CHAPTER IV

DEFENCE/SECURITY RELATIONS
Independent India inherited the British organisational and command structure of Defence forces, the British military ideas of strategy and planning and the British ways of military training and institutional behaviour. Britain made a significant contribution towards the reorganisation and modernisation of the Indian Defence forces in the post-independence period. India's defence forces were equipped with British arms and ammunition and even after independence some of the senior British officers were retained to command the Indian military personnel. In the words of S.K. Sinha, "At the time of partition, the highest rank attained by any Indian in the Army was Brigadier and there were only three or four officers of this rank with only one having commanded a Brigade in war. The sudden departure of British officers created a vacuum, particularly in senior ranks. These vacancies had to be filled by Indian officers lacking experience and expertise for those ranks." 1 However, certain special appointments were made for the key positions, selecting from the British officers and it was only on 15 January 1949 that General (later Field Marshal) K.M. Cariappa became the first Indian to take over as the Commander-in-Chief of the

Indian army. Notably, the "military establishments of India and Britain remained closely linked even without any formal commitment to mutual defence by treaty". ²

For nearly two hundred years, India formed a pillar of the British empire and shaped much of Britain's strategy. The pattern of imperial conquests not only in the Middle and Far East, but also in the Mediterranean and Africa, was largely determined by actual or potential threats to the routes between Britain and India. But, after Indian independence in 1947, India's military and defence relations with Britain naturally began to change; yet, Britain retained a major interest in Indian defence for many years. ³

ARMS TRADE

Before 1962, in the absence of any major apparent threat from its neighbours and with an obvious primary concern in its economic development, India had been content with its inheritance of the defence policies and strategy from the British period. But, since the Chinese aggression of 1962, India's defence policy has been notable for

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3. Ibid.
diversification, search for independence and emphasis on enhanced defence spending. During the late sixties and seventies, India had inducted a substantial portion of its defence equipments from the Soviet Union.

Despite the fact that India imbibed largely the British military ideals and training, she had a different threat perception in the South Asia/Indian Ocean region and therefore, pursued policies which were not fully responsive to British security objectives in the region. Indian armed forces were basically concerned with the maintenance of security and integrity of the country. India pursued a policy of non-alignment, peaceful coexistence and mutual non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. Her prime concern was effective defence of her territory. Britain and India had identical organisational defence set up. Their linkages through defence personnel and arms deals survived various ups and downs in the bilateral relations. In fact, arms supply and purchases remained a major area of military interaction between India and Britain which has been influenced also by political factors.

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4. Ibid.
The fact that Britain was no longer the principal supplier of arms to India was quite clear from the Annual Report for 1963-64, published by the Ministry of Defence. In that Report, Britain's contribution to India's new defence build up was found only marginal. The British Government's contributions related mainly to economic and communications equipment. By the end of 1960s, Britain's influence in India declined, and also in its share of the supply of arms.  

India's initial dependence on Britain for weapons supply was perhaps due to the familiarity of the Indian forces with the British weapons, besides the influence of the personnel linked with the establishments of both the nations and the general closeness with Britain compared to any other supplier. According to Kavic, till 1962, the "Indian military policy was one of continual and usually unsatisfactory compromises between what was politically desirable, financially possible, and militarily prudent."  

British made Centurion tanks and the Hunter and the Canberra aircraft were used as main equipments by the


Indian army and the air force respectively.

It may be noted that throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, Britain remained the leading arms supplier to the South Asian region. In the 1970s, however, the superpowers moved in. During the period 1971-85, USSR became the most important arms supplier not only to India but also to other countries of South Asia. The general decline in Britain's world role was one factor, as also "the position of British arms industry at the high technology end of the market and the restraint shown by the Labour Government between 1974 and 1979." 7 "The British share of exports of major weapons increased in the mid 1980s because of a massive sales drive by the Conservative Government which came into power in 1979." 8

While, on the one hand, in the 1960s British arms exports generally declined, there was a specific turning point in Indo-British relations, which in a way affected Indo-British arms trade. It was in 1965 when India desperately needed submarines to counter the hostile Indonesian activities around the Andaman and the Nicobar Islands. President Soekarno of Indonesia had renamed the

8. Ibid, p.68.
Indian Ocean as the Indonesian Ocean, made alignments with Pakistan and China, got Indonesia withdrawn from the United Nations and started CONFRONTASI with Malaysia. While Britain agreed to build one Oberon Class submarine for India, it expressed its inability to give loan on soft terms. This compelled India to turn to the Soviet Union and accept the pending offer for supply of F-class submarines on very concessional terms.9

However, beginning in 1978-79, there was yet another diversification drive on the part of India; arms and equipments from USA, USSR, France and the Federal Republic of Germany figured prominently. But from 1983 onwards till 1987, apart from the USSR, UK was the main provider of arms, selling Sea Harrier fighters, Sea-King helicopters, Sea Eagle missiles and the aircraft carrier HMS Hermes among other supplies. From 1983 onwards and throughout most of 1984, Indira Gandhi's government continued its efforts to diversify the sources of military supply — Jaguar and Sea Harrier fighters and Sea King helicopters from Britain.10 Interestingly, during the period 1971-85, the


most important single customer for British major weapons...was India', though in mid-1980s, India again contracted with the Soviet Union for major arms purchases.\textsuperscript{11}

Later years of the 1980s saw Indo-British arms trade being influenced by a different sort of consideration. In 1987, India implemented a decision to 'freeze' Indian purchase from Britain to persuade the British authorities to take effective steps against the extremist elements operating from the British soil against Indian interests. Subsequently, no major arms deal was reported till early 1994 though there had been reported deliveries of Sea Harriers in 1989-91 and also self-propelled guns and electronic warfare equipments.\textsuperscript{12}

Indo-British defence collaboration encompassed all the three services -- the Army, Navy and the Air Force.

