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Arab World: March towards Democracy and Its Implications

Ranjan Mathai

It is an honour and a privilege for me to deliver the inaugural address of the Conference on “Arab World: March towards Democracy and its Implications” organised by the KPS Menon Chair, Mahatma Gandhi University.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) greatly values the views and opinion of people all over the country and we regard it as a privilege to partner Mahatma Gandhi University in this activity. I believe that MEA is a pioneer in public outreach – we have an active press relations division, and our Public Diplomacy Division is a manifestation of our widening horizons. We organised the first ever national seminar of International Relations Departments of Universities from all over the country in 2011. With this little self–congratulation let me turn to the subject at hand. The developments we have witnessed over the last two years in the Arab World are unprecedented, have brought in phenomenal changes and have altered the character of regional politics. Whether these constitute a ‘March towards Democracy’ is for history to judge. Let me just preface my remarks by saying that the significance of the developments is not only for individual countries in the region, but equally important for India too, and the subject of the seminar is indeed one of global significance. Hence this conference here in Kottayam is particularly valuable.

When we talk of the Arab world it is necessary to recall that a significant part of this world is in Asia, and has therefore the so called Arab Spring has some meaning for the future of Asia and of India. Even before independence Pandit Nehru spoke of India’s place as the natural centre and focal point of many forces at work in Asia. “The history of India is a long history of her relations with other countries of Asia. If you should know India you have to go to Afghanistan and West Asia, to China, Japan and then countries of South East Asia.”

I started by saying it is for history to come to judgement on the so called Arab Spring. Two years is clearly too short a time to deterministically and accurately
judge the implication of these events, especially when they continue to unfold even as we speak (recall the answer which Premier Chou en Lai never actually gave about it being “too early to tell” how he assessed the French Revolution!). At the same time, while a rush to judgement should be avoided, policy makers need assessments of what has happened so far to help them in the task of policy formulation. And policy is about people not about abstract concepts. I am glad therefore that we are holding this conference in Kottayam which is the heartland of the area from which millions of our citizens have gone to the Gulf; and for whom, the issues unfolding in West Asia are of critical importance in their daily lives.

It is obvious that for India, the Gulf (which we consider our extended neighbourhood) and the West Asia-North Africa (WANA) region is of vital strategic importance. We have said this to all our partners – who seek our views on matters ranging from Iran to Syria. The region is home to more than 5 million Indians (a significant percentage of them from Kerala) who contribute over US$ 35 billion in remittances every year. Some estimates are that more than 20 per cent of Kerala’s GDP is dependent on the Gulf. India’s overall economic and commercial engagement with these countries is around US$ 160 billion per annum. The region is a source of around 60 per cent of our oil and gas requirement and hence critical for our energy security. It is also a major source of phosphatic and other fertilizers and hence a factor in our food security. Stability in the region is, therefore, vital to India’s national interest. This has become a mantra in Delhi today – but decades ago – in Kerala this was instinctively understood. That is why so many have sought to build ties with the region and influence foreign policy decisions, and do want calculations based on the importance of stability.

I must assure you that the interests of our working people have been uppermost in our minds when we analyze West Asia. Yet India’s policy towards the region and developments there, and our posture in the Security Council have also been guided by our principled desire not to interfere in the internal affairs of States and being non-prescriptive. We are aware of the ramifications of the movements for democracy. We are aware that in many countries rulers have not accepted the new tide of democracy. We have called for restraint in the use of coercive measures against people who we believe should be permitted to articulate their aspirations. But we are absolutely clear – (to put it in PM’s words) that societies cannot be re-ordered from outside through military force and that people in all countries have the right to choose their own destiny and decide their own future. In some cases that may take time particularly in countries with traditional power structures – but in the end the democracy that emerges is sustainable.

Developments which we are witnessing in the Arab World affect, first and foremost, the countries and peoples of that part of the world. While transition in
some countries has been relatively smooth, such as in Tunisia, in others like Libya it
was affected by a drawn out campaign and blatant external intervention – however
explained. That said we do respect the new leadership that has emerged in Libya
and its commitment to representative government. Our Ambassador to Libya has
developed contacts with the new leadership. Many of them have experience of
India and respect for our governance model. We hope circumstances will enable
the thousands of Indians who left to revive their professional and business ties with
Libya. The conflict in Syria is still being waged and there has been considerable loss
of life and blood-shed. The outcome is still in the balance and it is too early to say
what will emerge. Egypt, which saw a change in leadership soon after the popular
uprising is today witnessing violence and clashes as it moves to put in place a new
system and structure of governance. Clearly, the road to transition and change
has not been easy. We helped a little with election management. Elections are a
critical condition but not the only one for democratic government. I am reminded
of the description of Kerala as the Yenan of India and my response to the praise
of Kerala as the first place where Communists took power through the ballot; viz.
that they have won many elections, but Kerala is also the first place where they
exited from power through the ballot. And there is a profound message in this
– because it is only through repeated elections that the democratic roots are laid
down; when people look to interests and broader aspirations beyond slogans and
religious appeals – which may be dominant in the first elections. And it is this long
term view which provides a degree of optimism. Any government in the region
which has to provide welfare to its people – will ultimately need safety and stability
of its administration, of its workers and investors, steady production of natural
resources and trade partners. What we need is a way of navigating the short term.

The popular movements which emerged in countries across the region were
not ideology led or driven by a cohesive group. In fact, there is some debate about
how it all started – in Tunisia. But at the same time recall the history of popular
movements in Egypt, the rise of the Wafd and other parties from the 1920s and you
realize there is a historical basis for democratic upsurge. Just as in India in Egypt
it was tied to national resurgence. There was of course a long period of political
stagnation when democratic expression was suppressed, so there is a learning curve
to be climbed. Now the movements, in some countries where they were successful
in affecting regime change are said to have ceded political space to “Islamists” as
outcomes of democratic process. What are the implications of this? I have an issue
with the simplistic term “Islamist.” But even if one accepts it, the issue is - would
“Islamists” dominate the political space or would it be shared in democratic manner
with other more secular political actors? With this question comes the issue of the
place for religious minorities and women in new power structures – these groups
were in the fore-front of many of the popular movements. And, most importantly, we should ask ourselves the question as to what we can do to contribute to the process of capacity and institution building in these countries. It is in our interest that democracy stabilizes and brings the religious and secular forces into an evolutionary framework. As I said earlier – above all democracy means submitting government to popular will at the end of the term; and meanwhile governance in accord with the freedoms that make participatory democracy meaningful. Thus our analysis would require looking beyond the economic calculations of long and short term that I earlier made.

Equally significant are the implications of the unfolding developments for regional and global geopolitics. Some of the regimes which had provided the bulwark of a particular vision of security in the region for superpowers are no more. What kind of role would the successor regimes play? The turmoil in Syria has far reaching reverberations which go well beyond the country’s or the region’s borders. The Shia-Sunni fault-line which runs through the region adds its own volatility to the potent mix. The impact of the developments on the Arab-Israeli conflict, major power rivalry and the regional power equations requires close monitoring and in-depth analysis. For us in India – and China – and perhaps Europe – the impact on oil production trends also has to be factored in. It is we in Asia (not US) who are now critically dependent on oil from West Asia. If the democratic upsurge affects oil production it is Indian and Chinese consumers who will feel the effects first. It is heartening that there are so many professionals and technocrats in the democratic movements.

At another level, the developments in the region have a direct bearing on global terrorism and hence on our national security. The situation in Mali today is inter-alia a consequence of the turmoil in Libya whether acknowledged or not. Al-Qaeda and its affiliates such as Ansar-dine in Mali, Al-Shabaab in Somalia and others have sought to exploit the political instability in the region to their advantage. Arms pumped into the region are finding their way to terror groups. The unending conflict in Syria is facilitating similar trends in that country, providing terror groups arms and sanctuary. It would be worthwhile for this Conference to look closely at this phenomenon and its very serious implications for the world at large. Are these forces exogenous to the region? Are they separate from the democratic surge? And do we need international cooperation to deal with the menace of terrorism.

While a number of countries in the region witnessed popular movements, only six – Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Bahrain have witnessed large scale upsurges which challenged the regimes. Would such movements spread to other countries of the region? While swift change in leadership and/or regime could encourage popular unrest in other countries, drawn out, violent and bloody
conflicts could well act as a deterrent. While technology facilitated the spread of information and mobilisation of people, there are other traditional networks including social and religion-based which act as countervailing forces (this is by the way something which even fully functional democracies are familiar with!). Except Bahrain which sits on the Shia-Sunni fault line and where the demonstrations were contained through regional effort, all other countries which have witnessed large scale popular movements, are non-monarchies. Will this continue to be so? Do monarchies enjoy greater credibility amongst the populace? There are questions which we need to address: Let me say we have been conscious of the need to avoid a ‘one size fits all’ approach. We have been guided by a sense of solidarity with democratic movements, opposition to external interventions, and being very clear about the preservation of our relations in the national interest.

The issue of whether the ‘Spring’ is actually a regional phenomenon could be put differently by posing the question, whether the desire for change is a Pan-Arab phenomenon. Rami G. Khoury, Editor-at-large of the Daily Star in a piece written at the end of last year said that there is no such thing as a cohesive, single “Arab World” as every Arab country follows a different path in pursuing its own political re-configuration. Khoury, however, added that the 350 million ordinary Arab men and women across the region are nevertheless expressing some common grievances, attitudes and aspirations. Among them there is a desire to acquire freedom that people in other parts of the world take for granted. To restore their place in the global movement of ideas and achievements. This is not just about social media led middle classes – though these media facilitate a leadership role; they are conscious they once had a great place in the world of ideas. Recall Nehru’s words about the extraordinary achievements of Arab civilization in historical times: “The intellectual curiosity, the adventures in rationalist speculation, the spirit of scientific enquiry, among the Arabs of the 8th and 9th centuries are very striking.” The heirs to such a great tradition cannot long accept being unable to participate in the globalisation of cultural, scientific and spiritual movements. We in India certainly cannot stand aloof from this mobilisation.

To conclude, ‘the march towards democracy’ is a path of promise but fraught with challenges and pit falls. It is a path of far reaching consequences and would need to be traversed with caution. There will be no dearth of self serving detractors working for their own narrow interests; but in the end democratic movements are larger than the specific interests which might motivate some among them. And as beneficiaries of democracy ourselves, we believe the implications of the democratic upsurge would be positive in the long run.

Inaugural address at the Conference on “Arab World: March towards Democracy and its Implications” organised by the KPS Menon Chair for Diplomatic Studies on 4-5 February 2013.
Future Trajectories for BRICS

Achin Vanaik

Despite much optimism, there are clear indications that BRICS lacks the capacity to function as a powerful and innovative new force in the realm of global politics and governance. Can BRICS emerge as a collective that will reject the current neoliberal order and seek to promote a much more social welfarist form of capitalist development – one that might at least unleash a dynamic much more conducive to the emergence of more progressive social and political forces whose pressures are from below? And will it seriously challenge the existing world order where the imperialist behaviour of the US continues to be highly – and sometimes decisively – influential in shaping the course of events? Or are these governments headed by elites whose principal preoccupation is forging a more cooperative system of global management of a world capitalist order in which their voices will be more seriously listened to and in which their own rankings in the global pecking order of elites rises much more significantly?

If the official outcome of the fourth summit of BRICS that took place in New Delhi on 29 March 2012 embodied in the consensual ‘Delhi Declaration’ offered insight into the current significance and trajectory of BRICS as a collective body, matters will become even clearer after the Durban Summit. There have been two contesting views. One is marked by considerable enthusiasm about its potential. The very fact of regular summit meetings with an ‘escalating consensus’ is thought to bode well for the body’s future and its ability to reshape the institutions and practices of global governance. That the G-7 gave way to the G-8 which in turn has now given way to the G-20 (incorporating the BRICS countries as well as other emerging economies) as the main international grouping undertaking to steer the world economy, is taken as testimony to the growing relevance of the emerging powers in general and BRICS in particular.

Others are more skeptical. Here, the BRICS countries are viewed not so much as major reformers of the current global neoliberal order but as new members happily included in a still hierarchical ‘world steering committee’ because they
too will play by the basic rules. BRICS may account for 42 per cent of the world’s population, 18 per cent of its GDP, 15 per cent of world trade and 40 per cent of its currency reserves. (It is often ignored that the states comprising the Gulf Cooperation Council, namely Oman, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, which are all politically subordinate to the US and more obedient towards its economic needs, have in total more dollar reserves – official, sovereign wealth and other government funds – than does China).

The main importance of BRICS lies in the fact that it accounts for more than half of the world GDP growth rate. In what follows the Delhi Declaration issued after the last annual Summit is taken as a basis for assessing the nature and role of BRICS precisely because it is their collective statement to date. That the final Durban Declaration will show some forward movement is very likely but in what direction? In the eyes of skeptics there will be more reinforcement than departure from the existing political and economic scripts.

The Delhi Declaration showed that there was no real challenge to the neoliberal order and no interest in promoting an NIEO (New International Economic Order) of the kind that was once discussed by the Nonaligned Movement (NAM) during the 1970s. Indeed, neither Brazil which has observer status in the NAM, or China, which got this in 1992, have shown interest in becoming full members of the NAM or in re-invigorating it as a mechanism for transforming global governance.

Whether it is being part of the G-20 or being aspirants to permanent status in the UN Security Council for those who are not yet permanent, or playing a bigger role in the WTO’s Green Room decision-making, the emerging powers have shown more interest in joining the ‘big boys’ club.’ They use their membership of the G-77 and similar larger groups to project themselves as representatives of the interests of the majority of the poorer developing countries, the better to leverage pursuit of their national interests in negotiations within that club. This is a balancing act of sorts but not one whose primary purpose is to strengthen the South as a whole or prioritize the interests of the most vulnerable and poorest member countries within the South.

The Delhi Declaration accepted the free trade mantra as the key to global prosperity and simply called for more regulation of the global financial system. So instead of seriously challenging the basic orientations of the IMF/WB/WTO triptych let alone working to radically transform it or build an alternative governing architecture to it, the Delhi Declaration promised to work with the G-20 in the domain of global macro-management.

Of the IMF it demanded merely that it live up to the ‘2010 Governance and Quota Reform’ for providing greater representation and quotas to emerging powers. These reforms however will not alter the US position as the sole power
Future Trajectories for BRICS

capable alone of vetoing any crucial decisions in the Executive Board. As for setting up some alternative mechanism for institutionalizing intra-BRICS cooperation of a kind that might seriously challenge existing structures, this did not happen. Clearly, concerns about potential Chinese dominance of such a bank, given its resources and reserves, were paramount among the other member countries on that occasion. This Delhi Declaration talked about setting up a new ‘Development Bank’ but was careful to state that this would not compete with the World Bank and no timeline for setting it up was established. This will remain the case even if beginnings are made to set it up after the 2013 BRICs meet in Durban.

On the economic front, the one measure of some significance, though hardly a challenge to existing structures of global economic governance, was an agreement on intra-BRICS credit provision in local currencies for promoting intra-BRICS trade. There would be greater inter-bank cooperation as well as facilitation of more cooperation in capital markets, financial services, treasury transactions, stock exchange investments and the issuance of local currency bonds according to national laws, that is, minimising transaction costs in intra-BRICS economic activities.

Collective self-interest rather than learning the lessons of the past and present meant that the pursuit of nuclear energy was endorsed even as UNSC resolutions on Iran were shamelessly endorsed. On the issue of global warming the feeble outcome in Durban in December 2011 – where the US, India and China as the big emitters were the main culprits responsible for this feebleness – was also endorsed (Bidwai 2011). If nothing else, this was an indication that the BRICS countries are not going to take the bull by the horns as it were when it comes to charting out any new development paradigm that would be fundamentally eco-friendly.

On the political front because Russia and China were shaken by how their earlier endorsement of limited UN sanctions on Libya helped the West to carry out regime change, they pressed for and obtained a collective statement advocating caution and non-intervention by the West in regard to the Syrian crisis, that is, respect for its ‘territorial integrity and sovereignty.’ The reality is that a basic political-economic incompatibility rather than organizational handicaps limit the collective’s capacity to function as a powerful and innovative new force in the realm of global politics and governance.

The South African super-wealthy, mostly white, park much of their wealth and investments in Europe and Australia creating a domestic balance of payments problem because of repatriation of profits and dividends to parent companies set up abroad. Given this powerful elite force, South Africa maintains a strong Rand unlike the other four who are nowhere near as committed to maintaining a strong Real, Rouble, Renminbi or Rupee (Gentle 2012).
By demography (50 million) and total GDP, South Africa might not be in the same league as the other four or even as significant as Mexico, South Korea, Turkey. But it is far and away the biggest investor in Africa dwarfing the US, EU, China, India, Brazil and alone accounts for 40 per cent of all African investment and 80 per cent of all investments in the Southern African Development Community.

In foreign policy Pretoria is more obsequious than the others to US foreign policy except on Palestine. India is pursuing ever closer relations with the US despite hiccups and is part of Washington’s China-containment policies. Brazil is paying more attention to its intra-continental economic activities as well as showing more foreign policy independence from Washington.

But outside Latin America this is more a way of asserting a greater self-confidence as an emerging power than actively seeking to put serious spokes in the functioning of US foreign policy. Russia and China however are both much more perturbed by US behaviour globally than the other three and thus seeking greater political-economic cooperation.

It is difficult to see just what the BRICS countries can point to – economically, politically, culturally, strategically – that can serve as the kind of cement that could make the collective a unified and powerful force for significant change on the world level (Ladwig 2012). The most perhaps that can be said is that a serious weakening of US global hegemony and influence would raise – by default more than anything else – the importance of BRICS as a collective unit.

References


(C) South Asia Citizens Web
Arab Spring and Arab Winter: Understanding and Misunderstanding the Arab Uprisings

Tim Niblock

1. Perspective

The past two years have posed important questions about the manner in which observers of the Arab world analyse developments there. However much observers now may seek to convey the Arab uprisings as a natural outcome of the inherent injustices and failings of the regimes, the reality is that none of them predicted the Arab Spring. Neither the ability of popular movements to mobilise and challenge the regimes, nor the weakness of regimes in the face such challenges, were envisaged in writings prior to the events. The emphasis of much of the analytical study of Arab regimes in the previous decade, indeed, had been on trying to understand what made the regimes so seemingly impregnable. The failure of observers in this respect does not apply only to external observers (whatever national background they came from) but equally to regional Arab or wider West Asian and North African observers. Nor was it limited to any professional category. Academics, journalists, diplomats, think-tank analysts and military strategists were all taken by surprise.

I have written elsewhere about the reasons why we were all taken by surprise, as have others (Niblock 2012: 20-34). In particular, I have focused on the mistaken assumptions which underpinned much of our thinking about the Arab world. This paper, however, will move on from that analysis and focus on how specialists have interpreted the events over the past two years, in order to examine the assumptions which underpin current analysis. The objective is to consider whether the mistaken assumptions of the past may have now simply been superceded by another set of mistaken assumptions – leading to similar surprise when events turn out differently than expected.

In trying to understand where the political transformation of the Arab world is going today, therefore, there needs to be a clear recognition of the conceptions and assumptions which an observer makes when undertaking an analysis.
To recap briefly on the mistaken assumptions prior to the Arab uprisings, the writer has suggested that analysts were harbouring five misconceptions about the political, social and economic dynamics of the region. These were:

1. “The age of popular protest in the Arab World is past.” Specialists well-acquainted with Arab history were, no doubt, aware that popular protest had been a key ingredient in Arab political development over a prolonged period in the first half of the 20th century (and a bit beyond). The structuring of the relationship between Arab peoples and rulers seemed to have become entrenched: power, force and authority were exclusively in the hands of the regimes; while fear and submission were inherent in the attitudes and conduct of populations. It seemed natural to assume that the pattern was fixed for the foreseeable future. Change through popular protest did not figure in assessments of future political development. This assumption was dramatically undermined in the first three months of 2011.

2. “The levels of inequality and injustice, while substantial, are nonetheless tolerable.” The existence of substantial social and economic inequality and of injustices in the exercise of political power in the Arab world were acknowledged by external as well as domestic observers. The possibility that this was of an extent and character to lead on to regime-threatening unrest, however, was not given serious attention. The uprisings indicated that the inequality, corruption and injustice (which was in fact increasing, not declining) were not tolerable for significant sectors of the population – in fact the majority of people.

3. “The regimes are internally solid, based on the perceived common interests of key elites.” Most regimes in the Arab world clearly, were kept in power by the close collaboration of presidential, military, security and sometimes business elites. Observers assumed that these elites were effectively and inevitably bound together by common interest. They were forced to “hang together, otherwise they would hang separately.” The uprisings revealed that this pattern did not hold universally. The outcome of the uprisings, indeed, has in part been dependent on the nature of the relationship between presidential and military/security elites – and how this has varied from country to country.

4. “The regimes retain a significant degree of ‘secondary legitimacy’ at the popular level.” Analysts believed that although regimes had lost most of their primary legitimacy (i.e. belief among the population that the regime constituted their preferred and proper system of government), there remained a basis of secondary legitimacy underpinning them: a belief that whatever the regime’s failings, it was better than a feared alternative. People supported the government, then, not because they liked it but because they thought any
likely alternative (or the break-up of the country) would be worse. In practice, however, secondary support was steadily waning. There was a strengthening conviction that it was the regimes themselves which were the problem, and not the potential alternatives.

5. “Pan-Arab identification has ceased to be of any relevance to the Arab political scene.” The inter-Arab conflicts of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s had led most observers to give diminishing attention to Arab identification. Arab nationalism was seen as a spent force, and the conclusion was drawn that Pan-Arab identification carried no political significance. The Arab uprisings put Arab identification back on the political map. Events in one Arab country clearly had a major impact on developments in others. The Arab world was shown to constitute a common ideational space, with information and opinion resting in a shared cultural pool. Satellite television channels (especially Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya) had played a key role in the re-creation of this ideational space. State oppression in one country, therefore, created echoes and vibrations across the region.

2. Perceptions of the Uprisings: New Assumptions, New Misunderstandings?

While the events of the Arab Spring have acted as a corrective to the perceptions of specialist observers of the region, it is (as noted above) important to ensure that one set of misconceptions is not simply offset by another set of similarly misguided assumptions. This section will examine the dominant assumptions which observers have made since the outbreak of the uprisings. In practice they fall into two parts, one of which is relevant mostly to the first phase during and after the uprisings (for ease of presentation this will be referred to as the 2011 assumptions) and the phase which followed that (referred to here as the 2012 assumptions).

2.1. The 2011 Assumptions: the Arab Spring

At the beginning of the Arab uprisings outside observers (at least in the Western world) saw the development in predominantly positive terms. There were three, interlinked, assumptions which they were making about the events which were unfolding, and each of them was seen as the harbinger for a brighter future for Arab countries. The term “Arab Spring” itself conveys this positive projection. The assumptions were:

“The Arab Spring has brought a democratic revolution to the countries concerned.” This conception placed the uprisings in the context of Huntington’s “waves of democratisation” (Huntingdon 1991).

1. The “third wave” had begun in 1974, with the Carnation Revolution in Portugal, and continued through the democratic transitions in Latin America in the
1980s, Asian countries such as the Philippines, South Korea and Taiwan in the 1980s, and Eastern Europe and Central Asia after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The most recent phase of that had seen the “coloured revolutions” and “flower revolutions” in such countries as Georgia (the “rose revolution” 2004), Ukraine (“the orange revolution” 2005), and Kyrgyzstan (the “tulip revolution” 2005).

The Arab Spring, then, was frequently portrayed by observers as a continuation of the third wave, or possibly as a separate Arab “fourth wave.”¹ The core element was that these were popular uprisings aimed at the creation of democratic systems of government.

2. “The weaknesses of authoritarianism has been revealed, and authoritarian regimes in the region are doomed (whether in the short- or medium-term).” There was, among observers, a strong belief that something fundamental had changed in the region, and that even those regimes where no uprisings had occurred would find themselves impelled to change. Among some observers, there was a belief that Western countries would be increasingly prepared to give direct assistance to supporting the transition of regimes to democracy – whether out of guilt for past association with non-democratic authoritarianism in the region, or so as to strengthen or maintain their strategic presence there.

3. “The liberal democratic regimes expected to follow from the uprisings will provide a sound basis for resolving the social and economic problems which have faced Arab countries.” The extent and gravity of these problems had been evident prior to the uprisings, and it was further highlighted by the uprisings themselves. The focus on mismanagement, elite corruption and wide-ranging inequality which existed under the outgoing regimes linked these to the form of government. Authoritarianism enabled regimes to manipulate economies in their own interests, with no concern for how the rest of the population was affected. A democratic system of government, it was assumed, would not have the same scope for corruption and mismanagement. Problems could be more effectively confronted and resolved.

The Arab Spring, in 2011, then was conveyed very much in the context of a global march towards democracy, carrying with it all the presumed benefits of democratic principles and practice.

2.2. The 2012 Assumptions: the Arab Winter

In the course of 2012 (and into 2013), the views of the same outside observers have become much less optimistic, to the extent that many now talk of an “Arab winter” and the “failure of the Arab Spring.” The foreign ministries of a number of Western countries have begun studies of “what has gone wrong.” A number of perceptions have shaped this view:
Some uprisings have failed to achieve their objective of overthrowing the regime, or else have led to a level of civil conflict and destruction which casts into the shadow any possible achievements. At the time of writing this clearly applies to the case of Syria, where a UN-sponsored report has suggested that as many as 60,000 people may already have lost their lives in the conflict (UN News Centre 2013).

1. Other organisations have reported lower death tolls, around 40-45,000. Nor is there any indication that the conflict is about to end – at least not with the establishment of a stable democratic state. The uprising in Yemen resulted in a transition of power, but with key elements of the previous regime still in positions of power and unreconciled to conceding space for new political structures. In Bahrain, similarly, the objectives of those who took part in the demonstrations in February and March 2011 are no closer to realisation now than they were then – and perhaps further away.

2. The regimes of the Arabian peninsula, with the exception of that of Yemen, have mostly proved adept at remaining in power, and indeed in some cases of reinforcing control over their societies. A combination of factors has underpinned this: the introduction of substantial new packages of welfare for the population (increased subsidies, higher salaries for civil servants, unemployment pay etc), the absence of aggressive external pressure for change, and in some cases the introduction of incremental political change or the ability to depend on primary and secondary support among parts of the population. In the case of Bahrain, there has of course been the presence (and the significant symbol) of Saudi Arabian military support for the regime. In Kuwait, the ability of the regime to control the expression of popular discontent has been weaker than elsewhere, partly due to a more long-standing tradition of representative practice and perhaps due also to divisions and political mismanagement in the leadership.

3. Where uprisings have led to elections, the general trend has been for Islamist movements to gain political ascendancy, which some observers see as likely to lead to the pursuit of socially-restrictive policies, and to embody a long-term threat to democratic practice. Whether the latter perception is realistic is, as will be contended later, questionable, but there is little doubt that significant sectors of opinion in the Western world hold that view. The “general trend” certainly exists: in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Morocco governments supported by Islamist political movements now wield governmental power, even though in some cases a “deep state” (with a military dimension) remains in existence – constraining the actions of the governments.

4. The new governments which have come to power are seen as failing to address effectively the social and economic problems facing their societies. As the
uprisings were in part shaped by the failure of previous regimes to improve the social and economic conditions of their peoples, it was assumed that this would be the immediate focus of attention for new governments coming to power. Yet in practice the central focus, as perceived by observers, has often been constituted by petty wrangles over constitutional niceties, intense in-fighting between different political groupings, and a failure to establish the institutions, structures or climate necessary for economic growth, the provision of welfare, and the redistribution of wealth. Key indicators on employment, investment, poverty and growth are mostly less positive than they were before the uprisings.2

3. The Future of Political Transformation in West Asia and North Africa: Towards Some Realism in Predictions

The contention of this paper is that both the initial optimistic perspectives, and the later pessimistic perspectives, reflect faulty assumptions about the social, political and cultural forces which are at work in the region. An accurate assessment of the future of political transformation which is occurring in West Asia and North Africa needs to be based on realistic assumptions. The paper puts forward 5 points which the writer considers critical to making an accurate realistic assessment.

First, putting the uprisings into pre-conceived categories (“democratic revolutions”, or more recently “Islamist revolutions”) leads to distorted expectations and understandings. At present we do not know what kind of revolutions they were, are or may be. The crowds who demonstrated on the streets were motivated by many different interests, emotions and beliefs. Some were showing their despair at prolonged unemployment or the rising cost of living; some were moved by anger at the wealth being accrued and flaunted by the elite; some felt marginalised or sidelined by the ethnic or religious composition of the political leadership; some had been alienated by the secularism or un-Islamic practices of the society and polity in which they lived; some were motivated by the oppressive conditions imposed on women; and some were rebelling against the authoritarianism of those who held political power in the country, nationally or locally.

No doubt all the demonstrators wanted more political space in which to express their own views and pursue their political, social and economic objectives. It was natural that the slogans raised in the demonstrations called for freedom and (to greater or lesser extents) democracy. Yet that does not mean that there was any commonality in the views of demonstrators about the political structures which should be instituted, nor about the kind of social milieu in which they wanted to live.

By labelling the uprisings as “democratic revolutions” observers set a standard by which to judge them, and thereby to dismiss them as failures. What is important,
rather, is to abandon preconceptions and focus on what has actually changed. This will provide a surer basis on which to assess how the uprisings and their outcome this may affect the political development of the countries concerned.

The regimes which are emerging may not follow a liberal democratic pattern (at least not one which fits Western conceptions of liberal democracy), but the character of political power has changed. Despite some of the journalistic comment (e.g. describing the Egyptian president, Mohamed Mursi, as “a new Pharaoh”) government does not – and is no longer likely to - take the form of a single integrated oppressive force. The exercise of political power has, increasingly, to be negotiated among different sectors of society. The sense of popular empowerment coming out of the uprisings, moreover, shows no sign of diminishing. Elections are one channel through which popular interests and wishes achieve expression, but they are not the only one. Demonstrations, strikes, journalistic activism, social media expression etc all form part of the new scenario. Parts of the population which were politically quiescent for years have come together to voice their interests. The secular liberal intelligentsias, previously critical of the authoritarian regimes but ineffective in mobilising popular support for a political alternative, are now engaging in the practical politics necessary to pursue their objectives. Others do so on the basis of religion, ideology, social mores, or class interest.

The pattern of government in Tunisia, Egypt, Iraq, Libya and Morocco over the next decade is most likely to be that of “negotiated power, with popular involvement.” It may be neither stable nor democratic (in Western eyes) but it will not simply constitute a “reversion to type,” as some have suggested. The sense of popular empowerment achieved in the uprisings limit the extent to which power could be re-assembled in the hands of a unified oppressive state.

It is, also, worth noting that the composition of the political elite in those countries where uprisings have been successful has changed. Many of those who are now holding positions of authority centrally, and to some extent regionally, have not held such positions before. Some of them have served time in prison, others have been in exile. They come from backgrounds which are less secular, more Islamic and often lower-class and less associated with capital cities than the previous office-holders. This may or may not be significant to the social and economic policies pursued, but it does mean that governing circles may be subject to influences from different directions than before.

Second, the political systems of the Arab world will become more diverse in character and dynamics than they were prior to the uprisings. This may seem contrary to current developments and expectations, inherent in the trend toward moderate Islamist movements taking power, with support from conservatively-inclined Gulf states. Yet the surface differences between Arab states prior to
the Arab Spring – some republics and some monarchies – concealed far-going regime commonalities. They were all authoritarian in character, with a tightly-knit ruling group wielding power through a combination of military and security services support, cooperation with key social elements crucial to the operation of the state, and representative or consultative bodies which gave the appearance of parliamentary forms but with limited ability to hold policy-makers to account. It was significant that the republics were themselves moving towards hereditary leadership, copying the pattern of the monarchies.

Despite the commonalities in the governing practices of Arab regimes prior to the uprisings, and the apparent commonality represented by the moderate Islamist trend emerging as the main beneficiary of the uprisings, in practice the social, cultural and economic bases impinging on government in different Arab countries vary greatly. The fluidity which the uprisings have induced in some of the political systems of the region will mean that the differing social, cultural and economic bases will articulate themselves in terms of institutional and structural differences.

The dynamics which impinge on the oil-rich monarchies of the Gulf, for example, are distinctively different from those of the less resource-rich republics. Despite the considerable problems which the oil-rich monarchies face, their resource-base has enabled them to maintain a level of welfare which significant parts of the population fear may be lost with political change. This creates an element of eudaemonic3 legitimacy (and allied secondary legitimacy) which may be lacking in less well-endowed polities. Gulf monarchies, moreover, may also benefit from residual elements of primary legitimacy based on ethnic, historical or religious factors: parts of the population supporting the regime because they see their own identity as linked to that of the ruling group. Deficiencies in government conduct or policy will undermine a regime if its legitimacy is based on what it offers the population, but not necessarily if the perceived legitimacy stems from ethnic, historical or religious identification. The influences from the Arab Spring have affected, and will in significant ways continue to challenge, the monarchies of the Gulf, but there is no good reason to expect the imminent demise of these regimes.4

Even among the republics where uprisings have successfully overthrown authoritarian regimes, the pattern of political development will not be uniform. The balance between, and the identity of, the different sectors of society and institutional groupings which will take part in the negotiation of political power vary greatly from one state to another. The political formations which emerge will be affected by the size and influence of different class, ethnic, cultural and religious groupings, as also by the linkages which exist between military, security, business and other elites. The characteristic of “negotiated power with popular involvement” may be common to all these emerging systems, but the political and institutional
outcomes of this characteristic are bound to be very different from one country to another.

What can be said about the likely diversity of political systems, however, does not necessarily apply to foreign policy. The greater popular involvement in government will render governments more responsive to popular opinion, which on some issues (such as that of Palestine) may well create a greater commonality of policy. With regard to the positions which Arab countries adopt towards Iran, on the other hand, there could be more diversity of policy.

Third, ideological positions should not be regarded as fixed and unchangeable. The statements of ideological principle made by Islamist movements which were not tolerated under the authoritarian regimes of the past are, as they stand, often difficult to combine with the values associated with liberal democracy. Yet participation in a political process where movements/parties are competing for popular support – however deficient these may be by Western standards - is likely to have a conditioning effect. Even participation in elections has previously been condemned by the Salafi figures who formed the Al-Nour party in Egypt, yet they are now actively engaged in Egyptian parliamentary politics. When exposed to competitive politics, practical realities, and the need to gather international and domestic support, even the most radical ideological positions can prove malleable. Strident and militant professions of political position do not necessarily indicate an inability to compromise when the need arises.

Rather than react to Islamist involvement in politics by questioning the long-term objectives of the Islamist groupings concerned, it is more productive to integrate them into the political process and allow that process to shape and inform (an in practice change) their ideological rigidity. Fears about the long-term objectives are little different from the fears which some quarters of Western opinion had about the role of Communist parties at the time of the Cold War. It was in the countries of Western Europe (particularly Italy) where Communist parties were strongest, and were able to compete most effectively in the political process, that the ideologically-flexible “Euro-communist” strand developed.5

Fourth, the extent of social and economic inequality in West Asia and North Africa has been, and remains, an unstable basis on which to build participative and representative political systems. The concentration of economic power as well as political power in the hands of the pre-uprising regimes meant that any genuine measures towards democratisation threatened their wealth as well as their political power. The pressures which Western governments exerted on them to institute political reforms, therefore, were never likely to bear fruit – even if the pressure was exerted intensively and consistently (which it seldom was). Reform and liberalisation could involve dismantlement of the most savage dimensions of the
security apparatus, greater latitude for the criticism of state policies in the media, and managed elections limited to parties whose challenge could be contained, but it was bound to stop at the point where the regime’s control on power was threatened. The accountability of government personnel to representative institutions would have crystallized that threat.

The impact of inequality on the wider population was equally inhibiting to democratisation. The business class had the resources and usually the education to play an independent political role, but no inclination to risk their well-being in risky political activity. Travel and contacts abroad linked them to the wider global environment, providing some release from the restrictions of authoritarianism. The poor, marginalised by the all-pervading state and its associated elites, sought respite in the communal and religious values which gave their lives meaning. Emigration to gain employment elsewhere constituted a possible avenue of escape for them.

While the setting has now changed, continued inequality could again distort political processes and limit the range of options available. The outcome would depend on the specific conditions in each country – perhaps the growth of extremist activity (built on the despair and resentment of the poor), perhaps an increasingly authoritarian trend (whereby the wealthier elements in society seek to protect their interests), or perhaps a tendency towards political apathy (stemming from a lack of hope that the revolutions can bring change). All such outcomes would be damaging to the future of the countries concerned.

