

Institute of Regional Studies

**South Asia
and
Central Asia**



**Building Economic
and
Political Linkages**

**Collection of papers presented at an international
seminar organised jointly by Institute of Regional Studies and
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Islamabad on 20-21 Oct 2008**

**Institute of Regional Studies
Seminar Papers Oct 2008**

South Asia and Central Asia: Building Political and Economic Linkages

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organized jointly by the Institute of Regional Studies &
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Islamabad on 20-21 Oct 2008.**

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Welcome Remarks	
<i>Maj Gen Jamshed Ayaz Khan (Retd)</i>	1
Welcome Remarks	
<i>Dr. Babak Khalatbari</i>	5
<u>Keynote Address</u>	
Pakistan — the Bridge Linking South Asia and Central Asia	
<i>Shah Mehmood Qureshi</i>	9
SAARC: Let's Be Realistic	
<i>Thomas Houlahan</i>	17
Nation, State and Identity Conflicts in South Asia	
<i>Maneesha Tikekar</i>	44
Religious Extremism and Militancy in South Asia	
<i>Shabana Fayyaz</i>	99
How to Improve Cultural & Economic Linkages Between Afghanistan & Pakistan	
<i>Nasrullah Arsalai</i>	116
India-Pakistan Peace Process	
<i>A. G. Noorani</i>	125
The Kashmir Stalemate	
<i>Victoria Schofield</i>	151
The India-Pakistan 'Peace Process': 'Stronger, but with some interference'	
<i>Dr. Christopher Snedden</i>	159
Reviving Traditional Linkages Between Kashmir and Central Asia	
<i>Dr. Hameedah Nayeem</i>	187

**The EU and G-8-Initiatives on Afghanistan
and Pakistan: German Perspective**

Ambassador (Retd) Dr. Gunter Mulack

193

**Building Political and Economic Linkages
Between South and Central Asia**

Farzana Raja (MNA)

211

**Strategic Strengths and Weaknesses
of Central Asia: Pakistani Perspective**

Prof. Dr. Sarfraz Khan

222

**Politics of Religious Extremism and
Response of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan**

Marina Pikulina

245

**Economic Cooperation Between
Afghanistan and Turkmenistan: A
Means of Regional Political Stability**

Najeeb ur Rehman Manalai

271

**Regional Cooperation in Eurasia: Reviving
Linkages Between Central & South Asia**

Swaran Singh

291

**Afghanistan Between South and
Central Asia: Common Perceptions**

Dr Wadir Safi

324

Summing-Up

*Ross Masood Husain
(Rapporteur)*

333

Farewell Remarks

Maj Gen Jamshed Ayaz Khan (Retd)

338

The Contributors

341

Welcome Remarks

Maj Gen Jamshed Ayaz Khan (Retd)*

Bismillah- hir-Rahman-nir-Rahim

Honourable Foreign Minister of Pakistan, distinguished participants, excellencies, Parliamentarians, honoured guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my proud privilege and a rare honour indeed to welcome you all to this International Seminar on *Building Political and Economic Linkages between South Asia and Central Asia*. I am also voicing the sentiments of all my colleagues at the Institute of Regional Studies that we are grateful that the honourable Foreign Minister of Pakistan, despite his pressing engagements, found time to be with us this morning. And the distinguished participants, one and all, voiced their solidarity and expressed their sympathy with us over the horrendous incident of Marriott, which Dr. Christopher Snedden labels as the ‘face of Islamabad’. We were touched by the warm sentiments expressed over the destruction and tragic loss of innocent lives.

Mr. Chairman, it was at this very venue of the Marriott Hotel that we organized an International Seminar on *Afghanistan’s Unabated Turmoil* in May 2008. And now unfortunately the hotel is all in ruin, consumed by fire that engulfed it following the attack. In that seminar we deliberated on:-

*President, Institute of Regional Studies

- *Afghanistan's Cauldron — Resurgence of Taliban*
- *Genesis and Character of Tribal Areas and the Issue of Border Land Security and its Linkage with Afghanistan.*
- *Impact of the Protracted Stay of Afghan Refugees in Pakistan.*
- *Afghanistan: Cost for Pakistan*

We were fortunate that a number of foremost international experts on Afghanistan and this region like Dr. Barnett R. Rubin, Dr. Rodney W. Jones, Lt. Gen. (Retd) Kamal Matinuddin, Dr. Rasul Bakhsh Rais, Prof. Zhou Rong (Joe Ron) and many others took part in that seminar.

All the papers presented at the seminar have been published in a book titled "*Afghanistan: Unabated Turmoil*" which is available in our book stall. The consensus that emerged was that there was no light at the end of the dark and darkening tunnel of Afghanistan. The NATO operations were failing to produce the desired results and Pakistan was being singled out as the fall-guy.

The happenings in Pakistan as a daily routine are stark reminders of the fact that Afghanistan's situation is casting a deepening dark shadow over Pakistan. Today, unfortunately, it is not the regional turmoil which is a serious cause of concern but the entire world has been thrown into a financial turmoil, west and east, north and south, and no one seems to have escaped. If collapse of the Twin Towers was a turning point in our current history, now the collapse of the Wall Street in New York is a defining moment of much larger implications than 9/11. The other day the BBC was calling it a Financial-Sonami.

A well known scholar Francis Fukuyama, of the end-of-history fame, or notoriety, predicts that "with the melt down of the Wall Street, globally the United States will not enjoy the hegemonic position it has occupied until now,

something underscored by Russia's Aug. 7 invasion of Georgia. America's ability to shape the global economy through trade pacts and the IMF and World Bank will be diminished, as will our financial resources. And in many parts of the world, American ideas, advice and even aid will be less welcome than they are now".

George Soros, who hardly needs any introduction, predicts that US dollar may lose its position as the pre-eminent currency at the global level, and argues that the American domination of the global financial landscape is coming to an end with the centre of gravity shifting eastwards to Europe and even further east. Fareed Zakaria says that "the real fallout of the financial crisis will be the delegitimization of American power". Now perhaps the time has come to give more credence to geo-economics than to geo-strategic.

It is a crunch time for our region — South Asia, Southwest Asia and Central Asia — because not only security issue of terrorism affects us but a host of other crises are looming on the horizon like endemic poverty, degradation of environment, shortage of energy, food and water and threat of diseases like malaria, AIDS etc. Thus, cooperation should be the buzz word and a much broader view of security should be taken.