(i) \textbf{The Army}: At the time of independence the army, with its emphasis on regimental tradition, remained a thoroughly British Institution in organisation, training and outlook. Most of the artillery pieces of the Indian army were of the

\textsuperscript{11} Brzoska, n.7, p.68.

British origin and it also depended heavily on Britain for its heavy armour. At the time of independence, it had obsolete Stuart and Sherman (American) tanks. The first Kashmir war clearly revealed the need for modern equipment. In 1953, some 30 Sherman tanks were purchased from the United States on an ad hoc basis. During 1956-57, the Indian army purchased nearly 200 Centurion heavy tanks from Britain — which still remain in the front line of the Indian heavy weaponry — and in 1957-58 about 150 AMX light tanks from France. In the field of military hardware for the army, UK continued to be the dominant supplier, though not the sole one, till 1962. Above all, the Indian Army with its emphasis on regimental traditions, remained a thoroughly British institution in organisation, training and mentality.¹³

After 1962, India, in her search to achieve self-reliance in Defence production and in an attempt to diversify her sources of acquiring defence hardware, became more dependent on the Soviet Union. With the retirement of the 'Sandhurst' men from the Indian Army, the British influence declined considerably.

However, in May 1984, an order for tractors for the

¹³. Lipton & Firn, n.2, pp.200-201.
use of the Indian army was finalised between India and Britain. The contract for the tractors, called combat engineer tractors, was under negotiation for some time and a broad agreement has been finalised. The total order, of £50m. was based on Export-Credits Guarantee Department credits and soft loans with long repayment periods. The 155 mm Gun which was offered to New Delhi was the FH 70 which was in service with the British army. 14

(ii) The Navy: At the time when India attained Independence, the Indian Navy was the weakest of the three wings of the Indian Defence forces. It constituted a few Destroyers, Frigates and some ancillary vessels. Most of the Indian Navy in the years after independence were conceived and implemented by a few British Officers of the Indian Navy. 15

Under the plan of expansion drawn up in 1947, the Indian Navy acquired, from UK, one light cruiser (renamed INS Delhi) in 1948, and three Destroyers in 1949, which reached the Indian waters in January 1950. The first aircraft carrier for the Indian Navy, INS Vikrant (ex-HMS Hercules), was acquired in 1957 and the anti-submarine


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frigate and Sea Hawk fighters were obtained subsequently between 1957-68 from the United Kingdom.\textsuperscript{16}

On the eve of the conflict with China in 1962, the Indian Navy was almost entirely British equipped. There was only a fleet replenishment ship of Italian origin, a few seaward defence patrol boats of mixed Yugoslav and Dutch origin, one Portuguese frigate captured during the Goa operations in 1961, and some minor vessels built in the Indian Shipyards. The Indian Navy was essentially an anti-Submarine force. After 1962, in the decade of the Seventies and Eighties (1980-81), the Sea-King helicopters from Britain entered service in India.\textsuperscript{17}

Subsequently, in July 1983, Britain received orders from the Indian Navy for helicopters and missiles worth more than £200m. The orders were for Westland helicopters, and Sea King helicopters, armed with the British Aerospace Sea Eagle anti-ship missile.\textsuperscript{18} It was among the largest industrial contracts ever won by Britain from India.

Britain also agreed in October 1984 to supply to India 21 Westland helicopters costing £65 million for use on off-shore oil wells. After facing stiff competition from Aerospatiale of France, the British Government provided £65

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{17} India, Ministry of Defence, \textit{Annual Report, 1980-81}, (New Delhi, 1982), pp. 13-14.

\textsuperscript{18} The \textit{Times} (London), 21 January 1983.
Britain also agreed in October 1984 to supply to India 21 Westland helicopters costing £65 million for use on off-shore oil wells. After facing stiff competition from Aerospatiale of France, the British Government provided £65 million of aid in the form of outright grants to cover the full cost of the Westland-W30 helicopters, with Rolls Royce engines and basic spares, to be used by India's Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC).\textsuperscript{19} The United Kingdom also sold to India anti-ship missiles to equip the 24 Dornier aircraft which were proposed to be deployed for patrolling India's vast coastline.\textsuperscript{20}

During the visit of Rajiv Gandhi, Indian Prime Minister, to Britain in 1985, agreements were concluded for the sale of 21 Westland-W30 helicopters and also a £150m contract for a further 11 Sea Harriers for the Indian Navy and the purchase of the aircraft carrier HMS Hermes, renamed IN$ Viraat, which has a special type of flying deck to enable the Sea planes to take off easily.\textsuperscript{21}


\textsuperscript{20} \textit{The Statesman} (New Delhi), 3 October 1985.