Fifth, the impact which the Arab Spring has had on the domestic politics of non-Arab West Asian countries has been limited. While the Arab Spring has created interest and discussion within the wider region (and outside) there have in practice been few developments elsewhere which have directly drawn inspiration and political dynamic from the uprisings. In the case of Iran, whose proximity to the region and involvement there create the strongest likelihood of impact, the Arab uprisings appear not to have affected the country’s political dynamics. Iran’s own “Green Revolution” (the militant political activity and demonstrations in 2009, against the government’s alleged misconduct in the presidential elections) had no significant impact on the domestic politics of the Arab world, and there has similarly been no noticeable impact in the reverse direction from the Arab uprisings of 2011-12.

Where there has been a significant impact in the wider region, however, has been in regional and international politics. The position of Turkey has been strengthened, while the regional roles of both Iran and Israel have become more problematic. As with most cases where a rebalancing of regional (or global) power occurs, there are considerable risks to regional stability which could ensue in the
short-term – before the countries concerned grow accustomed to operating within a changed configuration of power and influence.

4. Conclusion

In practice, the central issue for Arab countries (as for most countries with less well-established political institutions) remains what it was before: how to create and maintain political systems where those who govern are accountable to the population, where social and economic problems can be effectively be addressed, and where the population feels a sense of common purpose and common identity. When the previous regimes first came to power in the 1950s and 1960s they sought legitimacy on the grounds of being able to resolve these issues. Their means of resolution envisaged rapid development through state-sponsored industrial and agricultural development, measures to bring relief to the poorer parts of society and create greater equality, accountability through fostering popular participation in supposedly all-encompassing single parties, and projecting a national identity which created among the population a feeling of common endeavour. There were times when these objectives seemed capable of bringing success, but ultimately the regimes failed to deliver what had been promised.

The new regimes represent a new approach to resolving the same problems. Their success will be measureable over the long-term, not the short-term. It is, at present, too soon to draw negative conclusions about the outcome of the uprisings. A sense of hope remains the correct approach.

Notes

1. One possible difference with the third wave was noted. The role of the West’s human rights agenda, and the support of Western governments for NGOs promoting democratisation, were said to have been characteristic of third wave democratisation, whereas it was more difficult to detect evidence of that in the Arab “fourth wave” uprisings.

2. For the case of Tunisia, see World Bank (2012) or for a more extensive analysis IBRD (2012). The more positive aspects of the Tunisian experience are brought out in an article written by the Nahda leader Ghannouchi (2013). For the case of Egypt see Beinin (2013). Also see Saif (2012).

3. The word “eudaemonic” comes from the Greek “creating happiness,” and thus eudaemonic legitimacy refers to people viewing a government as legitimate by virtue of the beneficial conditions which government policies have created for them.

4. For a different view on this see Davidson (2012). The writer of this paper would concur with Davidson with regard to the problems faced and weaknesses inherent in some of the regimes. His assessment, however, is that Davidson’s analysis underplays the strengths which regimes also have at their disposal.
5. Writing on this subject, set within the context of how “anti-system” parties can operate within a democratic framework, and how this process gradually moderates their ideologies, has been extensive. The literature first developed in the 1970s and related in particular to European communist parties. See, for example, Sartori (1976); Capoccia (2003: 9-35) and Sanchez-Cuenza (2004: 325-349).

References


Ghannouchi, Rachid (2013): “We are Building a Tunisia for All,” The Guardian, 13 January.


India borders on Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Maldives. India's relations with each neighbouring country will have its immediate fallout on contiguous Indian states. Thus India-Pakistan relations will have its fallout on Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir; India-China relations will affect Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh; India-Nepal relations will spill over to Bihar, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Sikkim and West Bengal; India-Bhutan relations will impinge upon West Bengal, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam; India-Myanmar relations will have its fallout on Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram; India-Sri Lanka relations is closely intertwined with the political developments in Tamil Nadu and India-Maldives relations will have its impact on Minicoy islands. I have not mentioned Thailand and Indonesia because relations with these countries have yet to take off in a big way.

In the Indian situation the formulation and implementation of neighbourhood policy is the exclusive domain of the central government. And during the era of one-party dominance New Delhi pursued a neighbourhood policy which it considered to be in the best interests of the country, with absolutely no inputs from the federal units. In that process, on several occasions, the interests and sensitivities of the State Governments were ignored.

Citizenship to people of Indian Origin who live abroad

Madras Presidency had outstanding representatives in the Constituent Assembly. They included C Rajagopalachari, Alladi Krishnaswamy Iyer, T Prakasam, Gopalaswamy Iyengar and Ammu Swaminathan. Despite their legal acumen when citizenship provisions were being discussed they did not raise the question of the legal status of the people of Indian origin who had gone to several parts of the British Empire. The British policy towards them was based on the
assumption that they would enjoy the same rights and privileges as the indigenous people.

Y D Gundevia, who was Indian Ambassador in Burma, was deeply interested in the problem. Burma was part of British India until 1937 when it was separated and became a separate British colony. When Burma was part of British India thousands of Indians, especially from Madras Presidency, migrated to Burma to eke out a living. They went from one province to another province. Gundevia was convinced that the people of Indian origin living in Burma should be given an opportunity to become citizens of India. In his book, *Outside the Archives*, Gundevia has narrated how he was able to persuade the Indian leaders to include constitutional provisions so that the people of Indian origin settled abroad will have the option to become Indian citizens. When Gundevia spoke to Jawaharlal Nehru he found Gundevia’s arguments to be reasonable. Nehru, however, added, that Ambedkar was very firm that citizenship should go strictly by domicile. Nehru suggested to Gundevia that he should meet Hriday Nath Kunzru, the highly respected member of the Constituent Assembly, well versed with the problems of Indians Overseas, to champion the cause of the children of Mother India living abroad. HN Kunzru succeeded in his mission and was able to persuade Ambedkar to change his stance. The result was citizenship provisions in the Constitution which provides for registration in Indian Embassies to acquire Indian citizenship. It was India’s good fortune that we had outstanding civil servants like YD Gundevia and TA Pai who were more patriotic than nationalist leaders on the issue of Indians Overseas.

**Berubari Case**

The first occasion when friction between central and state governments took place was in the late 1950s when Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru wanted to transfer Berubari to East Pakistan. Berubari is located in the Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal. The dispute arose as a result of certain anomalies in the Radcliffe award which divided the boundaries between India and Pakistan. Protracted negotiations took place between the two countries to settle the issue and finally the Nehru-Noon Agreement was signed in 1958. New Delhi decided to transfer Berubari to East Pakistan. New Delhi considered Berubari to be a disputed territory, whereas the Government in West Bengal under veteran Congress leader B C Roy maintained that Berubari was and should remain part of India. The West Bengal Legislative Assembly passed a resolution opposing the transfer of Berubari and the matter was referred to the Supreme Court by the President of India for its opinion. The Supreme Court upheld the view that if part of Indian territory is to be ceded to a neighbouring country it was essential to have a constitutional amendment. The Berubari case highlighted the necessity to establish healthy conventions for
the successful functioning of the Indian federal system, especially in relation to neighbourhood policy. While the Central Government was within its right to enter into agreements with neighbouring countries, it would be a good convention if the affected state governments are kept informed about the details of negotiations.

Sirimavo-Shastri Pact, 1964

In the years immediately after independence strains developed in India-Ceylon relations. The controversy revolved around the legal status of the people of Indian origin in the island. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru maintained that all, except those who voluntarily opted for Indian citizenship, were the responsibility of Ceylon. Taking into consideration their long years of residence and contribution to the Sri Lankan economy, Nehru suggested to successive Prime Ministers that they should confer citizenship on the people of Indian origin. From the mid-1960s this time-tested policy was sidetracked and eventually derailed. With Lal Bahadur Shastri as the Prime Minister and CS Jha as the Commonwealth Secretary, New Delhi reversed its earlier principled stand and adopted a new approach towards the people of Indian origin in Sri Lanka. As a first step, according to informed sources, those who subscribed to the Nehruvian principles were transferred from the Sri Lanka division in the Ministry of External Affairs. New Delhi began a new policy to find a solution to the vexed problem of stateless people. In his memoirs, CS Jha mentioned that he was eager to find a solution so that New Delhi could come out of diplomatic isolation in South Asia, a situation in which it found itself after the humiliating defeat in the India-China conflict of October-November 1962. The astute politician that Sirimavo Bandaranaike was she made the best use of the situation and clinched a favourable deal. Ably assisted by Sri Lankan diplomat Shirley Amarasinghe, she pointed that India had accepted 10 million people from Pakistan as Indian citizens. The number as far as Sri Lanka was concerned was less than one million. It is worth mentioning in this connection that a perceptive Indian Tamil journalist, P Ramaswamy, who was stationed in New Delhi and who was deeply sensitive to the problems of the people of Indian origin in Ceylon persuaded Congress President Kamaraj Nadar to intervene in the last moment on the issue. Kamaraj met Lal Bahadur Shastri and told him that the agreement was being signed without taking into consideration the wishes of the people of Indian origin in the island as well as the political leaders in Tamil Nadu. However, the deal was struck and according to the India-Sri Lanka Agreements of 1964 and 1974, New Delhi agreed to confer Indian citizenship on 600,000 persons plus their natural increase and Colombo agreed to confer citizenship on 3,75,000 plus their natural increase.

The Agreements of 1964 and 1974 reduced the people of Indian origin in Ceylon to the status of merchandise to be divided between the two countries in the
name of good neighbourly relations. Savumyamurthy Thondaman, the undisputed leader of the people of Indian origin in Ceylon, told the author that he was not given a visa to come to India to represent the wishes of the concerned people. What is more, no efforts were made by New Delhi to ascertain whether the affected people would like to take Indian citizenship. It is the tragedy of Indian foreign policy that these two agreements, which had an important bearing on the lives of thousands of people of Indian origin was signed without taking into consideration the wishes of the people concerned. It was not only a betrayal of Gandhi-Nehru legacy, it was also a bad precedent as far as India’s policy towards Indians Overseas was concerned. All trade unions in Sri Lanka, irrespective of political affiliations, stoutly opposed these inhuman agreements.

What about the views of the Government and people of Tamil Nadu? The Indian delegation which negotiated the issue with Sri Lanka had one member from Tamil Nadu – Ramiah who was a member of the Bakhthavatsalam cabinet. It is strange, but true, that Ramiah preferred to be a silent spectator while the negotiations were going on. All important political leaders, cutting across party lines, opposed the agreements. They included C Rajagopalachari, Kamaraj Nadar, CN Annadurai, V K Krishna Menon and P Ramamurthi. But their opposition was in vain. New Delhi was determined to implement its foreign policy goals. The irony of the situation must be pointed out. Those who came back from Sri Lanka as Indian citizens were referred to as Sri Lankan Tamils by the local people, a position which they never got in Sri Lanka even after many years of residence in that country. What is more, the assumption that the two agreements will solve the problem of statelessness turned out to be a mirage. The problem continued to haunt the people of Indian origin for many years. It was as a result of sustained parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggles launched by the Indian Tamil community that the Government of Sri Lanka finally decided to confer Sri Lankan citizenship on them.

India-Sri Lanka Maritime Boundary Agreements, 1974 and 1976

The ceding of Kachchatheevu to Sri Lanka, like the earlier Sirimavo-Shastri Pact, is another illustration of New Delhi bending backwards to please its southern neighbour. Despite strong historical claims, New Delhi adopted the stance that the island was a disputed territory. What is more, though the principle of equi-distance was followed in demarcating the maritime boundary line, a deviation was made when it came to Kachchatheevu, so that the Island could fall on the Sri Lankan side. Though the island was ceded, articles four and five of the agreement provided for the continuation of the traditional fishing rights enjoyed by the Indian fishermen to fish in and around Kachchatheevu, but these rights were also bartered away in the subsequent agreement of 1976. Karunanidhi, who was the Chief Minister in Tamil
Nadu, at the time of the signing of the agreement should have resorted to judicial remedy, but, for some strange reason he did not do so. Jayalalitha filed a case in the Supreme Court, after the lapse of many years, challenging the ceding of the island. Karunanidhi followed her example and also filed a case. Supreme Court has yet to commence hearing on the two cases.

Constructive suggestion ignored

An illustration of how constructive suggestion made by the Government of Tamil Nadu was ignored by the Mandarins in the South Block is in order here. The suggestion was made by the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C N Annadurai, who was deeply concerned about the developments in Burma, especially the forcible repatriation of Tamils and related issues of compensation due to them. In a conversation with the author, Thomas Abraham, then Minister Counsellor in the Indian Embassy in Rangoon, recalled his meeting with Annadurai in the Chief Minister’s residence in Mambalam. The meeting was arranged through the good offices of common friends. After discussing the pros and cons of the matter, Annadurai wrote a letter to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi suggesting that India should enter into a long term agreement with Burma for the import of rice and the compensation due to the Burmese repatriates could be adjusted in the proposed deal. It may be recalled that during 1967 India was facing acute shortage of food grains. On his return to Rangoon, Thomas Abraham also made a similar proposal to the Ministry of External Affairs. It is unfortunate, but true, that these concrete proposals did not elicit any favourable response from New Delhi.

Coalition Governments in New Delhi

With the formation of coalition governments in the centre and the regional parties becoming alliance partners a qualitative change took place in centre-state relations with particular reference to neighbourhood policy. The alliance partners began to make their inputs into the making of India’s neighbourhood policy. For example, the inclusion of the Sethusamudram project in the policies and programmes of the Man Mohan Singh government was due to the tireless efforts of the DMK. Of equal relevance, the Central Government exerted its benign influence and softened the hard line stance of its regional allies. Thus, during the Fourth Eelam War, the DMK was a willing partner in India’s Sri Lanka policy. At the same time, for tactical reasons, New Delhi permitted Karunanidhi to indulge in theatrics and pose himself as the champion of the overseas Tamils. But the fact remains that Karunanidhi did not rock the central government while the Fourth Eelam War was being fought to the finish and gross human rights violations were taking place in Sri Lanka. In later months Karunanidhi did a re-appraisal of the situation and realized
that DMK had lost its good will among the Sri Lankan Tamils. Therefore, in order to regain their support, he revived the Tamil Eelam Solidarity Organisation (TESO) and also instructed his colleagues to resign from the central cabinet.

How to bring about harmony in the thinking of the central and state governments with reference to neighbourhood policy will be a litmus test for the policy makers in New Delhi in the years to come. Despite earnest efforts to win over the West Bengal Government on the sharing of the Teesta river waters, the West Bengal Government stoutly opposed the agreement and New Delhi had to beat a hasty retreat. As far as India’s Sri Lanka policy is concerned, differences have come into sharp focus during recent months. The travails of the Indian fishermen in the Palk Bay, on international enquiry into human rights violations in Sri Lanka during the last stages of the Fourth Eelam War and on training of Sri Lankan defence personnel in defence establishments located in Tamil Nadu, Chief Minister Jayalalitha had been very critical of the policies and programmes of the central government. Jayalalitha’s postures can be understood only if we keep in mind the competitive nature of Tamil Nadu politics, where the two Dravidian parties are vying with one another to champion the cause of Overseas Tamils. This slingling match will gather momentum in the days to come as the elections to state legislative assembly were due.

Gujral's Initiatives

IK Gujral, during his stewardship in the Ministry of External Affairs, was very keen to associate the State Governments with the formulation and implementation of neighbourhood policy. Rahman Sobhan, the Bangladeshi economist turned diplomat, in a tribute to IK Gujral has provided glimpses into Gujrals’ eagerness to take along the West Bengal Government on the question of sharing of the Ganges waters with Bangladesh. Rahman Sobhan mentions that at the end of a dialogue in New Delhi, Gujral asked him to stay back for a private conversation. Gujral stated that since West Bengal has vital stakes in the Ganges waters, it is necessary to take West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu on board. Gujral made the “quite extra-ordinary suggestion” to Rahman Shoban that the Awami League Government should “open its own channel of communications” with the West Bengal Government, “drawing on our shared geography and cultural heritage”. Instead of proceeding to Dhaka Rahman Shoban went to Kolkata, met his old friend and class mate Asim Das Gupta, the Finance Minister. To quote Rahman Shoban “Asim responded very positively to my suggestions and indicated that his leader was not unaware of the mutually beneficial opportunities on offer.” Jyoti Basu and Sheikh Hasina displayed exceptional statesmanship. The rest, as they say, is history. The West Bengal Government was formally invited to be a party
in the negotiations with Bangladesh. In fact, Asim Das Gupta led the Indian
delegation. The statesmanship of Gujral and Jyoti Basu stands in sharp contrast
to the intransigent attitude of Chief Minister Mamata Bannerjee on the question of
the sharing of the Teesta waters.

Federal units should make constructive inputs

It is not the author’s contention that the Federal units should run the foreign
policy of the country. But the federal units can and should make constructive inputs
into making of India’s neighbourhood policy. The Universities and think tanks
have an important role to play in this direction by undertaking in-depth studies on
various subjects and making positive recommendations so that a win-win situation
could prevail.
South Asian Parliament:  
An Opportunity for the Growth of SAARC

S.Y. Surendra Kumar

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has completed 28 years of its existence. The idea was first mooted by Bangladesh in 1983 and, after lot of deliberations, the SAARC was formed in 1985, with the inaugural summit at Dhaka. Over the years, it has made some progress in initiating policy actions related to health, poverty, education, natural disasters, people-to-people contact, public-private partnership, climate change and so on. For instance, for the promotion of trade and welfare of the people, it had established South Asian Preferential Trading Agreement (SAPTA), South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA), South Asia Development Fund (SADF), and the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI). It has also set up the South Asian University at New Delhi; SAARC International College, Dhaka; Agreement on Judicial cooperation on Counter-Terrorism; Food Bank; Development Funds; Telemedicine Network; SAARC Writers and Literature Foundation; and South Asia Foundation. Besides, it set up centres like South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme; South Asia Centre for Policy Studies; South Asia Women’s Centre; and South Asia Olympic Council (South Asian Games). Furthermore, SAARC has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with United Nations agencies like the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Telecommunications Union (ITU), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT), United Nations International Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and this has strengthened SAARC relations with UN agencies and other organisations.

To strengthen the people to people contact, it initiated the SAARC chairs, fellowship and scholarship schemes; SAARC Youth Volunteer Programme; SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme; SAARC Audio-Visual Exchange Programme; South Asian festivals; Association of SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians; SAARC Law (Association of legal communities of the member countries); Cooperation of
Non-Governmental Organizations; SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry; SAARC Scheme for Promotion of Organized Tourism. Moreover, it has set up the Integrated Plan of Action (IPA), under which there are various committees focussing on variety of issues like agriculture, communications, education, culture and sports, environment, health, population activities and child welfare, meteorology, prevention of drug trafficking and drug abuse, rural development, science and technology, tourism, transport, women in development.

Although there is a wide gap between these initiatives yielding results, all this kept SAARC going and made moderate progress for the benefits of the South Asia people. However, it is yet to form a comprehensive regional identity like the European Union (EU), a sense of regional belongingness, and also achieve the goals it has set forth during successive summits. Thus, SAARC, like any other regional organisation is a mixed baggage of both success and failures.

Despite this, from time to time, many academics, media personnel, diplomats and some political leaders across South Asia have projected and supported the idea of South Asian Parliament (SAP), as a mechanism for effective monitoring of socio-economic and security interests of the region. A few others have argued the need of SAP for crisis management and resolution in the region. This idea is significant, since SAARC has always focused and emphasized on economic integration and generally excluded political integration, which has to certain extent hindered the growth of SAARC. Subsequently, the SAP can both induce and reinforce the process of cooperation and integration among South Asia. Hence, in this context, SAP is promoted. However, bringing the idea into reality will be a difficult task, given the political dynamics of South Asia.

The idea of SAP did not emerge initially from the SAARC members or process, as sensitive political issues were kept out of its framework. However, it was first mooted academically by M.L. Sondhi and Shrikant Paranjpe during the early 1990s and elaborated in late 1990s in the form of research paper (Paranjpe 1990). In the process, journalists, academics and the political leaders also began to endorse the idea of SAP. Although there is consensus over the idea, SAARC countries are yet to make any progress in formulating and implementing SAP. Before proceeding further, it is important to examine the need for SAP in the present South Asian scenario.

**Backed by South Asian Countries**

The SAARC was initiated for economic cooperation and socio-cultural exchanges for building mutual confidence in the region, where political understanding would be strengthened, conflicts to be resolved and integration initiated. However, since its establishment it has made slow progress in all the fronts
due to the lack of political will to address political issues. As a result, many of the SAARC members like Pakistan and Bangladesh have supported the idea of opening SAARC to regional and bilateral political discussion. Ironically, India has opposed this on the ground that SAARC Charter does not allow bilateral and contentious issues to be raised. Thus, in this context, many continue to manifest SAP to advance degree of political integration in the region, as the SAARC only focused on economic integration. Even the Group of Eminent Persons (GEP) appointed during the 9th SAARC Summit held at Male, Maldives in 1997 emphasized political integration in the region and stressed that cooperation has been hindered by a “lack of political will and hampered by the vicissitudes of the political climate” affecting the progress of SAARC (Muni 2004:49). Thus, in this context many argue that SAP would strengthen political integration in the region.

The idea of SAP has been also backed by the civil society groups and political parties in South Asia like the South Asia Policy Analysis Network—a brainchild of South Asian Association for Freedom of Media Association (SAFMA) in 2006 which supported the idea of SAP and deliberated on its relevance for the growth of SAARC. Even the Sixth South Asian People’s Summit, held in New Delhi in 2007, recommended the creation of SAP for building trust and regional cooperation. Similarly, in June 2007 parliamentarians representing all the major parties in South Asia adopted the Shimla Declaration, in which they recommended to form a South Asian Parliamentary Forum to realize the dream of a South Asian Parliament (Bhargava and Reed 2009:10). Furthermore, the conference also proposed the creation of an Intra-Parliamentary Union in South Asia and appointed an expert group to prepare a comprehensive report and a time frame for establishing SAP. In January 2012, many leaders of South Asian political parties articulated on the need for SAARC Parliament to solve the problems of the region (The Daily Star 2012).

Interestingly, Pakistan which is not forthcoming for developing or implementing any new ideas in SAARC, had also expressed support for establishing SAP. For example, the former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto wanted to create a South Asian parliament like the European Parliament, where solutions to problems could be found and thereby South Asia would progress economically and politically. Moreover, in November 2011, the Pakistan National Assembly Speaker Fehmida Mirza proposed the creation of SAP on the lines of the European Parliament — for sustainable peace and prosperity in the region, and also argued that it would be the “largest forum of legislators, commanding the trust of 1.7 billion South Asians” (Roy 2011). At the same gathering, Mangala Samaraweera, the Sri Lankan Member of Parliament endorsed the idea of SAP and stated that it would be a watch dog for democracy in the region.
In the case of India, the idea of SAP has been backed from time to time by political leaders, particularly from the part of Indian establishment. For example, former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao mentioned the idea of SAP during his inaugural address at the 10th Anniversary of SAARC in December 1995 in New Delhi, which was also endorsed by the Bangladesh foreign Minister ASM Mostafizm Rahman (Ramasubramanian 2005). During the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) rule, the then External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha had urged the parliamentarians of the SAARC countries to push forward the idea of SAP, which has been promoted so far under the auspicious of SAFMA (Pakistan Tribune 2007), and went one step further and gave a call to form ‘Union of South Asian States’, which will be integration of both economic and political aspects. Further, he stated that this idea was not the end of SAARC, rather upgradation of SAARC into a South Asian Union. Sonia Gandhi, the opposition leader, at a conference on ‘Peace Dividend in South Asia’ held in December 2003 at New Delhi stated, “over time, why can’t we, for instance, conceive a SAP as permanent deliberative body on issues of regional concern and importance” (Muni 2004:53). In the process, the Congress party endorsed the idea of SAP which was well reflected in its 2004 election manifesto and later on incorporated in the United Progressive Alliance’s (UPA) common minimum programme. Ironically, the UPA government during its two terms (2004-2014) did not take any steps to translate the idea of SAP into action.

**The Strength of Parliamentary Democracy**

Over the years, countries like India, Sri Lanka and, to certain extent, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Maldives and Bhutan have accumulated rich experience in evolving parliamentary institutions and shared experience with other countries. Bhutan has seen the transition from monarchy to democracy, and successfully the second general elections were held in Bhutan in May and July 2013, which resulted in victory for the opposition People’s Democratic Party. The same year, for the first time in the history of Pakistan, one civilian government handed over power to another civilian government after completion of its full term in office. Both in Nepal and Maldives, after lot of political turmoil and instability, new governments have been elected. All these trends in different ways signify the maturing of the democratic processes within each country in South Asia. Thus, South Asian countries gradually witnessed deepening roots in democratic governance which provides a good foundation for the establishment of SAP.

In addition, the parliamentary democracy is advantageous for a variety of reasons – (a) it represents the will of the people and it deliberates the task of
policy-making. Thus, as a representational body the parliament would integrate
the regional community while, as deliberative body, it would endeavour to solve the
problems of South Asia; (b) parliament will discuss issues on all matters, including
regional/ethnic issues; (c) legitimate aspirations that tend to get crushed under the
centralisation tendencies of the anti-national state would not carry the label of anti-
national if they were voiced; (d) from the primary function to deliberation it would
encourage the free flow of people and information, the “representational functions
of grievance ventilation, educational and advice without prejudice to the existing
territorial sovereignties” (Paranjpe 2002:353); (e) parliament would provide
a forum for the articulation of demands while at the same time, containing the
escalation to ensure it does not turn violent; (f) the parliamentary process is based
on debates and negotiations. Persuasive and rewarding bargaining would constitute
the ideal method for negotiations. It is at the level of negotiations that the SAP
would be most effective medium (Amin 2009:268). Subsequently, the unifying and
continuity effects of a SAP would help lessen the possibility of new conflicts arising
from the solutions of the old ones like the India-Lanka Accord 1987; (g) generally,
regional parliaments may be able to harmonize aspirations such as constructing a
regional identity amongst political elites, strengthening the emblematic regional
organisation with the help of public opinion and third countries, and facilitating
intra-regional communication; (h) The principle of ‘unity in diversity,’ that has
remained the key to national integration and harmony in India, recognises the
unique social, cultural and ethnic diversity of the people in the region, and seeks to
identify a thread of unity within that diversity. If extended at the regional level, SAP
can strengthen ‘unity and diversity’ concept (Paranjpe 2002:353). (i) it will help the
region to address the common problems such as poverty, gender issues, migration,
trade barriers, human rights, natural disasters, climate change, terrorism, drug,
arms and human trafficking and so on.

Thus, SAP, if comes true, would offer new types of political interaction that
would increase transactions, linkages and coalitions among its peoples. A SAP could
go beyond the bureaucratic-technical parameters of the existing origination and
promote new political, moral cultural and civilisation dimensions of regionalism
in South Asia. It is through regional cooperation that the member states would be
better equipped to deal with domestic inadequacies and international pressures.
Overall, strengthening of SAARC through SAP would benefit member states the
most and it would be assertion of political ambitions. Thus, SAP will go a long
way in improving the efficiency of decision making process or obtain policy gains
through cooperation and collective actions.
Relevance of European Parliament

Since the World War II, regional cooperation and integration have emerged as important phenomena around the world for its positive elements like enhancing security, including political, economic and social security; the economic integration tends to inhibit conflict and increase incentives for managing it; the cohesive regional units would reduce the scope for intervention by outside powers; the increased interaction and interdependence creates increased scope for both conflict and new opportunities for cooperation in world politics (Simon 1999). Even Joseph Nye argues that regional integrations are most effective to achieve “order and stability within particular regions, because of a sense of common interest” (Nye 1971; Lindberg and Scheingold 1971). Thus, regional integration has developed an important tool in international arena. In this context, EU is regarded as the oldest and most highly developed example of institutionalised regional integration and is viewed as great success stories of these arrangements. In total, there are many important EU institutions like the European Parliament, European Council, European Commission, European Court of Justice, European Human Rights Council and European Central Bank. Among the various EU institutions, the European Parliament has played a vital role in regional integration and strengthening EU position in the international arena.

The European Parliament is still a young parliament, as it was elected for the first time in 1979; however since then it has developed its role and powers considerably. Although the social, political and economic conditions in South Asia are vastly different from Europe, nevertheless, the process, evolution and growth of European Parliament offer useful insights for South Asia to learn from, in terms of special characteristics. Among all the regional parliaments, European Parliament is the only one that has acquired real powers and become pivotal to the complex decision-making structure of the EU. Even the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) which was formed in 2004, has become a weak institution with limited formal prerogatives. It is moreover hampered in its development by a lack of financial and technical resources, suspicions of mismanagement and internal organisational problems (Navarro 2010 and Houghton 2004). The European Parliament plays a fundamental role in trade, defining development policy and support programmes for research, education and culture and in promoting public health. The European Parliament is involved in building and maintaining close links with national parliaments in EU. This inter-parliamentary cooperation is intended essentially to reinforce the parliamentary dimension of the EU by extending democratic scrutiny of and accountability for decisions at EU, thus ensuring more transparency and openness in the decision-making process. European Parliament is making its influence increasingly felt in EU foreign policy and its approval is required for most
international agreements entered into by the EU i.e., no international agreements without the parliament approval, EU foreign policy is closely scrutinised by Members of European Parliament (MEPs); Leaders around the world received at the parliament (Cameron 2007:280). European Parliament is constantly working to build political, economic and cultural links with other parliaments around the world, like members participate in the African, Caribbean, Pacific/EU joint parliamentary assembly, Euro-Latin America assembly. It champions respect for human rights and is the guardian of freedom and democracy.

Furthermore, the European Parliament is presently strengthened through the Lisbon treaty, which came into effect from December 2009, i.e., the European Parliament is provided with important new powers regarding EU legislation, the EU budget and international agreements. The composition of the parliament has also been changed - the number of MEPs is capped at 751 (750 plus the President of the Parliament). Seats are distributed among countries according to “degressive proportionality,” i.e. MEPs from more populous countries will each represent more people than those from smaller countries. No country may now have less than 6 or more than 96 MEPs. Subsequently, the treaty provides greater involvement of national parliaments to be involved in the work of the EU through the new mechanism to monitor the acts of Union. For example, if a sufficient number of national parliaments are convinced that a legislative initiative should better be taken at a local, regional or national level, the Commission either has to withdraw it or give a clear justification why it does not believe that the initiative is in breach with the principle of subsidiary (Donnelly 2010:20). As a result of the above aspects, it is rightly pointed out that EU without a parliament would be a system totally dominated by bureaucrats and diplomats, loosely supervised by ministers flying periodically to Brussels.” The existence of a body of full-time representatives in the heart of decisions-taking in Brussels makes the EU system more open, transparent and democratic than would otherwise be the case. MEPs are drawn from governing parties and opposition parties and represent not just capital cities, but the region in their full diversity. Hence, Parliament brings pluralism into play and brings added value to the scrutiny of EU legislation (Corbett 2002:6).

Against this background, European Parliament is regarded as model for other regional parliaments like SAP. However, SAP need not adopt the EU model directly; rather, SAP can learn from pitfalls of EU and could be a reference point.

**The Stumbling Blocks**

Although there is the need for SAP to address the South Asia issues, it is still not formally institutionalised for multiple reasons and there are many challenges confronting its formation.
Fragile Parliamentary Institutions

Although in some countries, like India and Sri Lanka, the parliamentary democracy has taken considerable roots, in countries like Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives, the parliamentary system is under continuous stress and still evolving. Moreover, even in countries like India, parliament has not been successful in evolving a healthy political culture in its functioning and its associated practices like political defections, indiscipline, corruption and power struggles have not allowed healthy norms and traditions to take its roots. Furthermore, oppositions have often boycotted parliament on political grounds, and not allowed to transact legislative business. The ruling parties have also not shown necessary respect and deference to the wishes of the opposition (Rubinoff 1998). Thus, the prevailing fragile parliamentary institutions in South Asia may not ensure the success of SAP.

In the case of Sri Lanka, the parliamentary institution’s integrity has been threatened in recent times, where the President Rajapakse has become more powerful than the Parliament due to the 18th Amendment of the Constitution, weak opposition parties even as his government enjoys complete majority in the Parliament. In case of Bangladesh, it has witnessed frequent military rule or fragile parliamentary structure and deep dissonance between the two main political parties challenging democracy. In Nepal, even though there have been several significant changes in the political arena, the lack of political consensus and increasing polarisation on the question of federalism, has led Nepal to the path of instability. In Maldives, the advent of democracy has brought to the fore various challenges like politicisation of the media, ineffective functioning of the parliament, lack of independence of institutions, and the increasing use of religion as a political tool (Kumar 2014: xvii). Afghanistan and Pakistan witnessed serious distortions in democratic institutions over the decades. Thus, countries under the fragile parliamentary systems will not be encouraging for the growth of SAP. Thus, many argue that South Asian countries should first strengthen the parliamentary system and then work towards SAP.

SAARC: Uneven Progress

This is the era of interdependence where no country can remain isolated in today’s world. As a result, regional cooperation has altered the course of history. Subsequently, regional cooperation is a way for achieving peace, progress and excellence. It is also a process to banish war, eradicate inter-state tensions and improve living conditions. In this regard SAARC has not shown much success, efficacy and positive role as a regional organisation due to internal divisions, conflicts and misunderstandings, and even the growth of regional based process has not been encouraging. For example, as per the SAARC Statute, there should
have been 28 summits. However, only 18th SAARC Summit will be held in Nepal in 2014. Most often summits are postponed due to domestic and political reasons, bilateral tensions the majority of which involved India and Pakistan. Many argue that this itself is single indicator of SAARC’s failure to meet annually at the summit level, underscore the intra-regional tensions that come in way of its success (Ghosh 2013:105). Over the decades, SAARC has not been able to increase its intra-regional trade, which other organization have done successfully. For example the intra-regional trade in North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is 40%, Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) is 26%, EU is 67%, and ironically, the intra-SAARC trade is only 4 per cent of the region’s global trade, despite the prime focus of SAARC as a forum for economic integration and cooperation.

The uneven progress was acknowledged at the 16th SAARC Summit (April 2010) Thimpu, Bhutan, by member countries expressing their frustration with its sluggish progress. For example, the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh expressed his disappointment by stating that “the glass of regional cooperation, regional development and regional integration is half empty” and emphasised that “the region must be better connected, empowered and educated” to achieve comparable success with other regional organisations. President Mohamed Nashid of Maldives emphasised that India and Pakistan need to “compartmentalise the differences and move forward on common ground” to make cooperation a success. The Prime Minister of Bhutan remarked that over 200 meetings a year and proliferation of areas of cooperation had added to the sluggish progress of SAARC (Pattanaik 2010). These statements show that SAARC needs to move beyond rhetorical posturing to concrete cooperation which will ensure the growth of SAARC.

In addition, the lack of SAARC progress is also result of failure in implementation of successive policy choices. In this regard, Manmohan Singh said, the challenge is “to translate institutions into activities, conventions into programmes, official statements into popular sentiments. Declarations at summits and official level meetings do not amount to regional cooperation or integration” (Pattanaik 2010). Instead of taking up new areas in its summit declarations, SAARC should focus on trade, connectivity and security and the need to develop a regional identity. Only a regional identity will generate a regional approach and not the other way around. Furthermore, SAARC is the only regional organisation in the world, having more observer members than the full fledged members. The observer members include China, Australia, the US, the European Union, Iran, Japan, South Korea, Mauritius and Myanmar. Thus, many argued that inclusion of new have not benefited SAARC; rather it has hindered the progress. Hence, the uneven growth of SAARC will have serious impact on the prospects of SAP.
**Bilateral tensions and India’s hegemony**

One of the major hurdles in the way of cooperation among the SAARC members is the mistrust, mutual security perceptions and hostility. All the members of this organization feel, in one way or another, a threat to their political, economic and territorial stability from the neighbouring countries. They are still entrapped in the historical conflicts and there are always high risks that any time the efforts for cooperation can suffer due to communal and terrorist threats. In recent times, the bilateral tensions have always hindered the growth of SAARC. This was again acknowledged at the 16th SAARC Summit by the Maldivian President, Mohamed Nashid who emphasised for greater dialogue between India and Pakistan and expressed frustration of the smaller countries of South Asia who have often found themselves hostage to the Indo-Pak conflict (Nashid 2010). This is true, for example, Pakistan has linked the issue of SAFTA to Kashmir. Although both India and Pakistan are members of WTO, while India has accorded the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) to Pakistan, the latter has not reciprocated for political reasons. Even on the regional connectivity, Pakistan has not allowed Afghan trucks to carry Indian goods from Wagah. India also has been using Iran for its trade with Afghanistan. As a result, Pakistan’s non-reciprocal attitude indicates that it is unwilling to cooperate with India, not because of trust deficit, but due to animosity. Not just Pakistan, even Bangladesh has not been forthcoming in granting India the transit facilities through its territory even though it knows it will gain in the process. As a result of these bilateral tensions, India has entered into various other multilateral regional organisational arrangements like BIMSTEC, Kunming Initiative, ASEAN, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and so on to advance its diverse interests. The smaller countries also have entered into bilateral arrangements with India. Furthermore, in spite of South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) being ratified, regional trade has remained below five per cent. However, India’s bilateral trade with the neighbouring countries has grown manifold over the years. As a result of the bilateral tensions with Pakistan, India lacks motivation and looks toward east and strengthened its relations with big powers. Overall, India appears to have less motivation for strengthening the regional organisation and do not take SAARC and SAP as inevitable for their progress.