In our seminar we are going to carry out:

- Strategic Appraisal of South Asia
- Internal Dynamics of South Asia
- India-Pakistan Peace Process
- EU's Resolution on Afghanistan and Pakistan
- Strategic Appraisal of Central Asia
- Internal Dynamics of Central Asia
- Building Bridges between South Asia & Central Asia

Now, I will ask Dr. Babak Khalatbari, Resident Representative of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Islamabad, to take my place. They have been very kind to co-sponsor this seminar.

Welcome Remarks

Dr. Babak Khalatbari*

Your Excellency,
Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan,
Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi,

President of the Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad,
Major General Jamshed Ayaz Khan,

Distinguished dignitaries, speakers, participants and guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung I extend a warm welcome to all of you on the occasion of this two-day seminar dealing with “Building Political & Economic Linkages between South Asia and Central Asia”.

The interest of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in this topic relates to the G8 Foreign Ministers Meeting held in April 2007 at Potsdam, Germany, which the foreign ministers of Pakistan and Afghanistan also attended.

At the meeting a wide range of issues was discussed, including the future of Kosovo as well as the situation in Afghanistan, the Middle East and Sudan. In particular the representatives of the G8 States reconfirmed their support for enhanced cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

* Resident Representative of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Islamabad

The German foreign minister specifically underlined the fact that cooperation between these two countries is crucial not only for the security situation within their borders but in the entire region. Based on this assumption the “G8 Afghanistan-Pakistan Initiative” was born and formulated in a document signed by those present.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This seminar is organised by the Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad, in cooperation with the German Konrad Adenauer Foundation. Financial assistance was provided by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This clearly indicates the interest taken by the Federal Republic of Germany in developments in the region at large.

While formulating the programme of the seminar the organisers specifically referred to article 11 of the Joint Statement issued by the foreign ministers of the G 8 and the foreign ministers of Pakistan and Afghanistan, highlighting the importance of promoting contacts between the civil societies of both countries, bearing the nature of confidence building measures. The G8 foreign ministers offered support for stronger interaction between political representatives, Parliamentarians, the media, universities and think tanks.

Focusing on the working title of the conference we should start with defining the two regions — South Asia and Central Asia. While numerous definitions are available, it was eventually decided to adopt the German academic perception.

Accordingly *South Asia* covers most of the member states of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, commonly known as SAARC, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Central Asia is perceived as the region extending from the Caspian Sea in the West to Central China in the

East, and from Southern Russia in the North to Northern Pakistan in the South. Accordingly it includes Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Mongolia as well as north-eastern Iran and the western Chinese provinces of Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Qinghai and Tibet.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Historically the inter-Asian connectivity is not a new phenomenon. After all in former times the Silk Road formed an extensive network of trade routes across the Asian continent, connecting East, South and Central Asia with the Mediterranean, including North Africa and Europe.

Today, while we are living in the global village of the 21st century, mutual political understanding and good neighbourhood as well as multiple connectivity are even more relevant than in the past.

In the process of building political and economic linkages undoubtedly governments have to play a decisive role. However, civil society is pivotal in preparing the ground. Analysts, researchers and scientists often think ahead, develop options and scenarios, step by step providing the theoretical and factual base for major policy decisions, paving the way for significant strides ahead towards growing regional cooperation.

Honourable Audience,

In this spirit the Institute of Regional Studies has selected a significant topic to be deliberated by an international group of experts who will share their thoughts with us. Looking forward to fruitful discussions and enlightening proceedings during the two days ahead of us, I express my gratitude to Major General Jamshed Ayaz Khan for having undertaken this effort and wish us all thought provoking exchanges and valuable results of the seminar.

Keynote Address

Pakistan — the Bridge Linking South Asia and Central Asia

Shah Mehmood Qureshi*

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am honoured to be invited to this seminar on political and economic linkages between our region, South Asia, and our neighboring region, Central Asia. I congratulate Major General Jamshed Ayaz Khan, President of the Institute of Regional Studies, for organizing this seminar on such an important subject.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

South and Central Asia have interacted over centuries through the fabled Silk Route. The route facilitated not just traders and invaders but also philosophers, saints, thinkers and artisans. This interaction was intense and spread over millennia. As a result, today no two regions and their people have so much cultural, linguistic, ethnic and spiritual commonalities as South Asia and Central Asia. These commonalities are even more pronounced in the case of Pakistan. Our cultural traditions, language, cuisine, and even religious undercurrents have predominantly Central Asian roots.

* Foreign Minister of Pakistan.

The historic cross-currents of ideas, civilization and culture between the two regions had been innately strong. Therefore, despite deliberate policies to isolate the two regions under over a century of British rule in South Asia and some seventy years of Soviet control of Central Asia, the similarities between the two regions remained. Under these colonial rules the historic and natural interaction between the two regions that was symbolised by travel, trade, migration and even conquest was assiduously curtailed. The Silk Route, both physically and in terms of ideas, lay idle. But this still failed to eliminate the inherent regional similarities. The effects of shared millennia of history could not be reversed by the antics of the Great Game.

Today, we are here to take stock of our common history. We need to build upon it. We need to deliberate upon the revival of the Silk Route. And we do all this not for the sake of history but for the sake of our people, for the prosperity and progress of our coming generations. The fabled Silk Route helped in sharing prosperity and cultural richness between South Asia and Central Asia in the past. Its revival — in its 21st century reincarnation — should bring economic prosperity and provide opportunities to exchange ideas for the benefit of the people of the two regions.

In my discourse today, I will briefly discuss regional cooperation within the South Asian region, will talk about the scope and potential offered by Central Asian Republics (CARs) in this regard, and underline the vast potential Pakistan offers as the hub for inter-regional economic and political activity. We are located at the crossroads of the two regions and have much to offer to both.

The South Asian regional grouping, SAARC, was established in 1985. From its initial tentative steps limited to technical cooperation, SAARC now has grown into a vibrant organization addressing the challenging subjects of social

uplift, regional connectivity, food security, energy cooperation, and human resource development.

SAARC has come a long way since its inception. It has gained considerable credibility at international level. Its global profile has been enhanced by the decision to grant observer status to the USA , China , Japan , South Korea , Australia, the European Union, and Iran.

In recent years SAARC has also witnessed an increased collaboration with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and World Bank. The Pakistan-India peace process has been a particularly useful development that has facilitated the growth of regional cooperation in South Asia.

