Mao's leadership in the late 1960s further cut down the totally exaggerated Indian perceptions about the Chinese might. However it was no coincidence that in the beginning of seventies India made overtures to China for talks without any preconditions. But the Chinese were not too keen to quicken the pace of normalisation of relations. This was due to the changes in the external environment in terms of new power configurations. By 1970, the United States started on its, now, famous course of rapprochement with China.

\(^{(83)}\) For analysis of India's reactions on the Chinese nuclear test, see Buchan, N 81, pp. 210-17.

\(^{(84)}\) Ram, N 75, p. 134.
intending to capitalize on the Sino-Soviet rift. Pakistan also had its own interests in joining the linkage between China and the United States.

The triangular relationship between the United States, China and Pakistan caused deep concern for India in terms of restricting its foreign policy options. Moreover India was trying to dilute its excessive dependence on the Soviet support and aid. In this regard the Sino-Indian normalization while restoring the balance in India's external relations, was seen as helpful in blunting any growing entente between the Soviet Union and Pakistan as had become evident from the late sixties.

Despite the efforts on politico-diplomatic level to establish friendly relations with China, India nevertheless did not underestimate the Chinese in the context of geo-politics of the region and in terms of military assessment. Chinese presence ranging from Nepal to Sikkim continued to pose lasting challenge to India's security in the Himalayan belt. Besides this, the Sino-Pak linkages and the Sino-American rapprochement made India realize that
it would have to live and cope with the factor of Chinese threat both in the immediate context as also long range security considerations. (85)

V

By the sheer logic of geography, the Indian ocean has immense strategic importance for India. The peninsular character of Indian geography makes it dependent on the water ways that surround it on three sides.

As a noted western scholar puts it, "India's location at the head of the Indian ocean and its dependence on sea-routes for the flow of goods and services, gives it an important stake in the rivalries of the region". (86)

As K.N. Panikkar observes "the peninsular character of the country with its extensive and open coast line and with a littoral which is extremely

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(85) Muni, N 71, pp. 26-28
fertile and rich in resources makes India extremely dependant on the Indian Ocean. Her national interests have been mainly on the Indian Ocean over which her vast trade for the most part, found its way to the marts of world all through the history. Thus "it is the geographical position of India that changes the character of the Indian Ocean." (87)

Analysing the possible threats to the newly independent India, K.M. Panikkar further observed, "If India's unity holds and she is led with even ordinary competence, an invasion from the land side presents no serious threat to Indian independence. But the position is different in the case of an attack from the side of sea. If the mastery of the Indian seas is established by a hostile power, its pressures could be relentless, since Indian economic life is dependant on maritime trade. An overwhelming percentage of her trade is carried in ships through the sea-lanes of the Indian Ocean. Attack from the sea is more dangerous than any threats from across

(87) K.M. Panikkar, India and the Indian Ocean: An essay on the influence of sea-power on Indian History (London, 1945) p. 82 and 79.
her land frontiers". (88)

Besides the Indian Ocean is a vital region for India, because of the valuable raw materials, vital sea-bed resources, strategic waterways and significant geo-political location for many of the great powers and particularly for the super powers. This vitality of the Indian Ocean itself is a major source of many problems to India's security considerations. (89)

Two major factors shaped the Indian security considerations in according low priority to the Indian Ocean: (a) Historical evidence of most of the invasions on India being from land sides particularly from the North-Western Frontiers, (b) the legacy of British defence strategy. For the British defence strategy, "the question of sea power did not arise as the Indian Ocean was a British Lake. It was as natural and as normal as the air we breathed during that time and no one was interested in discovering the


relation of sea to the Indian defence". (90)

Independent India also adopted this approach towards the Indian Ocean partly due its own weak position to acquire such a decisive role. (91)

But all the same, India has basic framework of security perception of the Indian Ocean. As a scholar observes it, "India's approach to the problem of security in the Indian Ocean has been by Ocean and large in conformity with both the traditions of the anti-colonial struggle and the country's own enlightened self interest .... India's approach has therefore got to be one of trying to realise security largely through promoting peaceful regional cooperation among the littoral and hinterland states and preventing the militarisation of the Indian Ocean". (92)

India's reactions to the developments in the Indian Ocean particularly in the first half of 1960s,

(90) Panikkar, N. 87, p. 9.


were very feeble and mild. When the United States entered the Indian Ocean in 1963, India reacted very passively despite its pronounced stand against external power presence in the Indian Ocean. This passiveness was due to the fact that India was still under the transmatic effects of the 1962 Sino-Indian war and might have taken the United States' entrance as a protective cover against any future moves of China and also India was yet to come out from the Anglo-centric land based defense strategy. (93)

But within a year, at the 1964 Non-Aligned Conference at Cairo, India vocally supported the official declaration, condemning the attempts of external powers to colonise and to acquire bases in the Indian Ocean and thereby building up the tensions in otherwise peaceful area. (94)

However in November 1965, when the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) was created and later


U.K. concluded an agreement with USA about Diego Garcia, India's reactions were very low-key. Though the Diego Garcia base was situated in Chagos Archipelago just 1,200 miles south of Kanyakumari, the southern tip of India, Indian protest was in keeping in the tradition of temperate and low-profile policy. (95)

Soon even the Soviet Union started contesting the U.S. efforts to build up a base at Diego Garcia. This growing Super Power presence in the Indian Ocean and their involvement and interference in the affairs of littoral States led to India's voicing its concerns in stronger terms.