The dominant discourse on India in the South Asia countries has been about ‘hegemonic’ power or ‘big brother,’ always attempting to dominate the region for its own strategic interest. This perception has been strengthened by incidents of India’s hegemonic behaviour in the past like the closure of some transit points between Nepal and India in 1988; the food ‘bombing’ in Jaffna in 1986; sending of the IPKF to Sri Lanka under Indo-Lanka Accord; India’s intervention in the Maldives
in 1988; India insisting political solution to Tamil ethnic problem in post-war Sri Lanka etc. More recently, the Indian Oil Corporation stopped shipment to Bhutan after government officials in New Delhi announced that they would no longer reimburse the subsidies of their supplied fuels. However, the former PM Thinley pleaded with India to reconsider their decision and India did oblige the request in August 2013. Moreover, India’s growing strategic partnership with US is also perceived by neighbours as the former seeking US help to continue its dominance in the region. Thus, these prevailing perceptions hindered India’s influence and allowed China’s growth in the region. As a result, many infrastructure projects which are in the interest of India and its neighbours, are awarded to China like the development of Chittagong port in Bangladesh and Hambantota port in Sri Lanka. Thus, the key to China’s success in South Asia is the fear and suspicion of latter countries over India’ domination. Consequently, India’s efforts to have a normal relation with its neighbours continue to be under challenge.

In addition, the domestic compulsions have also hindered India’s pro-active policy towards South Asia. For example, West Bengal shares border with Bangladesh, and Tamil Nadu is closer to Sri Lanka. The federal units are not always in the same wave length with Indian government. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee declined to sign the Teesta Treaty, which was envisaged to sharing of river waters between India and Bangladesh. She even pulled out of Manmohan Singh’s trip to Dhaka in September 2011. As a result, it was a huge embarrassment to the UPA government and the treaty was put on hold. However, recently the consultations have begun. Similarly, India’s policy towards finding a lasting political solution in Sri Lanka is shaped by Tamil Nadu politics. The political parties and the state government insisted Manmohan Singh to persuade the Sri Lankan government for early political solution to Tamil problem and to take necessary steps against the Sri Lanka Navy for attacking India fishermen in the Palk strait, which the Sri Lanka government see it as India’s unnecessary interference in its internal affairs. Moreover, Manmohan Singh in his two terms as Prime Minister did not make any visit to Sri Lanka, and India even voted against Sri Lanka in March 2012 at the UN Human Rights Council, urging Sri Lanka to credibly investigate allegation of Human Rights violations during the final stage of war against the Tamil militants, LTTE in May 2009. It was precisely due to the pressure from the Tamil political parties in Tamil Nadu. Even in the case of Nepal, the UPA government was initially reluctant in establishing relations with the Maoist led government, due to the prevailing Maoist insurgency problem in the country. Thus, these domestic compulsions have prevented Indian government from taking a pro-active neighbourhood policy.
SAARC and EU Experiences

Generally, SAARC and EU differ on various grounds in its evolution and growth as an entity. EU enjoys more than 50 years of rich entity experience in the field of regional cooperation, whereas SAARC has an experience of just 28 years. Although SAARC is a highly populated entity and has potentially huge market for industrial and technological fields, it is yet to form a strong institution like EU. EU is regarded as model for peace and prosperity, which primarily comes from economic cooperation. EU success demonstrates that greater economic cooperation is possible only when there is political understanding among the member countries of the region. Ironically, SAARC barely progressed beyond rhetoric of regional cooperation and continued to suffer from underdevelopment, political instability and trust deficit. EU has revitalisation of ongoing institutions, such as the European Parliament, the Council, Court of Justice, EU Human Rights Council, etc. but SAARC has been hesitant in accepting such an idea, and therefore it falls behind in many areas of development. EU has initiated many measures to make their citizens aware of their procedures, through open and planned dialogues with civil society or interest groups. For instance, the European Parliament had adopted a resolution on the participation of citizen and social players in the institutional system of EU. However, SAARC is still progressing in the front and yet to reach the level of EU (Rosel 1996:3173). Subsequently, the civil society is yet to internalise the SAARC or develop an idea that the SAARC is instrumental to progress or at least see its presence as inevitable to progress. EU acknowledges the complexities of problems and adheres to unanimity principle to resolve disputes. However, SAARC Charter clearly states that all decisions will be made on the basis of unanimity and that no bilateral disputes will be taken up for discussion. Generally, economic integration played a vital role in EU’s development as a powerful regional organisation. The economic integration included preferential trading area, free trade area, customs union, common market, economic and monetary union and complete economic integration. In this regard, South Asia lags far behind its target (Tariq 2008-09:123). There are no underlying economic compulsions that bind the countries of the region as was the case with the EU. The countries of South Asia do not have common security concern to unite them. Threats are mostly seen arising from within the region rather than from the outside. Therefore the problem is how the countries of South Asia cooperate with each other when they perceive each other as being responsible for their instability. Because of the trust deficit, many conventions have become defunct (Pattanaik 2010:627), like the additional protocol of SAARC convention on terrorism. Though SAARC has terrorism monitoring desk in Colombo, it has not yet come out with any report. SAARC, unlike the EC, emphasises on intergovernmental cooperation rather than supranational integration. Unlike
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EU, SAARC, despite instances of joint communiqués of ministerial meetings on the environment and WTO related issues, member states pursue opposite or contradictory policies that prevent SAARC from realising its best. Thus, the SAARC mechanisms unlike most EU institutions are not endowed with any authority of their own or initiate, direct or enforce the integration process (Amin 2009:268). Unlike EU, the SAARC lacks consensus on the vision of SAARC itself. For example, while Pakistan seeks political integration, India wants economic integration, and Bangladesh regional cooperation. SAARC was the outcome of government initiatives, rather than people’s initiatives and it lacks solidarity, which is not the case of EU. Hence, adopting the model of European Parliament to South Asia would be a challenging task. The EU became viable because its foundations were laid by durable economic communities like the European Coal and Steel Community of 1951, followed by the European Economic Community of 1958, which eventually evolved to become the EU in 1991. Unfortunately, in SAARC’s case, there is no such precedent. Besides, in the EU’s case, institutional cooperation could take off only after the end of Franco-German rivalry. Here, given the protracted conflict between India and Pakistan, the idea of a regional parliament will remain a non-starter. The animosity between India and Pakistan which has hobbled the growth of SAARC, even after 28 years of its existence, will also overshadow it. The two governments will never agree on its composition and powers.

China Factor

The international security environment is witnessing a power shift from the West to Asia, led by the rapid rise of China and India. More than India, it is the rise of China a concern for major and emerging powers. As a result the entry of China as an observer of SAARC will have significant impact on the idea of SAP. China has already made progress in making its presence felt. It invited senior diplomats from South Asia to China in 2011 and it hosted the Third South Asian countries commodity fair and China-SAARC senior officials’ meeting as well as the fifth China-South Asia business forum. It has announced a contribution of US$300 million for funding of various developmental projects in the region under the SDF (Pattanaik 2010a). Subsequently, the high level bilateral visit between China and SAARC countries has strengthened the political, economic and military ties. All this allows China to play a greater role in South Asia, thus denting India’s role.

Furthermore, China has been lobbying through Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka for its inclusion as a full fledged member. However, India’s foreign ministry, successfully blocked China’s attempt to become a member of the SAARC in March 2014, on the ground that SAARC needs to work towards strengthening its ties with new partners, rather than expanding the membership. Furthermore, India
emphasised at the foreign ministers meeting in Male that “Some of the observer states have done commendable work with our association, but it is important that we define a clear set of policies and objectives for these relationships and their future direction, before we move further” (Kasturi 2014). Nevertheless, India is concerned over China’s growing influence in the region and its entry into SAARC, which will naturally give other nations options to engage [other than India] and also it would reduce India’s leverage within this grouping, in which India dominates. Thus, if China becomes member of SAARC, then it would obviously complicate SAARC, which is already hijacked by India-Pakistan tensions. Thus, against these developments, the idea of SAP is not gaining momentum.

In a nutshell, though there is vast potential for the creation of SAP, SAARC is confronted with more challenges than prospects. At the same time, no systematic attempts have been made to reach out to all political forces in the region for the realisation of SAP. Unlike EU, the regional cooperation in South Asia lacks the commitment and dedication that is required to make it a success. Thus, SAARC should first work toward strengthening the economic and political ties among the members for the successful functioning of regional cooperation. Secondly, the members need to overcome the main problems confronting the parliamentary democracy in their respective country and then lay the foundation for establishing SAP. Thirdly, member states should work towards resolving their outstanding disputes and build institutions for cooperation like the EU, before the formation of SAP. Nevertheless, there is the need for SAP, although as of now it is on hold. However, it remains to be seen if geopolitical forces will push the arrangement forward.

_Narendra Modi Government: New Hope?_

Narendra Modi government which came to power in May 2014 has raised many hopes not just among the people of India, but also among the neighbouring countries. Keeping this in mind, Prime Minister Modi initiated some steps to win the confidence of the South Asian countries. He made a unique gesture by inviting all the heads of SAARC States and governments for his swearing-in-ceremony on 26 May 2014, which was very much obliged by the SAARC leaders, except the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, who could not come, but had deputed a Minister for the function. The programme was also followed by short bilateral meeting between the leaders, which boosted the confidence of SAARC members. Modi undertook his first bilateral two-day visit to Bhutan, clearly indicating the importance of Bhutan in Indian foreign policy and strategic thinking. He also made several statements on SAARC, like the grouping can be used to “improve regional cooperation and connectivity” and the need of “fruitful regional cooperation for
peace and development,” developing ‘SAARC Satellite.’ Each country in South Asia has its own specific strength and opportunities and they should also learn from each other’s best practices. Thus, these statements indicate that South Asia will get adequate importance under Modi’s government.

Overall, all these initial steps by the Modi government have given a confidence among the SAARC countries that India would play a pro-active role in strengthening regional co-operation. However, neither the Modi government nor his party members, have made any reference or a statement related to evolving the SAP. Hence, it seems that SAP is not the immediate priority of Modi government, but it might figure in near future for the growth and prosperity of South Asia. Hence the SAARC leaders should consistently work towards the formation of SAP, which would go a long way in the political integration of South Asia. It will also be good for India’s growth as regional power.

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Track-Two Diplomacy between India and Pakistan:
A Study in Diplomatic Overture
Samir Ahmad

Introduction
There has been a fundamental change in the way interstate relations are conducted in modern times. The nature and working of diplomacy has undergone significant changes over the last few decades. Traditionally, diplomacy was managed by professionally trained elite groups of functionaries operating at state-to-state level through Track-One process, which usually ranged from official and non-coercive measures such as good offices, facilitation, mediation and peace keeping to more coercive measures like power-mediation, sanctions, peace-enforcement and arbitration (Reimann 2004). However, in the contemporary world, management of inter-state and international relations has expanded to include a number of new forms of diplomacy in which multilateral and non-state agencies, groups, think-tanks and private institutions have come to play a very important role in the conduct of relations and influence the issues of larger concern to the global society. Among these new levels of diplomacy, “Track-Two Diplomacy” (also written as track-two diplomacy, Track-II diplomacy, and second track diplomacy) has emerged as a significant factor in terms of the role it has played, in recent times, to supplement the official diplomacy. Track-Two diplomacy has been defined as unofficial peace initiative led by think tanks, former bureaucrats, retired senior military officials, senior journalists, prominent academics and other influential citizens who have capacity to influence the public opinion, with three important objectives - resolutions of conflicts, building confidence and economic cooperation between the rival parties and thereby reducing the trust deficit.

Track-Two is not necessarily a substitute to the Track-One diplomatic initiatives and engagements. In contrast to Track-One or official diplomacy which pertains to diplomatic efforts to address issues and manage relationships through formal means, Track-Two pertains to dialogues and discussions that are non-governmental, informal and unofficial in nature but address issues of larger inter-
state concern. It complements the former in managing inter-state relations so as not to allow the situation to deteriorate further. By working in close cooperation with government and official agencies/institutions, Track-Two diplomacy seeks to provide a second line of communication between parties to a conflict with the purpose of bridging the gap between official positions.

The exponents of Track-Two diplomacy value the psychological approach associated with dialogues to address the human aspect that are safe to come out in workshops and in similar other activities but might disrupt in an official process. The agenda in Track-Two work is fluid and explores people’s deepest psychological concerns and experiences. It can be responsive to these barriers to conflict resolution and thus seeking to overcome them (Chataway 1998). The exponents of Track-Two diplomacy further argue that such unofficial initiatives broaden the range of participation in the dialogue process among the antagonist groups as it allows consultation with parties that need to be represented but aren’t officially involved. Even though we might not be able to get the desired result from these processes, nevertheless, there are several instances in which Track-Two diplomacy has been cited as an effective tool to advance dialogue process between parties to a dispute by various international scholars and peace activists across the globe. As a result, there has been tremendous growth and expansion in the Track-Two diplomacy as a conflict resolution process in different parts of the world. In fact, it is now quite widely recognised by the Track-One diplomats that it is unlikely that the modern day conflicts can be resolved without the cooperation of Track-Two diplomacy as it helps in easing the various barriers between the adversary groups.

In the post-cold war period, the Track-Two diplomacy attained great significance as a conflict resolution and conflict prevention mechanism applicable to parts of the world beyond Western borders. In fact, many scholars and practitioners would credit it for pushing forward some of the important peace agreements and initiatives like Israeli-Palestinian peace process that began with the Oslo accord in 1993, and Neemrana peace initiative between India and Pakistan in early 1990s. Similarly, it was quite effectively used in Northern Ireland conflict, in Africa, etc.

India-Pakistan relations that have always been perceived to be intractable and strained ever since their independence in 1947 could not remain immune to these changes in the diplomatic functioning experienced in different parts of the world. It is quite well-known that from the very beginning of their independence, both the countries have remained at logger heads particularly because of the dispute over Kashmir. The two states have always used the best of their diplomatic and other resources to undermine each other, both locally and internationally. In the
context of cold war global polarisation, their contestations extended to the United Nations. The result was that the relations between the two were always difficult and problematic. The two countries engaged in three full-fledged wars in 1947, 1965, 1971 and several other small military clashes including the Kargil war in 1998. The relationship came to its lowest in 1989-90 with the eruption of militancy in Kashmir. As it is generally believed in India, Pakistan has a direct role in supporting the cross-border militancy in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. This existed alongside the two States working for attaining a sort of nuclear status. It was subsequently in late 1998 that both India and Pakistan exploded nuclear devices on 11 and 13 May at Pokhran and 28 and 30 May at Chagai, respectively. This reflected a sort of nuclear parity between the two countries.

Prevailing tension-prone relationship between the two (potential and subsequently actual) nuclear states became a genuine cause of alarm to the international community and for the concerned citizens and people living within the two states. They could realize the cost of conflict in case it gets out of control. It was in this context that well-meaning people and other saner elements within and outside the region started becoming active to play a positive role to bridge the gap between the two states. One of the important resources that they could draw from has been cross-border cultural affinity and communicability on both sides. This is how non-official diplomacy, particularly Track-Two diplomacy became quite active in the India-Pakistan context. Subsequently, over the last two decades several Track-Two dialogues have been held with the purpose to develop linkages, communication, and understanding between the two nations.

Bilateral Track-Two Initiatives: An Overview

In the case of India-Pakistan relations, most of the Track-Two diplomatic initiatives are funded and facilitated by foreign agencies. Generally, scholars and academics from South Asia and across referred to ‘Neemrana Dialogue’ as the first Track-Two overture between India and Pakistan which was held in early 1990s. But considering the conventional understanding of the term Track-Two, one may not consider ‘India-Pakistan Friendship Society’ as the first important peace (and the initial track-two) process between India and Pakistan. The initiative played a significant role to generate a healthy atmosphere for citizen peace initiatives especially for the Track-Two diplomacy. Since then, there has been a significant increase in the number of Track-Two initiatives between India and Pakistan. Of late, some new Track-Two initiatives have been started like Chaophraya Dialogue, WISCOM annual workshop, Pugwash Conferences, Ottawa Dialogue etc. However, as already said, the unofficial peace process between the two nations began with the inception of ‘India-Pakistan Friendship Society.’ So, it is important to have a
brief evaluation about this particular initiative before we move to Neemrana and subsequent bilateral Track-Two diplomatic initiatives between the two countries.

**India Pakistan Friendship Society**

India-Pakistan Friendship Society established by Kewal Singh, a former Indian Foreign Secretary in 1987, was one of the first citizen dialogues initiatives between India and Pakistan. Some prominent citizens like Inder Kumar Gujral, who became prime minister of India in 1997, Bhai Mohan Singh, leading industrialist, Soli Sorabjee, a former Attorney General of India, Khushwant Singh, prominent literary figure were among the members of this Forum. The purpose of the initiative was to increase popular exchanges between the two countries in order to generate more understanding for the ‘other’ amongst the people. Further, it attempted to arrange cultural exchange programmes between the two governments, organise discussions and meetings between the Indian and Pakistani High Commissioners and hold annual lectures on issues of mutual concern. The initiative played an important role in de-escalation of tension caused due to the two military exercises- Brasstacks and Zarb-i-Momin by India and Pakistan, respectively. The former is believed to be the largest military exercise of the history in the South Asian region. The ‘India-Pakistan Friendship Society’ also led to promote friendly atmosphere - consequently, a number of small scale people-to-people contacts, exchange programmes etc. were held between India and Pakistan.

**Neemrana Initiative**

With the situation getting worse in Jammu and Kashmir and the nuclear race reaching a very advanced stage in early 1990s, a serious concern emerged in the Western World. It was in this background that in 1990 the US Information Service (USIS) arranged the first important Track-Two process – known as ‘Neemrana’ initiatives – between India and Pakistan at a time when most of the official channels were dysfunctional. The initiative is known as Neemrana because its first meeting was held at the Neemrana Fort in Rajasthan, India. The origins of the Neemrana dialogue lie in a series of conferences, which were moderated by the renowned American diplomat Harold Saunders, modelled on the lines of the Dartmouth Conferences (Cohen 2004). In its first meeting, 20 persons from India and Pakistan, with experience and stature in the fields of academics, diplomacy, military affairs and journalism were accompanied by some senior officials from the US Embassy to Rajasthan in October 1991 (Kuma 2007). The early meetings of the Neemrana were chaired by M.K. Rasgotra from India and Niaz Naik from Pakistan. To familiarise the participants with the vicissitudes of complex negotiations and to impress upon them the need to produce results in a fixed timeframe, the US Embassy personnel
staged a play called “A Walk in the Woods” based on the Reagan-Gorbachev Summit in Reykjavik, Iceland in 1987. The Americans felt that the involvement of former officials in the Track-Two process would provide both the governments an additional channel of communication. Participants of the dialogue operated under two fundamental proposals; first, they did not discuss the meetings with media or public so as to maintain secrecy of the dialogue and, second, during the meetings, participants, both from India and Pakistan did not indulge in discussions based on history (Faiz 2004). Initially, the Neemrana initiative was funded by USIS but, in later stages it received support from various other American and German agencies and institutions. By the end of 1995 the group had ten meetings and consensus was developed among the members on most of the issues, except Kashmir (Waslekar 1995). The members of the Neemrana initiative identified the following issues to be discussed in its meetings;

- Conventional Arms Race
- Nuclear Proliferation
- Kashmir Issue
- Economic Relations

With the passage of time some new issues such as the internal situation in both countries, trade and economic issues, visa relaxation, cultural exchange programmes, cooperation in the fields of science, technology and education etc. have been added to its agenda list. And over the past more than twenty years, almost 30 meetings have been held under the Neemrana initiative between the members of the groups.

Some people would rate the initiative as very high while others criticised it as being useless exercise without any tangible impact on the policies of the two countries against each other. Nevertheless, the value of a group such as this lies in the refined analysis and advice that it gives to the governments, thereby emerging as a source for useful ideas and options and as a tool for communication between the two countries (Sewak 2005). For instance, in 1995, the members of the Neemrana dialogue had a meeting with the Kashmiri leaders. After which they recommended to then prime minister of India P. V. Narasimha Rao that steps should be taken to grant greater autonomy to the State of Jammu and Kashmir. In response to which, Narasimha Rao appointed a five member delegation to assess the situation on ground in the State. After the visit to Kashmir, the delegation submitted its report to the Prime Minister’s office, who within no time announced in the Indian Parliament that the government of India is ready to offer autonomy to the state of Jammu and Kashmir but short of Azaadi. Further, he added that “Sky is the limit” (Kuma 2007). Moreover, the Neemrana dialogue often provides the second line of communication for the two governments and narrows the gap in perception about
the conflict between track one officials and non-governmental actors. It does this by engaging in private consultations with the two governments advising them on policy options and informing them about the popular perception at the grassroot level (Sewak 2005).

**Pakistan-India People’s Forum for Peace and Democracy (PIPFPD)**

Another early example of bilateral Track-Two initiative between India and Pakistan is ‘Pakistan-India People’s Forum for Peace and Democracy’ (PIPFPD). The initiative was launched on 2 September 1994 after a meeting was held between some of the well-known peace activists from India and Pakistan such as Rajni Kothari, Nirmal Mukerji, Tapan Bose, Gautam Naulakha, Teesta Setalvad from India and I.A. Rehman, Mubashir Hassan, B.M. Kutty, Madeeha Gouhar, Beena Sarwar, Mehdi Hassan, etc. from Pakistan.

The first Convention of the PIPFPD was held on 24 - 25 February 1995 in New Delhi. The Convention was attended by around 200 delegates with equal number of participants from both the countries. The Convention was a watershed incident in the history of ‘Track-Two’ diplomacy between the two neighbouring countries. Never before in the history of India-Pakistan relations such a large number of people came together to attend this sort of event. The Convention was concluded with the recommendations to the government of both the countries;

- That both nations should work towards demilitarisation;
- Find a peaceful solution of the Kashmir issue;
- Develop religious tolerance and impart good governance in their respective countries.

Except for some temporary halts the group has been consistently holding people-to-people dialogues. Over the years, the Forum has come out as a significant tool to influence the public perception against the conventional positions held by the governments in the two countries vis-à-vis the various outstanding issues and problems. Being one of the largest Forums with a large number of members, its initiatives reflect mass sentiments and have percolation effect, which is so deep and visible that Track-One is compelled to act on the opinion of the people it claims to represent (Sewak 2005). However, it doesn’t mean that the Forum has accomplished its set goals. There has been criticism levelled against its effectiveness and mode of functioning. Despite being one of the largest and oldest Track-Two initiative, one can say that it has a very loose connection with the government functionaries. As a result, whatever they do, it hardly reached the relevant quarters at the official level. Neither has it been able to put any barrage against the nuclear and conventional arms race in the region. The issue of Kashmir is still looming
Balusa Group

Another prominent Track-Two initiative between India and Pakistan was established in 1995, known as Balusa Group. The Balusa Group is an outcome of the joint efforts of Shirin Tahir Kheli (Founding Director of South Asia Programme of Foreign Policy, John Hopkins University, Washington DC who also served at US National Security Council during 2003-2005) and her brother, Toufiq Siddiqi, an eminent environmentalist and energy expert. The brother-sister duo brought together a group of Indian and Pakistani generals, politicians and bureaucrats etc. to discuss ways to bring sense and direction to India-Pakistan relationship. It was this loose gathering that came to be known as the Balusa Group, named after two adjacent villages in Pakistani Punjab. One of its members- Shah Mehmood Qureshi, became Foreign Minister of Pakistan during the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) government. The Balusa initiative has been financially supported by the United Nations Development Programme and the Rockefeller Foundation. While explaining the origin of the Balusa Group, Toufiq Siddiqi said:

Shirin and I have had a continuous interest in promoting sustainable development in the Subcontinent, and here was a concept that would represent a win-win economic situation for the key adversaries, while also serving as a CBM. I knew many of the energy and environment experts in both countries, whereas Shirin knew many of the policy-makers. What we tried to do was to get people from the major political parties in Pakistan and India, not just the one party in power but also main opposition parties, because we know parties keep changing all the time, so you have to have the backing of both parties to get anything done and not have to cancel the project every time a government changed. We understood that given the magnitude of energy requirements, the natural gas pipeline offered the greatest potential (Siddiqi 2008).

The Balusa Group is famous for its efforts to promote a joint gas pipeline from Iran to India via Pakistan, with an objective to address the growing energy requirements of both the countries and serve as an economic benefit to both the countries. The Balusa Groups is also trying to build a partnership between India and Pakistan on trade and electricity. The Group continues to meet on regular basis and with a purpose create a healthy atmosphere for resolution of all intractable issues between India and Pakistan. However, most of these meetings are held behind closed doors to avoid any kind of media attention. Therefore, it is not easy to evaluate or determine its role vis-à-vis India-Pakistan relations. But, as already said, the Group had been fervently pursuing the government of India and Pakistan to start a gas pipeline from Iran, until the US condemnation of the project propelled several disagreements between stakeholders and ultimately prompted
India’s unofficial withdrawal from the partially completed pipeline (Kutty 2012). Over the years it has been quite successful to promote friendly relations between the people of two countries. For example, former Pakistani Major General Mahmud Ali Durrani said:

I grew up with the firm conviction that the only good Indian was a dead Indian. To add to the ranks of good Indians, I joined the Pakistan army. However, after nearly four years of fairly intense interaction with a selected group of Indians, I am progressing to the pleasant conclusion that with sincere effort and strong political will, Pakistan and India can learn to live in peace with each other (Durrani 2000).

Other proposals made by the Balusa Group include establishment of effective military-to-military hotlines between India and Pakistan, increasing interaction between the intelligence agencies of India and Pakistan, nuclear confidence building and greater education of Indian and Pakistan leaders concerning the responsibility of leading nuclear weapon states. The Group also reflects the role of Track-Two processes in keeping the dialogue channels open even when the situation is very tense. For instance, the Group met in Lahore in the fall of 1999 in the wake of military coup in Pakistan to discuss and analyse the Kargil Conflict (Durrani 2000). However, according to Stephen Cohen, though most of these dialogues included extremely high profile Indians and Pakistanis, they accomplished nothing and over the years the hawks from both sides used the meetings to score propaganda points (Cohen 2004). Often, these meetings were parody of the oft-heard joke that ‘CBM’ meant ‘conference-building measure,’ as each dialogue concluded that more study and another meeting was necessary (Cohen 2004).

India-Pakistan Soldiers Initiative for Peace

Established during 1999-2000, India-Pakistan Soldiers Initiative for Peace is another important bilateral Track-Two initiative. It was in late 1990s that a group of distinguished military officers from across the border came together to launch a peace initiative between the two countries. The major focus of the organisation is to mobilise opinion in favour of the normalisation of relations between India and Pakistan and to create better understanding. Besides, the organisation also tries to raise awareness and put pressure upon the two governments for giving clemency to prisoners on two sides. IPSI began with a very small organisational strength and support base. However, over the years it has been able to extend its outreach and its membership to a large extent. According to one estimate, close to 60 Indian and 15 Pakistani retired soldiers are members of this dialogue (Faiz 2004). Initially, the initiative was led by Nirmala Deshpande, a peace activist and former Rajya Sabha member from India and Lt. Gen. Nasir Akhter (retd) from Pakistan. Lately, a few senior ex-officers have also joined this group. On the Indian side, former Naval Chief
Admiral Ramdas (retd) and a former Vice Chief of the Army are members of IPSI. On the Pakistani side, former Chief of the Air Force Air Marshal Zafar A. Chaudhary (retd), a couple of former Corp Commanders and other senior military officers have joined this initiative. Since its inception the group has organised several exchange visits between the military officials. The latest visit by the members of the India chapter of IPSI was held from 18 to 24 November 2012. It was jointly organised by the Beacon House National University and IPSI at Lahore. While speaking in a seminar on ‘India-Pakistan Relations: Prospects and Challenges’ at the BNU, the Lt Gen (retired) Moti Dar, former vice chief of the Indian army and the president of the Indian chapter of the India-Pakistan Soldiers’ Initiative (IPSI) said, “Let us get rid of the historical baggage that separates the people of our two countries so we can bridge the communication gap and get over the trust deficit between India and Pakistan.” Further, he reiterated that issues such as Kashmir, Siachen, Sir Creek, water resources and nuclear disarmament have plagued the relations between the two countries, but good thing is that both our governments have at least decided to resolve these issues through a composite dialogue instead of war.” While talking about the effectiveness of the IPSI, he said that the organisation had still not managed to make as big a difference as they had imagined, but he had high hopes for the youth of both nations. While the head of the Pakistan chapter of the IPSI, Lt Gen (retired) Nasir Akhtar said, “Wars never help; instead they ensure greater deterioration of a situation.” Both the countries are facing severe poverty and we are still very primitive people, therefore, it is time that both countries move forward and align ourselves in a manner which promotes peace between India and Pakistan” (Shaukat 2012). The seminar was attended by various other dignitaries like former foreign and finance minister Sartaj Aziz who is also the Vice Chancellor of the BNU.

According to some scholars, the IPSI initiative has not been able to attract retired soldiers in very large number. One of the factors cited in this regard is the seclusion and institutional socialisation of military personnel. When visas are issued, both governments make it a point to exclude the cantonment areas. Also, a majority of the ex-soldiers find it difficult to overcome decades of institutional and ideological influences based on demonization of the other (Faiz 2004).

**Henry L. Stimson Center**

There are several other Institutes, research organisations based in different parts of the world involved in various peace and confidence building measures between the two countries. One such institute is Henry L. Stimson Center based in Washington DC, USA. The Center initiated its South Asia programme in 1991 with the following objectives (Krepon 2004).
● Stabilise and reduce nuclear dangers in the subcontinent;
● Facilitate positive movement on the Kashmir issue; and
● Promote regional stability and normal relations between India and Pakistan.

Further, the Stimson Center employs several programming tools and published a significant body of work on risk reduction, confidence building, and reconciliation that has been utilised by decision makers, researchers, students, and military officers. Some of the project publications include *Crisis Prevention, Confidence Building, and Reconciliation in South Asia* (St. Martin’s Press 1995); *Global Confidence Building: New Tools for Troubled Regions* (St. Martin’s Press 1999); and *Nuclear Risk Reduction in South Asia* (Palgrave Macmillan 2004). In addition, the Stimson Center published numerous reports and essays on South Asia. The Stimson Center also has created a Visiting Fellows programme, which has hosted over 65 Pakistani and Indian journalists, academics, researchers, and military officers. The goals of the Visiting Fellows programme are to increase mutual understanding, improve analytical capabilities and to promote creative, problem-solving ideas. The Visiting Fellows programme was financially supported by the National Nuclear Security Administration of the United States Department of Energy.

The Stimson Center also convenes Track-Two workshops on nuclear risk reduction and escalation control. For example, the first Stimson Center Escalation Control Workshop was organized on 14-18 November 2002. In the workshop seventeen Indian, Pakistani and US participants met at the Gorse Hill Conference Center to discuss escalation control in South Asia. A number of CBMs advocated and nurtured through the Stimson dialogues have also been implemented at official levels, such as ballistic missile flight test notification agreement, military exercise notifications and constraint measures along international borders and Kashmir related CBMs (Kye 2011). Stimson organisers also believe that their workshops and publications on nuclear terrorism have raised considerable consciousness of this problem in official circles, particularly since the 9/11 incident (Kye 2011).

In addition to Stimson Center, various other international institutions and organisations have also been responsible for organising different Track-Two initiatives between the two countries, most of them were funded by different European and US governments. For instance, the Shanghai Process, in which India, Pakistan, China and the US discussed the nuclear issue, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) meetings organised by a Washington Think Tank, training Workshops organised by Cooperative Monitoring Center (CMC) at the Sandia National Laboratories to foster the knowledge about a variety of CBMs to improve the security conditions in South Asia, Maritime Activities in which Centre for Foreign Policy (CFPS), Dalhousie University (Canada), under which former
Heads of Indian and Pakistani navies came together to discuss issues to prevent incidents at sea, disputed maritime boundaries, fishermen concerns etc. All these initiatives played a significant role to promote peace constituencies in the region and also provided opportunities for the people in both the countries to develop CBMs.

**Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP)**

Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP) is a Delhi based organization. Since 2001, the organization has been conducting Conflict Transformation Workshop for the people particularly for young students, journalists, and academics from India and Pakistan. The Conflict Transformation programme seeks to (http://www.wiscomp.org/, 2012):

- Empower a new generation of women and men, in South Asia, with the motivation, skills, and expertise to engage in processes of nonviolent change in different conflict settings. These include conflicts ranging from the intra-personal and inter-personal to those at the community, intra-national and international level.
- Introduce Conflict Transformation as a field of study in South Asia.
- Foreground the lens of gender in the analysis of conflict and in the conceptualization of peace initiatives.
- Provide a reflexive curriculum for peace that evolves in response to changing regional and international landscapes. This is done through knowledge sharing, theory-building, skill enhancement and critical reflection on contemporary thinking and practices in conflict analysis, mediation, multi-track diplomacy, reconciliation, justice and post-conflict peace-building.
- Build partnerships, mentoring relationships and a network of peace practitioners and theoreticians who can contribute to peace-building initiatives in South Asia and the world.

Some scholars have described the WISCOMP Conflict Management Workshop as ‘Track five’ exercise (Sewak 2005), but given the participation of various retired diplomats, political leaders, retired bureaucrats, academics and scholars it would not be inappropriate to call it a ‘Track-Two’ initiative in nature. Since the first workshop held in June 2001, the WISCOMP has conducted ten such programmes on annual basis in which more than 400 people mostly youth from across the border have participated. The tenth annual workshop was held on 23-26 August 2012 in New Delhi. The WISCOMP Conflict Transformation model has been widely appreciated and emulated by an increasing number of civil society groups in the two countries(http://www.wiscomp.org/, 2012).
**Pugwash Conferences**

Pugwash Conferences, worldwide known for holding dialogues and workshops aimed at promoting peace and reconciliation, reducing danger of armed conflicts and seeking cooperative solutions for global problems. In line with its mission, the Pugwash has been quite actively involved in South Asia region particularly between India and Pakistan, in organising various Track-Two dialogues on Kashmir issue, confidence building measures about nuclear weapons and facilitated an influential network of experts from both sides of the LoC, addressing a range of issues from economic relations to highly technical arms control and disarmament issues.

In December 2004 Pugwash convened its first meeting on Kashmir issue that brought together people from both parts of Kashmir. The conference was conducted in Kathmandu, Nepal. It provided an opportunity to Kashmiri leaders from both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) to meet and discuss the various dimensions of the Kashmir problem. Besides, the participants included prominent people drawn from academic, diplomatic, military, political and business backgrounds. The Conference was an important milestone in the Track-Two diplomatic discourse in the context of India-Pakistan relations’ (Baba 2005). The Conference resolved to integrate the Kashmiri leadership and society in a framework of semi-official dialogue with a reach to the formal circles of bilateral negotiators. Since then Pugwash has been able to hold several crucial discussions aimed at finding ways to reduce violence in Kashmir, decrease the threat of nuclear war and established ‘Pugwash India-Pakistan Independent Commission’ to explore the avenues and ways for the resolution of various bilateral issues and reduce the trust deficit between the two countries.

**Chaophraya Dialogue**

The Chaophraya Dialogue is a joint India-Pakistan Track-Two initiative undertaken by the Australia India Institute (AII), Melbourne and the Jinnah Institute, Islamabad, to encourage informed dialogue on Indo-Pak relations and enhance stakes in peace. The dialogue is primarily meant to give an opportunity to informed members of the strategic community in India and Pakistan to interact with each other on a sustained basis. The Chaophraya Dialogue has encouraged participants to share the conclusions of each round with their respective governments. So far, the participants in the Chaophraya Dialogue have included senior retired officials and bureaucrats like Ambassadors, Foreign Secretaries, Intelligence Chiefs and top-ranking members of the Armed Forces, academics, journalists, political leaders and civil society members from across the border. Besides, Chaophraya dialogue has been a useful forum when the official dialogue process between India and Pakistan has been frozen. This was witnessed after
the 26/11 attacks in Mumbai. During this period, when the official talks between the two countries were suspended, the Chaophraya dialogue managed to bring together senior interlocutors from the two countries in Bangkok more than once. In addition, the Chaophraya Dialogue seek to influence public opinion, that is the main reason that the participants include key opinion makers whose ideas are likely to trickle down to average citizen to promote peace solutions to the conflict. The process is now in its fifth year. In the last five years, several dialogues were held on issues related to terrorism, Kashmir dispute, bilateral trade, bilateral cooperation, regional nuclear stability, water sharing issues etc. The twelfth round of Chaophraya Dialogue was held during 17–18 July 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand. Important opinion makers from India and Pakistan, including parliamentarians, former diplomats, retired military officers, media persons and policy experts participated in the Dialogue. At the end of the Dialogue all the participants had a consensus that both India and Pakistan need to build on emerging opportunities that could well provide space for sustained improvement in their bilateral relations.