An important milestone achieved by the South Asian countries is the operationalization of South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA).

We believe that three factors will by and large determine the full utilization of South Asia's potential in its external relations. Firstly, economic under-development, which leads to widespread poverty, gross illiteracy and disease, is the greatest challenge faced by South Asia and needs to be addressed.

Second, South Asia's major strength lies in its demographics. The vast opportunities of globalization can bring benefit if our human resource is properly utilized. The quality of our population will determine our strength. Mere numbers will not account for much.

Third, it is important to develop transport and communication infrastructure to link SAARC countries with each other as well as with Central Asia. This, in fact, is an essential pre-requisite for inter-regional trade and economic cooperation.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and emergence of independent republics of Kazakhstan , Kyrgyzstan ,

Uzbekistan , Turkmenistan , and Tajikistan have dramatically changed the political, economic and strategic landscape of the Central Asian region.

The population of CARs is only about 65 million but they are extremely rich in energy resources and other raw materials, such as gold, uranium, iron and nonferrous metals.

Central Asia has 150 billion barrels of crude oil and 1234 trillion cubic feet of natural gas reserves. South Asia affords a ready market for these resources.

Central Asia is landlocked. Its existing links to the sea are circuitous and time-consuming. South Asia potentially provides it an ideal route to the sea.

The Central Asian states have restructured their economies, improved their internal security and have emerged as stable political and geographic entities.

Central Asian states are members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). With these organizations getting significance at world stage, CARs have also gained considerable weight in the international system.

The need for cooperation between South Asia and Central Asia is also reinforced by the common challenges faced by the two regions. These challenges are poverty, degradation of environment, food scarcity, threat of terrorism and extremism, narco trade, threat of epidemic diseases and the impact of global financial crisis. Working together, the two regions stand a better chance to meet these challenges.

Talking of inter-regional initiatives, I must point out that some interlinkages between South Asia and Central Asia already exist. The Central Asia–South Asia Regional Market (Casarem) is one such initiative. Casarem is being developed in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank and World Bank. Under this initiative, in the first instance, transmission lines will be laid from Tajikistan to Afghanistan

and onward to Pakistan to transmit 1000–1200 MW of electricity. The project will improve the energy security situation of Pakistan and possibly other energy-deficient countries of South Asia. Pakistan hosted an inter-governmental ministerial conference on the project in August 2008 in Islamabad. An inter-governmental agreement was signed during the conference. Casarem is to set up a permanent secretariat in Kabul.

TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline) project is another major initiative. The Steering Committee Meeting of TAPI had formally inducted India into the project in April 2008. This highly feasible project has tremendous potential and promise. Both regions will benefit economically. It will also integrate the economies of South Asia and Central Asia.

ECO's Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) has already entered into force. It lays down a comprehensive roadmap for establishing functional transit links across the region. Being a member of both SAARC and ECO, Pakistan could facilitate the extension of this initiative to South Asia.

An important field of mutual collaboration can be to synergize efforts being undertaken in the context of SAARC Regional Multi-modal Transport Study (SRMTC) with those in progress within the framework of ECO's Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA).

The two regions can jointly address the trans-border issues of environment and climate change. Melting glaciers of the Himalayas and Karakoram will change the climate and environment in both regions. We need to work together to avert this impending environmental degradation challenge. Likewise, Central Asian Republics can share their experiences in Aral Sea related environmental degradation with South Asia.

Like SAFTA in the context of South Asian countries, ECO countries have also concluded an ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA). ECOTA has entered into force this year. With the finalization of lists, this important regional agreement is expected to be operational by January 2009. There is a need to strengthen the efficacy of these regional preferential trade arrangements by extending their territorial scope and by complementing these with other trade facilitation measures including elimination of all non-tariff barriers.

Pakistan follows the policy of supporting regional mechanisms that facilitate confidence-building measures, preventive diplomacy, conflict resolution and peaceful settlement of all outstanding issues. This complements our vision to develop Pakistan as a hub of inter-regional economic activity.

Being a founding member of both SAARC and ECO, Pakistan is uniquely positioned to facilitate closer linkages between South Asia and Central Asia . Pakistan 's geographic location provides a natural physical link between the two regions. *Pakistan is the bridge.*

Also, in geo-political, geo-strategic, and geo-economic terms, Pakistan is suitably positioned to play a key role in bringing the two regions closer. We will happily engage all the stakeholders to promote peace, stability, political harmony and economic development.

Over the years Pakistan has made steady progress towards improving potential trade and transit links through upgradation of national transport infrastructure and establishment of functional region-wide transit corridors. This upgradation has provided a viable option to the Central Asian Republics for transit links.

The Gwadar seaport is a significant project in this regard. Future trade patterns envision substantial cargo from

CARs and Afghanistan. Gwadar has opened new opportunities for CARs. Its role in oil transportation across the regions is also envisaged.

The Karakoram Highway, built with the assistance of our great friend China, affords access to Central Asia through China . A Quadrilateral Agreement for Traffic in Transit brings together Pakistan , China , Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan through KKH.

Pakistan is also a party to ECO's Transit Transport Framework Agreement. Unimpeded implementation of this and the Quadrilateral Agreement for Traffic in Transit will greatly boost regional commerce.

As I said earlier, Pakistan is also pursuing import of hydroelectricity and natural gas from Central Asia to South Asia . We have credible international backing for the two projects. World Bank and ADBP are the lead institutional support for import of energy from Central Asia.

Pakistan's leading role both in SAARC and ECO and Observer status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) proffer important platforms to Pakistan for promoting ties between Central Asia and South Asia.

We believe that convergence of economic and strategic interests will remove any real or perceived intra- and inter-regional differences. We should therefore aim for a free trade zone, and later even an economic community, for the countries of the two regions. Our focus should be close economic cooperation and integration, as in the European Union, or nearer home, ASEAN.

It is our firm belief that increased economic, political and human interaction will further the geo-economic potential of South Asia and Central Asia . Challenges are enormous but so are the opportunities. Let us focus on the latter.

SAARC: Let's Be Realistic

Thomas Houlahan

This paper examines what role the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) might effectively play in the search for peace in the region. I beg your indulgence in advance, as much of my paper will deal with the failure of the SAARC to come together as a regional trading bloc, but I assure you that it is germane. The organization was founded largely on the notion that by avoiding contentious political issues, free trade could be facilitated. It was expected that from free trade would come trust and prosperity, which would help resolution of contentious political issues. From that would come peace. Since free trade never materialized, none of the benefits that were supposed to flow from it accrued.