\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Daily Telegraph} (London), 9 October 1985. Sea Harriers are jump jets which can take off and land from and on the same place, specially from aircraft carriers.
In 1985-86, a contract was signed with the British Aerospace, for the supply of 11 additional Sea Harriers. This was in addition to 8 Sea Harrier aircraft already procured by the Indian Navy. Contracts were also signed for the acquisition of spare engines from the Roll Royce and for the supply of Sea Eagle Missiles with the British Aerospace.22

In addition to the aircraft carrier HMS Hermes, the Indian Navy also acquired 13 FRS-Mk 51 Sea Harriers from the British Aerospace for more than £100 million. It also purchased a further three T-60 two seater planes to train naval pilots.23 The HMS Ark Royal and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary Fort Grange, 2 Units of a Royal Navy Task Group, on a six month deployment to the Far East, Australia and South Asia, visited Bombay in November, 1988.24

The Air Force: Like the Army and the Navy, the airforce also depended on Britain, as the principal source of supply of aircraft. As one of India's principal suppliers of aircraft and related equipment, Britain made a valuable

contribution to the development of the Indian air-force. So far as the purchase of arms and equipment was concerned, the policy of the government of India was definitely pointed towards the West, particularly towards the United Kingdom. At the time of the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962, most of the front line aircrafts of the Indian Air Force were of Western origin, mostly British. However, after 1962, Britain slowly lost its pre-eminence as a source of the Indian Air Force, and also in the Indian aircraft industry, and yielded to the slow but steady penetration in the field by the USSR.

During the early part of the seventies, the need to replace the ageing and obsolescent fleet of Hunters and Canberra aircrafts was accepted. Efforts to find a proper replacement aircraft for the ground attack role materialised during the years 1978-79, and the Jaguar Deep Penetration Strike Aircraft (DPSA) was selected after detailed evaluation of various options by a number of experts and senior officers of the Indian Air Force (IAF), Hindustan Aeronautics, Ltd., and the Ministries of Defence and Finance. The Jaguar Project involved an out purchase of about a quarter of the total requirements and licence

26. Ibid.
production of the remaining aircraft in India. 27

The Jaguar programme was only a replacement programme to replenish the Indian Air Force fleet of ageing Hunters and Canberras, with a proper modernised aircraft. With the rapid changes leading to greater sophistication in technology of equipment, it was imperative for the Indian air force to continuously modernise its equipment to maintain proper defence preparedness all the time and taking into account the level of such equipment in other countries, including India's neighbours, while at the same time continuing to maintain friendly and cordial relations with them. 28

As already noted, during Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Britain, in 1985, the Westland helicopter deal was finalised. But a new doubt arose over the entire transaction following Rajiv Gandhi's remark that these Westland helicopters were too big and expensive to operate. As a result, a question mark was posed as to whether India was going to avail itself of the British offer to pay for 21 helicopters, each of which was capable of carrying as

28. Ibid.
many as 20 persons, from grant assistance. In an interview, Rajiv Gandhi said that the Westland was "not in the seat" and was too expensive to run. However, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher returned to the subject when she briefly visited New Delhi and pointed out to Rajiv Gandhi that the Indian Government had decided in 1984, when Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister, to buy the more versatile Westland in spite of the extra expense. Further, technical queries have been raised on questions such as safety on take-off. This gave the impression that the Indians had a technical reason to abandon the contract.

However, it was to help the beleaguered Westland Company survive the cash crisis that Britain made India buy the helicopters rather than to provide India with a product it urgently needed. Subsequent technical snags proved the critics of the deal right.

In 1987, however, serious misgivings were raised about the wisdom of the Westland helicopter deal. The W30s were supplied primarily to work in India's offshore oil industry, but their manning costs are double the rates for

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30. Ibid.
31. Bedi, n.23.
commercial helicopter charters and they were proving too large to land on some oil platforms. There have been virtually no sale of these W30s, and since the Indian deal, no significant orders have been placed for these helicopters.\textsuperscript{32}

The sale came at a critical time for Westland. The Indian Government helped to precipitate the crisis at the company when New Delhi showed signs of pulling out of the deal in the middle of 1985, after almost everybody involved in assessing the offer had rejected it on cost and technical grounds. When Britain offered a further £10m as an operating subsidy, the negotiations were resumed and on 16 March 1986, after the storm over the US led rescue of Westland, India gave the green signal for the contract between the British firm and the newly formed, Government owned Helicopter Corporation of India (HCI). The deal came in the teeth of tough competition from a rival French helicopter — Aerospatiale's Dauphin. There was a criticism that Rajiv Gandhi thought that helping Whitehall with an order for the ailing Westland company would improve India's diplomatic relations with Britain.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{32} The Independent (London), 2 March 1987.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
planes for the ATP in a deal worth £6.5 m.\textsuperscript{34}