**Delhi-Islamabad Dialogue**

Since the year 2011, Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation (CDR), a Delhi based think tank in collaboration with Jinnah Institute, an Islamabad think tank, initiated Track-Two dialogue process on the current dynamics of the India-Pakistan relations. Through the initiative the key policy makers from both the countries come together to debate, discuss and chart out the specific and timely recommendations on the various contentious issues including the Kashmir problem. Since the launch of this initiative, a number of joint conferences were held both in Delhi as well as in Islamabad labelled as Delhi-Islamabad Dialogue. The most recent dialogue under this initiative was held during 20–21 January 2013 in New Delhi. During the meeting 30 participants from India and Pakistan comprising retired diplomats, academicians, civil society activists, media personnel, and business persons, deliberated on a variety of bilateral issues such as bilateral trade, extremism and terrorism, higher education and the Kashmir problem.

The Delhi Dialogue was followed by Islamabad Dialogue held on 4–5 July 2013 in Islamabad, Pakistan. The participants of the meeting included senior parliamentarians, former military officers, former diplomats, media persons, policy experts, academics from both the countries. The conference was held for the third consecutive year as an effort to promote peace and regional stability through Track-Two diplomatic overtures between the two neighbouring countries. A draft resolution outlining recommendations was released at the end of the conference impressing upon the governments of India and Pakistan to improve bilateral relations and address all the outstanding issues. The participants urged
both countries to use Afghanistan as an opportunity to cooperate towards the development of a better and secure future for the people living across the region, instead of making it another bilateral issue as that could lead to serious consequences for the entire South Asian community. Further, it was stressed during the meeting that both the countries should start partnership programmes in Information Technology (IT), communication, healthcare, education and other important fields. Considering the background of the people who have been participating in these meetings, it is not incorrect to assert that this particular Track-Two initiative is relatively better equipped to communicate its recommendations and suggestions to the government functionaries in the two countries.

**Ottawa Dialogue**

Another important on-going Track-Two dialogue between India and Pakistan is ‘Ottawa Dialogue.’ The Ottawa Dialogue is convened by Peter Jones, Associate Professor at the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Ottawa. Like most other Track-Two initiatives between India and Pakistan, attendees of this dialogue are also retired bureaucrats, senior academics, and retired military and government officials. Besides, some of the meetings were attended by Condeleeza Rice, former US Secretary of State and William Perrey, former US Secretary of Defence.

The Dialogue is focused on the nuclear relationship between the two countries and seeks to explore ways in which restraint and stability measures can be developed. Like the Balusa Group, Ottawa Dialogue meetings are held behind the closed doors, but some information is released to the general public including brief press releases containing general information. While talking about the impact of the Ottawa Dialogue on the government policies on the two governments, T.V. Paul, one of the regular participants in the Ottawa Dialogue said that ‘our report is taken seriously in government circles in both India and Pakistan and also in other countries’ (Jain 2011).

**Conclusion**

The failure to achieve substantial progress on issues confronting the two countries through the traditional diplomacy made a strong case for unconventional approach, particularly in the post–1990 situation, when violence in the State of Jammu and Kashmir became a subject of assertion. With the result, non-official dialogues particularly, Track-Two diplomacy attained a significant role to find ways of bringing the differences down and working towards a long term transformation of India-Pakistan relations. Over the last two decades, there has been a significant increase in the number as well as in the role of the Track-Two initiatives. There

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are more than twelve highly institutionalised Track-Two groups, besides more than twenty other people-to-people exchange programmes operating between the two neighbours. Some of these Track-Two initiatives receive international funding while others are locally funded and coordinated. According to Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, there are two types or forms of track two initiatives operative in the India-Pakistan context- Open and Secret. The open Track-Two meetings are held in the form of seminars, conferences, symposiums, while the secret Track-Two dialogues are held through regular and irregular meetings between small groups mostly consisting retired bureaucrats, active bureaucrats in their private capacity, political leaders etc. The deliberations in the open form are reported by media, and also quite often published in the form of reports, books etc. On the other hand, the purpose of the secretly held Track-Two meetings is to work out an agreed text and then send it to the concerned authorities.

Both in India as well in Pakistan people are divided over the role and relevance of these Track-Two initiatives. The detractors have been criticising the Track-Two initiatives on various grounds. Their first argument is that since the concept of Track-Two diplomacy is borrowed from West, it is not effective at all to the South Asia conditions. Secondly, these critics are of the opinion that there are some inherent limitations these Track-Two initiatives possess. Therefore, it is quite unlikely that it will be able to produce any desired result, especially given the intractable nature of India-Pakistan relations. Thirdly, both Indian as well as Pakistani systems don’t allow exchange between Track-One and Track-Two. None of these countries have a tradition of people moving back and forth from think tanks to policy-making and vice-versa as is the case in Western countries like USA. Fourth, there is a usual complaint from the Track-One or government official that the Track-Two participants are not fully aware of the contours of the relationship between the two countries and in the process create contradiction rather than complementing Track-One diplomacy. Finally, the critics argue that the people who form these Track-Two groups are just self-appointed intellectuals and when it comes about the outcome from these unofficial dialogues, there is very little to talk about. Further, they argue that these Track-Two groups are not adequately equipped to handle the fundamental differences on some of the crucial issues like Kashmir, Siachen, the issue of terrorism etc.

However, despite all the criticism and shortcomings, the Track-Two diplomacy has tremendously improved the relationship between the two countries. It does offer forums in which Indians and Pakistanis act as nonofficial spokespersons for their causes, increase the sophistication of their understandings of issues, develop civil and harmonised relationships based on working trust and explore the viability
of options that may serve to advance their own causes as well as prospects for a stable and enduring peace.

In short, the Track-Two process between India and Pakistan is neither inconsequential nor as pernicious as different detractors are inclined to believe. While talking to different Track-Two activists on both sides of the border, majority of them were confident that these meetings with enemy were in no way detrimental to their national interests. Rather, they were of the opinion that these Track-Two meetings provided them a platform to break down all kinds of stereotypes against each other. Moreover, it is generally believed that through these Track-Two initiatives the participants developed new relationships and new opportunities to pursue goals that would offer better future for the people living in both the countries. For the last two decades, Track-Two diplomacy assumed enormous importance given the volatile situation at the official level between India and Pakistan. And it is difficult to even imagine enduring peace between the two countries without major efforts on the part of the committed and influential citizens to consolidate foundations for peace among the people living on both sides of the border.

Notes
1. I also had the opportunity to attend this workshop in 2012.
2. The Jinnah Institute is also involved with CDR, a Delhi based think tank in organizing Track Two dialogues, discussed briefly later in this chapter.

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Shaukat, A. (2012, November); Aroosa Shaukat, *The Express Tribune*, 20 November.


Contemporary debates on the ‘decline’ of American power in the global political landscape, initiated by some scholars and think tanks, tend to underestimate the pervasive-dynamic of the ‘techno-legit’ order which makes the United States ascendency in international relations an indispensable factor in the decades to come. Even a scholar of international repute like Immanuel Wallerstein (2003) argued that “the United States has been fading as a global power since the 1970s.” He writes:

To understand why the so-called Pax Americana is on the wane requires examining the geopolitics of the twentieth century, particularly of the century’s final three decades. This exercise uncovers a simple and inescapable conclusion: The economic, political, and military factors that contributed to U.S. hegemony are the same factors that will inexorably produce the coming U.S. decline (Wallerstein 2003:13)

Wallerstein continues:

...the U.S. economy seems relatively weak, even more so considering the exorbitant military expenses associated with hawk strategies. Moreover, Washington remains politically isolated; virtually no one (save Israel) thinks the hawk position makes sense or is worth encouraging. Other nations are afraid or unwilling to stand up to Washington directly, but even their foot dragging is hurting the United States. Yet the U.S. response amounts to little more than arrogant arm twisting. Arrogance has its own negatives. Calling in chips means leaving fewer chips for next time, and surly acquiescence breeds increasing resentment. Over the two hundred years, the United States acquired a considerable amount of ideological credit. But these days, the United States is running through this credit even faster than it ran through its gold surplus in the 1960s (Ibid: 26).

Kevin Brown says that the US entered the 21st Century with its losing of hegemony in World Affairs. This was due to several factors including “costly military interventions overseas, in addition to serious economic issues at home. He also pointed out that the “US power on the world stage as a whole has been
challenged due to the rise of other powers namely China and India” (Brown 2008). Writing about this, Noam Chomsky noted:

In the 2011 summer issue of the journal of the American Academy of Political Science, we read that it is “a common theme” that the United States, which “only a few years ago was hailed to stride the world as a colossus with unparalleled power and unmatched appeal — is in decline, ominously facing the prospect of its final decay.” It is indeed a common theme, widely believed, and with some reason. But an appraisal of US foreign policy and influence abroad and the strength of its domestic economy and political institutions at home suggests that a number of qualifications are in order. To begin with, the decline has in fact been proceeding since the high point of US power shortly after World War II, and the remarkable rhetoric of the several years of triumphalism in the 1990s was mostly self-delusion. Furthermore, the commonly drawn corollary — that power will shift to China and India — is highly dubious. They are poor countries with severe internal problems. The world is surely becoming more diverse, but despite America’s decline, in the foreseeable future there is no competitor for global hegemonic power (Chomsky 2011).

According to Joseph Nye, it was “fashionable to compare the United States’ power to that of the United Kingdom a century ago and to predict a similar hegemonic decline.” Yet, the US was “not in absolute decline, and in relative terms, there is a reasonable probability that it will remain more powerful than any other state in the coming decades.” He argued, however, that as “globalization will spread technological capabilities and information technology will allow more people to communicate, U.S. culture and the U.S. economy will become less globally dominant than they were at the start of this century” (Nye 2010).

The arguments put in place by these scholars appear to have different focal points; yet they tend to ignore the emerging structure of global power configurations to be understood in terms of norms and systems of controls. It is here that the construct of the global ‘techno-legit’ order calls for a deeper understanding of the mutually reinforcing dynamics of relations of power embedded in the world capitalist system and its structural as well as legal-normative linkage with institutions/regimes in the post-Washington Consensus setting. In such a regime of ‘consent’ and interconnectivity, the United States has already emerged as a ‘global regulatory agency’ with its immense (technological and legal) control of the structures and agencies of the global system (Foot, MacFarlane and Mastanduno 2003). Conceivably, all regions and countries of the world are more integrally connected with the US-negotiated techno-legit order today than any time in history. Notwithstanding the setbacks the US had to endure after the global recession or 9/11 (Seethi 2002), what is perceived to be a ‘national tragedy’ (or a setback) in the US is inexorably a challenge to techno-legit order. Hence the stability/instability of the US has become the stability/instability of the global techno-legit order and vice versa.
Nuclear Issues, the US and ‘Soft Containment’

The United States, having established its transnational strategic linkages with global regimes and organisations, is exercising its influence/power through policies, programmes and pacts with virtually all countries in the global system. The most critical regimes of American power dynamic include global neoliberal regime (the World Bank, IMF, UNDP etc), trade and intellectual property rights regime (WTO), global science policy regime (UNESCO etc), strategic industries regimes (military-industrial complex and nuclear-space complex), service regimes (health-industrial complex, information-communication complex, educational-academic complex, banking-financial complex) and non-proliferation regime (NPT) (Seethi 2010; Seethi and Reghunath 2010). There can be other corollaries of these strategic regimes where the United States continues to play a regulatory role in several ways. In many cases, these regulatory roles tend to assume the character of soft-containment of oppositional forces. Soft-containment is a global regulatory strategy of Washington, seeking to ensure that national actors conform to the norms and principles of the techno-legit order so that any transformation in the global system is within the limits set by techno-capitalism, the leadership of which is with the US. The possibilities of actors (such as China) emerging to threaten this order are remote given the low power dynamic of such countries vis-a-vis the techno-legit order. One major area of this dynamic is non-proliferation where the US has enormous strategic concerns and advantage.

The American soft-containment of Iran and India therefore calls for a deeper level analysis within the ‘logic of nuclear anarchy’ in the regions of the West Asia-Gulf and South Asia. There is a rationale for deploying the non-proliferation dynamic to make a comparative analysis of the US strategy in dealing with the two major actors in the regions of West Asia-Gulf and South Asia. In both cases, Washington used the ‘techno-legit’ circuits to contain Iran and India, the former an NPT adherent and the latter an NPT non-compliant. Both are also non-aligned countries (with Iran currently holding the Chairmanship of NAM). Though the strategy with respect to India and Iran was initially in the nature of sanction-based containment, following reports about their nuclear activities, the US came round to the view that soft-containment would be a better option/more appropriate under the non-proliferation regime.

Soft-containment of Iran falls within the circuits of global techno-legit order. Initially, Iran and six powers (P5+1, the permanent five members of the UN Security Council plus Germany) entered into an agreement in November 2013 on an interim deal to control Tehran’s nuclear programme in exchange for some easing of sanctions that had undermined Iran’s economy. Sanctions had already cost Iran $120 billion in lost revenue since the US and other western powers imposed barrier on Iran in 2010 and countries that engaged in trade with Teheran. The
share of Iran’s oil reserves is about 9.4 per cent of the world total, but the internal consumption comes only to 2.2 per cent. Iranian reserves are among the world’s largest, fourth only to Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, and Canada. Hence the circuits of techno-legit order cannot afford to alienate Iran further; rather the appropriate strategy would be soft-containment. Iran agreed in February 2014 to take seven further steps within three months under a deal with the IAEA. One of the measures related to a long-stalled investigation by the IAEA into Iran’s nuclear programme. It appears to be a significant step forward as the investigation into suspected nuclear weapons research has been deadlocked for years. The six-month agreement, which offers Iran about $7 billion in relief from sanctions in exchange for non-proliferation commitments leaves in place banking and financial measures that hampered Iran’s crude exports. There were apprehensions with respect to Tehran’s commitment beyond six months, and it was obvious that under the current circuits of the techno-legit order, the US would continue to act as the global regulatory agency with its immense power of influence within the IAEA. However, the soft-containment of Iran has sent a powerful message to all other regional actors that Washington will have high stakes in the West Asia-Gulf region in respect of non-proliferation. After intense negotiations, the deal has now come to stay. It seeks to bring down the number of Iranian centrifuges by two-thirds. It would put a ban on enrichment at key facilities, and limit uranium research and development to the Natanz facility. The deal further caps uranium enrichment at 3.67 per cent and limits the stockpile to 300 kg, all for 15 years. Iran will be required to ship spent fuel out of the country forever, as well as allow inspectors from the IAEA inspectors certain access in perpetuity. Heightened inspections, including tracking uranium mining and monitoring the production and storage of centrifuges, will last for up to 20 years. The US says that the new measures take Iran from being able to assemble its first bomb within 2-3 months, to at least one year from now. After months of negotiations, the US secretary of state, John Kerry, claimed that “progress was made on some of the most vexing challenges that we face.” He said: “we are closer to a deal that would make the entire world ... safer and more secure” (The Guardian 2014).

In the case of India, the US followed a similar strategy of soft-containment with its implications for countries across regions (such as Pakistan). Washington used Section 123 of the US Atomic Energy Act titled “Cooperation with Other nations” to effect soft-containment. The Civil Nuclear Agreement signed between India and the United States unfolds a significant step in binding New Delhi to the non-proliferation regime (Seethi 2008). Some would call it India’s backdoor entry into NPT. The conditions put across by Washington for agreeing to have a nuclear deal with India were related to the latter’s willingness to accept the provisions of the American Hyde Act, signing a major agreement with IAEA and another with
the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). While acknowledging India’s nuclear weapon status through these commitments, Washington sought to ensure that the ground rules of the techno-legit order are obeyed by the recipient unequivocally – first by agreeing to the conditions set by the US in respect of India’s support to its position on Iran in IAEA and then conforming to the rules of non-proliferation (such as New Delhi’s readiness to open its civil nuclear plants for IAEA-led international inspection). The Indo-US nuclear deal is thus a major breakthrough in overcoming New Delhi’s isolation following the Pokhran-II nuclear tests in 1998. The compulsion for such a deal could be seen as ‘mutuality of interests’ (such as energy deficit of India and reactor business of American companies) under the techno-legit order, but the US engagement, in fact, amounted to soft-containment of India’s nuclear ambition, thereby invoking non-proliferation precepts for ensuring its global commitment. It further underlines that the US engagements in Asia (such as West Asia, South Asia and East Asia) on critical questions of non-proliferation are as consequential as it is in combating terrorism and fundamentalism within the circuits of techno-legit order.

References


Religious Education and Identity Formation: A Case Study of Pakistan
Azad Ahmad Khan

Islamic education and Madrasas have been very important part of the Muslim societies. These religious schools are devoted to the Islamic traditions of knowledge and are expected to preserve the traditional Islamic world view. These Madrasas have not only been the centre of learning but also of wider socio-economic and political developments in the society as well. In widely circulated literature about Madrasas, they are defined as institutions which impart education (especially religious education) mostly through their own curriculum. They have undergone many changes by modifying themselves with changing time and have tried to adapt to local demands and culture. Eventually, these Madrasas have tried to emerge as a parallel modern system of school education in the Muslim societies. They also get influenced due to the social formation taking place within the society. They are sometimes divided on sectarian/ideological lines too. The teachers and students study literature reflecting the beliefs and opinions of their own schools of thought and their own interpretations. They also produce a large amount of religious literature in the form of books, journals, magazines and pamphlets; all propagating their own schools of thought. All these lead to formation of distinct identity of their own which largely leads to ideological differences among them.

The present study is concerned with the religious education imparted in and outside the formal Madrasas and will try to examine how the education disseminated by these Madrasas lead to formation of distinct identities within the society. The study will try to analyze the curriculum, textbooks as well as ideological divide over different interpretations of Islam comprehensively. Thus, explaining the correlation between Madrasas and the formation of distinct social identity in the society.
I

Pakistan has been declared to be an Islamic state and Islamic Laws are enforced by the state but it does not specify as to which school of thought or interpretation would be recognized (Zaman 1998: 692). It is a Muslim majority country but there are sectarian, sub-sectarian and other ideological divisions within the Muslims of the country. First there is the Sunni-Shiah sectarian division. And further the Sunni majority is divided among sub-sects such as the Barelvis, Deobandis, Ahl-i-Hadith and revivalist groups such as the Jamaat-i-Islami (Rahman 2008: 201-2). After the creation of Pakistan in 1947, Ulema started playing important political role in the name of Islam. Its first sign was the adoption of Objectives Resolution which in a way gave them sole authority to interpret religion as they deemed fit. They also got a significant say over religious affairs in the country for acting as agents of change in the social and religious affairs of the state.

Religious education in Pakistan has always been given priority either on full time residential enrollment or part time basis. Madrasas, at the time of British India, emphasised solely on making ordinary people better acquaint with Islam and preserving and protecting the Muslim identity. But on the contrary these madrasas in Pakistan began to produce a distinct class of students who seem incapable, underequipped and ill-informed for facing the challenges of the modern and ever changing today’s world. These Madrasas belong to five major maslaks of Pakistan such as Tanzim-ul-Madaris (Barelvi), Wafaq-ul-Madaris (Deobandi), Wafaq-ul-Madaris (Shia), Wafaq-ul-Madaris (Ahle Hadith) and Rabita-ul-Madaris (Jamaat-e-Islami).

The reformist ideology of the Deoband school of Madrasa soon acquired a sectarian dimension, with these Deobandis distinguishing themselves and their Madrasas from other schools of thought such as, the Barelvis and the Ahl-i-Hadith. All these schools of thought emerged in India in the second half of the nineteenth century and still constitute the most significant sectarian affiliations among the Sunni Muslims of the Indian subcontinent (Zaman 1999: 305).

II

After the departure of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), differences emerged among the ordinary public in general and to those who were close to Hazrat Ali in particular as to who is going to succeed him. As there was no hereditary rule of succession, selection of the Caliph was made through an open vote cast by the public (Akbarabadi 2010: 26), therefore after due consideration among themselves, Hazrat Abu Bakr was made the Caliph. And it is from here onwards that people started believing that Hazrat Ali was more close to the Prophet Mohammad and was even his son in law, therefore he was most rightful heir or successor. It was also
because the people thought he is the most qualified candidate for the job. Because of these differences there happens to be the emergence of different sects such as - Sunnis and Shias. Therefore, different practices of beliefs as well as rituals between these two different sects started. These people gradually started to be identified as Shias whose practices as well as rituals are also somewhat different from Sunnis.

Since the eleventh century, when it first emerged as the principal institution of higher Islamic learning, the Madrasa has undergone many changes, adapting in varying degrees to local cultures with changing times. Madrasas play a very crucial role in preservation of the knowledge (both religious and modern) and production of newer and scientific knowledge. Madrasas do play a central/critical role in the formation of religious elite in any Muslim society. Quite often these religious elite produce political elite by aligning themselves with them (Zaman 1999: 294).

The growth of madrasas saw a steady decline under the colonial rule of the British in India. And the emphasis shifted back towards the religious education while earlier the emphasis was on religious as well as on other modern scientific education. The decline of Mughal Empire led to the gradual withdrawal of state support for Islamic education in 19th and 20th century Islamic thought, at that time the prominent schools of Islamic thought in South Asia were: Deoband, Barelvis and Ahl-i-Hadith. In order to promote and protect Muslim identity, madrasas were established all over the country. Madrasas in South Asia began as institutions to preserve Islamic learning. Madrasas established during Mughal rule largely followed informal teaching method and used to revolve around the personality of the teacher rather than curriculum. Their establishment was not only based on Maslaks but on personal or political differences as well.

There have been various studies regarding madrasas, religious education and their influence outside it. One such study by Francis Robinson (2000) on *Firangi Mahal* argues how religious ideas and norms shape politics and explores how religious identities have evolved and shaped various educational institutions in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Tariq Rahman (2004) criticizes the inflexible and outdated approach of education in such madrasas where they follow their own school of thought simultaneously by criticizing others. A study by Khalid Ahmad (2006) becomes important to take into notice as it claims that madrasas in Pakistan create a rejectionist mindset which doesn’t approves of modernity and discourses from outside it. Whereas another study by Arshad Alam (2011) argues that madrasas as religious, social and educational institutions are as prone to social change as any other constituent of the Muslim society. In his study of Muslim societies and cultures, he found that social formation of the locality has a wider impact on religious institutions. Robinson (2001) asks why an educational tradition, which at one time was associated with reasoning and debate would, in recent times, gravitate toward militancy.
III

Islamic schools have preserved and transmitted knowledge, not only Islam, but also knowledge of language, literature, resonating, rhetoric, and natural sciences. Pakistani madrasas were once known throughout the Muslim world for their well preserved Hanafi teachings. Today, they are better known, among ordinary Pakistanis, as places where one’s children may get an ethical education, in a disciplined environment, with low cost accommodations and meals, and improved employment prospects. Thus, these madrasas are providing education to the poorest of the people in the society at almost no cost (Candland 2014). The four major schools of Islamic jurisprudence—Hanafi, Hanbali, Shafi’I and Malaki hold somewhat different beliefs about fiqh (Ibid: 5). There are differences between Barelvis and Deobandis in matters of worship and social practices within the Islamic aspect. There are also divisions within a particular school of thought. They tend to discredit those schools of thought who are believed to be opposed to the widely acceptable and state supported ideology such as the declaration of Ahmadiya community as infidels. And within such divisions there are sub-divisions too—such as Jamaat-i-Islami which is a different organisation propagating their own schools of thought but within it there are various factions such as those led by Samiul Haq, Fazlur Rahman and Ajmal Qadri (Ibid: 12-3).

Madrasas in South Asia began as institutions to preserve Islamic learning. Initially, the state (both Mughals and the British) needed the graduates produced by these madrasas who were well versed and skilled in reading, writing, mathematics, logic and linguistic, to assist in state’s administration. With the coming of English education to India, the official language of government changed from Persian to English and the British colonial government stopped being the chief employer of madrasas graduates (Candland 2014). Thus, these madrasa going pupils became somewhat disenchanted with the state.

Ideological Orientations: Roots of Divergence

Over a period of time difference between Shia-Sunni and later within Sunni converted into four major different maslaks. There are basically four dominant schools of thought which are operating in Pakistani madrasas such as Ahl-e-Hadith, Deobandis, Barelvis and Shias. Jamaat-i-Islami has also emerged as an organisation which tries to profess modern interpretation of Islam although it is similar to Deobandis ideological orientation.

Ahl-e-Hadith: This school of thought has close association with strict Saudi Wahabi beliefs i.e. interpretations of the Islamic doctrine to its earliest traditions (Ashraf 2012: 9). They give utmost priority to Quran and lastly to Hadith. They
don’t believe in any Imam such as Imam Shafai, Imam Malik, etc. In some practices such as process to offer prayer is also somewhat different.

Deobandis: They are the followers of Deoband and follow puritanical interpretations of Islam. They give utmost importance to Quran and Hadith but at the same time they consider or take sincerely the scholarly works of Ulema and their thoughts. They do not believe in any spiritual kind of activities such as visiting shrines and on the contrary reject it as being un-Islamic. Their opinion is that there can never be associating partners with God. There have to be direct connection between God and his follower. They consider Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the ordinary man who was given Nabuwat by Allah (the God) and had as much knowledge of unseen as God wanted him to have (Rahman 2008: 204). Deobandis attire is also a bit different from others. They believe in tableegi Jamat. It implies to call towards Islam where people are expected to denounce evils while enjoining good habits and religious learning.

Barelvis: They are the followers of Ahmad Raza Khan of Bareilly. Their source of belief and importance are Quran, Hadith and the Ulema’s thoughts. Their interpretation of Quran is a little bit different from Deobandis. Their central belief is that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) had knowledge of the unseen (ilm al-ghayb), that he was created from radiance (nur), and that he had the power to intercede or help his followers in life and after death (Ibid). They believe in Silsila or vasila, visiting shrines, peers, etc. They give importance to such Sufis who have played important role in spreading Islam and believe to possess spiritual powers. They also believe that a Barelvi cannot pray behind a Deobandi Imam. They do not believe in tableegi Jamat and instead chase those people away from their locality or areas.

Jamaat-e-Islami: This organisation believes in modern interpretation of Islam in the light of Quran and Hadith. They are not only engaged in providing religious education through madrasas but also playing important socio-political role in the society. They don’t associate themselves with any of the maslaks, but it is believed that they are more inclined to Deobandi orientations (Jamaat-e-Islami 2014). Politically, they believe in Ikhwanul-Muslimeen i.e. Muslim Brotherhood. Their aim is to develop an Islamic state based on modern interpretation of Quran and hadith.

In their annual functions, Jalsas and other special occasion people belonging to all these maslaks tend to criticise the rival sects/maslaks as doing injustice to Islam as a religion and Muslim Ummah. Prominent personalities play important role in promoting particular school of thought. They have also started hiring and appointing such persons who can promote their own interpretations of Islam.
Madrasa Education Boards in Pakistan

There is huge controversy over the number of madrasas in Pakistan. But officially it is believed that there are almost 16000 registered madrasas with five central wafaqs in Pakistan, a vast majority of which show no tendencies towards militancy (Bano 2013: 5). There are also a large number of unregistered madrasas. There are differences among wafaqs as well as within wafaq too.

There are five Madrasa Boards recognised by the government of Pakistan. They represent the four dominant schools of Islamic thought that were developed in South Asia during 19th and 20th centuries. Except the Jamaat-i-Islami that came into being in 1940s, all others were established between 1950s and 1980s. Wafaq-ul-Madaris Al-Salafia (Ahl-i-Hadith) was established between the 1950s and the 1980s. Wafaq-ul-Madaris-Al-Arabia (Deobandi), in 1959, Wafaq-ul-Madris Al-Shia (Shia) in 1959, Tanzeemul-Madaris Ahl-i-Sunna-wal-Jamaat (Barelvi) in 1960, and Rabata-ul-Madaris Al-Islamia in 1983 (Ibid: 87).

These Wafaqs are hierarchical structures where a madrasa’s influence over the decision within the Wafaq is determined in proportion to its placement within the three tiered hierarchical structure of the wafaq such as Majilis-i-Amalah (Council of Executives), Majlis-i-Shura (Consultative Council) and Majlis-i-Umumi (General Body).

These wafaqs basically undertake the role of publishing materials, conducting examinations, issuing certificates, sets curriculum and most of the time try to evolve consensus on mutually beneficial issues. Their most important job is to bargain or give proper representation with or before the state by placing effectively the demands of the smaller madrasas. These wafaqs have a set of proper formalities to be fulfilled in order to get membership or registration with them. It goes through proper assessment process which involves lots of formalities, documentation as well as representation.

Wafaq-ul-Madaris Al-Arabia (Deobandi): It is the biggest madrasa board in Pakistan which is believed to be the most conservative and most anti-western in Pakistan. The Headquarter of the Wafaq-ul-Madaris Al-Arabia is based in Multan. Their website opens with highlighting their aims and objectives where they promote such people who can excel in religious knowledge in the light of Quran and Hadith. They give utmost importance to Islamic education and boast of the important role played by Deoband in promoting and protecting their religious identity. They also tend to bargain with state apparatus on behalf of smaller madrasas if there is any interference or regulation from state machinery.

Tanzeem-ul-Madaris Ahl-e-Sunnat (Barelvis): The website declares that Tanzeem would be for religious education only and remain non-political in nature.
Religious Education and Identity Formation

It calls for Islamic revivalism. It also tends to inculcate modern education with greater use of information and technology.

Jamaat-i-Islami: This organization is not only concerned with imparting education but playing socio-political role as well. Jamaat-i-Islami insists on return to a ‘pure’ Islam for which the life of the Prophet and the reigns of the four righteous caliphs are regarded as the role model (Mustafa 2005: 4).

Shias: Shias cater to not more than 4-10 per cent of the total madrasas in Pakistan. They belong to the Athna-Ashri (believing in 12 Imams) (Bano 2013: 70). The difference in madrasa results from the different approaches to learning within such madrasas. Shia madrasas unlike the Sunni madrasas place little emphasis on the memorization of Quran with the result that unlike the madrasas from the other schools of thought – they mainly admit students seeking training in theology (Ibid). Shias criticise the Sunni approach of teaching as well. Their tradition makes it mandatory to spend the last two years of education either in Iran or Iraq. In Pakistan sometimes Shias are apprehensive about being declared heretic by Deobandi dominated Sunni Ulema.

Despite their bitter competition as well as differences, when it comes to survival, they believe that it is always better to be united and work collectively to strengthen their position vis-à-vis the state by keeping their ideological differences aside (Ibid: 92-3). Whenever threaten or faced with any outside interference or regulation, these wafaqs call for unity among all the madrasas across the country irrespective of the maslaks they are associated with. Their collective platform is called as Ittihad-i-Tanzeemat Madaris-i-Deenia by the respective leaders of the wafaqs (Ibid: 72). These five schools of thought namely Deoband School of Thought, Barelvis, Jamaat-i-Islamic, Ahl-i-Hadith and Shia dominate the madrassa network in Pakistan. There are higher demands of Deobandi madrasas in Pakistan. These madrasas have been more successful in providing a larger number of prominent personalities among Ulema in Pakistan than the other sects.

System of Education and Curriculum: Almost all the madrasas in Pakistan follow the same pattern of curriculum such as Dars-i-Nizami except some minor variation in terms of interpretations of the Quran which is the main bone of contention. They follow a very strict and uniform pattern of syllabus as well as examination system in their own respective maslaks. Although their curriculum as well as method of teaching is same, there are ideological differences among them as well. Sometimes it gets reflected in their madrasas.

Madrasa education initially comprised of ten subjects, taught via seventeen books. However, it was Mullah Nizamuddin Sehalvi (1748) of Madrassa Firangi Mahal who formalised the foundations of contemporary madrasas by establishing the Dars-i-Nizami curriculum (Ashraf 2012: 8). With its emphasis on the study
of logic, philosophy, mathematics and linguistics using recent texts, and religious education through classical texts, Dars-i-Nizami soon became the most popular curriculum used in madarasa across the subcontinent and it remains more or less similar to this day (Ibid: 8).

IV

Munazarah Tradition in Madrasas/Muslim Society: Bone of Contention

Munazarah tradition is associated with theological disputes (Rahman 2008: 197). The differences between Barelvis and Deobandis led to Munazarah in these madrasas. These munazaras are internalised by the madrasa students. It involves face to face debate among various sects and sub-sects basically over theological differences.

Although Munazarah is not part of the Dars-i-Nizami, it is widely used in almost all the madrasas across the country. There is a significant number of Munazarah text books in the madrasas of Pakistan which refute the beliefs of the Ahmadis as well as rival sects and revivalist interpretations of Mawdudi as well (Ibid: 205). All these books about ideological controversy are in circulation not only in madrasas but also outside it. The purpose of the munzarah was to convince the opponent of the falsity of his views. This was done by appeal to sacred texts and deduction from their implications.

The institution of the munazarah brings out the ideological differences which lie at the core of the different sects, sub-sects and the Islamic identity, as differentiated from non-Islamic identities, among Pakistani Muslims. However, only the students of madrasas are taught the art of disputation while other religious people do not get any formal training of this kind (Ibid: 215).

It is alleged that it is not the Dars-i-Nizami, which consists of the Quran, Hadith and exegies which creates the sectarian intolerance among the madrasa students but the munazarah texts which are extra-curricular and, therefore, normally ignored by the madrasa reformers (Ibid: 217). Refutation of revival sects play very important role in training madrasta students to counter other theological worldviews which they consider as heretical or otherwise. It involves refutation of other sects, sub-sects, heretical beliefs and western notions (Rahman 2004: 14). And for such refutation all madrasas use various books as well as journals and articles belonging to their own school of thought.

V

Every new interpretation of the religious texts is claimed to be based on the original teachings, but in actuality, interpretations keep changing with the
requirements of time and give new meaning to scriptures and the sayings of prophets and apostles (Ali 2011: 49). It also involves historical roots. The main cause of these different interpretations is the inherent antagonism within the different groups of the society that think their interpretation to be correct. As a result of this, all other interpretations are dubbed unnecessary to them and quite often they prove it contrary to their interpretation. Thus, the new meaning of original teachings is never accepted universally, but only by those whose interests it serves (Ibid). There are groups of people in every society who want change in their practical life but at the same time they desire not to abandon religion. These groups of people become supporters of new interpretations of religion that suits their way of life. They accept religion according to their way of life and practice it accordingly. All these, later results into the emergence of new group of people (Ibid: 107).

*External Influence*

As far as external factors are concerned, Saudi’s financial and United State’s tactical support in cultivating such groups in Pakistan are much to be blamed. Initially it was supported to counter the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan but gradually it started hitting themselves i.e. the US as well as Pakistan’s own interests (Fair 2009). Eventually these madrasas adopted sectarian outlook as almost each madrasa is associated with some kind of ideological orientation and criticise another’s version of Islam.

*Attempt to Integrate and Regulate Ideological Orientation in Madrasas*

Pakistan’s first National Internal Security Policy (NISP) in consultation with others is developing a ‘National De-Radicalization Programme Design,’ so that madrasa and mosques can be integrated and regulated. This programme assumes the fact that some of these madrasas might be involved in the spread of extremism and therefore must be confronted. It also vows to reform the curriculum aspect too (Menon 2014). It claims that there are huge networks of the Deobandi and Ahl-e-Hadith madrasas where youths are indoctrinated with extremist ideology. Thus, due to the indoctrination process of these madrasas, most of the pupils of these madrasas attain different identity often in direct conflict with the modern state system.

*Conclusion*

It is very interesting to note that those religious groups which were not in favour of making Pakistan, but when it was made, they were the first one to speak on behalf of the religion and portrayed themselves as the sole authority to interpret religion. Islam does not provide for a religious hierarchy. However, in Muslim
societies Ulama plays very prominent role in conducting rituals, leading prayers and most of the time giving religious interpretations on socio-economic issues affecting daily lives of the people at large.