Traditionally, "security" has referred to the sanctity of a nation's borders. If a state could secure its borders against attack from another state, then it was considered secure. "Peace" was a closely related concept. If a state's borders were not being attacked by another state, the two states were pretty much considered "at peace."

Things have changed. In the modern world, a state may well be able to secure its borders, but so long as it is in a constant state of tension, forced to worry about potential attacks, it doesn't feel secure. It certainly doesn't feel "at peace." India and Pakistan may not be at war, but relatively few people would characterize the state of relations between the two as "peace."

In addition, serious threats to sovereignty do not necessarily involve states attacking borders. Quite serious threats from well-financed subnational or transnational insurgent groups operating within a nation's borders are now fairly commonplace. A nation faced with such a situation could hardly be called secure or peaceful.

The SAARC has failed to deliver peace, as defined either by freedom from fear of attack from without (border disputes) or within (insurgency/terrorism). The organization's failure to deliver prosperity is material to discussion about the latter. Because most South Asian economies have failed to furnish the basic needs of a significant portion of their citizenry, pockets of resentment have formed and have provided a breeding ground for insurgents. About half of the member nations' 1.5 billion people live below the poverty level. Below is a chart showing the ranking of the SAARC nations in the United Nations Development Programme's 2007–2008 Human Development Index. Sri Lanka, the top performer, finished 99th out of 177 nations ranked.

	Rank
Sri Lanka	99
Maldives	100
India	128
Bhutan	133
Pakistan	136
Bangladesh	140
Nepal	142
Afghanistan	Not Available

The SAARC can play an important role for its member nations. However, a role as a powerful bloc along the lines of the European Union simply is not in the cards. Expectations for the organization were always higher than it could hope to live up to under the circumstances prevailing in South Asia.

Because its membership covers nations with a population of some 1.5 billion, expectations were high. However, due to economic, political and territorial disputes among its members, the SAARC has not played the role many have envisioned for it. Twenty-five years ago, living standards in China and the SAARC's member nations were roughly similar. Today, China is far ahead of most SAARC members.⁽¹⁾ Disappointment with the SAARC has prompted many to label it a mere "talking forum."

The gap between expectations and SAARC's accomplishments raises two questions:

1. What is inhibiting the SAARC and can it play a more effective role in the search for peace in South Asia?
2. If the SAARC is indeed a talking forum, what is wrong with that?

SAARC

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established on 8 December 1985. Its founding members were India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives. Because Nepal had no political conflicts of any consequence with the other members, it was unanimously agreed to house the SAARC's permanent secretariat in Kathmandu.

Afghanistan was admitted as a member in 2006. The European Union, the United States, the People's Republic of China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, Myanmar, Iran and Mauritius have been accorded observer status. The objectives of the association as defined in the Charter are:

- a) to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life;
- b) to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and to provide all individuals the opportunity to live in dignity and to realize their full potentials;
- c) to promote and strengthen collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia;
- d) to contribute to mutual trust, understanding and appreciation of one another's problems;
- e) to promote active collaboration and mutual assistance in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific fields;

- f) to strengthen cooperation with other developing countries;
- g) to strengthen cooperation among themselves in international forums on matters of common interests; and
- h) to cooperate with international and regional organizations with similar aims and purposes.

Born in distrust

In the late 1970s, Bangladeshi president Ziaur Rahman proposed the creation of a South Asian trade bloc. His proposal was greeted warmly by Bhutan, Nepal, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka. India and Pakistan were hesitant, however.

India's main concern was the inclusion of South Asian security matters in the organization's proposed mandate. The Indian policymakers were also concerned that the proposal, as written, might provide an opportunity for India's smaller neighbours to regionalize bilateral issues and join forces against India in disputes. Pakistan suspected that India would use the organization to strengthen its economic dominance in the region to the disadvantage of Pakistan.⁽²⁾

A month-long series of consultations between South Asian foreign ministers was convened at the United Nations headquarters in New York. In September 1980, it was agreed that Bangladesh would prepare a working paper for discussion among the foreign secretaries. In view of Indian and Pakistani concerns, the working paper removed security matters from its mandate and suggested only non-political and non-controversial areas for cooperation.⁽³⁾

It took three more years of preparatory discussion to produce the Integrated Programme of Action (IPA) on mutually agreed areas of cooperation. The areas selected for inclusion were agriculture and rural development,

telecommunications, health and population control, meteorology, scientific and technical cooperation, transport, postal services, arts and culture and sports. The first summit meeting of the heads of state or government of the founding members was held at Dhaka from 7–8 December 1985.

Built-in limitations

The concessions to Indian and Pakistani concerns are reflected in Article X (General Provisions) of the Charter, which reads as follows:

1. Decisions at all levels shall be taken on the basis of unanimity.
2. Bilateral and contentious issues shall be excluded from the deliberations.

Thus, under the SAARC Charter, all member states have to grant their assent before anything, even the holding of a summit, can happen. No divisive issues can be considered given that if any member has its heels dug in against a proposal, it dies. Thus, as a practical matter, the Charter makes it impossible for the SAARC to take on issues of any difficulty. It could be argued that under this constraint, the only issues that the SAARC can tackle are those about which there was such broad agreement that its involvement was largely unnecessary in the first place.

If there was any doubt about the extent to which Article X(1) limits the SAARC's involvement in contentious issues, Article X(2) clears it up by specifically forbidding it. The Charter also does not permit the raising of bilateral disputes. Since some of the most significant obstacles to unity within the SAARC are disputes between members, in particular the dispute over Kashmir between India and Pakistan, this is a significant limitation.

As a result of these limitations, almost every member state has had some sort of crisis that the SAARC has played

no part in resolving it. Consequently, almost every member state has some reason, beyond the obvious failure of the SAARC to deliver free trade, to feel let down.

The 1960 Indus Waters Treaty between India and Pakistan is a good example of the kind of action that is both necessary for South Asia to move forward as a region and beyond the ability of the SAARC to undertake. The treaty, which covers 26 million acres, the largest irrigated area of any one river system in the world, has survived two wars.⁽⁴⁾

Without the intervention of the World Bank, it never would have happened. The SAARC is prohibited from involving itself in a water dispute.

A more recent example is the Kargil crisis, which the SAARC was powerless to address. It was resolved through the offices of the United States government. Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Maldives have also had tensions or disputes with India.