During a visit to India, George Younger, British Defence Secretary, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Britain and India, in March 1988, for joint Defence Research Projects aimed at increasing the use of manufacturing joint ventures between the two countries. The joint projects were to be in electronics and army equipment. However, India ranked among the UK's biggest Defence customers and bought equipment worth between £300m. and £350m. in 1985 and 1986. Subsequent orders included more than 40 Westland Sea-King helicopters and 27 British Aerospace Sea Harrier Jump Jets, together costing about £500m., and a contract worth about £1 bn. for jointly manufacturing 76 Jaguar fighter aircraft in India, after selling 40 aircraft direct from the UK.\textsuperscript{35}

The British Defence establishment, starved for contracts in a rapidly disarming Europe, was pushing for a larger share of the lucrative Indian armaments market, with the Indian Defence Budget hiked by another ten per cent in the plan outlay of 1985-90, the British armaments industry

\textsuperscript{34} Financial Times (London), 12 May 1987.

The British Defence establishment, starved for contracts in a rapidly disarming Europe, was pushing for a larger share of the lucrative Indian armaments market, with the Indian Defence Budget hiked by another ten per cent in the plan outlay of 1985-90, the British armaments industry hoped to include some of this increased spending onto their balance sheets. In pursuance of this objective, British Chief of Defence Staff, Peter Levine visited India in 1980. Even though the British Defence industry faced the prospect of being edged out of the Indian market by the French, they continued to occupy a dominating position as India's foremost arms supplier.36

Arms Supply can be used effectively as a weapon to promote foreign policy objectives. As Freedman observed: "Though only limited potential benefits can normally be expected from agreeing to sell arms, since this is seen in commercial terms, refusing to sell arms is a major political act. It appears as a calculated insult reflecting on the stability, trust and credit worthiness or technical competence of the would be recipient."37 However, Britain had been quite forthcoming in its attitude towards

36. Bedi, n.23.

sale of arms to foreign governments, though political considerations did come in at times. Arms supplied to India by Britain to counter the Chinese attack was given on a condition. Under this agreement between India and Britain concluded on 27 November 1962, Britain supplied arms and equipment free of payment to be used only against China. Britain was allowed to keep its representative to observe and review the use of such equipment. During the India-Pakistan War of 1965, Britain suspended arms supply to both India and Pakistan.

The Sino-Indian war in October-November 1962, and the events following, underlined the changes in New Delhi's attitude towards Britain as the arms supplier. A shift from London to Washington, and finally to Moscow was clearly discernible. When the hostilities between India and China Broke out, Britain was one of the first countries to give unqualified support to India's stand on the border conflict; and later on, in response to an Indian request for arms, Britain joined United States and other friendly countries for an emergency arms airlift to India. The first shipment of British arms, mainly infantry weapons, reached

38. Harpreet Mahajan, Arms Transfer to India, Pakistan and the Third World (New Delhi, 1982), p.213.
India on 9 October 1962.\(^\text{39}\)

Despite India's occasional imports of armaments from diversified sources (like frigates from Singapore, Howitzer guns from Sweden, submarines from Germany, ammunition from former Czechoslovakia), her two major suppliers have always been Britain and the USSR.

In India's case, Britain's access to Indian political, business and bureaucratic circles is obviously greater and access through these contracts are obviously more forthcoming.\(^\text{40}\) For example, a contract to supply the Indian Air Force with advanced jet trainers began in February 1987. It was reported that the French company Dassault's standing (makers of Alpha jets) over the British Aerospace (makers of Hawk) had been improved following the French Government's offer of radio-active isotopes for India's nuclear power programme. Britain and the USA declined to supply the items.\(^\text{41}\) But it was generally believed that the deal would be finalised as the British Aerospace was known to have the right contacts in India,

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40. Brzoska, n.7, p.71.

both in the Air Force and outside.\textsuperscript{42}

However, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Britain might just become the main arms supplier to India. The Indian army and the air force are now marginally dependent on the United Kingdom for some specialised items needed for Indian tanks, combat tractors and spares for the Jaguar Squadrons. Despite its extensive programme of indigenisation, the Indian Navy still relies largely on Britain for the maintenance and renewal of parts of its fleet, especially the aircraft carriers, as their aircraft and armoury of missiles are procured from Britain. Much of the Navy's sophisticated navigational and electronic equipment also is procured from the United Kingdom.\textsuperscript{43}

Overall, Indian Orders of equipment for the three services amount to a big sum, sufficiently large enough for the prospect of their denial to cause considerable discomfort in British official and industrial circles. It was an Indian decision in 1987, to cut down firmly on these orders and direct Indian purchases to other sources, that finally persuaded the British authorities, to take steps to curb the anti-Indian activities of the Sikh extremists


\textsuperscript{43} Malik and Robb, n.9, pp.98-99.
defence activities between the two countries, especially in areas such as exercises and training, etc.