The study finds out that there is a very close link between the kinds of education (religious) imparted in the madrasas of Pakistan and the ideological reproduction within the society at large. These ideological or sectarian differences among the community sometimes lead to violent clashes among them. There are various militant organisations belonging to almost each maslaks and more often carry out the violent activities across the country.

Pakistan, land of the pure (as claimed) has been more inclined to its indigenous Sufi Islam rather than exported from outside the puritanical Islam (as claimed) thus, having counterproductive effects of such imposition from outside as well as internal coercion. Much emphasis needs to be attached to check the maslaks within each madrasa in addition to giving modern orientation to the curriculum as there is huge demand for combination of religious and contemporary knowledge in Pakistan.

Table 1: Distribution of Madrasas According to their Schools of Thought

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Various Schools of Thought</th>
<th>No. of Madrasas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Deobandi</td>
<td>9500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Barelvis</td>
<td>4500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jamaat-i-Islami</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ahl-i-Hadith</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Shia</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bano (2013).

Table 2: Distribution of Madrasas According to their Schools of Thought Across the Provinces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Provinces</th>
<th>Deobandis</th>
<th>Ahl-i-Hadith</th>
<th>Jamaat-i-Islami</th>
<th>Barelvi</th>
<th>Ahl-i-Shia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Punjab</td>
<td>3218</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>3579</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sindh</td>
<td>1746</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Balochistan</td>
<td>663</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Khyber Pakhtunkhwa</td>
<td>1815</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Islamabad</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Online website of different wafaqs, Bano (2013) it excludes FATA and Pakistan Administered Kashmir.
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Since the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan in 1979, the country has been used as battlefield between competing global and regional powers and groups - a battlefield between the former Communist USSR and the Capitalist West (mainly the USA) in the 1980s; a battlefield between Pakistan, the Arab Gulf countries, on the one hand, and Iran and Russia in the 1990s, on the other; and more recently a battlefield between foreign Muslim fundamentalist groups and US. In this process of rivalry, Afghanistan’s main immediate neighbours infiltrated deep into Afghan politics. With competing interests in the country, they created their client factions-warlords and sponsored them militarily, financially and politically. These factions had gradually become so dependent on their foreign sponsors that they saw Afghanistan’s interests through the eyes of these foreigners. The neighbours also exploited Afghanistan’s existing ethnic and religious composition and justified their interventions on the grounds that they had common religious and ethnic ties with their clients. Thus the armed conflict, which continued for several years even after the defeat of the (former) Red Army, resulted in the extensive destruction of Afghanistan’s economic, political and social infrastructure.

The September 11 terrorist attacks, which deeply shocked the world, appear to have had a strong impact on global policy, particularly on US’s policy towards Afghanistan. These events seem to have convinced US policy makers that the social, political and economic environments that breed terrorism are no longer confined within the national boundaries of nation states. Instead, they have clear transnational manifestations, and therefore, such environments need the attention of the international community. Indeed, the current international military engagement, economic reconstruction plans, and the political stabilisation of Afghanistan, are partly, aimed at the reintegration of Afghanistan into the global community.
However, after a decade long war in Afghanistan and waning Taliban the country seems to be moving into a direction of stability. US force withdrawal in 2014 and another democratic election has completed without violence. In the recent past, countries like India and China played a more constructive role. India has been playing a very significant role in Afghanistan’s reconstruction as well as in its social and economic development since 2001. It has extended development assistance and aid to Afghanistan, and has pledged and disbursed approximately $2 billion for the country’s rehabilitation, reconstructions, overall development, and building of basic infrastructure. Similarly, in 2007, Metallurgical Corporation of China (MCC) and Jiangxi Copper Corporation Limited (JCCL) agreed to make the single largest foreign investment in Afghanistan to date- $4.4 billion. The hefty investment for over five years also includes building railways, exploiting coal mines, and constructing a 400-megawatt coal-fired power plant and a 1 million tonne steel works. China’s total investment reaches to $10 billion. On the contrary, Pakistan’s role in resolving conflict in Afghanistan becomes vital as it is seen a crucial mediator between Taliban and Afghan government. Democratic developments in Pakistan also have positive impact in resolving the conflict in Afghanistan as any democratic regime in Pakistan will allow less role to be played by security establishment, notably Army and Intelligence agencies. Thus, this paper examines as well as envisions the role or constructive approach by these three countries with their potential in specific areas. It not only focuses to building a war torn state but seek to setting a peaceful and less volatile security environment in South Asia.

Conflict Resolution and State-Building

Historically, conflict has been a part of state-building. Most of the post-colonial states are still under their state-building process. And conflict is deeply embedded in these post-colonial societies. Scholars like Charles Tilly have argued, in the context of Western Europe, war made states and states made war (Tilly 1975: 42). The analysis over which he drew this conclusion or propounded this theory explicitly states that the act of war-making produced the means of enforcing government’s will over stiff resistance. He goes on to argue that it intended to promote territorial consolidation, centralisation of the means of coercion, all the fundamental state-making process (Ibid: 42). But in the post-colonial societies Tilly’s theory of war-making and state-making seems inappropriate. Afghanistan has been long involved in foreign invasions and as well as in civil-war situation. In fact, due to civil wars of foreign invasions, Afghanistan has been mostly ruled by warlords and fragile or authoritarian state like regime.

However, some scholars argue that the superiority of the state over other forms of organisation lies in its ability to coordinate human activities for a
common goal (Shanker 2008: 2). Therefore, it is argued that the best means of attaining legitimacy in post-2001 Afghanistan would have been to recognise that the government’s function was more important than its form: what it could do for the people who lived there. After the quarter century of war and social disruption, ordinary Afghans sought security, economic stability, and a chance to live normal lives (Barfield 2010: 8.)

Thus, the conception of state-building can be understood as a process or as a mechanism that involves political engineering in order to consolidate state socially, economically, and most importantly politically. The process of state formation is viewed comparatively in historical terms; it was only as late as 19th century that the idea became widely accepted that the proper boundaries of the state should coincide (Shanker 2008: 10). Subsequently, the notion of state-building, theoretically, required the following aspects: creating legitimacy, claiming sovereignty, acquiring and maintaining monopoly over the means of violence, evolving and controlling the economy or more precisely controlling extractible resources like taxes, and finally; providing security, in its broad sense.

International Community (IC) and Afghanistan: Bonn to Bonn

December 2001 the international community called upon to decide the fate of war-torn Afghanistan after the toppled Taliban regime. It comprehensively draws the governing structure for the transitional period for the transfer of power to a legitimate government. The Bonn-I clearly states that “Upon the official transfer of power, the Interim Authority shall be the repository of Afghan sovereignty, with immediate effect. As such, it shall, throughout the interim period, represent Afghanistan in its external relations and shall occupy the seat of Afghanistan at the United Nations and in its specialized agencies, as well as in other international institutions and conferences” (Bonn Conference 2001). Similarly the Tokyo conference on Afghanistan stressed the importance of the implementation of the Bonn process, including the time frame set in the Bonn Agreement. Assistance will be conditional on all Afghan parties positively contributing to the process and goals agreed in Bonn with the aim of establishing peace, representative governance and stability in Afghanistan, and eliminating terrorism and narcotics production and trafficking. It was noted that, as the efforts for reconstruction proceed, due geographical balance within Afghanistan should be taken into account in resource allocation (Tokyo Conference 2002).

Strong emphasis was put on the importance of rapidly establishing a sound and comprehensive macroeconomic and monetary framework. Sustainable economic development and the effective use of donor funding urgently require that sound currency arrangements, as well as strong and transparent budgetary
and treasury systems, are put in place. Donors pledged to provide the necessary technical and financial assistance to help the Afghan Interim Authority to create the essential institutional framework (Ibid). However, keeping poppy cultivation and narcotics as a potential threat and a source of income of violent non-state actors the international community in the following conference on Afghanistan stressed to contain it. Therefore, it agrees that opium poppy cultivation, drug production and trafficking pose a serious threat to the rule of law and development in Afghanistan as well as to international security, and that therefore Afghanistan and the international community shall do everything - including the development of economic alternatives - to reduce and eventually eliminate this threat (The Berlin Declaration 2004).

The multiyear commitments made at the Conference for the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan totalling US$ 8.2 bn for the fiscal years 1383 – 1385 (March 2004 – March 2007), which includes a pledge of US$ 4.4 bn for 1383 (March 2004 – March 2005) (Ibid). Furthermore, London Conference on Afghanistan 2006 is seen as one of the most intensive one which addresses a large chunk of issues. It not only talks and promises to deliver the development of infrastructure in terms of building of means of transportations, energy, water resource management, urban development and environment but it also assures to deliver the social security in terms of health, education (both primary and higher), skill developments, Afghan cultural heritage (The Afghanistan Compact 2006). London conference was specific as it sets deadlines for most of the projections about the future course of Afghanistan.

On the contrary, it is debated that aid and assistance to Afghanistan have not yielded the desired outcome so far. It is impossible to arrive at a definitive figure of the development assistance given to Afghanistan. The first donor conference after the fall of Taliban regime, in Tokyo in January 2002, produced pledges of US$ 5.2 billion in non-military aid over five years, against a hasty preliminary needs assessment of over US$ 14 billion (Nixon 2007: 4). In April 2004, the Berlin conference resulted in US$ 8.2 billion pledged against the seven-year, US$ 27.5 billion plan laid out in “Securing Afghanistan's Future,” a major fund-raising document presented by the Afghanistan government. These pledges, however, do not reflect what was actually received or spent. During 2002-05 only US$ 3.3 billion was spent on assistance projects, and less than US$ 1 billion worth of projects were completed during that time (Ibid). There are different interpretations of these numbers. One interpretation is that Afghanistan has received too little assistance. This argument rests on comparing the aid promised or disbursed with assessed need, or with that spent in other post-conflict countries.
However, further IC meets on Afghanistan in terms of London Conference Communiqué, Kabul Conference Communiqué and Bonn-II, stressed for a regional active engagement in bring out Afghanistan from a war torn situation and helping the country to build it. Conference Participants underscored that regionally-owned and steered initiatives stood the best chance of success and welcomed a number of recent initiatives that showed the need for neighbouring and regional partners to work constructively together. Bonn-II reaffirms that “We believe that a stable and prosperous Afghanistan can only be envisioned in a stable and prosperous region. For the entire region, the rewards of peace and cooperation outweigh those of rivalry and isolation by far. We endorse Afghanistan’s vision for building strong, sustainable bilateral and multilateral relationships with its near and extended neighbours. Such relationships should end external interference, reinforce the principles of good neighbourly relations, non-interference and sovereignty, and further Afghanistan’s economic integration into the region” (Bonn Conference Communiqué-II 2011).

**Negotiating Strategic Rivalries**

More than decade long IC engagement in Afghanistan is now slowly on its end. NATO is pulling out in a phase manner. As in the previous section it was discussed that IC now emphasised for an active and constructive regional role in Afghanistan. Therefore, the key actors in the region have to set the fate of the country in the coming years. With U.S., NATO and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) personnel set to withdraw the bulk of their military personnel from Afghanistan in 2014, regional key actors such as China, India and Pakistan or for the matter Iran will have the opportunity to play an influential role in the country’s future. Both India and Pakistan have historically been involved in Afghan affairs, and lately China has begun to show interest in expanding its Central Asian influence. In the wake of recently held elections U.S. policymakers hope that the next Afghan leader will continue to combat Islamic extremism and the Taliban. Here, importantly, the role Pakistan could potentially play in Afghanistan is the role of securitisation, as it not only shares the longest border with Afghanistan but it also has close relations with the Afghan Taliban. The top strata of the insurgency currently reside in Pakistan’s tremulous tribal area, thus Pakistan has enough influence on the Afghan Taliban to encourage them to participate in the peace talks and give up from fighting (Saifullah 2010).

Evidently, For Pakistan the primary interest is to be party to any deal that is negotiated in Afghanistan. Pakistan could scuttle a peace deal or negotiating process between the Afghan Government and the ISAF with the Taliban. It is very often argued that the absence of Pakistan in any reconciliation process is counter-
productive (Narayanan 2010). With regard to Indo-Pak engagement in Afghanistan it is critical to determine how India and Pakistan have been cooperating in Afghanistan and the prospects for future cooperation. A recently published report, on Crises, Conflict and Cooperation by CISS, considers the perspectives of Indian and Pakistani decision makers on competition and cooperation between the two countries with respect to Afghanistan, and it offers thoughts on the ways in which cooperation might be improved (Hameed 2012: 1). The report adds, three observations motivated this report for research. First, regional security and peace will likely be achieved in the region only if some degree of cooperation is reached among the region’s primary state actors. Pakistan and India are the biggest rivals in the region, and Afghanistan has suffered from this rivalry. Second, Afghanistan cannot advance economically or improve its security and governance without some cooperation from India and Pakistan. The road to trilateral cooperation in Kabul lies through Islamabad-Delhi cooperation, greater trust, and active engagement in conflict resolution. Third, although many observers view the idea of Indian-Pakistani cooperation with skepticism, there are likely significant security, governance, and economic advantages for both countries should they find more common ground (Ibid).

Although the U.S. has plans to keep some of its military bases in the country, U.S. foreign policy interests are bound to shift away from Afghanistan towards other regions, such as Africa and the South China Sea. Ultimately, as western powers scale down their military forces, regional powers will be forced to play a greater role in Afghanistan’s future, and in terms of U.S. interests, India’s actions will be of vital importance. Recently, Robert Blake, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, stated during a Congressional hearing of the House Foreign Affairs Committee that “any discussion of South Asia has to start with India” (Hindustan Times 2013). Blake also highlighted the economic impact India has had on the Afghan economy: “We appreciate very much the significant role that India is playing in Afghanistan. In fact, we see India as kind of the economic linchpin for the future” (Ibid). Blake was correct in calling India an “economic linchpin” as India is the largest regional contributor of aid to Afghanistan, having provided approximately $800 million in aid so far. The Indian government, led by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, has pledged to provide more than a billion dollars of foreign aid and has also put a sizable amount of cash into foreign investments, primarily in ore deposits like the one in Hajigak.

Being the fifth largest donor to Afghanistan, with aid programs reaching US 1.2 billion since 2001, makes India major player in the country. There are 4,000 Indian citizens working on reconstruction and development projects in Afghanistan. India’s role in transferring skills to Afghans is a crucial aspect of their presence
Conflict Resolution and State-Building in Afghanistan

which helps build and enhance the capacity of the local population (Saifullah 2010). Furthermore, each year India provides hundreds of scholarships to Afghan students which include graduate and post-graduate studies. In comparison to Pakistan, Afghans tend to consider India’s influence to be more genuine and free of hidden agendas. Some of India’s strategic projects include the Salma Dame in Herat, joint project with Afghans to transfer electricity from central Asia to Afghanistan; the Zaranj and Dellaram road which connects Afghanistan to Iran and the Chabahar sea port of Iran. Experts deem that Indian national interests in Afghanistan are focused on gaining access to the rich natural resources and deposits in central Asian countries through Afghanistan.

However, China, which has invested in Afghan mineral and oil deposits, has expressed concern over the security with its Afghan border. The two countries share a very small border between Tajikistan and the Jammu and Kashmir region and recently China has become increasingly worried about the increase of Islamic extremist activity in its Xinjiang province. China wants to play a more active role, but it will weigh the sensitivities of neighbouring nations in a troubled corner of the world, said Zhang Li, a professor of South Asian studies at Sichuan University who has been studying the future of Sino- Afghan ties. “I don’t think that the U.S. withdrawal also means a Chinese withdrawal, but especially in security affairs in Afghanistan, China will remain low-key and cautious,” he said. “China wants to play more of a role there, but each option in doing that will be assessed carefully before any steps are taken” (Miglani 2012). In February, China hosted a trilateral dialogue involving officials from Pakistan and Afghanistan to discuss efforts to seek reconciliation with the Taliban.

It was the first time that Beijing involved itself directly and openly in an effort to stabilise Afghanistan. Afghan foreign ministry spokesman Musazai said Kabul supported any effort to bring peace in the country. “China has close ties with Afghanistan. It also has very close ties with Pakistan and if it can help advance the vision of peace and stability in Afghanistan we welcome it” (Ibid). On China, the Afghan side urged participants to stop viewing Afghanistan through Pakistan’s prism and view it as an entity itself. On India, the Afghan side sought greater support – if not an “alliance” then an effective “partnership”. Afghan requirements include training their officer corps, military equipment particularly helicopters and medical evacuation capabilities, training a generation of technocrats to man the embryonic state apparatus, educational assistance via scholarships to Indian and Chinese institutions (Singh 2014). Today, Afghanistan matters not because it is an arena for interstate competition or competing national interests but because a weak state can make Afghanistan vulnerable again to radical forces and ideologies eager to fill any vacuum. One unstated question that seemed to be raised was
whether regional powers could live with an Afghan power vacuum that strengthens extremist havens and its potential spill over onto their territorial frontiers.

For India, the historical lessons are clear: even a modicum of a progressive pluralistic state in Afghanistan is an antidote to radicalism in South Asia. For China, the spectre of radicalism infecting its western regions suggests Afghanistan can no longer be dealt via a posture of benign neglect. But the policy mix for both India and China in terms of level of assistance and involvement is in flux. One Chinese scholar stated that India-China cooperation on Afghanistan is welcome but the primary initiative for such trilateral initiatives should come from Kabul. It was also stated that China will not lead a regional process but will be an equal member of a shared approach (Ibid).

Moreover, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi’s visit to Kabul on 22 February 2014 is significant. Wang outlined Chinese interests in a press conference with his Afghan counterpart, Zarar Ahmad Osmani: “The peace and stability of this country has an impact on the security of western China, and more importantly, it affects the tranquility and development of the entire region.” Earlier, on 7 February 2014, Xi Jinping met Hamid Karzai at the Sochi Winter Olympics (2014). According to official Chinese reports, Xi stressed that “China will continue to firmly support Afghanistan for the efforts for safeguarding state independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and support an “Afghan-led and Afghan-owned” national reconciliation process.” Diplomatically, China has already adjusted its Afghan policy (Ibid).

Some speculate that China may have other reasons for being interested in Afghanistan. For instance, some argue that China may wish to use Afghanistan to expand its Central Asian pipeline, which already runs through Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Alexandros Peterson recently wrote a very interesting article in Foreign Policy magazine in which he asked, “Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan have grown wealthy and centralized partly due to Chinese energy investment. Could the same be true for Afghanistan in the future?” A pipeline built through Afghanistan would greatly expand Chinese influence in South and Central Asia. In addition, such a large project could be extremely helpful to the Afghan people, creating potential jobs and bringing foreign business and investment to the country. However, a pipeline is highly unlikely until Afghanistan becomes less of a security risk for foreign investors, and given Afghanistan’s current state, the outcome doesn’t look promising. Afghanistan’s fate rests largely on what kind of role regional powers will play after the NATO withdrawal.

**Deploying Aid through Investments**

Aid, promised since Bonn-I, has not yielded the much desired outcome though the IC to a large extent has given Afghanistan a track for stability. It has
dismantled Taliban to a large extent. The country went through violence free democratic election in April 2014. Afghans are now under another legitimate regime. The nascent Afghan state needs stability and the stability depends on several means. One time billions of dollar aid cannot hold the state for the very long time. Afghanistan need aids not in terms of hard currency or certain military logistics but it needs to generate means. It requires major investments for its untapped natural endowments. It needs long term investments in building major infrastructures of the country. Given its unique geographical location the country serves as a connecting circuit between two major regions. A peaceful and stable Afghanistan contains major economic dividends.

As the Western led-IC is pulling out from the country, the onus now lies with regional stockholders. The active engagement of key regional actors opens new horizons for prosperity as well as stability for the region. The dynamics of global politics have changed dramatically in the last decade. Global economic recession has weakened the western monopoly to a certain extent. The rise of China as a great power and India as a major booming economy has increased their role. With regard to Afghanistan, India has historically engaged with this country. After the Taliban regime in Kabul India has again increased its footprints in the country. China also shares a narrow corridor with Afghanistan. The two countries, India and China, have gone into massive investment agreements with Afghanistan in recent years. India holds a comprehensive strategic agreement with Afghanistan. In 2012, India hosted a massive investment conference on Afghanistan (Delhi Investment Summit on Afghanistan 2012) on its behalf. It had called more than 350 business representative from Afghanistan. As the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan moves forward through the current period of Transition up to 2014 and prepares for the Transformation Decade (2015-2024), with the sustained commitments of its friends and development partners, it views the Delhi Investment Summit as an important step towards the promotion of foreign investment and joint ventures in promising Afghan economic sectors. Indian businessmen from sectors ranging from mining to education to tourism gathered in a packed hall of a New Delhi hotel to figure out whether it makes sense to invest in war-wracked Afghanistan (Stancati 2012). India’s then foreign minister, industry leaders and top Afghan officials took the stage in turn to deliver the message that, despite concerns over security and political instability, Afghanistan is open for business – and this is the time to step in. As the U.S. prepares to withdraw most of its forces by the end of 2014, Afghanistan is looking for ways to gradually reduce its dependence on foreign assistance. India says it’s willing to help it become financially more self-reliant (Ibid).

India has committed $2 billion to reconstruction and development projects in Afghanistan, including building roads and schools and installing power lines
(Lakshmi 2012). It also helps train the country’s bureaucrats and police. But so far, its decision to steer clear of a military role has earned it goodwill among Afghans, and it appeared to confirm. Considering the huge deposits of mineral resources in Afghanistan, cooperation in this area holds immense potential for both India and Afghanistan. India is of the view that mining sector and infrastructure development may be the key areas of private investment as Indian companies have indicated to invest up to US $10 billion in the mining, steel plant and related infrastructure in Afghanistan. Indian companies were granted Hajigak bids to mine four blocks of an estimated reserve of 2 billion tonnes of iron ore (Upadhyay and Zafar 2012). Indian companies have also shown interest in Afghanistan’s petroleum blocks and copper ore mines. Afghanistan’s mineral resources can be transported to India. There is an agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan signed in 2010 on the ‘one way supply’ of Afghan goods to India via Pakistan (Sachdeva 2010). Indian help in reviving Afghan manufacturing industries such as cement, oil, gas, and in services i.e. hotels, banking, and communications would also be important.

On the other hand, China now enjoys positive relations with Afghanistan, after the Bamiyan incident during Taliban regime. After the United States invaded Afghanistan in 2001, China became one of the first nations to establish official relations with President Hamid Karzai and the Afghan Transitional Authority, reopening its embassy in Kabul in February 2002 and almost immediately providing about $5 million in emergency humanitarian aid (Ng 2010: 3) Over the past eight years, China has steadily increased its involvement in Afghanistan. It has provided a total of nearly $200 million in foreign assistance and ramped up its economic investment, outbidding competitors by $1 billion in 2007 to win the rights to develop the $3.5 billion Aynak copper mine and establishing itself as Afghanistan’s single largest foreign investor (Wines 2009). The already generous bid by the state-owned China Metallurgical Corporation (MCC) also included promises to build a 400-megawatt electrical plant and accompanying schools, mosques, clinics, and even a railway—all generating an estimated 4,000 jobs (Philips and Oster 2009). In June 2012, CNPC (China Natural Petroleum Corporation) signed a framework agreement with Afghanistan’s Ministry of Mines, which covers technical and economic feasibility studies of a natural gas pipeline that would stretch from Turkmenistan to China via Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Both the proposed railway and pipeline are a reminder that it is Afghanistan’s neighbours who are likely to have the most influence over how the concept of a “New Silk Road” is translated into reality. China, for one, has an established track record as a force for regional integration through the construction of cross-border infrastructure (Downs 2012: 77). In the case of Amu Darya oil tender, CNPC was the only company to make a conforming bid; CNPC accepted both the oil pricing formula and the profit split proposed by the
Afghan government and agreed to pay the bid guarantee of $10 million. CNPC also committed to build Afghanistan’s first refinery (Ibid: 71).

Thus, in terms of providing Afghanistan a sense of stability the regional stakeholders and economic giants like India and China hold keys for a viable Afghanistan. The major economic engagements of these two states guide Afghanistan into new era. A viable Afghanistan could bring new venues of trade and commerce between South Asian and Central Asian states. It can also connect West Asia. The landlocked Afghanistan requires consistent involvement from its neighbours in terms of building its means of national economy. The current engagements and past agreements of India and China with Afghanistan suggest that the country may not see the past dark history of violence and conflict again after 2014 NATO drawdown. These two countries with their reconstruction approach with heavy investments seem committed in securing not only Afghanistan but the region as a whole from becoming it again a potential source of instability.

**Evolving South Asia Security Environment: Afghanistan and Beyond**

The security environment in South Asia has been long understood as one of the most volatile region in the world. Sri Lanka suffered many decades of violent conflict. The end of LTTE movement from Sri Lanka decreased the scale of intrastate wars in South Asia. At present Pakistan and Afghanistan are the two most violence prone states. But the democratic developments in Pakistan have given positive signs to promote peace and stability in the region. Any democratic regime in Pakistan is seen more cooperative than authoritarian regime in the security context of the region. At present, roots of democratic regime in Pakistan becoming stronger and tend to contain the home grown threats which also spills over to other region. The issue of Taliban, which is a common challenge both in Afghanistan and Pakistan, needs to be dealt jointly. Pakistan is seen as a vital actor in anchoring any peace deal with Taliban. The current and previous regimes have signaled to address this issue. Nonetheless, it does appear that Pakistan no longer looks at Afghanistan through its erstwhile strategic depth ambition, rather it desires a peaceful and stable Afghanistan that has representation of all ethnic groups of that country, and is neither ruled by the Taliban nor by elements hostile to Pakistan. A destabilized, insecure and Taliban-led Afghanistan will have negative implications for peace and security of Pakistan, particularly in FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Area), KP (Khebar Phakhtunkhwa) and Baluchistan (Rana and Sial 2013: 21). Similarly, in February 2011, a high-level delegation of Afghan High Peace Council, led by former Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani, visited Pakistan and met religious scholars, leaders of political parties, parliamentarians, and government and military officials. One of the many purposes of the visit was to
explore prospects for Pakistan’s role in the reconciliation process with the Taliban (Ibid: 27).

On the other side, China has signalled it will not contribute to a multilateral fund to sustain the Afghan national security forces – estimated to cost $4.1 billion per year after 2014 - but it could directly train Afghan soldiers. They’re concerned that there is going to be a security vacuum and they’re concerned about how the neighbours will behave. Beijing has been running a small program with Afghan law enforcement officials, focused on counter narcotics and involving visits to China’s restive Xinjiang province, whose western tip touches the Afghan border (Sanjeev 2012). The communist regime has a fundamental interest in Afghanistan’s peace and stability. It is the only major power with an immediate border with Afghanistan. China’s Afghan policy has been influenced in recent years by the security imperative of protecting its border regions, particularly Xinjiang province, and to contain the separatist activities of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), which has links with militant groups fighting in Afghanistan (Maleeha 2014). China has long held there is no military solution in Afghanistan. It supports “political reconciliation” and talks between all major Afghan political forces and the Taliban to achieve an inclusive settlement for sustainable peace. Despite Beijing’s misgivings about the Taliban and ETIM’s ideological and other links, it is keen for the Taliban to join talks in an “Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process” (Ibid).

As concerns rise in the region about the consequences of the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan in 2014, China shows some nascent interest in coordinating with India on this issue. There is a clear convergence between China and India because both states have made major investments in Afghanistan since 2002. The impact of Afghanistan’s destabilisation will be felt not only in Kashmir but also in Xinjiang, where the East Turkistan Islamic Movement is leading a separatist movement. China has also indicated that it is not sure if Pakistan’s security establishment actually continues to exert influence over the Taliban and other extremist groups, given the rapidly deteriorating security situation in Pakistan.

China and India both have reiterated that a regional approach is necessary in order to maintain peace and stability in Afghanistan after the departure of western combat forces. According to some reports, the two sides have agreed to support the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to play a greater role in Afghanistan and discuss anti-terror cooperation within the framework of the Istanbul Process agreed upon in 2011 (Pant 2014). Toward that end, trilateral consultations among China, India and Russia were recently held in Moscow and, in order to maintain regional balance, were followed by China-Russia-Pakistan discussions in Beijing.
Conclusion

Conflict resolution and state-building in Afghanistan in the context of regional political development exhibit the cooperative security approach. Despite the known fact the India and China are seen as the two rival states not only at the regional level but at the global level too still the two big economic powers share the same security concern over Afghanistan. Both the countries have heavily invested and committed for further help in long term for Afghanistan. Their approach works on the premise that a democratically elected legitimate regime would help in building a peaceful security environment in South Asia. Similarly, Pakistan which always sees Afghanistan from the prism of strategic depth has now shifted its policy on Afghanistan. Pakistan’s then Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar told journalists on 24 July 2012 following her briefing on Pak-Afghan relations to the Parliamentary Committee on National Security that Pakistan favored no particular ethnic group in Afghanistan and that it wanted to establish relations with all the groups equally (Rana and Sial 2013: 15). On the contrary, Pakistan has some core concerns over India’s deep involvement in Afghanistan but Afghanistan sees India as a vital partner in its reconstruction process. India does see Pakistan ambivalently in Afghanistan. But, evidently, India shares the thought that without the positive approach of Pakistan any deal for peace and stability in Afghanistan cannot be achieved with Taliban. In today’s context the notion of state-building does not confined within the boundaries of any state. The external environment influences the internal political processes. Similarly the internal socio-political dynamics influence the external environment too. Stable Afghanistan serves the interest of immediate as well as extended neighbors too.

Thus, this paper examined the approach and the engagement of India, Pakistan and China in the conflict resolution and state-building process of the Afghanistan. One can argue that these regional key actors are seriously involved in the reconstruction of war-torn Afghanistan. Apart from strategic interest Afghanistan also carries the capacity of hampering the security environment of not only its immediate neighbors but also the extended ones too if it again falls prey to any extremist regime. All the vital actors in Afghanistan share the thought that Afghanistan is a matter of cooperative security. A viable state is indeed an imperative in Afghanistan.

References


Chinese inroads into South Asia: Challenges to Indian Diplomacy
Ashok Alex Luke

Introduction
China’s global ascendancy or the so called so called “peaceful rise” has been viewed as one of the most significant geopolitical and economic developments of the 21st century. Its consistent growth over the past two decades, the ability to withstand the global economic meltdown of 2007-09, its emergence as the second largest economy in the world, together with its massive military build-up as well as the growing presence in the continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America had placed it as one of the most influential nations of the world. Many view China’s rise as a threat to the existing global order and much of the debates on the rise of China in recent years had been related to the challenges that it may pose to the countries like the United States and India.\footnote{Prior to 1979 Chinese foreign policy was more ideologically oriented. Since 1979 trade and commerce became more prominent in China’s foreign policy. As China counts along with the economically powerful nations of the world its reliance on the maritime transport will correspondingly grow as the bulk of its trade is transported by sea. At the same time it has emerged as an important donor to the third world countries by way of its “strings free” grants and undertaking public building projects.}

South Asia
South Asia with its 1.6 billion people (nearly 27% of total world population), is one of the poorest regions of the world having one of the least human development indicators, witnessing conflicts on the basis of ethnicity, linguistic together with communalism, nuclearisation, terrorism, the phenomenon of climate change, water and food scarcity together with the issues of migration. Of all the eight countries that make up the subcontinent, India accounts for 70% of the total population and 80% of the regions GDP and is the foremost military power. As India’s relations
with its neighbours are poorly managed some of these smaller countries looks upon India as a hegemon and tries to counter balance it with an outside power. One of the foreign policy challenges to India is to have a peaceful neighbourhood because closer political, economic and cultural ties with the neighbours are essential for the prosperity of the region as well as for India itself and the ‘Gujral Doctrine’ of 1996 was initiated on the basis of ‘non reciprocity’ with its neighbours.

However the federalist characteristics do matter in India’s foreign policy as some of the states in India share borders with the neighbouring countries and easy concessions cannot be given out without taking into account of the interest of the states which borders these neighbours. Peace and stability is essential for India to play the role of a great power in the region and therefore make sure that it is not caught up with the external conflicts in the region and beyond. South Asia is getting increasing prominence today than it was in the past. It could serve as a bridge between East Asia, Central Asia and West Asia. Over the years Chinese involvement in the region had grown tremendously, this involves building roads, railway lines, and pipelines to connect the rural areas of China with the Indian Ocean. India’s trade with South Asia was $17 billion in 2012-13 whereas China’s share of trade with South Asia was $85 billion in 2011 (of which nearly $74 billion was with India). As some of the countries of the region are quite apprehensive of India, there are dual opinions regarding China’s entry to the SAARC, a set of scholars argue that if China is allowed to be a part then the organization will gain more prominence while other set of scholars argue that culturally and historically China is alien to the region therefore it should not be brought into.

China is quite apprehensive that one day India along with the United States tend to disrupt its oil supplies along the Indian Ocean. On the other hand India is much concerned that China is making its presence in India’s troubled neighbourhood. Since 2007 China has hardened its position to the Indian State of Arunachal Pradesh. In 2013 China unveiled a defence budget of $116 billion. What worries India is that 70 % of China’s arms exports go to India’s neighbours namely Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. There are dual opinions regarding the rise of China in India, one school of thought observes that the Chinese interests in the region are highly commercial and it is common for the South Asian nations to engage with China in the era of globalization. Where as other school of thought who sees a strategic element in the growing Chinese presence in South Asia and therefore look it as worrisome. Its robust relations with Pakistan since 1960’s and issues with India especially in the wake of close US-India relations is looked upon with some concern along with matters such as stapled visas for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, the claims over Arunachal Pradesh, military assistance to Pakistan and growing footprints in South Asia and in the Indian Ocean.
**Chinese Presence in South Asia and “String of Pearls”**

The concept of “String of Pearls” was first referred in an internal report entitled “Energy Futures of Asia” by the Pentagon in the year 2004. The concept explains the growing Chinese influence from the South China Sea, through the Straits of Malacca, across the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf in which each pearl refers to the geostrategic presence of the Chinese in those respective countries. Some view it as an ambitious plan to surround the region with bases that can allow Chinese naval ships and submarines to get berthing and strategic access to various choke points. But the Chinese states the theory as groundless and clarifies that it is not trying to seek hegemony, or to encircle India but instead looking to expand its commercial and energy interests. The Chinese do acknowledge the importance of the region to its energy and economic interest therefore continued and stable access to the region is of high importance to them.

The relations with West Asia and Africa are of utmost importance to China, the trade relations between China and West Asia is expected to grow to more than US $ 500 billion by 2020 and the trade with Africa is increasing at 20% per annum. The Indian Ocean finds a place in the US pivot to Asia. Perhaps these could be considered as the focal point where the United States, India, China, Japan, and Australia converge. The East Indian Ocean is a major building block in China’s grand project to transform itself into a great world power. The Indian Ocean is one of the world’s busiest trade routes which fuel the economies of South East Asia, South Korea, Japan, and China. And it has become a chokepoint connecting the trade routes of West Asia, South Asia and Asia Pacific. Russia had some apprehensions regarding the US influence in Central Asia, Chinese too are apprehensive regarding the Western moves on South East Asia, East Asia and to the close cooperation between US and Taiwan. Similarly these two can happen in the case of India when China makes its increasing presence with its South Asian neighbours.