Given the low level of trust, the effects of the ethnic and religious conflict and the number of bilateral disputes in South Asia, it is obvious that any significant degree of regional cooperation requires that disputes among the member nations be addressed. The SAARC has no mechanism for doing so.

Comparisons between SAARC, European Union and ASEAN are inapt

Another cause of heightened expectation with regard to the SAARC was the success of the European Union. Optimistic South Asians felt that if Germany and France could put aside their historical differences, so could India and Pakistan. However, there were critical differences between the two situations.

Following their last war, Germany and France found themselves threatened by the Soviet Union. Their security

was guaranteed under the umbrella of American military power. Thus, for decades, they faced two intense pressures for reconciliation: a common enemy and a common security guarantor that would brook no serious squabbling between the two countries.

India and Pakistan, on the other hand, were not driven toward each other by a common enemy. They also lacked the common security guarantor to compel them to reconcile their differences.

In addition, aspirations of the governments and peoples of the EU and the SAARC are markedly different. After two “European civil wars” which bled the continent white, there was considerable sentiment among the Western Europeans and the governments they elected for a “United States of Europe,” similar to the United States of America. There is no similar sentiment among the SAARC members. The South Asian states are sensitive about their independence. Neither governments nor their people find a ‘United States of South Asia’ desirable. For example, a common currency among the eight nations or a SAARC passport would be unthinkable.

The EU nations are also able to enter into agreements with more confidence than the SAARC nations. The EU has verification systems and enforceable sanctions mechanisms, while the SAARC does not. Disputes involving the EU treaties and regulations can be resolved judicially, the SAARC disputes cannot. The EU nations can take cases to the European Court of Justice while companies and individuals have the Court of First Instance. Proposed agreements within the SAARC, therefore, require greater leaps of faith than those in the EU.

Corruption Perception Index (CPI), 2008

	Score	Rank
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Bhutan	5.2	45
India	3.4	85
Sri Lanka	3.2	92
Maldives	2.8	115
Nepal	2.7	121
Pakistan	2.5	134
Bangladesh	2.1	147
Afghanistan	1.5	176

The absence of a judicial mechanism for settling disputes is not a trivial matter in a region where perceived corruption is as high as it is in South Asia. The rankings above are from Transparency International's 2008 Corruption Perception Index. Countries were graded on a scale of 1-10. Only one SAARC nation scored over 5 and only two were in the top half of the 180 nations ranked.

The prospects for a judicial mechanism being introduced in the SAARC are not bright given India's resistance to third-party involvement in its disputes. India has a significant incentive to insist on bilateral approaches to disputes. Because of India's massive power advantage over any of its SAARC counterparts, bilateralism can often amount to unilateralism.⁽⁵⁾

The performance of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been another cause for optimism. The ASEAN is an Asian regional grouping but there the similarity ends.⁽⁶⁾

India is by far the most powerful country in the SAARC in terms of its size and economic and military power. There may be disparities among the ASEAN states but they are not nearly as dramatic as those between India and other SAARC members. As the chart below indicates,

India dwarfs the remaining SAARC nations, making up more than 80% of the association's total population and almost two-thirds of its total GDP.

India's potential, thus, to dominate the SAARC introduces a dynamic that is not present in the ASEAN.⁽⁷⁾ Concerns have been heightened due to setbacks to India's ambition of a global leadership role. The Non-aligned Movement it once led is virtually irrelevant. Meanwhile, Indonesia has emerged as a leader of the G-15.⁽⁸⁾ Some within the SAARC nations suspect that India might attempt to use the organization to re-establish some of its lost prestige.

The following table shows a comparison of SAARC countries in terms of population and GDP.

	Population	% of Total	GDP (Billion)	% of Total
India	1,132,446,000	80.64%	\$1,089.00	63.24%
Pakistan	172,800,000	12.31%	\$459.95	26.71%
Afghanistan	31,890,000	2.27%	\$19.84	1.15%
Nepal	29,519,000	2.10%	\$48.18	2.80%
Sri Lanka	21,129,000	1.50%	\$26.79	1.56%
Bangladesh	15,448,000	1.10%	\$72.40	4.20%
Bhutan	672,000	0.05%	\$4.39	0.25%
Maldives	350,000	0.02%	\$1.57	0.09%

There is also the issue of geography. Bangladesh is concerned because India is in a position to redirect water flows vital to Bangladeshi agricultural production. The geographic position of Nepal and Bhutan makes them dependent on India due to the latter's control over their transit links.

The ASEAN members also lack the SAARC members' tradition of protectionism. With independence, self-reliance became an almost obsessive goal in India. Though perhaps not with the same passion, other SAARC nations, which had also been heavily dependent on British imports, have sought self reliance since the end of the Second World War. Self-reliance demanded that these countries develop locally many of the goods that had previously been imported.

Toward that end, the practice of Import-Substituting Industrialisation (ISI) was instituted. It seeks to reduce foreign dependence of a country's economy through local production of value-added products. The local development of targeted industries requires that they be protected from

external competition. In most cases, the developed world produces value-added products more cheaply than the developing nations can, and thus imports in the markets of the targeted industries are discouraged by tariffs or other means. Thus, ISI-based policies have an unavoidable protectionist component.

Unfortunately, import substitution policies ended up not just affecting imports from the developed countries but also from some South Asian nations. Worse, protectionism became a habit and was extended to agricultural commodities as well. For example, before 1947, most of East Pakistan's jute had been processed in textile mills in Calcutta. After 1947, jute farming was promoted in India and protected by restricting its import. Meanwhile, in East Pakistan mills were established to process jute and protected against competition from processed jute made in India.⁽⁹⁾

With the exception of Sri Lanka which began liberalization in the late 1970s, anti-trade policies remained dominant throughout the region until recently. The South Asian nations began to liberalize in the late 1980s, the process picked up in the 1990s and continues to the present.