**INDO-BRITISH INTERACTION ON SECURITY ISSUES**

Logically, the end of the cold war should mark a new phase in Indo-British relations on international security issues. India had a very close interaction with the United Kingdom in the field of security until 1964. In the mid 1960s, two factors adversely affected Indo-British Security relations. After the Chinese nuclear weapon test on 16 October 1964, the Indian Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, reportedly sought a security guarantee (also known as a nuclear umbrella) from Britain. For obvious reasons, Britain did not agree to extend such a security guarantee. Subsequently in 1966-67, even while discussions were on for the finalisation of the draft Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), efforts to secure multilateral security guarantees from Moscow, Paris, London and Washington from the Indian side also failed. Secondly, in the wake of the Indian counter attack in the Lahore Sector on 5 September 1965, following the Pakistani attack in the Chhamb Sector during the Indo-Pak War of 1965, the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson accused India of

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45. Malik and Robb, n.9, pp.112-13.
multilateral security guarantees from Moscow, Paris, London and Washington from the Indian side also failed. Secondly, in the wake of the Indian counter attack in the Lahore Sector on 5 September 1965, following the Pakistani attack in the Chhamb Sector during the Indo-Pak War of 1965, the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson accused India of aggression on Pakistan, apparently ignoring the preceding Pakistani aggression. Later, he regretted his mistake. But, however, some damage had been done. 46

The 1971 Bangladesh crisis did not create any serious strain between India and Britain. The British attitude towards the crisis was characterised by realism. There was overwhelming support for the democratic aspirations of the people of East Pakistan. Britain called for a political settlement to the crisis and adopted a neutral posture towards the crisis. Although Britain was sure that the emergence of an independent Bangladesh was inevitable, it moved with much caution till the new nation was actually born at the end of the Indo-Pakistani war. It did so because its objective was not to give room to any controversy over its role during the crisis. It took care not to be drawn too far into the deepening crisis between

46. Ibid.

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India and Pakistan over Bangladesh. 47

Indo-British Security relationship can be said to be characterised by a three-dimensional aspect — Pakistan, China and the issue of terrorism, particularly in Kashmir and Punjab.

PAKISTAN: Indo-Pak hostility is the outcome of the enmity caused by the partition of India on communal lines. It was nurtured by mutual suspicion which had led to, more than once, major wars too. Ever since the dawn of independence and the creation of Pakistan, Indian concern for security has been greatly centered on Pakistan and China.

Although the second half of 1979 witnessed a lot of activity in the domestic politics of India, it was relatively a quiet time from the point of view of India's foreign relations. The period of Janata government in 1977-79 was marked by an unusual period of cordiality and friendship between India and Pakistan. As a result, Pakistan temporarily became less and less a factor in Indo-British relations. But, this cordiality between India and Pakistan abruptly ended following the return of Indira Gandhi to power in India and by the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. When the Soviets intervened in Afghanistan, in

47. Ibid.
December 1979, in India a caretaker government, headed by Charan Singh of Janata(S), was in power. Following the Soviet intervention, Afghan President Hafizullah Amin was killed, and Babrak Karmal, who was living in exile in the USSR, was installed as the new President in Kabul.48 Following this intervention, which received worldwide condemnation, Pakistan assumed considerable importance as a frontline state, especially in the eyes of Western powers like Britain and the United States, who renewed their interest in Pakistan and started arming that country as part of their effort to stop the Soviet expansionism. After Indira Gandhi's return to power in 1980, following her sympathetic attitude to USSR, the Indo-Pak relationship once again began to deteriorate.

However, in the wake of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979, the United States stepped up its supply of sophisticated military hardware to Pakistan, in addition to what was agreed under the $.3.2 billion economic and military package in 1981-82 and spread over till 1987. The USA needed Pakistan and its war tested military machine to check the Soviet expansionism and began

to supply arms to the Afghan mujahideens, operating from bases in Pakistan and fighting against the Karmal regime. Against this background, the Indo-Pak relations were moving steadily towards discord, and acrimony. Opinions were expressed in India that Pakistan's on-the-line weapons would be more suitable against India than in the rugged mountains of the North-West frontier. Despite strong protests from the Jewish Lobby and other quarters in the United States, the American administration chose to supply the advanced F-16 fighter bombers to Pakistan.49

The British Prime Minister, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, also fully supported and advocated Pakistan's 'right' to engage in arms build-up in view of the Soviet presence in Afghanistan. This British stance did cause some strain in the Indo-British Security relationship vis-a-vis Pakistan.50 Although both UK and USA, reiterated their stand that the arms supplied to Pakistan were not directed against India, it did give rise to misgivings and misapprehensions in India.

In the years 1980-85, following the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, there was a massive build up

49. Deccan Chronicle (Hyderabad), 23 December 1983.
50. Patriot (New Delhi), 20 April 1981.
of arms by Pakistan, supplied by the United States and Britain. According to the SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) Year Book, in 1980 Pakistan received 16 SH-3D Sea King helicopters from Britain. In 1984-85 it received 3 Amazon Class Frigates from Britain as part of Pakistan's fleet modernisation programme. 51

In the next few years, this massive arming of Pakistan, apparently though meant for countering the Soviet presence in Afghanistan and to help the Afghan mujahideens in Pakistan, had its spill over effects on India as some of these weapons found their way into the hands of extremists in Punjab and Kashmir who were waging terrorist attacks against the Indian Government.