China presently is struggling from what is know an as “Malacca Dilemma” which was pointed out by President Hu Jintao in 2003 which shows China’s vulnerability as 80% of China’s trade passed through the Malacca Straits at that point of time and it feared in the eventuality of a conflict a hostile power may take control of the straits and block nearly all of China’s energy imports. Both land based artillery and airpower can deny China the use of the strait. Data from World War 2 proves that the US conducted a similar campaign against Japan which also depended on imports of oil and raw materials. The Malacca Straits carries 1/3rd of international trade. As per the EIA China’s oil demand was 9.8 barrels per day and it imports 5.62 million barrels of crude oil per day. By 2030 it is expected to reach about 13 million barrels per day. China is looking for some other new strategic energy alternative channels that offer an alternative supply route for vital oil and
gas imports apart from the Malacca Straits which is prone to piracy or conflict. China fears that in the event of a conflict with Taiwan, Japan or Philippines the United States has the potential to enforce an economic blockade over the Straits of Malacca which is the life line of China’s energy trade.\textsuperscript{19} China has completed a pipeline which begins at Burmese coast and runs into Yunnan province of China. Similarly there are other pipelines which are planned from Siberia as well as from Kazakhstan to China; Currently Turkmenistan supplies up to 40 bcm of gas yearly to Russia via pipeline. In 2011 Russia started exporting oil to China by pipeline. China is now the major investor in the oil fields of Iraq, Sudan and Angola. All these efforts are made to reduce the dependence on Malacca Straits.\textsuperscript{20}

China has called for the creation of a ‘New Silk Road’ that extends from Western China through Central Asia, West Asia and finally reaching Europe which covers 20 countries in both the continents with a population of 3 billion. In 2013 China has announced a total of over $100 billion investments in the 4 Central Asian Countries excluding Tajikistan.\textsuperscript{21} In 2014 China is expected to be the largest oil importer surpassing the United States. China is looking at some other alternatives other than the Malacca Straits for its energy supply such as digging a canal across Thailand’s Isthmus of Kra which would save up to 1500 nautical miles journey for China. Similar there was a pipe line proposed from Gwadar in Pakistan to Xinjiang but due to the instability in Pakistan this does not satisfy the safety requirements. There was also another proposal to extend the proposed IPI pipeline to China but this also failed to figure out. The other option was a Sino-Myanmar pipeline however it is vulnerable from attacks from the insurgent groups. The recent PRC’s assertiveness has alarmed and antagonized not only Japan, South Korea, Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam but also the United States.\textsuperscript{22} India has opened up a naval base known as Baaz station in Malacca Straits to monitor the movement of Ships through the strategically located point through which 80% of China’s oil and crude imports from West Asia and North Africa comes. India is also perhaps worried that the growing relations between China and Myanmar will turn out to have a presence of the Chinese ships in the Bay of Bengal.\textsuperscript{23} There was a call from the Indian political circle that India should construct a port near the Straits of Malacca as 90% of the Chinese trade happens through this region.\textsuperscript{24}

**Afghanistan**

China is looking to tap the mineral resources of Afghanistan especially in the Aynak cooper mines. Meanwhile the CNPC has signed a contract to explore and extract crude oil from the basin of the Amu Darya river with an estimated deposit of 87 million barrels of oil and in the Parvan water conservancy restoration project. China has been providing assistance to Afghanistan since 2002 and has pledged a
total aid of $200 million. Chinese assistance has targeted education, agriculture and in capacity building in the public sector of Afghanistan. On the other hand since the fall of the Taliban in 2001 India has disbursed $2 billion worth of effective assistance to Afghanistan which has improved the lives of many Afghans. India is concentrating on the humanitarian work mainly infrastructure projects, education and technical assistance. Today Afghanistan is not only an extended neighbour to India but also a strategic partner especially in the areas of defence and strategic cooperation. In the eve of the NATO withdrawal in 2014, Afghanistan is looking forward to strengthen ties with countries such as China, Russia and India in order to ensure regional stability.

**Pakistan**

China and Pakistan celebrated 60 years of diplomatic relations in 2011. In the backdrop of 1962 Sino-Indo war, Pakistan has been looking China as a strategic partner. The transfer of nuclear and missile technology between two countries are well acknowledged. Pakistan played an important role in the US- China reconciliation process of early 1970s. Both are strategic allies and both see each other as strategic tool against India. The Indo-US nuclear deal has raised some amount of scepticism among both. In 2013 Pakistan accounted for 55% of China’s arms exports earlier it was the army but in recent days the Navy as well as the Air Force has also turned towards Chinese weaponry. Today China is the fifth largest exporter of global arms. Recently a warplane named JF-17 Thunder was unveiled which was jointly built by China and Pakistan.

**Gwadar Port**

The Gwadar deep seaport built in south-west of Pakistan with the Chinese financial and technical assistance will turn out to be a strategic asset for China which is located in close to the Pakistan-Iran border and the Straits of Hormuz in south western Baluchistan province which gives China access to the seas through which crude oil imports from Iran, Arab Gulf states and Africa could be transported to north west China avoiding the Straits of Malacca, South China Sea, East China sea and Yellow Sea. It can serve as a storage and transhipment hub for the West Asian oil passing through Pakistan. China has invested about $198 million in for the project. It could connect China’s Western province of Xinjiang through rail and road links and also by pipeline. When the eastern ports of China are 3500 kilometres away from the city of Kashgar in Western China, where as the distance from Kashgar to Gwadar is only 1500 kilometres. A Chinese naval presence in Gwadar could also be an advantage monitoring the supply routes for its energy shipments. Chinese presence in the Gwadar would be an irritant to the United States. The IPI pipeline
failing to materialize, meanwhile China has shown its interests to join the project and to build the Iran-Pakistan-China gas pipeline.\textsuperscript{30} China has also shown interests in the $20 billion economic corridor linking Western China with the Arabian Sea port of Gwadar. The corridor envisages of expanding road links, building railway lines, and installing energy pipelines running from Western Xinjiang region to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK). A part from the upgradation of the Karakoram highway China is building two reactors at Chashma C-3 and C-4.\textsuperscript{31}

\textbf{Bangladesh}

Bangladesh has sought Chinese assistance in constructing a highway passing through Myanmar to the Yunnan province of China. Yunnan province has become an economic bridge of China to the South and South East Asia. Bangladesh persuaded China to use Chittagong port and develop a deep sea port at a Sonadia island. China has access to the Myanmar naval base and established a monitoring station at the Coco Island, which is North of India’s Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Chinese presence in Chittagong would be a major security concern for India. China is a major supplier of defence hardware to Bangladesh; missile launch pad set up in Chittagong with assistance from China in 2008. Terrorism and extremism is a threat from Bangladesh.\textsuperscript{32} China has become the largest trading partner of Bangladesh. Agreement on closer cooperation was signed between China and Bangladesh in 2010. The bilateral trade reached $7.5 billion in 2011 and some reports indicate of a Chinese assistance to Bangladesh over the launch of a communication satellite along with military assistance and hydrological data.\textsuperscript{33} The recent agreement to purchase two submarines by Bangladesh from China had caused additional concerns for India; In 2012 Bangladesh became the second largest market for Chinese arms exports after Pakistan. India is constructing an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle base in the city of Kolkata. Bangladesh has a long time maritime territorial disputes with India. In 2009 Bangladesh instituted proceedings against India over the dispute in the UN’s permanent court of arbitration.\textsuperscript{34} China has been trying to develop a naval base in Bay of Bengal to develop Sonadia Islands as a deep sea port for Bangladesh which may turn out to be another Gwadar like port which is likely to raise concerns for the Indian defence establishment. Almost 99\% of the cost will be bared by the Chinese and the first phase is expected to be completed by 2015.\textsuperscript{35} China-Myanmar-Bangladesh tri national highway will be of much importance to China. Chinese access to the Chittagong and Sonadia ports would give China direct access to the Bay of Bengal and further to the Indian Ocean for its energy imports.\textsuperscript{36}

The visit of Bangladesh Premier Sheikh Hasina to China in June 2014, the bilateral agreements signed; together with her statement that “Bangladesh would be an active partner in the China led Asian Century” underlines the growing Chinese-
Chinese inroads into South Asia

Bangladesh relations. The recent visit of India’s external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj to Bangladesh had also added a new dimension to the Indo-Bangladesh relations. It is viewed that apart from the government both the BNP and the Jamaat Islami which are traditionally viewed as hostile to India had welcomed Swaraj’s visit. Apart from many other issues the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA), the Teesta river dispute and the problem of illegal migration which the BJP had raised in its election campaign were the issues which figured out the list of discussions. Finally a long lasting agreement with Bangladesh would be impossible without the consent of the government of West Bengal which remains a significant challenge.

Nepal

As a state sharing its borders with Tibet, Nepal has occupied a special place in Chinese foreign policy. Since 1950 Nepal was forced to surrender some of its advantages granted to it in the bilateral treaty of 1856 known as the Treaty of Thapathali which was replaced by a new treaty in 1956. The political transition in Nepal since 2007 and the emergence of left wing Maoist out wing has been an advantage to China. China has been looking for a reliable political partner in Nepal to make sure that Nepalese territory would not be used by Tibetan rebels against Chinese interests. Since 2008 China has increased its political, economic and military assistance to Nepal which is of much concern to India. Chinese interest in Nepal is viewed as containing Tibetan refuges, reducing India’s influence and looking towards a pro-China government. However the outcome of the general elections in Nepal in November 2013 gives New Delhi an opportunity to cherish as the Nepali Congress which is closely linked with India has emerged as the single biggest party and the defeat of the United Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) has been a set of some relief to India but still China’s influence in Nepal is still catching up. India hopes that what ever gap exists in its relations with Nepal could be filled up during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the Himalayan Republic in August 2014, looking at Nepal for its tremendous potential for hydropower especially the Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project; India should look ways for an India-Nepal-China trilateral partnership rather than end up in a “zero sum game”.

Bhutan

China is looking forward to establish diplomatic relations with Bhutan which is seen as India’s closest ally in the region. The Indian governments’ decision in 2013 to withdraw subsidy on cooking gas and kerosene which it supplied to Bhutan had lead rise in prices for these commodities which lead to further protests. Boundary negotiations continue between two continues without diplomatic relations regarding the areas in the northwest and central regions of Bhutan. Talks
also continue regarding the Chumbi valley which is tri-junction between India, China and Bhutan. It has showed interest in investing in health and education sectors. India is much worried that the growing Chinese-Bhutan relations would make a change of the Bhutan’s India centred foreign policy towards China, because Bhutan is the only country in South Asia with which India enjoys a consistent relationship, and it is also the only country in South Asia with which China so far does not have diplomatic relations. It is highly significant that Narendra Modi choose to visit Bhutan as his first foreign destination soon after taking over office. And the subsequent economic packages he announced including the hydropower projects will know doubt strengthen the relations between two neighbours. China’s claims to the Doklam Plateau of Bhutan which is not too far from the Silguri Corridor is an utmost concern to New Delhi because if the Chinese gains possession of this territory then it can cut off supplies to India’s north east in the event of a hostility. It is stated that New Delhi seems to be much worried about the Chinese-Bhutan border negotiations especially on the areas that is regarded as strategic importance to India and that in 2013 then India’s National Security Advisor Shiv Shankar Menon along with Foreign Secretary Sujatha Singh had travelled to Bhutan to advise the Bhutanese government on how to conduct border negotiations with China.

**Maldives**

India refused to take sides when Nasheed the first democratically elected President of Maldives was ousted from power in February 2012 and reached out to the new President Mohammed Waheed to continue the good relations. Maldives is crucial due to the geostrategic importance attached to it in the Indian Ocean. In November 2012 Maldives had cancelled a contract which it signed with the Indian Company GMR to modernize the Ibrahim Nasir International Airport and it was widely suspected that a Chinese company was behind the move. Maldives encouraged Chinese investments in construction and tourism. Chinese embassy was opened in Maldives in 2011. China is the country which sends the most number of tourists to Maldives. China in the past has shown interest in creating a naval base in Maldives. They are keen in developing Ihavandhoo and Maarandhoo Islands with transhipment ports among other things. Its presence in the Islands will strengthen its foothold in the Indian Ocean. China’s main aim is to ensure the security of its sea lanes for facilitating its critically needed energy imports. The elections in Maldives was something which the Indian political class was closely watching with expectation of the return of pro-India president, but on the contrary the expectation did not materialize. Delhi has no other option but to engage with Abdulla Yameen. The relations are however expected to move forward.
Sri Lanka

Since 2009 China has become the largest donor of Sri Lanka. Even in the backdrop of the international efforts in isolating Sri Lanka over human rights violations the China-Sri Lanka relations have grown. Sri Lanka continued its support to China’s on issues such as Tibet and Taiwan which is known as One China policy. On the other hand China assured Sri Lanka of its support to safeguard its national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as its domestic and foreign policies, boosting of cooperation in energy, infrastructure, tourism etc. China offered Sri Lanka some $100 million for some welfare projects in northern and eastern Sri Lanka which had suffered as a result of the civil war. When domestic political constraints have made it difficult for New Delhi to reach out to Colombo, Beijing was quick to fill the vacuum. The upgradation of the China-Sri Lanka relations to ‘strategic cooperative partnership’ on the eve of the Sri Lankan President’s visit to China in 2013 reveals the importance that Sri Lanka attaches to its relations with China. China has offered 2.2 billion in loans for infrastructure projects. China is not concerned for trading off human rights for financial resources and has not condemned the Sri Lankan government over the civil war where as the Indian Prime Minister refused to attend the CHOGM summit in Sri Lanka in November 2013 on the grounds of the influence exerted by the certain Tamil political parties. But this is likely to bring the Sri Lankan’s more closer to the Chinese. India’s policy towards Sri Lanka is shaped by both the interplay of the security establishment in New Delhi and the regional politics of Tamil Nadu. Though the impact of Tamil Nadu politics is not as significant as before, BJP cannot completely ignore the voice of AIADMK as it is the third largest party in the present Lok Sabha and also the NDA coalition partner Vaiko of the MDMK.

The NDA Govt and Foreign Policy

The new govt in India that took over in May 2014 headed by Narendra Modi had sent out a clear message indicating that neighbourhood lies India’s first priority and this was visible when he invited the SAARC leaders to attend his swearing in ceremony and choose to visit Bhutan for his first foreign trip as the Prime Minister. Though the BJP had always been hawkish on Pakistan and China while in the opposition, the change in gesture after elected to power must be viewed as new beginning. The release of the fisherman on both sides by India and Pakistani on the eve of Modi’s swearing in was a positive gesture. However the attack on the Indian consulate at Heart in Afghanistan on 23 May 2014 was the first crucial test for Modi’s foreign policy and a Pakistani hand in the incident could not be rule out. Though there has been some change in the internal dynamics of Pakistan, Sharif cannot go too long by ignoring the sentiments of the military
hawks in Pakistan. It has to be seen that how would instances like the beheading of an Indian soldier along the LoC in January 2013 if arise again would be dealt with. Presently trade with the SAARC nations is only a small fraction of India’s GDP and Modi is likely to utilize India’s economic diplomacy combined with national interest to win new friends in the neighbourhood. This has been evident in his recent proposal to develop a SAARC satellite which he thinks could be dedicated as a gift to India’s South Asian neighbours. The visit of the Chinese foreign minister to New Delhi after the election and the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Chinese President Xi Jing Ping on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in Brazil looks to add a robust relationship between two ancient civilizations. The Chinese are also closely aware of Japan’s closeness with India’s new PM. The Chinese had expressed their opinion that it wants India to play a key role in the ‘Maritime Silk Road’ project and the BCIM Corridor. However when it comes to economic diplomacy there is a common perception that “India promises, China delivers” which the new govt in New Delhi must strive hard to change.

**India’s edge in the Indian Ocean**

Alferd Mahan the 19th Century strategic thinker has indicated that the future of the world in the 21st century would be decided on the waters of the Indian Ocean. Over the past years India has also made significant inroads with the IOR littoral states. For the Chinese Indian Ocean is the lifeline for their energy and trade and India occupies an important position in the Indian Ocean. The sea lanes of Indian Ocean are considered as one of the most strategically important point of communication in the world. More than 80% of the world’s seaborne trade in oil transits through the Indian Ocean choke point which helps to feed some of the Asia’s largest economies such as Japan and South Korea. The United States posses a naval base in Diego Garcia. China enjoys sufficient goodwill among the Indian Ocean nations as a result of its aggressive soft power diplomacy and financial assistance such as providing loans, investments in infrastructure projects, building of roads, dams, ports, power plants and railways as well as offering military assistance and political support in the UN security Council through its veto powers. The Indian Ocean is the lifeline of China’s energy trade. Scholars like David Scott argues that India has the potential to block China’s (so called Malacca Dilemma) access to the Indian Ocean. Ajai Shukla argues that the Indian navy has the capacity to shutdown the Indian Ocean shipping lines whenever it chooses. India’s first official naval doctrine states that “control of the choke points could be used as a bargaining chip in the international power game.” Former Indian Rear Admiral Raja Menon argues that the strength of the Chinese lies in the logistic networks that they have built in the Tibet and their weakness lies in the Indian Ocean. Their
economic prosperity requires resources and therefore access West Asia and Africa are crucial for the Chinese. Despite the growing interaction between US and Indian navies, and India’s growing interest in broader Asia focussed debates over China, India still views this question in unilateral terms.\textsuperscript{65} It was reported in 2012 that Seychelles had offered China a base to provide relief and resupply facilities to the PLA Navy.\textsuperscript{66}

**ASEAN**

The ASEAN was formed to resist the Chinese domination apart from its core objective of promoting economic cooperation and the United States continues to be its mentor. In recent years China has strengthened its relations with ASEAN. Its energy demand and dependence on sea lanes for trade has compelled Beijing to treat its ASEAN neighbours with more parity. The kind of bullying that China does with countries such as Japan, Vietnam and Taiwan makes these countries to seek more proximity with countries such as the United States and India. China is suspicious about the US-Japan-India ties. India’s trade with ASEAN is US $70 billion and is expected to reach US $100 billion by 2015.\textsuperscript{67} The ongoing tussle between China, Japan, South Korea and ASEAN nations over the islands in East and South China Sea are mainly because of under sea resources.\textsuperscript{68} India insists that the disputes in South China Sea should be solved by peaceful means on the contrary China argues that the disputes be solved bilaterally with the respective countries and has warned Indian company ONGC Videsh not to engage in oil exploration in South China sea along with Vietnam.\textsuperscript{69} India too had been providing Vietnam with naval and air assistance. India’s military diplomacy with countries such as Japan, Vietnam, and South Korea are on the rise which worries China. Both India and China are suspicious of each others influence on the others backyard.\textsuperscript{70} The visit of India’s External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj to Myanmar to attend the 12\textsuperscript{th} India-ASEAN meeting and a promise to draft a five year plan of action to have a joint working on the common areas of interests concerning both sides, she also emphasised on the need for the 5Ts- Tradition, Talent, Tourism, Trade and Technology which looks for the prospects of increasing cooperation between India and the multilateral forum.\textsuperscript{71}

**Conclusion**

It is getting clear that China is engaging with almost all the South Asian countries where it smells an economic opportunity by building infrastructure projects, offering aid and assistance. As long as China remains an important player in the South Asian affairs the rest of the countries are likely to reduce their dependence on India on many counts which is a challenge to Indian foreign
policy. Chinese presence in India’s neighbourhood is seen as a Sun Tzu dictum of containing ‘an adversary through the leverage of converting the neighbourhood of that adversary into hostiles.’ India has taken up a cautious stand. India should take appropriate diplomatic and strategic measures to uphold its influence in South Asia. India’s strategic thinker Brahma Chellaney expresses the view that China’s threat of “String of Pearls” should be countered by forming a “String of Rapiers” with like minded Asia-Pacific countries. The South Asian countries look at China’s presence in the region as truly demanding to the development opportunities on the other hand some of them view India’s approach as posing some challenges to their internal stability therefore New Delhi has to review its neighbourhood policy to cope up with the Chinese challenge in the region.

India should build trust and improve relations with its South Asian Neighbours and continue to engage with the ASEAN nations some of whom are the adversaries of China. In spite of all these South Asia can emerge as an important player in the global affairs if its problems are sorted out. For China piracy is the other concern as it threatens the safety of its oil tankers. China posses significant commercial interests in West Asia as well as in Africa therefore the Indian Ocean is one of the key routes which will keep the Chinese busy in the years to come. It is reported that between 2005 and 2012 almost 179 ships were hijacked of the cost of Somalia and the Horn of Africa and the ransom paid was estimated to be between $339 million and $413 million. As China continues to build good relations with the South Asian countries the possibility of granting a naval base by some of these countries to China cannot be ruled out and as for China the naval presence can ensure more safety to its oil tankers passing through the Indian Ocean. Finally apart from engaging with its SAARC neighbours and the nations of ASEAN, India should try to continue every option in order to peacefully engage with the Chinese without compromising its own national interest.

Notes
2  See Mearsheimer (2006:162)
3  Tharoor (2012).
4  See Menon (2007).
5  See Joshi (2014).
6  See Mattoo (2014).
7  “South Asia Rising,” at http://www.cprindia.org/blog/security/3583-south-asia-rising
8  “India is steadily loosing ground to China as a trading partner of South Asian countries,” at http://businesstoday.intoday.in/story/india-losing-ground-as-starding-partner-south-asian-countries/1/201078.html
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“Will Chinese joining in SAARC make the organization more functional,” at thinkers.worldpress.com/2014/01/17/will-chinese-joining-in-saarc-make-the-organization-more-functional/

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“China to sell Bangladesh 2 Submarines,” at http://thediplomat.com/2013/12/china-to-sell-bangladesh-2-submarines/
37 See Krishnan (2014).
38 “Sushma Swaraj’s visit to Bangladesh a new Beginning,” at http://idsa.in/idsacomments/SushmaSwarajsvisittoBangladesh_sspattanaik_300614.html
41 Prasad (2014).
43 Singh (2011).
47 Singh (2011).
50 “China’s regional strategy outshines India’s,” at http://blogs.rediff.com/mkbhadrakumar/2013/05/31/chinas-regional-strategy-outshines-indias/
51 “What has India lost and gained by Manmohan Singh not attending CHOGM,” at http://indrus.in/blogs/2013/11/20/what_has_india_lost__and_gained_by_manmohan_singh_not_attending_chogm_30985.html
54 See Jacob (2014).
56 “Inviting the neighbours,” at http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/inviting-the-neighbours/article6041712.ece
57 Bhattacherjee (2014).
58 “Enlightened national interest’ is at the core of Modi’s foreign policy mantra,” at http://www.thehindu.com/sunday-anchor/enlightened-nationa-interest-is-at-core-of-modis-foreign-policy-mantra/article6115254.ece
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The states of India and Pakistan came into being in the web of modern nation-states in a massive bloodshed. The large scale displacements, refugee flows, pain, miseries, all generated deep rooted psychic assault on the people of both countries. In this background, the Kashmir has sustained itself as a ‘symbolic site’ as well as a ‘burning site’ of that great tragedy, partition. To a greater extend the question of Kashmir is embedded with the process of nation-building in India and Pakistan. In the post-independence period, the state-led nation-building process in the recalcitrant clay of pluralist realities in the states of India and Pakistan caused large scale exclusions, identity crisis and, most probably, the minorities are the victims of this progression. In this scenario, as a Muslim majority state in a Hindu majority country, Kashmir is more of a ‘symbol’ than an ‘issue,’ which had been used by the postcolonial elites to get out of the ‘legitimacy crisis’ and to crystallize the national identity on a majoritarian line. By using the painful history of partition, sustaining the intensity of such historical memories through symbolic postures and ‘issues,’ the process of nation-building has been progressing in these states in diametrically opposite ways, generating new forms of security issues both within and outside the cartographic settings (Joshy 2010). Indeed, India and Pakistan have been confronting a couple of bilateral issues; however, the question of Kashmir is the core in determining the very nature of relations between these states. Especially because of its symbolic value, its symbiotic relations with the unfinished project of nation-building, Kashmir has become so important to the ruling classes of both these states. The issue of Kashmir has remained as a ‘hard nut to crack’ and the ‘responsible’ people have been blaming each other without addressing the ‘trust deficit’ in the valley emanated out of the ‘irresponsible’ policies of the successive Indian Governments.

The ruling classes in both these states have been manipulating the issue of Kashmir for regime legitimacy. In India, to the secular nationalists, the protection
of Kashmir is associated with the credibility of secular nationalism Vs religious nationalism and to the Hindu religious nationalists, Kashmir is often visualised as an inevitable and prestigious part of the Hindu nation in opposition with the Muslim/Pakistan. The whole gamut of intellectual fashioning by the governmental machineries including the state sponsored academic activities, bureaucratic engagements and the ideological engineering by the Right wing forces sought to perpetuate stereotypical images about the ‘Other’ at various frequencies. The extreme national identity assertions provide no room for alternative imaginations especially on matters of ‘nation-building’ and ‘national security’- both are closely connected at various levels. In this context, on a statist point of view, the question of Kashmir is rationalized in the name of ‘national security,’ ‘national interest’ and ‘national prestige,’ and consequently, the voices of the Kashmiris are always been undermined and put in the bracket “anti-nationals.” The assertion of extreme politico-religious identities like Hindutva sought to distance the Other from the Self at every stage of identity construction. And the very process has been balkanizing the minorities both within and outside the boundaries of the nation. At the same time, the civil society, a space characterized by its power potential to check the authoritarian tendencies of the State, is also an important space which has been reproducing the statist projects especially on matters of national security. It is very clear that the civil society in India is not that much vibrant especially reflecting on the issues of national security and in many instances such as the Pokhran II nuclear explosions and Kargil war that it was not able to go beyond the statist line of thinking.

This paper mainly exhibits two different pictures in the context of the question of Kashmir: 1) the dominant national identity narratives in India have been victimizing the Kashmiris in the name of ‘protecting the nation.’ Like many other self assertions, the national identity assertions have always been providing no room for a friendly dialogue between the Self and the Other, and consequently, it adversely affects the possibilities for democratisation. In this scenario, the ‘boundaries are always burning’ and it provides no space for alternative imaginations. The other voices were regarded as ‘anti-national’ and dealt with severely; 2) The rich cultural heritage of India, specifically, the composite culture that had developed through centuries of inter-religious relations is so important in dealing with such extreme identity assertions. The attempts for strengthening the democratic institution building in a polarised society by incorporating such cultural values would certainly ‘blur’ the constructed social contours. In this background it is pertinent to note that the Kashmir question cannot be properly addressed with the “strategic” explanations by Realism, the dominant discourse of International Relations; it necessitates more idealist and interdisciplinary approach in dealing with the conflicts in the Kashmir valley.
Indian National Identity Narratives

On an historical and theoretical understanding, the notion of ‘nation’ is modern and it is identical with ‘homogeneity.’ The homogeneity is coterminous with security and the western discourses on society and polity are biased on this particular aspect. In this respect, the raison de etire of modern nation-State is the notion of security and the State becomes an overarching authority as concerned with the security of the people (Dillon 1996). Here, the enlightenment project in the West itself could be seen as a ‘security project,’ and the West claimed as the ‘security community,’ an outcome of their homogeneous disposition. The western model of nation-state becomes the symbol of development and security. Here homogeneity is equated with ‘security’ and plurality is termed as ‘insecurity’ and ‘weakness.’ It was the urge for imitating the models of the West by disregarding the cultural realities of the East caused social exclusions and the attempts for homogenising the cultural life-worlds with monolithic value system, both religious and secular, caused identity crisis. In short, the postcolonial states failed to reflect on the pluralist cultural realities of the society and it has always been imposing a ‘single reality’ through ideological and physical means.

The Kashmir question is deeply rooted in the unfinished project of nation-building in India and Pakistan. In order to explain the issue in detail, we should have an understanding of the historical background in which nationalism emerged in India, its bifurcations and importantly, its manifestations in the postcolonial period. There is no doubt that modern nation-states first emerged in the West. In its contact with the western modernity that nationalism emerged in the eastern societies. However, nationalism emerged in the West and East in different socio-political circumstances. Contrary to the West, nationalism emerged in India as a response to the colonial gaze. The colonialists had legitimised their regime in the colonies with their rationalist discourses. The inception of nationalist sentiments first came out in the writings of the newly emerged intelligentsia of the 19th century who questioned the very rationale of the Orientalist criticisms that perceived the Eastern Civilisations as ‘primitive, dark and superstitious.’ However, the native attempts were structured around a central theme that focused on how to catch up with the western world without losing their cultural distinctiveness. Partha Chatterjee viewed it as contradictory: “It is both imitative and hostile to the models that it imitates... It is imitative in that it accepts the value of the standards set by the alien culture,” and at the same coin it “rejects the alien intruder,” “rejects the ancestral ways as the obstacles to progress” and “yet also cherished as marks of identity” (Chatterjee 1996). The ramification of this cultural position was so clear in the postcolonial Indian politics.

The contact of the East with the West produced multifaceted responses in the Indian society. One response is as Richard G. Fox viewed it as the “hyper
enchantment” of identities - which contradicts with modernity’s basic values and at the same time functions within its frame (Fox 2005: 235-49). The Hindu Right (Sangh Parivar) in India is an example, that it wholeheartedly accepted the Western modernity at its institutional level and at the same time contradicts with its basic values. On the one hand they have celebrated a glorious Indian past, criticized the perverted present and at the same time envisaged the importance of western modernity for the progress of the Indian society. It contradicts with the humanist appeal of western modernity that the very ideology of the Hindu Right, the ‘Hindutva,’ is logically structured on the exclusionary narratives of the past that perceived the Muslims, Christians and the Communists as the Other of the Hindu Self (Golwalkar 2000; Joshy 2012).

Like the emergence of Hindu nationalism, the contradictory policies of the colonialists in their dealings with the natives had given considerable inputs to the surfacing of various other streams of nationalism in India. There were three ‘master narratives’ in Indian nationalism. One was a secular nationalism propagated by the Indian National Congress; the other was religious nationalism - mainly in two streams: Hindu nationalism and Muslim nationalism. The third one was caste based assertions of the deprived sections. (1) These three streams very much influenced the future course of politics in India. There indeed the nationalist struggle enabled the Congress to create an ideological hegemony in the society. In the post-colonial period new connotations like ‘national development,’ ‘national interest’ and ‘national security’ had totalised the security thinking in India. In contrast with Gandhi’s visions on state and development, Nehru promulgated a new, modern, developmental nationalism (Chatterjee 1996) which had a ‘silencing effect’ on the society. This developmental nationalism was logically connected to the process of nation-building, envisaged a national identity above the pluralist realities. The Nehruuvian vision about modern India was more idealistic and he perceived a rational socio-political order as against the irrational imaginations as like the religious nationalism. The congress used secularism as an ideology for national engineering and it always been hostile to the role of religion in politics. As like religious nationalism, the official version of secularism also provides no room for alternative imaginations because both are looking at the cultural life-worlds with certain kind of rigor. In that sense, the birth of Pakistan, the very existence of it as a theocratic state always been imaged by the ‘secularists’ in India as the ‘Other’ of the glorious Indian nation- qualified by its scientific temper and humanist values.

In a similar vein the extreme version of Hindu identity assertion, the Hindutva, has embraced the western science and technology and viewed it as an essential pre-requisite for attaining a strong, powerful and single colored nation-state, the Hindurashtra. They are so fascinated by the West, especially its technological,
Burning Boundaries and Blurred Boundaries

military superiority and its existence as ‘homogeneous’ nation-states. The proponents of Hindutva argued that the pluralist existence of the Hindu society is its weakness and called for “homogenise” and “militarise” the nation to attain the goal— the “Hindurashtra” (Savarkar 1984; Golwalkar 2000). Accordingly the idea of Hindurashtra is the reinvention of the glorious Hindu/Indian past, and the only way is to re-invoke the tradition and to purify the present perverted Indian society. The Hindutva forces have been trying to crystallize the Hindu ‘Self’ by positing the Muslims, Christians and the Communists as the ‘Other.’ They have territorialised the nation by re-invoking images from the Hindu epics and in various ways the Muslim/Pakistan is represented as the ‘Other’ of the Hindu/Indian ‘Self.’

In the postcolonial period, the ‘development nationalism’ propagated by the Indian National Congress was able to sustain an internal coherence and regime legitimacy to the ruling class. Besides, the re-invoking of the past to define the present was so common among the secular as well as the religious version of nationalist imaginations. The prominent writings like Nehru’s Discovery of India, the extreme Hindutva writings like Bunch of Thoughts, Hindutva: Who is a Hindu? imaged a modern India by exhibiting a glorious past and the road ahead to attain the national goals. However, their imaginations about the past and the present has serious differences, but both are expressing a somewhat nostalgia for a Hindu past. Within this broad spectrum, three strands can be discerned: great achievements of the past; India’s influence on the rest of the world and; the seeds of modernity that are embedded in India’s past (Commuri 2010: 47). Both discourses celebrate the achievements of the past in the fields of science, literature, architecture, art, language, philosophy and productions of goods, trade and finances. Both religious and secular nationalist narratives recognised that the Islamic invasions in the Indian society did not contribute anything worth to the nation. The spiritual influence of India, both Brahminical and Buddhist, in distant lands was also a source of imagination. In these discourses spiritual expansion was perceived as ‘non-violent,’ ‘peaceful’ and ‘harmonious’ as against the expansion of the west to the rest, ‘aggressive’ and ‘destructive.’ There were attempts to revert to the scientific temper of the perceived past as Nehru viewed that the Indus-valley civilisation is modern and the impulses of modernity is inherited in the Indian society. However, Nehru was ambiguous to find out the reason for the later on backwardness of the Indian society. Golwalkar viewed that the ‘non-violence’ perceived and practiced by the Buddhists and Jains made India vulnerable to foreign invasions. So he called for the rejuvenation of the ‘Kashtriya’ impulses in the Indian society (Ibid: 47-52).

Both secular and religious nationalist narratives set ‘time’ and ‘space’ in defining the nation. The lineage of the nation is often perceived as ‘immemorial’ and contends the Orientalist criticism that ‘there was no nation like India before the
British invasion and integration.’ Golwalkar, the second Sarsanghchalak (supreme chief) of the ‘Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh’ (RSS) used his own version of ‘culture,’ history’, ‘nation’ etc for imagining the origin of the Hindu nation, thereby making a sharp distinction between the Hindu civilisation and other cultures and religious systems:

The origin of our people, the date from which we have been living here as a civilized entity, is unknown to the scholars of history. In a way, we are ‘anadi,’ without a beginning. To define such a people is impossible, just as we cannot express or define reality because words come into existence after the reality. Similar is the case with the Hindu people. We existed when there was no necessity for any name. We were the good, the enlightened people - the rest of humanity were just bipeds and so no distinctive name was given to us. Sometimes, in trying to distinguish our people from others, we are called the enlightened – the Aryas – and the rest ‘Mlechas’ (Golwalkar 2000: 54-55).

While territorialising the nation, the cultural nationalists stick on the notion of ‘Akhanda Barath’ which means indivisible India comprised of Afghanistan (Upaganasthan), Kabul (Gandhar), Burma (Brahmadesh), Sri Lanka (Lanka), Assam (Pragjyothish) and Iran (Aryan). Such cartographic imaginations are based on the epics such as *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. The political organs of the Sangh Parivar – the Jana Sangh and BJP – called for the incorporation of those separated lands to the Indian nation. The essence of this imagination is the unity and integrity of the nation. However, this territorial Self is being threatened by the insurgencies in the state of Kashmir by Pakistan, the separatist movements in Punjab, the problem of illegal migrants from Bangladesh and the problems in the north eastern parts of India. According to the Hindu nationalists the ‘threat’ to the integrity of the nation stems from various quarters and they historicise it under three major heads: the Muslims, Christians and the Communists.

The religious nationalist narratives have been using logocentric notions like purity/pollution, civilised/uncivilised, insider/outsider and security/threat to separate the Self from the Other. As a dominant cultural nationalist narrative the Hindutva has been trying to crystallize the pluralist Hindu (political) identity in their attempt to formulate a Hindu nation in tune with the western model of nation state. In the very beginning of his book ‘Hindutva: who is a Hindu’ Savarkar defines a Hindu:

A Hindu means a person who regards this land of BHARTVARSHA, from the Indus to the Seas as his Father- Land as well as his Holy –Land that is the cradle land of his religion” (Savarkar 1989). To the ‘converted Christians and Muslims ‘the Hindustan is the Fatherland’ as to any other Hindu. Yet it is not to them a ‘Holyland’ too. Their holy land is in Arabia or Palestine. Their mythology and Godmen, ideas and heroes are not the children of this soil. Their names and outlook smack of a foreign origin, so, their love is divided (1989:113).
The Hindutva is a political connotation and Hinduism is about the religious system of the Hindus. The ‘Hindutva’ has nothing to do with ‘Hinduism.’ According to Golwalkar the political history of the Hindus/India is the history of a chain of conflicts between the Hindus and the Muslims. In the very definition of the nation the cultural nationalists posited the minorities and communists as aliens to the Hindu nation because they have extra-territorial loyalties. In the postcolonial period this enmity is territorially represented in terms of Hindu/India Vs Muslim/Pakistan and Communist/China. In this scenario both the secular as well as the cultural nationalist versions of identity construction in India have seen Kashmir as an important issue or symbol in their nationalist imaginations. The ‘protection’ of Kashmir is equated with the territorial integrity of the nation and alternative imaginations in terms of the ‘autonomy’ of Kashmir within the Indian federation are often perceived as a ‘threat’ to the very ideology and existence of an integrated Indian nation. This was an open confrontation between the quest for uniformity and the thirst for diversity.