It should be pointed out that liberalization occurred not through any initiative on the part of the SAARC, but by necessity as it became clear to the South Asian leaders that significant economic growth would require it. Its acceleration also had little to do with the association. Liberalization led to growth and more liberalization, and from 2000 to 2005, the countries that liberalized the most saw the highest growth rates. Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives and Pakistan recorded average GDP growth rates of 5% or higher than 2.5%.⁽¹⁰⁾ After 2005, GDP growth rates for all South Asian economies passed 5%. India and Pakistan saw annual GDP growth rates of 8.5% and 7.8%, respectively.⁽¹¹⁾

As it is, old habits die hard. Even after significant tariff liberalisation, the SAARC states' tariffs remain among the highest in the world. In addition, four decades of protectionism have produced industries with a sense of entitlement. The intention of every regional free trade regime is always to promote intra-regional trade and economic cooperation in all fields. However, interest groups within the member countries claim injury to their industries and call for their exemption from the import duties reduction requirements. The South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) allows a sensitive list and there are a significant number of interest groups with a political clout to get their activities included on the list, to safeguard their protected status.⁽¹²⁾

The chicken or the egg?

One of the chief hopes of the SAARC founders was that the formation of a trading bloc would lead to mutual trust. Instead, the organization found that there was not enough mutual trust to facilitate the formation of an effective trading bloc.

Intra-regional trade currently accounts for only about 5% of the total merchandise trade among the eight SAARC nations. There are reasons that this percentage is unlikely to increase significantly in the foreseeable future. First, political differences obviously constrain the expansion of intra-regional trade. In addition, the South Asian countries, with the exception of Sri Lanka, still have a relatively high rate of tariff and non-tariff barriers — another obvious contributor. Inadequate transport and communication links among the SAARC nations present another obstacle. Finally, most South Asian countries tend to export similar items and thus compete with each other on those items.

The first two problems are essentially political. They are a matter for leaders to decide to settle differences

between nations and to lower tariffs and other barriers. The final two deal with the practicalities of trade and are far more difficult matters.

Significant improvement of transport and communication links will require sizeable expenditure on infrastructure development. Currently, this money is unavailable to the nations whose need to improve their infrastructure is most acute.

The most daunting problem is the lack of complementarity among the region's producers. Ideally, products would "dovetail." One nation's speciality would meet another's need. Unfortunately, none of the SAARC countries has a comparative advantage in capital intensive and high value-added products of the type that are normally imported by countries in the region. Their comparative advantages tend to be in a narrow range of products, particularly in textiles, apparel, and other light manufactured goods, or in agricultural commodities. In short, the SAARC economies don't complement each other, they compete with each other to a significant degree. This trade structure is not conducive to producing a successful trading bloc, and it isn't the kind of structure that can be reshaped in short order.⁽¹³⁾ It certainly cannot be reformed without extensive cooperation between nations.

Hence there is a definitive answer to the question: Which comes first, political reconciliation or trade? In South Asia, political reconciliation has to precede trade.

As challenging as political reconciliation might be, it would actually be easier to bring about than the dramatic overhaul of the region's infrastructure or the achievement of the level of specialization necessary to achieve a significant level of trade complementarity in the region.

Political reconciliation has also proven to be a necessary precondition to free trade. Without reconciliation,

none of the other three problems can be addressed. Without improved relations, trade barriers don't come down. In addition, infrastructure development might seem a matter for individual member states to address. However, one of the main reasons why SAARC nations lack the money for comprehensive improvements is that defence spending necessitated by tensions in the region claims a large portion of national resources. Another difference between the SAARC and the EU is that the SAARC nations have yet to receive a peace dividend that could be devoted to civilian pursuits. As to complementarity, for member nations to develop complementary specialities will require a level of cooperation between member countries that is not possible in the present political climate.

A significant factor in the SAARC's failure to live up to the expectations has been that one of its central assumptions, that trade now leads to trust and reconciliation later, turned out to be wrong. Increased trade follows political reconciliation, not the other way round. Again, the problem: The SAARC lacks the means to resolve disputes between member states.

Leverage

The SAARC is in no position to drive the kind of hard bargains it needs to with more developed nations or regions so long as it lacks the clout to bring its members together into a unified trading whole.⁽¹⁴⁾ For an organization to exert serious influence over its members, the members must place some sort of premium on their membership. It is fairly clear that the SAARC's two largest members do not.

India's leadership, undoubtedly, understands that strained relations with her neighbours have been a significant cause of its failing to reach its full economic potential. Thus far, however, the SAARC has not been the Indian government's preferred mechanism for addressing the

problem. The lack of Indian initiatives within the SAARC has been interpreted as reflective of its slight regard for the organization. A more likely explanation might be that the Indian policymakers are sophisticated enough to know that an attempt by India to play a greater role in the SAARC will raise concerns of Indian hegemonism on the part of the other members and would doom the initiatives to failure. In short, an attempt by India to pursue major initiatives through the SAARC would probably be pointless.

To the extent that India has been involved in multilateral initiatives within the SAARC, it has been at the subregional level, through the South Asian Growth Quadrangle (SAGQ). The notion of subregional cooperation between India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, geographically contiguous nations, was first floated in December 1996. The SAGQ was launched in April 1997 by the foreign ministers of the four nations. The SAARC's ninth summit the following month in Male, the Maldives, endorsed the SAGQ as a subregional initiative under the SAARC. The SAGQ set the modest goal of harnessing the complementarities among these four countries.

The SAGQ is off to a promising start. The members have been involved in energy sharing. There have already been benefits as losses through outages have been minimised. The long-term benefits to industrial production, poverty alleviation through employment opportunities and health through rural electrification are expected to be significant.⁽¹⁵⁾

Pakistan has cordial relations with all the SAARC countries — with the exception of India. So, Pakistan doesn't really need help from the SAARC with most of its regional neighbours. The one neighbour it doesn't get along with would be in a position to block any initiative it undertook through the SAARC. Pakistan has, thus, shown only modest interest in the SAARC. On the other hand, has shown far

more enthusiasm in its dealings with the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

The ECO is not part of the SAARC, but its members at least share a common religion with Pakistan.⁽¹⁶⁾ The ECO is made up of predominantly Muslim states. Of the SAARC's eight members, four are predominantly Muslim (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Maldives and Pakistan). Two are predominantly Hindu (India and Nepal), while Bhutan and Sri Lanka are predominantly Buddhist.

The ECO has some of the same problems as the SAARC. At about 6%, its intra-region trade is only slightly higher than that of the SAARC members. Trade barriers are still relatively high. There are also similar complementarity problems resulting in export competition. Transport costs are relatively high owing to weak transportation infrastructure. Lack of resources is a problem as well. However, because trust issues and concerns about domination of the organization are not prevalent, prospects for addressing these problems seem somewhat brighter.⁽¹⁷⁾

There is little evidence that other member nations place any premium on the SAARC membership or have any serious commitment to the SAARC initiatives, as it is clear to them that Indo-Pakistani disputes limit the organization's prospects.