The Daily Telegraph, a leading British newspaper, had advised the Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi that if she wanted to prevent a war with Pakistan, she should not look for weapons only but also for an effective diplomatic effort. 52

TERRORISM: A major irritant in Indo-British security relations was the activities of the Sikh and Kashmiri

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extremists in Britain. India blamed that much of the terrorist violence in Punjab and Kashmir was carried by the support the Sikh and Kashmiri separatists received from the pro-Pakistani elements and a small section of Sikh fundamentalists abroad, particularly in Britain and Canada.

However, on the issue of Terrorism *per se*, there was a convergence of interests and attitudes between India and Britain, as Britain was also faced with terrorist attacks in Northern Ireland and elsewhere. Notably, Mrs. Thatcher herself faced an assassination attempt at Brighton by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) terrorists in 1984. India also lost two of her Prime Ministers, Indira Gandhi in October 1984, and Rajiv Gandhi in May 1991, in the hands of terrorists.

However, the basic approach of the Government of India has been to contain terrorist violence while attempting to negotiate a political settlement with the insurgent leaderships. Britain, herself trying to contain terrorist violence in Northern Ireland, has been sympathetic to India's problems and has reiterated its

stand against any kind of terrorist violence and has repeatedly called upon Pakistan to stop its covert support to the terrorists in Kashmir.\textsuperscript{55}

Britain had always supported a Indo-Pakistani dialogue to settle the issue of Kashmiri militancy. U.K., along with the U.S.A. showed greater understanding of the problems faced by India because of the trans-border support and instigation of terrorist violence in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab, and the covert support given to the terrorists by Pakistan.\textsuperscript{56}

Margaret Thatcher, enumerated the British government's stand on terrorism by saying that Britain was no stranger to terrorist attacks as it was troubled by the security situation in Northern Ireland and the terrorist activities of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), which was engaged in a series of bomb attacks, claiming innocent British lives.\textsuperscript{57}

During the ethnic violence in Sri Lanka in the 1980s, Mrs. Thatcher, while reiterating her well known stand on

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{55} India, Lok Sabha, \textit{Debates}, Fourth Session, Vol.XII, Nos.20-22, 1985, pp.23-25.
  \item \textsuperscript{56} \textit{Times of India} (New Delhi), 5 October 1994.
\end{itemize}
terrorism, asked the Sri Lankan President, Junius Jayawardane to solve the Tamil ethnic problem politically. She said: "The Government must stand ready to work with those in minority communities who are willing to argue their case peacefully and democratically."\(^{58}\)

Following India's decision to send relief supplies like medical aid and food and other essential commodities to beleaguered Jaffna, the British Foreign Office also expressed concern about the possible escalation of confrontation between India and Sri Lanka.\(^{59}\) However, Britain hailed the Indo-Sri Lankan accord of July 1987 for which Britain pledged loans worth up to £20 million for reconstruction plans in Sri Lanka.\(^{60}\)

In November 1988, there was an abortive coup attempt in the Island of Maldives in the Indian Ocean, staged by certain disgruntled Maldivians living abroad with the help of some mercenaries from Sri Lanka, against the Government of President Mamoon Abdul Gayoom. Following this, President Gayoom approached the United States and Britain

\(^{58}\) Times of India, 14 April 1985.

\(^{59}\) Times of India, 14 June 1987.

\(^{60}\) H.S. Chopra, "Improving Indo-British Relations, Opportunities and Obstacles", India Quarterly (New Delhi), XIIIV, Nos. 3 & 4, July-December 1988, p.55.
for help. They reportedly told Gayoom to approach India for help. 61 India rushed military support to the elected government in Male (capital of Maldives) and beat back the foreign invaders. Maldives is a member, both of the Commonwealth and of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). As the Commonwealth Secretariat in London stated India rushed troops to Male as part of its international obligation and not as the duty of a regional power. 62 President Gayoom of Maldives made it very clear that military assistance was only sought from India to resist the coup attempt, though general appeals of help were sent out to many countries, including the USA and the UK. 63 However, the British Government supported and lauded the Indian action in Male. 64

However, some British newspapers took a negative view of the Indian action to save the Maldives from the mercenaries' attack, and tried to project it as part of India's imperial designs. In an editorial captioned "Indian Might is Right" the Sunday Telegraph wrote: "It is

61. Indian Express (New Delhi), 5 November 1988.

62. India, Lok Sabha, Debates, Eighth Series, Vol.44, Nos.18-20, Cols.126,

63. Ibid., Col.48.

64. Ibid., Col.259.
sometimes said that the Soviet Union is the only empire left. That is not quite the case. India also has imperial pretensions, judging by its involvement even farther afield in the Maldives." The editorial said that it was not written in any spirit of criticism or complaint. The Defence editor of the Daily Telegraph saw in the Indian intervention in the Maldives another demonstration of the extent to which India had become the regional superpower of South Asia. "South Asia's gendarme" was the heading of the editorial of The Times. It said, the Indian intervention in the Maldives was a "dramatic exercise in regional policing." 66

CHINA: During the Sino-Indian War in 1962, Britain had supported India, but the Chinese dimension became a factor in the Indo-British security relations in the late 1970s especially in the wake of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the massive rearming of Pakistan by the Western Powers, notably the United States and Britain. In 1978, Indian Defence Minister, Jagjivan Ram, had sounded a word of caution on the Chinese build up of arms from

65. Quoted in Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 7 November 1988.
66. Ibid.
Britain and France.67

China encouraged Pakistan's intransigence with regard to India's Security. Pakistan served as a convenient focus for Indian concern, leaving China relatively free from India's attention. After the secret visit of Henry Kissinger to Peking in 1971 via Islamabad, Pakistan had proved its value as a go between the United States and the People's Republic of China, the rapprochement thus achieved in 1971 between US and China had potential consequences for Indian security.