National Identity Construction in Pakistan

Ideological engineering is an essential aspect of the legitimate existence of a nation-state, which seeks ‘individuality,’ and ‘separateness.’ As far as Pakistan is concerned this has been a daunting task. It has been facing quite a number of problems which varies from the ‘problem of differentiating Pak culture from Indian,’ ‘the ambiguity regarding the role of religion in State affairs,’ ‘legitimacy of Muslim nationalism’ etc… Indeed, Pakistan is not a product of a popular struggle, Muslim nationalism erected from the ‘fear of the Hindu majority’ and subsequently, this fear psychosis has been used by the elites for uniting the nation and sustaining regime legitimacy. In fact, the Pak movement was a movement of Muslims rather than Islam (Amin 2009) and its national leader, Jinnah was ambiguous on the nature of the political system and what role Islam has to play in the system. The imposition of Urdu as national language is another issue which caused the clash between the cultural realities of the society and the Statist ideology (Khan 2005:68-77). The creation of Pakistan was legitimised on the premise that the linguistic and ethnic divisions could be surpassed by the dominant Islamic identity. This nationalist perspective took an intolerant attitude towards hybridism and diversity. However, even though Pakistan remains Islamic, Punjabi ethnic identity is the core determining factor in the affairs of the State. 80 per cent of the army and 55 per cent of the federal bureaucracy is from Punjab. Punjabi domination in state affairs is being legitimised by equating Punjab’s interest with that of Pakistan’s. The assertion of other ethnic groups is considered as ‘anti-national’, implying that they...
are pro-Indians (Samad 2009:208-214). Pakistan has had four spells of direct and indirect military rule and several failed coups and each was justified on the grounds of national security (Cohen 2004:7), meaning imagined threat from India. Indeed, the Pakistani national Self is molded by positing India as it’s ‘Other.’

After Jinnah, Pakistani politics has been facing deeper systemic crisis displaying a bewildering array of shifting allegiance and alliances. In its sixty five years of existence, Pakistan has been administered by martial law regimes for nearly 30 years. At other times, the army has more directly pulled the strings of puppet democratic dispensations. The great influence of the military always keeps the Pakistani state as ‘praetorian.’ The State upholds a ‘political economy of defense’ over a ‘political economy of development’ (Talbot 2003:1-3; Kukreja 2003:58). The dominant influence of the Punjabi ethnic community over the military and the bureaucracy is a major determinant of the political horoscope of Pakistan. This trajectory emanated mainly out of the loss of East Pakistan (the pre-independent state of Bangladesh) which changed the balance of political power in Pakistan. East Pakistan comprised of more moderate Islamists and with its secession Punjabis became the dominant ethnic community in Pakistan (Cohen 2004:9). The role of India in the Bangladesh movement was also worth noticeable. In this scenario, the Pakistani elites have been positing India as its ‘Other’ and justifying a militaristic State. Najam Sethi, a critique of the Pakistani State observes:

The Pakistani State has come to be fashioned largely in response to perceived and propagated, real and imagined threats to its national security from India. The mentality and outlook of the Pakistani State is therefore that of a historically besieged state. That is why conception of national security, defined in conventional military terms, dominates the Pakistani State’s thinking on many issues. Indeed, that is why state outlook dominates government policies. That is why Pakistan’s foreign policy runs its domestic policy rather than the other way rounds......That is why Pakistan is more a state-nation rather than a nation-state (Sethi 1999:7).

The ruling class in Pakistan has been using anti-India card to strengthen the national Self and to ensure regime legitimacy; the decent voices were regarded as anti-national, and in such a way that the democratic aspirations of the people have been suppressed by the state. In Pakistan there is a continuing conflict between the powers of authoritarianism and peoples ambitions for the democratization of the state and society. The liberal institutions and the moderate elements in the civil society have been showing positive signs for strengthening the relations with India. However, the ruling class has always been perpetuating an enemy image and hostile relations with India. In this scenario, the question of Kashmir has an important role in the national identity construction in Pakistan.
Representing Kashmir

The ‘issue’ of Kashmir has more symbolic value than what it has been generally perceived as a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan. If it is simply a territorial dispute, it can be resolved through negotiations. But differently, it is more of a symbol of partition by which two independent states came into existence in the region with a host of problems includes the construction of a nation-state in a multi-ethnic society, the sustenance of the legitimacy of the ruling class, the issue of differentiating the culture of two countries as independent modern nation-states, legitimizing the secular and Muslim nationalisms in the postcolonial statecraft etc. In this scenario, Kashmir became a ‘burning site’ which always tells us the painful story of partition symbolically, and spatially it occupies an important position in the mapping of the nation. According to Gitika Commuri, JK occupies an interesting space in the external/internal dimensions of state sovereignty. Its status in the Indian state is contested by several forces such as Pakistan, which considers it a part of Pakistan; by India, which considers JK a part of the Indian Union and by Kashmiris, this later group is deeply fractured, as it represents those who want to become part of Pakistan, those that seek political independence from both India and Pakistan, those that seek autonomous zone within India and others like the Kashmiri Pandits who seek establishment of Panun (Pure) Kashmir for Hindu Kashmiris. As a result, there is much anxiety in the Indian political imagination about the intent of Pakistani and Kashmiri political leaders on the one hand and the ability of India to retain Kashmir within the Union’ on the other (Commuri 2010:88).

In the national identity narratives in India, JK is so important that it is the only Muslim majority state. In the secular conceptions “accepting the Muslim community as a part of the diverse Indian self is to an extent crucial.” The secular nationalist narrative on Kashmir was always in opposition with Pakistan (symbol of Muslim nationalism) on the one hand and at the same time it opposes the ultra Hindu nationalist positions. In the words of Nehru:

We have always regarded the Kashmir problem as symbolic for us....as it illustrates that we are a secular state....Kashmir has consequences both in India and Pakistan, because if we disposed of Kashmir on the basis of two nation theory, obviously millions of people in India and millions in East Pakistan will be powerfully affected (Commuri 2010: 108).

The ‘protection’ of Kashmir is being defended by Nehru in terms of his opposition to ultra Hindu nationalism. Nehru states:

It helped our thesis of nationalism not being related to religion. If the contrary thesis were proved...it would have a powerful effect on the communal elements in India, both Hindu and Muslim. That is of extreme importance to us- that we don’t, by taking some wrong steps in Kashmir, create these terribly disruptive tendencies within India (Ibid).
So the ‘protection’ of Kashmir justifies the ‘secular’ nationalism and in many ways it qualifies the credentials of the Indian civilisation that it was ‘inclusive.’ The secular nationalists generally focus on the syncretic elements in the Kashmir valley. In this perspective Kashmir represents another ‘unity in diversity.’ The secularists generally use the composite culture in the Valley to debunk the ‘two nation theory’ propagated by the Muslim League. In such a way they have questioned the very rationality of Muslim nationalism and blamed the Muslim League for the creation of Pakistan. Here Pakistan was posited as the outcome of ‘irrational’ mobilisations and practices which had always been in contradiction with the set images about India, a nation claims ‘thousands of years history,’ its ‘multi-cultural existence,’ its ‘malleability’ and the ‘true successor of British Raj.’ This hegemonial status is being threatened by the separatist movements in the Valley, Pak support to the insurgencies and its claims on JK have always been generating ‘insecurity’ in the national imaginations in India. The ‘protection’ of Kashmir signifies an important position not only in the secular national identity narratives but also in the cultural nationalist narrations, wrapped by the extreme ideology, the Hindutva.

In the cultural nationalist narratives, Kashmir is associated with the Hindu legends and the Hindu community. It asserts that Kashmir is the integral part of the Akhanda Bharat. According to the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS), the intellectual nerve of the Sangh Parivar, Kashmir’s ‘history, geography and culture’ shows that it is an inseparable part of ‘Bharat’ (India) (RSS 1953; Upadhyay 2002). The cultural nationalists territorialize the nation with the help of myths and legends; similarly, the origin of Kashmir revolves around the notion that Rishi Kashyap built the Valley and as like many other Hindutva narratives it goes on the story of Muslim invasion and the bitter experiences of the Hindu people. The Sangh Parivar position on Kashmir was very clear in a statement by Savarkar, the prime ideologue of Hindutva:

I wish that the Moslems in Kashmir do not forget that they are subjects of a Hindu state and unless and until they cut off all their connection with such disloyal creeds and organisations as the Pakistani ones and owe an un-divided loyalty to the Hindu state and the unity and in-divisibility of the Central Indian State as well, they cannot claim “the rights” which are dun (sic) to the majority of the loyal citizens alone. As soon as the Moslems whether in the Hindu States or in India as a whole fulfil (sic) these conditions the Hindu Mahasabha will certainly allow them the benefit of its national formula of democratic representation based on the population proportion (1967: 29).

The accusing of extra-territorial loyalty to the minorities is so common in the nationalist narrations of Hindutva. As far as Kashmir is concerned, the Sangh Parivar took an intolerant attitude towards the secularist ambitions of an inclusive nationhood. In theory, by providing special status to Kashmir (Article 370), the secularists showed much to mitigate the ‘insecurity’ faced by the Muslims in the
state after its accession to India. However, in practice, New Delhi pulled the strings of the puppet governments in the state. Because of the external/internal dimensions of politics in JK, New Delhi was so keen in directly controlling the affairs of the state. The anxiety of the Indian government over Kashmir, the vested interests of bureaucracy and military shrinks the space for dialogues.

Differently, the Sangh took a strong position against the Article 370, called for the ‘complete accession of Kashmir to India,’ and stressed the integrity of the nation as ‘one Prime Minister, one flag and one constitution for entire nation including Jammu & Kashmir’ (Golwalkar 1967). The Hindu Right in India has always been campaigning for the handling of the Kashmir problem through military means. Golwalkar viewed that: “Our wise forbears have declared agni-shesha, roga-shesha, runa-shesha and shatru-shesha (residues of fire, disease, debt and enemy) should not be allowed to persist. Even their smallest traces will have to be eliminated. Otherwise, the residual spark may well develop in course of time into an all-consuming fire” (2000: 261). The Hindu Right approach to the question of Kashmir has to be read in the context of the very ideology of Hindutva which always has been generating enemy images for the political consolidation of the pluralist Hindu folk. Here animosity is important to crystallizing the Self and in the process they called for the “handling” of Muslim/Pakistan, consequently providing no space for a friendly dialogue between the Self and the Other.

**Kashmir: Prospects for Peace**

Ashish Nandy says: “Indian tolerance is based on faith. Akbar and Ashoka never heard of secularism. One was a Muslim whose Islam was liberal and the other a Buddhist whose Buddhism was also liberal. What’s the point of using a term that dissociates itself from people?” (The Hindu, 30 July 2014). However, the problem is with the mimicking of western models/concepts without considering the cultural realities of the eastern societies and the need of the time is to re-define the very concept of Secularism especially in the background of the appropriation of the religious space by anti-democratic forces. This should enunciate that secularism is not anti-religious and it provides a ‘creative space’ for alternative imaginations.

The extreme religious identity assertions distort the affable relations between various communities, shrinks the possibilities for composite culture that was developed through centuries of inter-community relations, consequently in a multi-ethnic society like India it reduces the secular space, the space for democratisation. In India secularism is an ideology, and the state sponsored secularism is so antagonistic to the religious systems, termed as ‘irrational systems,’ and it discarded the possible role of religion in democratisation. Here secularism is perceived as an ideology that overwrites the cultural differences. In this context, secularism should
be redefined as a space giving equal status to all belief systems and also provides a lively space for ‘alternative imaginations’ such as the production of syncretic value systems. The last point is very much important that the superimposition of any ideology or non-ideology certainly would occupy the space for alternative imaginations and it is basically against human nature.

The state-centric approach to conflict resolution is not viable in dealing with the issues that have also been a product of statist creations, so that a more idealist and community-centered approach is necessary to deal with the conflicts, especially in the Kashmir Valley where culture can perform a vital role in bringing peace and harmony. Culture is an important area which was totally neglected in the peace-building process. By re-invoking the rich cultural heritage of Jammu & Kashmir especially its syncretic value systems would be a new beginning in democratic institution building. By making the civil society more free and inclusive, the univocal imposition of any particular ideology or dominant value systems can be better countered. So an understanding of the rich cultural heritage of Kashmir is inevitable to ponder over the possibilities for democratisation in the valley.

Jisha Menon narrates her experiences with the Bhand Pather Kashmiri folk performers:

An improvisational form, Bhand Pather – literally “actor’s play” – incorporates dance, Sufi music, and puppetry, in addition to dramatic dialogues. The Bhands perform in a variety of spaces, which include terraced maize i elds, shrine courtyards, and on the streets. In contradistinction to the Partition’s exclusionary narratives of national belonging, the Bhand Pather illuminates a model of sociality that draws on and intermixes multiple cultural traditions. The Bhand Pather performances, from their music to their stories, disorder the discourses of religious polarities that were foundational to the two-nation theory. On my arrival in Kashmir, however, the “syncretic” theatre of the Bhand Pather seemed anachronistic in the wider political context of the Kashmir valley (Menon 2013: 154-55).

The extreme identity assertions along the line of Hindu and Muslim absorb the cultural plurality of the society by integrating the diversity into a monolithic form of imagination about the past, present and future. However, in Kashmir the very pattern of cultural practices is a big challenge to the consolidation of religious identities along the line of majoritarian values. Jisha Menon observed. “That cultural practices in Kashmir complicate and disorder the categorical production of Hindu and Muslim as separate, bounded, hermetically sealed religious traditions is made manifest in the chok dance, performed by the Bhand actors” (ibid). M.K. Raina, a theater director observes: “An extremely superstitious people the Bhands perform this particular chok .... The religious devotion that the Muslim performers bring to their ritual dance in the Hindu temple reveals neither mere lip service to the constitutional ideals of secularism nor a grudging charity that Kashmir:
hospitality and the “unfinished business” of partition” (Menon 2013: 157). The performance of Chok dancers certainly blurs the religious boundaries. It combines satire and spirituality to counter the mimetic territorial rivalry between India and Pakistan. The very idea of ‘hospitality’ and the acceptance of religious and cultural differences are important features of Chok performance (Ibid). The composite culture in the valley is the strength of Kashmiriyat, Kashmir’s ethnic nationalism, however, the secular concept of Kashmiriyat in today’s circumstances is vague and it has an uncertain future. In this context, Kashmiriyat refers to a historical promise which has not yet been fully realised (Khan 2004).

The spread of Wahhabi Islam in South Asia with the ideological and financial support from Saudi Arabia has serious ramifications in India especially in the state of Jammu & Kashmir. The issue of Kashmir has become represented as a conflict between two “homogenous” communities Hindu and Muslim. The rich cultural diversities as well as the syncretic values that had been developed through centuries of inter-community relations have been undermined and the superimposition of an extreme version of Islam, over the Sufi tradition-intertwined with Buddhism and Hinduism, serves the statist interests (Seethi 2011). The extreme identity assertions provide no space for a friendly dialogue between various religious traditions, besides it restricts the space for alternative imaginations. In Kashmir, the religious worship systems went beyond the pre-set boundaries and developed a composite culture through people to people interactions. So a constructive attempt to explore the possibilities of syncretic values is an important step in building peace in Kashmir Valley.

By way of a conclusion it should be noted that there is no ambiguity regarding the fact that the unfinished project of nation-building in India and Pakistan has been victimizing the Kashmiris. The use of exclusionary narratives of the past to define the present always perpetuates stereotypical images about the other and it provides no room for a friendly dialogue between the Self and the Other. The superimposition of any particular ideology, religious or secular, in a pluralist society like India is anti-democratic. The re-definition of the official version of secularism as a space for democratic dialogues, recognition of the cultural diversity as a boon rather than a curse and the incorporation of religious systems in the process of democratisation are certain preconditions for peace-building in the Valley.

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Burning Boundaries and Blurred Boundaries

The external goals of any nation constitute the essence of its foreign policy and involve strategies, measures, methods, directives, understandings and agreements by which it conducts international relations with each other and with international organisations and non-governmental actors. Since it is formulated in accordance with internal needs, the process is regulated by domestic institutions. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) - the South Block - is the institutional body for decision-making in the realm of the foreign policy in India.

The Ministry and the bureaucrats involved in the process have the crucial task of gathering and assessing information, highlighting problems, framing alternative solutions and finally coordinating and operationalising actions responsible for all aspects of external relations. While the foreign minister and ultimately the prime minister and the cabinet are responsible for actual decision making with regard to the fundamentals of foreign policy, the foreign office feeds them with detailed and adequate information by analyzing and evaluating the available data, and recommends concrete measures in each case. The foreign office, therefore, plays a vital and indispensable role in the making of foreign policy, without being ultimately responsible for it (Bandyopadhyaya 1979).

Regarding the nature of decision making happening, it can be said that the MEA has a triple task (Kapur 1994). First, it has the responsibility of taking a vast majority of decisions, secondly it covers controversial and political decisions regarding regions and the third task, more technical than political, covers global macro decisions. The first responsibility falls within the domain of the Ministry, there is only minimal interference from other institutions. But, when it comes to regional and global decisions, the fundamentals formally reside with the executive; the Ministry has the task of feeding the executive with all the inputs that are required to define a policy.
To effectively perform such a task, the Ministry is equipped with a vast network of territorial, functional and administrative structures within the country, and with an equally vast network of diplomatic, consular and economic missions all over the world who jointly help the executive to arrive at conclusions.

**History**

The origins of diplomatic relations were believed to be initiated by English missionaries in the seventeenth century (Benner 1984). This euro-centric view neglects the fact that India had diplomatic relations since ancient times. The Indian epics such as the Mahabharatha, the Ramayana and ancient trade details contradict this fact. However, in 1723, the British East India Company signed its first treaty with an Indian Prince, the Treaty of Anjengo with the Raja of Travancore, which marked the beginning of the most important of British Indian diplomacy functions, managing relations with princely states.

By the year 1783, a well administered government in India, the present bureaucracy’s most important link with the past was developed by the British Raj and in the year 1783, a Foreign Department was established. During Lord Canning’s Governor-Generalship the portfolio system was established under the Indian Councils Act of 1861, as a result of which all the Departments except the Foreign Department was put under the charge of Members of Executive Council while foreign relations were considered directly of the Governor-General of India. It was then onwards that the supremacy of the executive in Foreign office became a tradition. Parallel to the growth in foreign relations the Foreign Department underwent many changes and, in 1919, the Government of India Act made, for the first time, a distinction between Dominion (later more commonly known as Common Wealth) relations and External Affairs.

The growth in the Indian overseas community during this period resulted in the formation of an independent Department of Indians Overseas and in 1944 was designated as the Department of Commonwealth Relations. Later in 1947 the Department of Commonwealth Relations was merged with the Department of External Affairs as the Department of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations. On 29 August 1947 the Department as well as the other seventeen Indian Departments was designated as a Ministry and in 1949 the appendage “Commonwealth Relations” was dropped, and the Ministry of External Affairs in its present form was born (Bandyopadhyaya 1979).

**Organisational Structure**

Since independence, Nehru was both Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, and the Secretary General functioned as the administrative head of the foreign
office to supervise and coordinate the activities of the ministry and to advise the Prime Minister on policy details. The abolition of the post of Secretary-General in 1964 led to the improvement in status of the Minister of External Affairs who now plays an active role in making and interpretation of foreign policy. At present there are two Ministers of State for External Affairs below the External Affairs Minister.

The status of the Foreign Secretary also rose when this change in hierarchy happened after Nehru’s death. At present the administrative head of the foreign office is the Foreign Secretary. Below this are two other Secretaries in the Ministry called as the Commonwealth Secretary and the Special Secretary who afterwards got converted into Secretary (East) and the Secretary (Economic Relations), in order to institutionalize and highlight the growing economic functions of the Ministry of External Affairs. The basic structure of the foreign office consists of divisions, broadly classified as territorial, functional, and administrative. Presently the MEA has about 52 divisions (Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) 2013). The administrative divisions play only an indirect role in the process of policy formulation, while the territorial and functional divisions are more important. The relative importance of a territorial division depends on the significance of the region concerned in international relations and the degree of India’s interest in it.

The main source of information regarding happenings in foreign states and other international developments reach the Ministry of External Affairs through a network of missions and posts maintained by it abroad. The missions are also responsible for the effective implementation of foreign policy. With the expansion of India’s diplomatic activities, the number of missions abroad has grown steadily over the years (MEA).

**Evolving Role of the Ministry of External Affairs**

We now witness the post-liberal era featured by the advent of neoliberalism. Nation-states are most affected by this, as a result of which national policies are to be formulated under compulsions from the external environment rather than internal. Much attention has been paid on how it affects national policy, especially foreign policy. Since it is the MEA that formulates the foreign policy, it is important to know how the decision making process in the South Block becomes complex and diversified in the contemporary age. The Ministry has made changes in its organizational set up and has evolved itself in order to attain compatibility with the present international environment.

The Indian Administration was aware of the incompatibility of the MEA with the changing world from the early days itself. The MEA Annual Report of 1952 addressed: “having regard to the increasing range of the Ministry’s work
and responsibilities, the present strength is quite inadequate. Proposals for the reorganization of the Ministry are under consideration.”

It was in line with this that Lal Bahadur Shastri appointed a Committee in 1964 on the Indian Foreign Service with N.R. Pillai as the Chairman of the group and under him the Member-Secretary N. Krishnan. The Pillai Committee was asked to review the structure and organization of the Indian Foreign Service, with particular reference to recruitment, training and service conditions, and to consider any other matters conducive to the strengthening and efficient functioning of the service at headquarters. The Committee held 77 meetings before submitting its report (also known as the Pillai Committee Report) to the Indira Gandhi government in October 1966. Two major recommendations of the Committee were the upgradation and expansion of the Economic Division and the External Publicity Division of the External Affairs Ministry. The Report also brought into light, major weaknesses in the Indian Foreign Service and the MEA which includes the inefficiency of the diplomatic corps, coordination within the MEA was poor, coordination with other ministries which dealt with foreign policy was almost non-existent and, finally, professional training was limited and, where it existed, inadequate.

Regarding the role of foreign service in a changing world, the Pillai Committee Report observed that “in the context of changes in the international scene and the growing commitments of India abroad, the role of Foreign Service will become increasingly important, its tasks will become much more exacting, especially in the promotion of our trade” (PCR 1965). The Report stated that the primary responsibility for conducting foreign relations vests in the Ministry of External Affairs. Relations of other Ministries with foreign Governments should develop adequate competence within itself and effective inter departmental liaison for discharging this responsibility (Tharoor 1982). Even so, many of the recommendations of the Pillai Report were not acted on, for example its recommendation to re-establish the Secretary-General Office who earlier conducted the coordination process within the MEA.

Even though the Report stated that the primary responsibility for conducting foreign relations vests in the Ministry of External Affairs, with regard to the Economic Division’s role was mainly advisory. Economic collaboration in general and Joint Commissions in particular, were the direct responsibility of the Ministry of Commerce. Technical assistance programmes’ of the UN and its specialized agencies and those under the Colombo Plan and other multilateral organizations were the direct responsibility of the Department of Economic Affairs of the Ministry of Finance. Bilateral economic and trade agreements were generally signed by the Commerce and other economic ministries. The Ministry of External Affairs mainly offered political advice and the services of its missions abroad to
the other ministries. Similarly, with regard to regional and international economic cooperation the Ministry of External Affairs offered only political advice and support and the services of its missions and posts. An Economic Affairs Division was created within the Ministry of External Affairs in 1947 itself but was abolished in 1950 as an economy measure. In 1961 the Division was revived as the Economic and Coordination Division under a Joint Secretary. In 1964 it was renamed simply as the Economic Division in order to emphasize the essentially economic nature of its work (Bandypoadhyaya 1979). The Division is expected to coordinate the handling of international economic questions and thus would help in the formulation of a closely integrated politico-economic policy.

As India became a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), several policy changes became inevitable in the realm of trade, investment, service, industry and agriculture and this became a crucial phase of ideological shift from a liberal-democratic framework to a neoliberal agenda of development (Seethi and Vijayan 2005). During this period, the Ministry’s role in foreign policy making was sidelined as it became inadequate to meet with the needs of economic diplomacy. But the Ministry of External Affairs made structural adjustments to overcome this inadequacy. This major change in the organization and making of foreign policy has also been reflected in the growing number of economic and commercial posts abroad. The earlier trend of many ministries of the Government of India, especially those connected with economic affairs, in signing treaties and agreements with foreign governments, often without referring to the Ministry of External Affairs came to an end. During the past few years, the Ministry of External Affairs has successfully increased its control over all foreign economic agreements and in this respect greater cooperation/coordination has developed between it and the other ministries especially the Ministry of Foreign Trade. The Foreign Office also takes an active part in all foreign trade discussions through Economic Division.

But criticisms have been raised claiming that the power for decision making of the MEA has been declined. Kapur (1994) writes: “it’s crucial role notwithstanding, the Ministry’s powers in actual foreign policy making has, through the years, suffered a decline. The Ministry is no longer what it used to be the sole decision making centre of foreign policy.”

Many factors have been held responsible for this and a few of them are noted below. The first and most important reason is institutional. Through the years other institutions have emerged, with whom the MEA has to share the responsibility of decision making. The growing importance of covert international information, the increasing globalization of India’s economy, and the accretion of India’s involvement in conflict situations brought to the forefront an array of other institutions involved in foreign affairs which can hardly be ignored in any foreign
policy making. At first, even after the inauguration of policy planning, foreign policy decisions were jealously guarded by the foreign ministry as something that fell within its exclusive domain. This situation did not last and a Policy Planning and Review Committee was established in 1966 (Mishra 1977).

Another reason for the dilution of the Ministry’s powers was the personality factor in relation to the head of the government. Whenever India had a strong Prime Minister at the top with a particular interest in foreign affairs, the Ministry of External Affairs was invariably downgraded and sidetracked. The period of Jawaharlal Nehru and of Narendra Modi as we witness today affirm to this fact. On the other hand, the emergence of a weak Prime Minister, with only a marginal interest in foreign affairs, invariably resulted in the Ministry assuming some degree of responsibility on global macro decisions. However, on regional based decisions, even a weak Prime Minister maintained a hold, given the clear link that exists between domestic and regional matters. Another such influencing factor is the Indian Parliament. Article 246 of the Indian Constitution empowers it to legislate on “all matters which brings the Union into relations with any foreign country.”

But the most important reason to be considered is the emergence of the economic diplomacy. Its importance had already become evident in the sixties and the increasing globalisation of the economy has made economic diplomacy the deciding factor of India’s foreign policy. It resulted in the strengthening of the Ministry’s Economic Division, but also increased the power of other economic ministries. Over the years, as a result of the increasing emphasis being placed on trade and business with other countries and regions, the role of the MEA has been considerably curtailed and it has become an appendage of other ministries, particularly the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Finance whose primary domain of engagement today is external rather than internal (Seethi 2010).

The nature and role of the nation-state in this phase underwent a dynamic transition due to the operation of forces unleashed by the neoliberal assertion. Thus the nature of the Indian state changed. It also led to the erosion of national and state sovereignty. The policy makers in India in this phase encountered a variety of challenges in the realm of state, political economy and foreign policy.

The current policy of liberalisation and globalisation provides very little option for an independent foreign policy, particularly in the economic domain. In foreign policy realm, the strong influence of the force of globalisation in both ideology and practice can be seen from the 1990s. But with the integration of the Indian economy with the global economy, major changes were made in the nature of Indian diplomacy. This explains the significant change in the role of the Ministry of External Affairs in the formulation of foreign policy.
During this period, the role of the Ministry of External Affairs and of the Indian Missions abroad has changed in pursuing our economic objectives abroad. Ramakrishan (2005) states that the Indian Foreign Ministry’s pivotal role in formulating policies regarding the states external relationship has given way to its sharing of responsibilities with the Commerce and Finance Ministries - the cumulative effect has been the assignment of an overall secondary role for the foreign ministry, in setting the agenda o India’s foreign policy. The role of the Ministry of External Affairs in foreign policy making underwent changes as the finance and commerce ministries had been handling major part of the external dealings. The question of whether economics preceded politics arises here but, it is to be remembered that however important as they are, economic interests do not stand alone, but are linked to political interests which may modify or even override their effect (Deutsch 1978).

MEA for all practical purposes had a residual role – largely of coordination and providing political inputs to the economic ministries. In other words, the ministry had to be a part of overall issues like development, growth, trade, investments, capital and technology flows, which were all integral to a new economic architecture and decision making process. In order to formulate foreign policy under such circumstances, the South Bloc had to get enough information regarding all foreign relations conducted by other Ministries. This has become a major challenge as problems of internal coordination occurred between different ministries the MEA itself. Also, foreign intelligence was first in the hands of the Home Ministry and then of the Prime Minister’s Secretariat. Hence the Ministry had only limited information source.

Way back in 1964, a Coordination Division was set up as part of the recommendations made by the Pillai Committee Report farseeing these problems. The Division functions as nodal point of the Ministry for all work relating to Parliament, interaction with other Ministries, Departments, State Government Offices, Union Territories and Autonomous bodies.

In order to carve out a significant role, the Ministry of External Affairs evolved itself and retained its dominant position regarding the conduct of foreign relations and in the formation of foreign policy. Earlier, the sole purpose of the Ministry of External Affairs was in the formulation of foreign policy. Due to the changing situation, a new dimension was given to the activities carried out by the Ministry. In order to adjust with the changing circumstances caused during the post-liberal period, measures were taken within the Ministry of External Affairs to find itself a more useful role in the conduct of foreign relations. The efforts taken by the personals were in ensuring that the MEA and India’s missions became more proactive and useful in economic and commercial work. This has to be done by refashioning the
economic desks in the MEA and making the ministries regular interaction with its missions, relevant ministries, apex chambers of commerce, commodity boards, media, ITPO (Indian Trade Fair Authorities), etc. It also functions in the projection and promotion of India’s unique core competencies among others, in emerging thrust areas of knowledge, high technology, tourism, services, soft power and its attributes, human resource development, Diaspora, education, medicine, etc (Ram 2012). Coordinated action was also taken up in areas like tourism, security, civil aviation, agriculture, taxation and investments. In the present context, MEA successfully increased its control over all foreign economic agreements and in this respect, greater cooperation and coordination has developed between it and other ministries.

Another major step taken by the MEA was in the creation of a Public Diplomacy Division within it in the year 2006 with a purpose to foster enhanced public understanding and participation of India and its foreign policy. Its mandate enables it to organize and support a wide range of activities both in India and abroad with a purpose of projecting India’s soft power (MEA 2006). The Division acts as a ‘representative of dialogues’ by organizing academic lectures and events, concerns itself with publications, and conducts Digital Diplomacy by means of new social media. It provides an effective and economic tool for the government to understand the nation’s feedback. The Division has also contributed to facilitate an informed discourse on foreign policy issues. Realising the difficulty faced by the research community in accessing the official documents of the MEA, the Public Diplomacy Division worked along with the National Archives of India and made available a list of over 70,000 declassified files from the MEA during the time period of 1903-1972.

In the light of the above details, it is made clear that foreign policy of India is made possible by the group effort of several ministries and non-ministerial bodies and not just of the Ministry of External Affairs alone. Foreign policy formulation is done by the coordinated efforts of all bodies conducting foreign relations and communication and coordination among them are vital.

The South Block and South Asia

Each state has to formulate its foreign policy, first with its immediate neighbours and secondly with other states and non state actors, with whom it considers to have desirable relations with. This is why India’s relations with countries in South Asia become a vital sphere of concern. The formulation of India’s foreign policy towards South Asia has been influenced by factors such as security conditions, industrial and economic potential, domestic conditions, dependence with India, trade and commerce and ideological compulsions. The South Asian Association for Regional
The South Block and South Asian Diplomacy

Cooperation (SAARC) is the only organization through which India interacts with her immediate neighbours in South Asia. Unfortunately, India has disputes with most of the countries in the region which has an adverse effect on foreign relations.

This aspect becomes visible while evaluating the reasons of low level of integration within the (SAARC), which was formulated by the eight constituent countries in the South Asian region for enhancing regional integration, cooperation and economic growth, thereby in bringing prosperity in the region. Free trade is considered one of the most critical factors in accelerating regional economic growth. The agreement on the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA), signed in Islamabad in January 2004 is another initiative taken as such. But the Indian industry realizes the South Asian region as not only inadequate for the expansion of its capital, technology, trade and services, but also that the region does not provide a suitable political climate within which New Delhi can comfortably carry forward its economic and commercial transactions. This has given momentum to India’s policy planners in enhancing trans-regional engagements (Seethi 2010), than in the promotion of regional engagements. Also India’s predominant position in South Asia and conflicts between her neighbours act as a major reason for low level of organizational unity within SAARC and in the functioning of SAFTA. This citation has resulted in the formation of more bilateral treaties in the region than multilateral ones as nation states are suspicious of India’s ambitions and also fear the monopolization of Indian goods in their markets. Also India now focus on initiatives like Bay of Bengal Initiatives for Multilateral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMST-EC), Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) while it shows relative negligence towards the SAARC.

Strategic and military compulsions arising from the region makes it a vital spot for India where she should keep her interests sustained in order to have a peaceful neighbourhood. India should have closer ties with South Asian countries which would provide better space for negotiations in within countries and in the region. It is the South Bloc that could effectively carry out this function by enhancing activities of cooperation and trade enhancement within the SAARC. China becoming the largest trade partner with most states along with India, results in lessening the strategic hold of India in the region. Most states now use the China card to counter and balance against the predominance of India. Hence the primary focus of the South Block should be on our South Asian neighbourhood and thereby enhancing mechanisms of integration.

On the other hand, the context in the subcontinent is changing in a manner that augurs well for closer regional economic linkages. The best option for the region is to make the SAARC a more effective economic organization thereby improving connectivity which leads to regional integration (Pant 2014). The Sixteenth Summit
in Thimphu called for greater intra-regional connectivity and endorsed 2010-2020 as the “Decade of intra-regional connectivity in SAARC.” Being an influential candidate in the region and having close bilateral ties with most countries, India should take the lead in re-programming SAARC for the next decade and ahead.

There have been no meetings by the leaders since the last Summit in Maldives in November 2011. Even though the Ministers of Finance, Commerce, Health and Home have been meeting in the course of the last two years, no meetings were conducted by the External Affairs Ministry. The MEA should be aware about the strategic importance of the region and take initiatives for developing closer ties within. In this aspect, the South Block should revisit its South Asia policy in order to promote stability and to pursue material benefits from the region.

**Future Prospects for the South Block**

The Indian system of administration is still in its process of adjusting itself with the compulsions of the larger international system, so as the South Block. Under these circumstances, changes are made inevitable in order to cope up with the changing environment. Even from earlier times, it had been recommended that the administrative framework should have a built in mechanism for introducing necessary changes from time to time, to make the policy formulation amenable to the fast moving international scenario (Khilnani 1981).

The role of bureaucracy is inevitable within the Ministry as it is they who preserve the continuity of policy as foreign ministers change from time to time. The Ministry of External Affairs is lagged by the inadequate number of diplomatic corps staffing in various embassies and consulates across the world. India, with greater global ambitions and responsibilities, is not adequate enough to carry out its future aspirations with the existing number of personals employed. Also in the present scenario, the MEA needs expertise that it cannot provide from its own ranks. As it deals with a wide range of activities as stated in the earlier parts of the paper, it needs to recruit experts from different fields, but the MEA keeps a silence to consider this as it is unwilling to look beyond its own ranks. A separate Foreign Service exam, with a greater emphasis on international relations and languages, is also essential in order to recruit refined diplomats for future that would have a major hand in dealing with foreign relations.

Relations among state and non state entities are now so complex that the traditional boundaries between foreign and domestic affairs are blurring. Foreign ministries are now over worked; most of the departments are involved in many foreign issues, giving rise to grave problems of coordination (Frankel 1988). With the Coordination Division, through which the South Block manages to conduct interactions with other departments conducting foreign relations, and as a result
compulsions arising from the steady changing nature of international relations, the process of coordination has been enhanced in the near past. However, still greater levels of interaction needs to be achieved, also in a highly interconnected world, the MEA requires information from multiple sources. This is where coordination and communication becomes vital. The Ministry has close ties to the commerce ministries whereas its interaction with other bodies such as the Defense and Home Ministries is limited. Foreign intelligence information is available first in the hand of these ministries where they keep it as their sole subject. It has also been seen that issues regarding disputes between countries are at hand considered by these Ministries and the role of the Ministry of External Affairs is neglected as an efficient instrument for negotiation. The ministry is less allowed to involve in such disputes which often leads to the worsening of diplomatic ties between countries involved. The recent dispute with Italy regarding the *Enrica Lexie* case is such an event where the MEA had only a residual role while the Home Ministry took over.

Another problem facing the diplomats in practicing foreign policy is when strategic and diplomatic considerations would also come in mutually conflicting situations where negotiation and coordination becomes problematic. India’s policy towards China and Pakistan is examples of this. While economic and diplomatic ties compel them to work together, military-strategic relations often tend to pull the string the other way. It is to be noted that, “pluralism in the policy process leads to a better policy or at least more moderate one than the centrally restrictive machine” (Benner 1984). This can be exercised along with mutual trust among various departments and combined efforts.