Over the years, the SAARC members have demonstrated extreme hesitancy on signing a free trade agreement. In 1993, the SAARC countries signed an agreement to gradually lower tariffs within the region. However, due to persistent protectionism, a lack of substantial tariff reduction, the proposed exclusion of several large sectors of trade from tariff reduction, tensions and distrust among members and domestic crises, it took thirteen years for a free trade agreement to materialise. The South Asia Free Trade Agreement finally came into force on 1 January 2006.

In the meantime, member nations took unilateral action to relax tariffs to improve trade generally. It worked, but unilateral liberalisation increased trade with the outside world more than it increased between South Asian nations. As mentioned earlier, intra-regional trade currently accounts for only 5% of the total merchandise trade. The SAFTA member countries have tended to trade far more extensively with the industrial economies like the United States and the European Union. For some members, India and Pakistan in particular, intra-regional trade is just not all that important in the scheme of things.

The SAARC nations also forged bilateral agreements. For example, India signed a 30-year water sharing treaty with Bangladesh and a trade and transit treaty with Nepal.⁽¹⁸⁾

India also has several trade pacts with the Maldives, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka.

The prevalence of bilateral agreements between member states demonstrates conclusively that they are not dependent on the SAARC to achieve their economic objectives. Each bilateral agreement reduces the clout of the SAARC.

The agreements also suggest that the SAARC countries are not necessarily ready to think regionally. It is simply easier to negotiate with one nation than with seven. Each bilateral agreement reinforces the habit of dealing with individual countries rather than acting regionally. Bilateral agreements also indicate that the member nations are not willing to forego the “bird in the hand” of an immediate agreement with one nation for the “two in the bush” of the possibility of a regional the SAARC breakthrough down the road.

It should be pointed out that the benefits of the SAFTA or any other regional agreement are speculative. So far, no empirical study I am aware of projects significant

gains for any member nation from the formation of a free trade agreement in South Asia. Due chiefly to problems with complementarity, studies tend to show that the SAARC nations would benefit more from unilateral liberalisation of trade restrictions or bilateral deals than they will from the SAFTA.⁽¹⁹⁾ This further reduces the incentive of members to seek regional agreements through the SAARC.

Terrorism

The Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism has been in force since 1988. The Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk was set up in Colombo in 1990. An Additional Protocol to the Convention on dealing with the issue of financing terrorism was signed in 2004. None of these have been very effective in checking the regional growth of terrorism. In fact, not a single action has been taken under the Convention. Member countries cannot even agree on the same definition of “terrorism.” The failure of the Convention on Suppression of Terrorism has not gone unnoticed, as seven SAARC countries out of eight (the Maldives being the exception) have faced terrorism problems of some type recently.

The lack of a SAARC dispute resolution mechanism is acutely felt on the issue of terrorism. Ironically, the SAARC has pounded home the idea that terrorism is a regional security issue. Having done so, it finds itself unable to take the actions necessary to facilitate the cooperation of its members on terrorism.

As Lt. Gen. Asad Durrani (Retd.), former director general of Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), has pointed out: “A fugitive can, even without permission from the recipient country, cross national frontiers. A state posse cannot.”⁽²⁰⁾ Activities of the terrorist groups that operate in South Asia have cross-border dimensions. Combating them will require cross-border cooperation. It would, therefore,

have been helpful if the SAARC had the ability to resolve differences between members, particularly between India and Pakistan. Because the SAARC has placed contentious issues and bilateral disputes off limits, these differences continue to limit what the association can do on terrorism just as it limits what it can do on trade. At a minimum, it would have been beneficial to have some neutral party to define “terrorism” for the SAARC, since it is unlikely that India and Pakistan will ever agree on a definition.

A little considered but significant problem has been unresolved accusations and the part they play in fomenting distrust among members. For example, it seems that virtually any time a bomb goes off on the subcontinent, Pakistan is accused of complicity. The Pakistan government is the only government, to my knowledge, that is regularly accused of being complicit in the terror bombing of its own people (“rogue elements of ISI”).

Accusations against Pakistan have generally been levelled by either India or Afghanistan and the “proof” of the ISI complicity tends to take two forms. Either there is no proof, which itself supposedly proves the ISI’s complicity, because, as the theory goes, only the ISI could organize a bombing and leave behind no evidence against it. Hence, the fact that there is no evidence against it proves that the ISI was behind it. Or, a government claims to have proof, but that proof is of such a sensitive nature that it cannot possibly be disclosed — to anyone.

So the allegations lie about unresolved, and they fester. They foster distrust of Pakistan, and, another little considered problem, they foster Pakistani distrust. The nature of the “proof” has engendered a belief in important circles in Pakistan that the governments of India and Afghanistan are opportunistic and anti-Pakistan. To be blunt, it has created the impression that those governments cynically exploit

tragedies to score cheap political points in the international community at Pakistan's expense.

As long as no mechanism exists within the SAARC to investigate terrorist acts, or at very least allegations of member state complicity in terrorist acts, the prospects of an effective SAARC response to terrorism are not merely dim. They are nonexistent.

What's wrong with a talking shop?

The SAARC is not completely incapable of modest practical achievements, as demonstrated by the establishment of the SAARC Food Bank. The need for a SAARC Food Security Reserve for use by member states in times of national calamity was agreed upon in August 1988. Twenty years later, renamed the SAARC Food Bank, it looks as if it will become a reality.

The bank would hold 241,580 metric tonnes (MT) in reserves of rice and wheat, contributed by each SAARC member, including India (153,200MT), Pakistan (40,000MT), Bangladesh (40,000MT), Sri Lanka (4,000MT), Nepal (4,000MT), the Maldives (200MT) and Bhutan (180MT). Afghanistan's share will be decided later.

As with most issues involving the SAARC, there are caveats. First, the Food Bank would not be large enough to see any country or group of countries through a major calamity. It would provide vital immediate assistance to tide victims over until outside help arrives. Second, the reserves would remain the property of the individual member country, which makes one wonder how smoothly distribution would go in the event of a calamity. Still, the Food Bank is a good idea and progress on it is an encouraging sign.

This success notwithstanding, it seems likely that the SAARC will act more as a forum for regional discussion

through conferences and seminars than as an architect for economic or security policy in South Asia.