The Indian Defence planners could not but take into account, developments in China's military capability. Even though the likelihood of a Sino-Indian conflict was rated low since both the Governments were taking care to avoid any escalation of tension over the disputed borders, India and China have had an age-old problem of disputed borders. Therefore, India made a serious note when since 1984, discussions were carried on between China and a British firm to equip China's fighter bombers with refueling capacity which posed a new threat to India.68

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68. Deccan Herald (Bangalaore), 30 December 1986.
Britain has a problem with China over Hongkong, which is slated for transfer to China in 1997. China took serious objection to the Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten's proposals to enlarge the democratic base of the Hong Kong administration. At the same time, India also has an interest in the smooth and trouble-free transition of power in Hong Kong from the British to the Chinese since there is a sizable Indian community in Hong Kong. Furthermore, the nature of transfer of power will also give out signals regarding the future style of Chinese policy in the South East and East Asian regions. Therefore, the Hong Kong issue has much wider implications for China's relationship with its Asian neighbours than those centered around the interests of Hong Kong itself. 69

India has been attempting to improve its relations with China and there were interactions and exchanges of delegations and visits between the two countries. There were proposals for confidence building measures on the Indo-Tibetan border. There was improvement in the Sino-Indian trade relations and talks have been held on the thorny issue of border problem, between the two countries. However, developments in Hong Kong and the Chinese policies pertaining to the transfer of Hong Kong are of mutual

69. Malik and Robb, n.9, pp.118-120.
Indo-British defence and security relations over this period under study—1979-91, has been marked by ups and downs. The British influence and supremacy on the Indian defence scenario was overwhelming in the initial years after Independence till 1962. After 1962, the British influence declined and Soviet Union became the chief arms supplier to India. However, in the late seventies and eighties, Britain regained its position in terms of supplying armaments and helicopters and jets to India, though in the latter part of eighties the entire relationship was to some extent overshadowed by the Westland helicopters deal.

Indo-British security relationship has had three prime dimensions—Pakistan, related to which is the problem of terrorism and China. There is much greater scope for closer interaction on international security issues with the end of the Cold War as they hold common perspectives on issues like terrorism and narco-terrorism. Britain is also equally concerned about peace and stability in South Asia and obviously attaches considerable importance to its security relationship with India. With the cold war coming

70. Ibid.
THE NUCLEAR PROBLEM: The nuclear issue has not been an area of direct dispute between India and Britain as it is with the United States. India and Britain have started a process of bilateral exchanges of views on the problem of nuclear proliferation. Pertinently, Britain is one of the three sponsors of the Non-Proliferation-Treaty, and is interested in the Treaty being extended indefinitely in 1995. In principle both Britain and India are in favour of non-proliferation. But, that basic stand has not prevented Britain from expanding its nuclear arsenal in terms of the number of submarine-borne strategic warheads by commissioning four Trident-class submarines. This would increase the number of British strategic warheads from 192 to 512 at a time when the United States and Russia were running down their arsenals.  


While Britain kept its nuclear options open, the
strategic uncertainty that goes with Britain's pressure on India to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is quite high, for the simple reason that India is situated in an area where it has to deal with nuclear China, and the ongoing nuclear cooperation between Peking and Islamabad. The Chinese have not suspended their nuclear tests, nor have they given any indication of an intention to join the arms reduction process. 73

India's nuclear restraint is well established. After carrying out a technology demonstration test for a peaceful nuclear explosion in 1974 74 at a time when such explosions were accepted as viable by the NPT, India had not followed the test with the build up of a nuclear arsenal. However, British government has reiterated its usual official stand that Britain is in favour of India and Pakistan's signing the Non-Proliferation treaty. 75

DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTION OF SECURITY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION

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73. Subrahmanyam, n.9, pp.117-18.


that Britain is in favour of India and Pakistan's signing the Non-Proliferation treaty.\textsuperscript{75}

**DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTION OF SECURITY IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION**

India and Britain also had different perceptions on the question of the security of the Indian Ocean. Since the late sixties, when the Soviet Navy extended its activity to the Indian Ocean following the British decision to withdraw its forces from the east of Suez, the Indian Ocean region became an area of big power rivalry.\textsuperscript{76}

There was genuine anxiety in Britain over the activities of the Soviet Union in a strategic region like the Indian Ocean. Unlike the super powers, Britain has large financial stakes in the Indian Ocean area. Besides, all important lines of supply carrying such vital necessities of Britain's economic life as oil, foodstuffs and raw materials pass through the Indian Ocean. Therefore, Whitehall was sensitive to the changes in the situation in