The Indian system of coalition government functioned as a major setback in the functioning of the MEA as the foreign minister or the head of the government may be restricted by party priorities or coalition requirements. The MEA has devalued itself during the previous UPA regime in its relations with Sri Lanka, influenced by the compulsions made by the Tamil Nadu government on the issue of participation in the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), 2013. However with the Bharatiya Janatha Party now ascending a majority position through the 2014 elections, we can see a slight change in Indian foreign policy, especially in favour of South Asian integration. It can be also seen that, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi nowadays assumes personal responsibility for major foreign policy decisions and the Ministry gets sidelined. However, it should be noted that while doing so, he requires certain information that the Ministry of External Affairs can only provide. The Parliament too, even though plays an increasing role in domestic than in foreign affairs have interest in relations with some countries, especially in the South Asian region. Even while their role is minimal in the formulation process, the budget requirements in order to implement these decisions are to be sanctioned
by them. They are also authorized to pass laws in order to implement international treaty requirements in domestic sphere.

While foreign policy concerns with substance and contents of external relations, diplomacy concerns itself with the methodology for implementing the foreign policy (Krishnamurthy 1980). This is where the prospects of applying Public Diplomacy in the practice of foreign policy emerge. The traditional practice of diplomacy no longer holds its stand in the present situation. Public Diplomacy should be enhanced as a better means in achieving the ends India wishes to acquire. It helps the government in influencing public attitudes towards foreign policy issues and in ensuring popular participation. It also provides as an effective tool for India to have closer integration process with the South Asian region. As most countries in the region views India with suspicion, Track II and Track III Diplomacy initiatives help to attain more cooperation and transparency in India’s South Asian policy.

While we pursue our overarching goals of regional integration through the SAARC, we should not miss out the opportunities of sub-regional cooperation. There are some indications that South Asian countries are willing to make economic linkages with India as opposed to political and security considerations. India’s economic growth in the last two decades has positioned it to credibly play the role of a regional hegemon. India’s neighbours are slowly realizing the tremendous opportunity that India presents for their growth prospects. Bangladesh wanting to enhance trade and connectivity with India, Pakistan agreeing to confer “Most Favored Nation” status to India, are signs of this. India too has understood the fact that allowing its neighbours to grow is essential both to reduce political differences in the region and it enables India to play an increasing role in global politics. As economic compulsions prompt states to cooperate in spite of mutual conflicts, the South Block should utilize this opportunity to create stable diplomatic ties in the region.

A major factor to be concerned by the South Block is that in its pursuit of economic prosperity, the domestic conditions prevailing in the country should not be neglected. The Ministry is often ambitious of the larger national interest of India and often neglects its implications for domestic actors. The present globalized world necessitates a high level of economic integration which is not always in favour with the developing economies of the Third World. The World Trade Organization (WTO), of which India is a member, advocates the implementation of Free Trade Areas (FTA) and makes its member nations to follow this policy, as part of which India has also signed several Free Trade Agreements. The above dilemma can be seen while evaluating India’s relations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement has in the long
run turned out to be a challenge to economic stability within India as it becomes a
threat to the manufacturing, agricultural and fisheries sectors. The state of Kerala
is a victim of this as the agricultural sector has been adversely affected and the
national government becomes unable to handle the issue. Representing India
within such larger bodies, it is the duty of the South block to advocate for its causes
in the global arena and negotiate for the comparative advantage, keeping in mind
the domestic conditions. The MEA should also take into account far reaching effects
while signing such agreements in future. Also it should consider the interests of all
individual actors and should not subject itself to compulsions arising from internal
political tensions.

India, along with other South Asian countries had more or less similar
experiences in facing globalization process. Indian foreign policy underwent major
changes since the 1990s as a result of integration with the neoliberal regime. This
became evident from the Uruguay negotiations conducted by the WTO and was a
clear deviation from India’s earlier projected aspirations for the third world which it
advocated since the time of independence. India now focuses on creating closer ties
with the developed world and this has led to a decline in the image of India among
the third world countries and in the region itself. Being itself a developing country
with multitude of internal contradictions, it would be desirable for India to have a
strong third world policy and closer ties with immediate neighbors, which would
provide an ideal negotiating space for itself as well as other developing nations.
Positive signs towards this can be seen in the South Asian Policy developed by the
BJP government with Prime Minister Narendra Modi initiating dialogues between
heads of South Asian countries. However, effective steps are to be initiated by the
MEA to take this mission forward as we can see it in its increasing concentration
towards the Look Easy policy.

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India’s Space Programme:  
Remapping contours of ‘Security’  
Girish Kumar R.

India successfully launched Mangalyaan, a rocket, to Mars in November 2013, commemorating fifty years of its first rocket launch in 1963 under Vikram Sarabhai in a majestic way. Mangalyaan or Mars vehicle is part of a scientific mission that will orbit the planet, Mars. It cost Rs 4.5 billion, or $73 million, which was one-sixth of NASA’s Mars mission that cost $455 million. A year later India’s indigenously built Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) which placed satellites from France, Germany, Canada and Singapore from Sriharikota into orbit had cost less to make than the Hollywood film “Gravity” - a British-American 3D sci-fi thriller that cost about $100 million. The launch of the first rocket, made on 21 November 1963 from Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS), near Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, marked the beginning of the Indian Space Programme. The rocket made it possible to analyse the atmosphere in situ using rocket-borne instrumentation. With the establishment of the TERLS at Thumba, a location close to the magnetic equator, there was a “quantum jump in the scope for aeronomy and atmospheric sciences in India.” Its space programme emphasised on civilian applications. It has successfully ‘integrated space technology into the lives of a significant segment of its population and has made the public aware of its services.’ ISRO thus became a household name. As outlined by Sarabhai, Indian thrust was on the application of advanced space technologies to the ‘real problems of man and society.’ Concomitantly, the evolving focus was on human security rather than military security.

1. The Institutional Structure

Post-independent India embarked upon creating a scientific society reflecting ‘European positivism via technological advance’ than Gandhi’s vision of a peasant society. Its institutional designs for space programme were devised in 1962,
by establishing INCOSPAR (Indian National Committee for Space Research). This initiative of Jawaharlal Nehru created an ad hoc institutional apparatus to formulate the Indian Space Programme with Vikram Sarabhai at the helm of affairs. In accordance with the decision of INCOPSAR, the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS) was established in Trivandrum, Kerala the same year. With the formation of ISRO in 1969 Indian space endeavours took a new direction. Subsequently, the Space Commission was constituted, and in 1972, the Government established the Department of Space (DOS) bringing ISRO under its fold. The Space Commission frames space policies and oversees their implementation for the socio-economic benefit of the country. DOS implements these programmes. For this it has specialized regimes like ISRO, National Atmospheric Research Laboratory (NARL), Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), North Eastern-Space Applications Centre (NE-SAC) and Semi-Conductor Laboratory (SCL). Antrix Corporation, ISRO’s commercial wing established in 1992, markets the space products and services as a government owned company (Space India 2011). It may further be noted that ‘mandatory layers of bureaucracy’ present in any government body is absent in India’s space institutional architecture. Instead, “specialists in the field and technocrats – starting with Sarabhai himself – rather than mandarins have populated the upper echelons of the hierarchy” (Moltz 2012).

*Chart 1: The Institutional Architecture*

Source: Department of Space (2014).
For developing Space Science in the nation, the DOS has evolved the following programmes:

- “Indian National Satellite (INSAT) programme for telecommunications, TV broadcasting, meteorology, developmental education, etc.
- Remote Sensing programme for the application of satellite imagery for various developmental purposes.
- Indigenous capability for design and development of spacecraft and associated technologies for communications, resources survey and space sciences.
- Design and development of launch vehicles with indigenous technology for access to space and orbiting INSAT, IRS spacecraft and space science missions.
- Research and development in space sciences and technologies as well as application programme for national development” (Space India 2011)

India’s Space budget

The Department of Space has its own budget, which is exclusively meant for the ISRO. For the last 10 years, ISRO’s total budget has stood at Rs 43,867 crore, which is provided below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Plan Outlay</th>
<th>Non-Plan Outlay</th>
<th>Total Budget</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003-2004</td>
<td>2,050</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>2,368</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>2,731</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>3,148</td>
<td>417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>3,220</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>3,610</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>3,420</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>3,858</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>4,074</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>4,100</td>
<td>859</td>
<td>4,959</td>
<td>885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>778</td>
<td>5,778</td>
<td>819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>5,700</td>
<td>926</td>
<td>6,626</td>
<td>848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>5,615</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>6,715</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Rs Crore)

Source: India Spend (2012).

2. India’s Space Programme (1963-2013): A Saga of Global Collaboration

Indian space programme took wings when the world was in the midst of Cold War. India initiated its space programme in 1962, by establishing INCOSPAR (Indian National Committee for Space Research), later replaced by ISRO (Indian
Space Research Organization) in 1969. Government or related public sector enterprises monopolise India’s space ecosystem. But forefathers of Indian space programme in tune with the policy of non-alignment endeavored to keep our space mission away from the dynamics of global power politics with an avowed vision of peaceful use of space. Vikram Sarabhai, the founder of Indian space mission declared:

> There are some who question the relevance of space activities in a developing nation. To us, there is no ambiguity of purpose. We do not have the fantasy of competing with the economically advanced nations in the exploration of the moon or the planets or manned space-flight. But we are convinced that if we are to play a meaningful role nationally, and in the community of nations, we must be second to none in the application of advanced technologies to the real problems of man and society.

Indian space programme made strides not in isolation. Innovation in space technology calls for global networks and involves complex interplay of states, spaces and transnational technological systems. Krige et al. (2013) cite NASA as a large technoscientific undertaking situated in ‘transnational or global frameworks, in recognition of the interdependence and interconnectivity of the modern state’.¹ Indian space innovation system cannot function in seclusion. ISRO has formal cooperative arrangements with space agencies of 33 countries. They include Russia, France, Germany, United States of America, Israel, The Netherlands, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Egypt, Hungary, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Mauritius, Mongolia, Myanmar, Norway, Peru, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Syria, Thailand, and Venezuela. The major areas of cooperation are Remote Sensing of Earth, Satellite Communication, Launch Services, Telemetry and Tracking Support, Space Exploration, Space Law and Capacity Building (DOS, 2014).

The Cold War has, in fact, facilitated India to develop space technology capability by forging tie-ups with different powers belonging to divergent camps, as each one of them attempted to align and woo a non-aligned India. India went the middle way between two powers and maintained an independent space policy, although unwritten. India had cooperation in space with the USA, the USSR and different space powers for different projects. In 1967, a satellite was given to India to conduct SITE (Satellite Instructional Television Experiment) by US. NASA helped ISRO in satellite broadcasting and remote sensing – till 1974. India had received NASA training, ground stations for Landsat remote-sensing data, and technological assistance in the form of Nike-Apache rockets in the 1960s, but was still skeptical about its dependence on US. (Moltz 2014) In 1975, the first successful satellite Aryabhatta was launched with the support of USSR. During 1977-79 India
conducted STEP (Symphonic Telecommunications Experimental Project) in collaboration with France and Germany (Moltz, 2012).

In order to meet the growing communication demand, India initiated the GSLV. In 1986-87 India approved the development of INSAT series of satellites. This was relatively heavier and had much more capability and capacity in terms of putting the payloads into GTO (Geostationary Transfer Orbit) or higher orbits. For achieving this, acquisition of next generation technology was required. In 1986, India initiated the cryogenic programme following the Chinese acquiring the technology in 1984. India rejected the offers for cryogenic technology from the USA and France due to the high cost, low value addition and absence of transfer of technology clause in the deal. Instead India accepted the offer by Soviet (later Russia) space agency Glavkosmos because: 1) the cost was on an average one-third of what the other powers offered; and 2) the offer had a provision of transfer of technology too. But the victory of the US in the Cold War left the US as the sole superpower and restricted Indian access to space technology even more. The scuttled cryogenic technology transfer between India and Russia should be viewed against this backdrop. The Indo-Russian cryogenic deal saw US tightening export controls on high-technology items. In May 1992 US imposed sanctions on ISRO citing violation of MTCR, and prohibited the transfer of advanced US space, nuclear and missile technologies to Indian companies. This has not only waylaid the transfer of technology but also retracted the progress of India in terms of space technology, which took India more than two decades to overcome. The acquisition of cryogenic technology would have significantly enhanced the payload capability of India’s space launch. The Indo-US relations deteriorated further after India’s nuclear tests in 1998, when the Clinton administration enforced a unilateral embargo on ISRO.

During the same time, the nearly two-decade (1979-98) US-China space cooperation came to a halt following the Congressional Cox committee conclusions on Chinese spying against US nuclear and missile sector. But China’s first human spaceflight in 2003 and its subsequent emergence as a military space power facilitated India forging strategic partnerships with US and changed Washington’s dystopian view of Indian space technology use. In 2004 Indo-US civilian space programmes were made part of the India-US Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) agreement. In the light of an assertive China breaking an informal international moratorium between US and USSR (later Russia) vis-à-vis anti-satellite (ASAT) test in 2007, the space race in Asia deepened, even making some scholars think that India should develop ASAT due to its significant deterrent value (Lele 2012). The Indo-US strategic ties strengthened deeper. Indian mission of 2008, the Chandrayan 1, included equipment, experiments and ‘technical assistance’ from NASA. The political and geostrategic pressure of civil space
dynamics forced ISRO to move into human spaceflight, and it shows concern of rising China, a concern India shares with the US. In 2011 when ESA proposed China a partner in ISS, the US mentioned India a possible member (Moltz 2012).

Indo-French commercial ties in satellite building and launch services have seen the launch of the French satellite ‘SPOT-6’. Ariane Space, a French launch service provider launched 16 Indian Geostationary satellites on commercial basis. This included India’s advanced meteorological satellite INSAT-3D and communication satellite GSAT-7 in 2013. Similarly, for ISRO’s Mars Orbiter Mission, NASA provided Deep Space Navigation and Tracking services support. ISRO collaborated with Canadian Space Agency (CSA) to realise the Ultra Violet Imaging Telescope (UVIT) (DOS 2014).

3. India’s Untold Space Policy: From Human Security to Military Security

The dual-use characteristics of space technology make the applications of space technology tools for political and military dominance forcing the nations to have a dystopic view about its utility. Indian space programme, however, emphasized on civilian applications and has successfully ‘integrated space technology into the lives of a significant segment of its population and in making the public aware of its services’. It made ISRO a household name. As outlined in Sarabhai’s speech Indian thrust was on the application of advanced space technologies to the ‘real problems of man and society’. Consequently, the evolving thrust was on human security rather than military security. Only at a later stage, ‘India’s technology transfer moved from the civilian side to the military side’ – quite unusual to other nations, where military concerns precede, and predominate the contours of space policy (Moltz 2012). Given its huge developmental challenges with a one billion plus population, its space programmes focused on telemedicine, tele-education, disaster warning, search and rescue operations, mobile communications, remote sensing and weather forecasting. Its space missions included broadcasting, monitoring environmental surveillance, survey of natural resources, and predicting disasters, communication, meteorology and oceanography. “Initially, the space programme focused on achieving self-reliance by developing capability to build and launch communication satellites for television broadcasts, telecommunications and meteorological applications as also remote sensing satellites for management of natural resources. In keeping with objective of ISRO to develop space technology and its application to nation building, it has operationalized two major satellite systems. One is called Indian National Satellite (INSAT) and the other Indian Remote Sensing (IRS). The first one is used for communication services while the other is for management of natural resources.” Further, in consonance with the swelling number of satellites, ISRO developed launching vehicles as well. “ISRO

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India’s Space Programme

uses Geostationary Satellite Launch Vehicles (GSLV) for INSAT type satellites and Polar Satellite Launch vehicles for launching IRS type satellites. Its PSLV-C26 successfully launched IRNSS-1C, the third satellite in the Indian regional Navigational satellite system on October 16 from Satish Dhavan Space Centre, Sriharikota…” (Handoo 2014).

**Satellites**

USSR launched India’s first satellite, the Aryabhatta in 1975. Named after the legendary astronomer Aryabhata, the 5th century astronomer and mathematician, the satellite was built to conduct experiments in X-ray astronomy, aeronomics, and solar physics. This was followed by a series of multipurpose geostationary satellites, the INSAT (Indian National Satellite System) to meet the requirements of telecommunications, broadcasting, meteorology and search-and-rescue needs of India. It was commissioned in 1983 involving a tripartite collaboration – ISRO, AIR and Doordarshan. Having one of the largest constellations of remote sensing satellite system in the world, Indian Remote Sensing satellites (IRS) are a series of earth observation satellites placed in polar sun synchronous orbit. In 2009 Radar Imaging Satellites (RISAT) was launched. ISRO launched many experimental geostationary satellites, which include Kalpana-1, and the Indo-French satellite - SARAL (2013) to monitor the ocean surface and sea levels. ISRO has also launched the first Indian Navigation Satellite, the IRNSS-1A in 2013 (first of its seven series programme) and IRNSS-1B in October 2014. ISRO’s plan to launch its own navigation system as an alternative to Global Navigation Satellite Systems, GPS, as part of its IRNSS satellite navigation system this year, is yet to fructify. This programme is expected to be completed in 2016. It is expected that when the seventh Satellite, the last in the IRNSS system is placed, India could have its own navigation system. To realize the delivery of the benefits of science, ISRO collaborates with other ministries like the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Ministry of Information and broadcasting, etc. India is also contemplating the idea of a SAARC satellite as a symbol of its foreign policy – ‘Neighbourhood first’ – to address the developmental and communication needs of SAARC nations.

**Launchers**

Meanwhile, to meet the growing communication demand, India made efforts to strengthen its launchers. This was immediately required as the government approved the development of INSAT series of satellites in 1986-87. This was relatively heavier and had much more capability and capacity in terms of putting the payloads into GTO (Geostationary Transfer Orbit) or higher orbits. For achieving this, acquisition of next generation technology was required. Configuration of
Indian Launch vehicles progressed gradually – from SLV’s success that led to advanced launch vehicle projects that include the Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle (ASLV), Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) and the Geosynchronous satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) – all addressing India’s development concerns and make it self-reliant. In the initial phase Indian focus was on building satellites that was required to meet the nation’s nation building process that included using technology to address education and health. Nation’s growing requirements for communication facilities strengthened its demand for launch vehicles later.

**Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV)**

The Satellite Launch Vehicle project headed by APJ Abdul Kalam had its beginnings in the 1970s. Satellite Launch Vehicle-3 (SLV-3) was an all-solid, four-stage vehicle capable of placing 40 kg class payloads in Low Earth Orbit (LEO). SLVs were, in fact, the baby steps that eventually enabled India to make a long journey in the remit of space.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Launch date</th>
<th>Payload</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>SLV-3</td>
<td>April 17, 1983</td>
<td>Rohini Satellite RS-D2</td>
<td>Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SLV-3D1</td>
<td>May 31, 1981</td>
<td>Rohini Satellite RS-D1</td>
<td>Partial failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>SLV-3E2</td>
<td>July 18, 1980</td>
<td>Rohini Satellite RS-1</td>
<td>Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>SLV-3E1</td>
<td>August 10, 1979</td>
<td>Rohini Technology Payload (RTP)</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ISRO available at http://www.isro.gov.in

**ASLV**

ASLV, the second generation of India’s launch vehicles, was designed as a five-stage vehicle - all-solid propellant. Under the ASLV programme four developmental flights were conducted - 1987, 1988 and 1992 and 1994.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Launch date</th>
<th>Payload</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ASLV-D4</td>
<td>May 05, 1994</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SROSS-C2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ASLV-D3</td>
<td>May 20, 1992</td>
<td>SROSS-C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ASLV-D2</td>
<td>Jul 13, 1988</td>
<td>SROSS-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>ASLV-D1</td>
<td>Mar 24, 1987</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SROSS-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ISRO available at http://www.isro.gov.in
India’s Space Programme

**PSLV**

PSLV, the third generation launch vehicle of India is ‘the Workhorse of ISRO’ that has made 28 missions to Low Earth Orbits so far. It is equipped with liquid stages and can take up to 1,750 kg of payload to Sun-Synchronous Polar Orbits of 600 km altitude. After its first successful launch in October 1994, the vehicle has successfully launched two spacecraft – Chandrayaan-1 in 2008 and Mars Orbiter Spacecraft in 2013 – that later traveled to Moon and Mars respectively, carrying Indian and foreign satellites (ISRO). Its time tested reliability facilitated commercialization of India’s space programmes as well. For instance, in 2014, ISRO’s PSLV-C23 launch vehicle lifted satellites from four nations - a French Earth Observation Satellite SPOT-7, AISAT of Germany, CAN-X4 and CAN-X5 of Canada and VELOX-1 of Singapore (DOS 2014).

### Table 3: Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) (1993-2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Launch date</th>
<th>Launcher type</th>
<th>Orbit</th>
<th>Payload</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>PSLV-C 26/IRNSS-1C</td>
<td>Oct 16, 2014</td>
<td>PSLV-XL</td>
<td>GTO</td>
<td>IRNSS-1C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>PSLV-C 23</td>
<td>Jun 30, 2014</td>
<td>PSLV-CA</td>
<td>SSPO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>PSLV-C 24/IRNSS-1B</td>
<td>Apr 04, 2014</td>
<td>PSLV-XL</td>
<td>GTO</td>
<td>IRNSS-1B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>PSLV-C 25</td>
<td>Nov 05, 2013</td>
<td>PSLV-XL</td>
<td>HEO</td>
<td>Mars Orbiter Mission Spacecraft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>PSLV-C 22/IRNSS-1A</td>
<td>Jul 01, 2013</td>
<td>PSLV-XL</td>
<td>GTO</td>
<td>IRNSS-1A</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>PSLV-C 20/SARAL</td>
<td>Feb 25, 2013</td>
<td>PSLV-CA</td>
<td>SSPO</td>
<td>SARAL</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>PSLV-C 21</td>
<td>Sep 09, 2012</td>
<td>PSLV-CA</td>
<td>SSPO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>PSLV-C 19/RISAT-1</td>
<td>Apr 26, 2012</td>
<td>PSLV-XL</td>
<td>SSPO</td>
<td>RISAT-1</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>PSLV-C 18/Megha-Tropiques</td>
<td>Oct 12, 2011</td>
<td>PSLV-CA</td>
<td>SSPO</td>
<td>Megha-Tropiques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>PSLV-C 17/GSAT-12</td>
<td>Jul 15, 2011</td>
<td>PSLV-XL</td>
<td>GTO</td>
<td>GSAT-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>PSLV-C 16/RESOURCESAT-2</td>
<td>Apr 20, 2011</td>
<td>PSLV-G</td>
<td>SSPO</td>
<td>RESOURCESAT-2 YOUTHSAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>PSLV- C 15/ CARTOSAT-2B</td>
<td>Jul 12, 2010</td>
<td>PSLV-CA</td>
<td>SSPO</td>
<td>CARTOSAT-2B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>PSLV- C 14/ OCEANSAT-2</td>
<td>Sep 23, 2009</td>
<td>PSLV-CA</td>
<td>SSPO</td>
<td>Oceansat-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>PSLV- C 12/ RISAT 2</td>
<td>Apr 20, 2009</td>
<td>PSLV-CA</td>
<td>SSPO</td>
<td>RISAT-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>PSLV- C 11</td>
<td>Oct 22, 2008</td>
<td>PSLV-XL</td>
<td>Lunar</td>
<td>CHANDRAYAN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>PSLV- C 9/ CARTOSAT-2A</td>
<td>Apr 28, 2008</td>
<td>PSLV-CA</td>
<td>SSPO</td>
<td>CARTOSAT-2 A IMS-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>PSLV- C 10</td>
<td>Jan 21, 2008</td>
<td>PSLV-CA</td>
<td>HEO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>PSLV- C 8</td>
<td>Apr 23, 2007</td>
<td>PSLV-CA</td>
<td>LEO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>PSLV- C/ CARTOSAT-2/ SRE-1</td>
<td>Jan 10, 2007</td>
<td>PSLV-G</td>
<td>SSPO</td>
<td>CARTOSAT-2 SRE-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>PSLV- C6/ CARTOSAT-1/ HAMSAT</td>
<td>May 05, 2005</td>
<td>PSLV-G</td>
<td>SSPO</td>
<td>CARTOSAT-1 HAMSAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>PSLV- C4/ KALPANA-1</td>
<td>Sep 12, 2002</td>
<td>PSLV-G</td>
<td>GTO</td>
<td>KALPANA-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>PSLV- C3/TES</td>
<td>Oct 22, 2001</td>
<td>PSLV-G</td>
<td>SSPO</td>
<td>Technology Experiment Satellite (TES)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>PSLV- C2/IRS -P4</td>
<td>May 26, 1999</td>
<td>PSLV-G</td>
<td>SSPO</td>
<td>Oceansat (IRS- P4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>PSLV- C1/IRS -1D</td>
<td>Sep 29, 1997</td>
<td>PSLV-G</td>
<td>SSPO</td>
<td>IRS -1D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>PSLV- D3/IRS -P3</td>
<td>Mar 21, 1996</td>
<td>PSLV-G</td>
<td>SSPO</td>
<td>IRS-P3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>PSLV- D2</td>
<td>Oct 15, 1994</td>
<td>PSLV-G</td>
<td>SSPO</td>
<td>IRS-P2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>PSLV- D1</td>
<td>Sep 20, 1993</td>
<td>PSLV-G</td>
<td>SSPO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ISRO available at http://www.isro.gov.in

**GSLV**

The largest launch vehicle developed by India is Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark II (GSLV Mk II). This fourth generation launch vehicle is currently in operation. It is a three-stage vehicle with four liquid strap-ons. The indigenously developed cryogenic Upper Stage (CUS) forms the third stage of GSLV Mk II. ISRO is making strenuous efforts to launch the next edition, the GSLV Mk III, a three-stage heavy lift launch vehicle. The vehicle has two solid strap-ons, a core liquid booster and a cryogenic upper stage (ISRO).
Table 4: Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) (2001-2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Launch Date</th>
<th>Launcher type</th>
<th>Orbit</th>
<th>Payload</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>GSLV-D5/ GSAT-14</td>
<td>Jan 05, 2014</td>
<td>GSLV-MK-II</td>
<td>GTO</td>
<td>GSAT-14</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>GSLV- F06/ GSAT-5P</td>
<td>Dec 25, 2010</td>
<td>GSLV-MK-II</td>
<td>GTO</td>
<td>GSAT-5P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>GSLV-D3/ GSAT-4</td>
<td>Apr 15, 2010</td>
<td>GSLV-MK-II</td>
<td></td>
<td>GSAT-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>GSLV- F04/ INSAT-4CR</td>
<td>Sep 02, 2007</td>
<td>GSLV-MK-II</td>
<td>GTO</td>
<td>INSAT-4CR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>GSLV- F02/ INSAT-4C</td>
<td>Jul 10, 2006</td>
<td>GSLV-MK-II</td>
<td>GTO</td>
<td>INSAT-4C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>GSLV-F01/ EDUSAT(GSAT-3)</td>
<td>Sep 20, 2004</td>
<td>GSLV-MK-II</td>
<td>GTO</td>
<td>EDUSAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>GSLV-D2/ GSAT-2</td>
<td>May 08, 2003</td>
<td>GSLV-MK-II</td>
<td>GTO</td>
<td>GSAT-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>GSLV-D1/ GSAT-1</td>
<td>Apr 18, 2001</td>
<td>GSLV-MK-II</td>
<td>GTO</td>
<td>GSAT-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ISRO available at http://www.isro.gov.in

Chart 2: The Launchers – SLV 3 to GSLV Mk III

Source: http://www.isro.gov.in/launchers
From ‘Human Security’ to ‘Economic Security’

If we examine Indian space programmes during the past fifty years, we could underline its emphasis on civilian applications making Sarabhai’s dream of applying ‘advanced technologies to the real problems of man and society’ a reality. EDUSAT that meets the demand for an interactive satellite-based distance education system for the nation, with an investment of nearly 500 crore rupees, displays the social commitment of ISRO in education. The focus was on human security in the initial phase, but to sustain the momentum and economic viability of such programmes, and in a way nation’s economic security has to be ensured. This induced ISRO to commercialise its space programmes. However, the nineties saw governmental budgetary allocation of different nations on space dwindling, compelling many world’s space powers to venture into space commerce. India is not an exception to this rule and has started involving private sector in the field. In fact, since 1980s, Indian industry is associating with ISRO, like manufacturing of Vikas Engines and Cryogenic engines. For instance Godrej and Boyce has been collaborating with ISRO from 1985 with the making of Titanium components to fabricate Vikas engines. Its spin-off effect enabled the company to service orders from aerospace industry that needs more precision fabrication, testing and quality. Similarly, ISRO has transferred a large number of in-house technologies to Indian industry. ISRO has also created Antrix in 1992 with a vision “to emerge as a globally significant space company fully utilising the strengths of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and other entities in the field of space”. It is the commercial arm of ISRO with the following business activities:

The current business activities of Antrix include:

a) Provisioning of communication satellite transponders to various users
b) Providing launch services for customer satellites,
c) Marketing of data from Indian and foreign remote sensing satellites,
d) Building and marketing of satellites as well as satellite sub-systems,
e) Establishing ground infrastructure for space applications, and
f) Mission support services for satellites.

(Source: Antrix available at http://www.antrix.gov.in)

To vie with the space faring nations in the global commercial market, India needs to move ahead with its GSLV in leaps. Its GSLV Mark III in 2014 was such an attempt to satiate this economic appetite as GSLV could place heavier communication satellites of INSAT-4 class, weighing 4500-5000 kg into orbit. PSLV though proved its economic utility through consistently sterling performance, however, could put satellites on a polar synchronous orbit at a height of around 700KM only (measured from sea level). But a similar performance from
India’s Space Programme

GSLV could place satellites in a geosynchronous orbit at a height over 36000 KM. This could strengthen not only the commercialization of Indian space programme further by meeting the requirements of global business, but also thwart resource hemorrhages from India. For instance, India has been paying $85-90 million (around Rs 500 crore) as launch fee to foreign space agencies. This is for sending communication satellites weighing up to 3.5 tonnes. But its GSLV rocket costs around Rs.220 crore only. The GSAT-14 that was launched costs around Rs.145 crore (Narasimhan 2014). It is with this intention that India sought cryogenic technology from Glavkomos, a Russian company in the nineties.

From ‘Economic Security’ to ‘Military Security’

Indian space programmes relied on global collaboration for technological upgradation. By stymieing the ISRO-Glavkomos cryogenic deal in 1992 citing violation of Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) guidelines, the US delayed Indian entry into the ‘cryo club’. India made two GSLV missions in 2010 and in 2013 – both failing to fructify. The US intentions were to block India from developing long ballistic missiles, to delay the development of Indian GSLV and more importantly to delay the resurgence of Russia as a threat to US in the post Cold War period. It took two decades for India to launch its indigenously built GSLV and join the cryo club consisting of US, Russia, France, Japan and China.

Twenty years’ efforts in realising the cryogenic engine and stage have now been fructified... toiling of 20 years, excruciating efforts of the past three-and-a-half years after we had the first test flight of this cryogenic engine and stage and all the efforts put by Team ISRO for the last few years” (Radhakrishnan, ISRO chairman quoted in TE Narasimhan, 2014).

However, the transitions in global architecture of power following the rise of China produced substantial alterations in the world order that are conducive for stronger military pursuits, and India’s quest for building a robust space technology system, because ‘geopolitical alliances are as much about technology as about shared interests and values’ (Malik 2011). Presently, we collaborate with the US more, and U.S. technological edge both in qualitative and quantitative terms is unprecedented and continues to elevate its geopolitical stature (Wohlforth 1999).

The Shift to Military Security: China’s ASAT and After

China has underlined the military dimensions of its space programme and possesses weighty advantages over India in space. New Delhi’s passive receptiveness to use space technology for military purpose is a recent phenomenon, perhaps greatly influenced by Chinese ASAT test in January 2007 that made Indian satellite, its space assets and space infrastructure worth $12 billion (Rs 60,000 crore) extremely vulnerable. India has 10 satellites now including the new Radar
Imaging Satellite (RISAT). Besides the debris created by the anti-satellite testing by China, the Kosmos-Iridium collision in 2009 has raised concerns about the safety of Indian space assets.

Consequently, Indian defence scientists expressed their intentions to validate an ASAT the anti-satellite capability as a countermove at least on “the ground through simulation” as there was global opinion formed against ASAT due to the debris and the pollution it creates in atmosphere. “Our country does not have a policy to attack anybody in space. We don’t believe in it. But as part of the Ballistic Missile Defense Program, we have all the technology elements required to integrate a system through which we can defend our satellites or take care of future requirements.” “Space security involved a gamut of capabilities including the protection of satellites, communication and navigation systems and denying the enemy the use of his own space systems. These technologies would be developed as part of the country’s totally indigenous Ballistic Missile Defence Programme.” (Statements of V. K. Saraswat, scientific advisor to India’s defense minister, quoted in Victoria Samson 2011). The successful trial of 5,500 km-Agni V Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile in April 2012 was a ‘game changer’. It was another step towards the military capability to target objects in space. Agni scaled a height of 600 km before re-entering the atmosphere. This could support the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) to field a full-fledged ASAT weapon based on Agni and ad-2 ballistic missile interceptor. India also created the Space Security Coordination Group (SSCG) in 2010 consisting of the National Security Adviser, representatives of DRDO, Indian Air Force and National Technical Research Organisation to formulate Government’s space policy and coordinate response to international code of conduct in space (Unnithan 2012).

In an interview given to the Hindustan Times, DRDO chief Avinash Chander said that India is pursuing its ballistic missile defence (BMD) programme aggressively. Out of the nine BMD tests carried out by DRDO so far, only one failed. India began working on its BMD programme 15 years ago and is planning the deployment of an advanced missile defence system. This is to stave off threats from ballistic missiles from China, whose arsenal is growing in sophistication and numbers (Singh 2014). The US Office of the Technology Assessment indicates that the development and deployment of anti-satellite weapons are closely related to BMD technology. “Any BMD system will need to protect its space-based components against potential ASAT attack and will almost certainly require ASAT capability to defend itself. Since the same technologies applicable to boost-phase and midcourse defense can be adapted for ASAT, and since ASAT attack is a potent BMD countermeasure, the BMD mission and the ASAT mission are closely coupled” (OTA 1985).

Perhaps the only first India could claim in its space race with China was its
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Mars Orbiter Mission – a feat shared by the US, Russia and EU. Both China’s Yinghuo-1 mission and Japan’s Nozomi mission to reach Mars have failed. Chinese state-run *Global Times* daily was not at all merciful in its criticisms of India’s Mars programme though it was much ahead in space programme. It wondered “whether it’s worthy for a country where more than 350 million people live on less than $1.25 a day and one third of the population are plagued by power shortages to spend millions of dollars traveling hundreds of millions of kilometers for a few Mars pictures.” It wrote “India, which still has hundreds of millions of illiterates and where money is needed in all fields, decisively sticks to exploring Mars and the Moon. Its national interests triumph over short-sighted populism... China must keep alert on populism, avoiding letting it kidnap the national strategic interests. In front of an India that is striving to catch up with China, we have no other choice but to construct our comprehensive strategic power.” The editorial signifies the new space race in Asia.

**Conclusion**

As we have seen, India’s fifty years of space endeavours have made it a space faring nation. From a responsible nation, whose avowed mission was to apply advanced technological applications in space to ensure human security, it is remapping its contours of ‘security’ vis-à-vis space programmes. The transitions in global architecture of power following the rise of China produced substantial alterations in the world order that are conducive not only for stronger Indian military pursuits, but also facilitated India to come closer to US for a geopolitical alliance due to the shared interests and values of both. Chinese ASAT tests made India’s military pursuit in space inevitable because India is in a space security dilemma and to protect its space assets, a military contest in space is inevitable, superiority in outer space an added vantage.

**Notes**

1. The name “Antrix” is an anglicised version of *Antariksha*, from the Sanskrit word for ‘space’ or sky.
2. NASA, though regarded as an American initiative to compete with the Soviet Union, has actively involved in international collaboration including with USSR even during ‘the darkest days of the Cold War.’ The development of the International Space Station (ISS) testifies the necessity of global partnership in space technology.
3. The Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) is established by the US and allies in the late Cold War period. It is a global international regime related to the use of missile/missile technologies and is an example of neorealist institutionalism. Politically, MTCR institutionalizes the unequal international system, legitimizes the national security and threat perception of the US, and is imposed on the global order. These rules created by the powerful perpetuate technological oligopoly in the world by banning transfer
of space technologies from technological haves to have-nots. The US scuttled the 1991 India-Russia deal saying it could enable India to make ICBMs (Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles) and hence would violate MTCR Guidelines.

References


ISRO Space India (different volumes) available at http://www.isro.gov.in/space-india


India’s Space Programme


Website Sources, especially that of ISRO, DOS.
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as Vanaik and Bidwai (1989)demonstrated

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