Alarmed by the trends of super power naval rivalry in the Indian Ocean, India had to vigorously advocate to keep the "Indian Ocean free from power politics" and "denunciation of the militarisation of the Indian Ocean". What is notable in this regard is that India did not hesitate to criticise the super powers directly about their interventionist policies in the Indian Ocean which had remained dormant so far. (96)

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(96) For the Indian expressions in this regard, see India and Foreign Review (new Delhi), vol.4, no.13, 15 April 1967, pp.3-4; Lok Sabha Debates, vol.XV, 10 April 1968, cols 3192-3202.

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The crunch for India in the Indian Ocean came in the form of British withdrawal of British from East of Suez in the Indian Ocean threw up many challenges to the Indian security. (97) One main element was the power vacuum theory. In fact the concept of power vacuum was very much grasped by India with its implications as early as in late 50s. (98)

What was more significant in the post-1968 phase was that the Indian Ocean region became an active zone of contest for all Great Powers, following the enunciation of the theory of power vacuum. This paved the way for the intensive militarisation and arms build-up in the Indian Ocean leading to the threat of potential destabilisation in this region. (99)

(97) See M.S. Venkataramani, "Indian Ocean and our Security: Implications of British Withdrawal", Times of India, 6 February 1968


India on its part, in general resisted and opposed any external power presence in the Indian Ocean and derided the conception of power vacuum. Swaran Singh, the then Defence Minister said that India did not "accept the validity ..... that a vacuum will be created in the Indian Ocean on the British decision to withdraw from the areas East of Suez....... For a country like India which has never believed in that concept, to think in these terms is absolutely in consistent."(100) Further India proposed that if any vacuum was there, it would and should be filled in by local Powers.

One clear implication of the 1968 declaration of British withdrawal was the sign of growing importance of the Indian Ocean in India's security considerations. The withdrawal compelled India to turn towards the sea-lanes in strategic terms.(101)

With the 1971 war, the importance of the Indian Ocean acquired critical dimensions in the

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(100) Lok Sabha Debates, volXV, 10 April, 1968, cols 3192-3202.

Indian perceptions. The U.S. entrance into the Bay of Bengal caused considerable stir in India; when the proposal for zone of peace (ZOP) in the Indian Ocean was mooted, India enthusiastically participated and vocally supported the idea. This active advocacy and participation of India in making the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace took concrete postures only after the 1971 war. From Indian point of view, the propagation of zone of peace would be an effective move that would enable India to sustain its position.

In strategic terms, this ZOP concept indicated three major security aspects: (a) the elimination of foreign military bases, (b) the recognition of natural claims of the regional Powers on the oceanic space, and (c) the settlement of disputes in the region in a peaceful manner without external intervention. In other words, external powers would be out of place, if

the zone of peace were established, in the Indian Ocean. (103)

To some extent the rationale behind India's solid support to the proposal of zone of peace in the Indian Ocean was to stabilise its new position and to gain time to build-up its navy. So its advocacy of the proposal contained strategic awareness and was not devoid of "pragmatism". (104)

VI

By definition a nation's security perceptions or considerations can not afford to be constant and be without change. At the same time, certain trends and continuities can be observed over a period of time. In the case of India, from 1947 to 1972, by and large, its security considerations were mostly centered and concentrated on Pakistan and China and towards the end of 60s on the Indian Ocean area.


(104) Sidhu, n.91, pp. 76-82.
Till the outbreak of 1962 Sino-Indian war, Pakistan totally enveloped India's perceptions. The 1962 war was a watershed in India's security perspectives as it shook the complacency out of India's defence policy and "security through diplomacy" approach. The need to build up a strong military to supplement the diplomatic initiatives was adequately recognised in the post-1962 phase.

Another turning point came in the post-1968 phase. The British declaration of withdrawal from East of Suez exposed India's "Nelson's eye" approach towards the strategic importance of the Indian Ocean. The growing Great Powers', particularly the United States' and the Soviet Union's naval presence and the resultant tensions compelled India to revise its Anglo-centric "land-based" defence strategy and to take a fresh look at the Indian Ocean thus reorienting its security priorities.