\textsuperscript{76} B. Vivekanandan, "India and Britain", *International Studies* (New Delhi), Vol.17, nos.3-4, October 1978, pp.696-8.
moves against the Diego Garcia project hurt British feelings as much as they offered a striking contrast to India's comparative silence over the Soviet moves in the Indian Ocean.\(^77\) There is however, no dispute between India and Britain over the desirability of constituting the Indian Ocean into a zone of peace because both India and Britain stand to gain by peace and stability in the region. Sir Alec Douglas Home, British Foreign Secretary, made this point clear at a Press conference in New Delhi in February 1972.\(^78\)

Besides there are differences between India and Britain over the conditions that promote peace. The British objective is to ensure a balancing presence of the navies of the different big powers. India's objective on the other hand is to free the Indian Ocean altogether from the presence of the big powers.\(^79\)

Indo-British defence and security relations during the period under study has been characterised by ups and downs. The British influence and supremacy on the Indian defence

\(^{77}\) Ibid.

\(^{78}\) British High Commission in India, *British Information Services* (New Delhi), BIS-B 59, 8 February 1972, p.2.

\(^{79}\) India, Lok Sabha, *Debates*, Fifth Series, Vol.45, Nos.1-10,Cols.251-76.
of the different big powers. India's objective on the other hand is to free the Indian Ocean altogether from the presence of the big powers.79

Indo-British defence and security relations during the period under study has been characterised by ups and downs. The British influence and supremacy on the Indian defence set up was overwhelming in the initial years after independence till 1962. But, after 1962, the British influence declined and India, in an effort to diversify the sources of defence equipment, collaborated and received defence equipment in a large quantity from the Soviet Union. However, in the late seventies and eighties, Britain regained its position and Indo-British relationship on defence matters were looking up; specially in the supplying of armaments, jets, and helicopters to India. The following statistics from the SIPRI would give an idea about the transactions between India and Pakistan in the field of defence equipment in the last decade. In 1981, India acquired 40 Jaguars, 18 Sea Harriers and 2 T-4 planes from the United Kingdom.80 In 1982, she acquired from

79. India, Lok Sabha, Debates, Fifth Series, Vol.45, Nos.1-10, Cols.251-76.
helicopters. In the later years, that is from 1984-85 to 1989-90, India not only acquired more Sea Harriers and Sea Eagle missiles and Sea King helicopters, but also Jaguars fighter planes, destroyers, frigates and also the aircraft carrier, 'INS Viraat' (formerly HMS Hermes) in 1987. Besides, India, also under licences from Britain, manufactured 2 type 1500 submarines, 3 Godavari class destroyers and 20 HS-748M transport-planes, 45 Jaguar fighter etc.

However, in 1986, when India decided to buy the Westland helicopters from Britain, there were a lot of controversies. Opinions were expressed that it was basically to help the beleaguered Westland helicopter company survive the crisis that India bought these helicopters and later on the drawbacks of these helicopters, proved the critics right.

Indo-British security relations during the period under review centred around mainly on Kashmir, China and on the issue of terrorism. While Pakistan's importance as a


basically to help the beleaguered Westland helicopter company survive the crisis that India bought these helicopters and later on the drawbacks of these helicopters, proved the critics right.

Indo-British security relations during the period under review centred around mainly on Kashmir, China and on the issue of terrorism. While Pakistan's importance as a frontline state got greatly accentuated after the Russian intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979, India lodged strong protests both internationally and with various visiting British dignitaries to India, that the constant arming of Pakistan by the United States and Britain, on the ground of the Russian invasion, was seriously upsetting the strategic balance in South Asia and jeopardising the security of India.

As far as the issue of terrorism was concerned, both India and Britain agreed on the basic stand that terrorism in all forms and all kinds of terrorist activities needs to be condemned in the strongest possible terms. Britain also has been a target of terrorist attacks from the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and hence was no stranger to terrorism. However, during 1984-86, at the height of the Sikh and Kashmir militancy in India, with the active support of expatriate communities in Britain, there was
considerable strain between India and Britain, with India accusing Britain of not taking proper steps to bring the culprits to book, while the British government defending itself on the plea that under the existing British law, it was not possible for Britain to punish somebody unless he had directly violated the British law. However, with the signing of the extradition treaty on 22 September 1992, things have certainly improved. 84

China and its relationship with Pakistan and the United States provides the third dimension of the security relationship between India and Britain. India has had an age old border problem with China and has been disturbed by China's intransigence towards Pakistan as regards India's security. India also is interested in the smooth transfer of Hong Kong from Britain to the Chinese authorities in 1997, as there is a sizeable presence of Indians in Hong Kong. Hence, developments in Hong Kong and the Chinese policies pertaining to the transfer of Hong Kong are of mutual concern to both India and Britain.

Besides, the issue of the divergent perceptions of both India and Britain over the question of security in the Indian Ocean region and the differing ideas and perceptions

closer interaction and cooperation in their bilateral defense and security relationship seems possible.\textsuperscript{85}

\textsuperscript{85} Malik and Robb, n.9, pp.128-29.