The SAARC is the only South Asian forum that brings together the region's leaders on a regular basis. The resolutions they produce are derided as "toothless" by many, but these resolutions are statements of the agreed-upon goals of the member states. As such, they are important in setting agendas.

The SAARC summits also enable policymakers to hold informal, behind-the-scenes dialogues on important regional and bilateral issues. This is not a trivial thing. Such summits have given participants the opportunity to lower the temperature of some sensitive issues, resolve bilateral problems and make bilateral deals. As Maj. Gen. Jamshed Ayaz Khan (Retd.) has pointed out: "Any point of contact, however slender is better than having no contact at all between two nuclear-armed adversaries."⁽²¹⁾

The SAARC summits also allow the leaders of member states to interact with representatives of major potential extra-regional trading or security partners like the European Union, the United States, the People's Republic of China, Iran, Australia, Japan and South Korea, all of which have been accorded observer status by the association.

These summits have not only provided leaders with the opportunity to meet, but elites as well. Administrators, professionals, academics and representatives of the media, NGOs and civil society have all had the opportunity to interact. This is especially important in the area of fighting extremism and terrorism. Traditionally, members of these elites have seen fighting extremism as a job for the authorities. These forums are a useful tool for making it clear that fighting extremism is everyone's job.

These interactions are also significant because these participants are important thinkers and opinion makers in

their countries. These opinion makers get to know their opposite numbers as real people rather than as caricatures and convey their impressions to the public. This is important because the South Asian leaders have a history of exploiting caricatures to score points with their public in pursuit of personal power.

The media may be the elite that benefits the most from these forums. In South Asia the media has traditionally fanned the flames of sectarianism and jingoism, thus fuelling terrorism and other political violence. At the SAARC summits, members of the media are confronted with the costs of these problems. If the SAARC forums can play a role in making the media more responsible, it has done a good day's work, even though there may be no formal agreement to show for it.

Conclusion

Distrust and disputes between the SAARC nations and the organization's inability to take formal action to do anything about them condemn it to a marginal role in regional trade and security. However, while the SAARC may not be the answer to the region's problems, it has been, and will continue to be, useful. The organization is capable of producing an occasional practical good, like the Food Bank. Regular meetings and the resolutions they produce also have their place. The back-channel contacts that take place at those meetings matter. The contacts at the summits may, in the future, lead to bilateral understandings on terrorism as they have on trade. Still, we should be realistic about what the SAARC can and cannot do.

Notes and References

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14. Jamshed Ayaz "South Asia: A Way Forward —op.cit (ref.5).
15. See South Asia Regional Initiative for Energy Cooperation and Development report, *Economic and Social Benefits Analysis of Power Trade in the South Asia Growth Quadrangle Region* (April 2005).
16. The ECO was formed in February 1992. Its members are: Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, and the Central Asian republics of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. The primary objective of this organization is to facilitate trade and other economic cooperation among the member countries.
17. Asian Development Bank, *Regional Cooperation Strategy and Program for Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Member Countries (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, People's Republic Of China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan) 2005–2007* (August 2004), pg. 51, See also Economic Cooperation Organization Secretariat, *ECO Decade of Progress (1992-2002)*.

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Nation, State and Identity Conflicts in South Asia

Maneesha Tikekar

It is 60 years since the colonial South Asia barring the tiny archipelago of the Maldives, became independent: India and Pakistan in 1947, Sri Lanka in 1948 and then subsequently East Pakistan as Bangladesh in 1971. The former colonies of South Asia and the two Himalayan countries of Nepal and Bhutan entered the modern world as nation-states. The undercurrents of South Asian societies cast a shadow on the region's intra-state and inter-state behaviour. It has been observed that at any given time at least one South Asian country is going through political turmoil and violent socio-economic conflicts. Though a number of conflicts in the region originate in economic and political grievances of the people, yet people are often mobilised on the basis of their social markers of identity such as ethnicity, race, culture or religion which make these identity markers easy rallying points.⁽¹⁾ While people also identify themselves with other group markers like gender, class, age or ideology this paper is concerned with the former indicators of group identities and attempts at understanding the conflicts generated by them in the South Asian region.

The framework

Internationally, intellectual curiosity and excitement, caused by the notion of identity politics, came in two phases. Literature on these issues started proliferating in the wake of the aftermath of the break up of the Soviet Union and the revolutionary events especially in parts of Central and Eastern Europe and in the Balkans in particular. In the second phase more vigorous debates have been raised about ethnic/identity conflicts in the context of globalization. Prominent among those who argue for a positive connection between globalization and exacerbation of ethnic conflicts are Amy Chua (2003) who reasons that current globalization and democratization waves had increased ethnic violence in much of the developing world and Thomas Friedman (2005) whose notion of a “flat world” contends that while globalization does bring economic prosperity, the culturally destructive process associated with the phenomena can alienate disadvantaged economic/social groups. Not everybody agreed with such analyses. Many argued that parts of the developing world had already witnessed simmering of tensions, occasionally resulting in fierce ethnic conflicts, almost in the immediate aftermath of freedom from colonial rule. In these countries ethnic nationalism has often gone in the name of separatism or self-determination or demands for increased autonomy. These identity/social conflicts are not necessarily embedded in tribalism or primordialism. They are often believed to be products of colonial policies or other contemporary events; nation-states in developing world respond to these events by mythologizing their unity, centralising their authority, engaging in vigorous ‘nation building’ activities and by occasionally resorting to brutal violence.

It would be useful to touch upon briefly the theoretical traditions about ethnicity and ethnic conflicts that have preceded the recent spurt of interest in identity politics. There have been arguments between ‘essentialism’ and

‘constructivism’. Essentialists often draw attention to ‘primordialism’, a term popularised by Clifford Geertz (1963), or ‘ancient animosities’, ‘tribalism’, ‘ties of blood’ among groups as a cause of heightened identity awareness leading to conflicts in the contemporary situations. A noted Sri Lankan historian Kingsley de Silva writing in the context of Sinhalese-Tamil conflict in Sri Lanka accentuates the ‘vital importance of the past’ in understanding ‘the awareness of common identity’. He writes, ‘Ethnic identities often carry with them memories of historical enmities with deep roots. Tensions and hostilities arise from attempts at a redress of historical grievances, sometimes going back into several centuries into the past’. (1996: 111) The more recent writings of scholars like Rajani Kothari (1988), Paul Brass (1991), and Thomas Eriksen (1993) for example, have viewed ethnicity as function of deliberate mobilisation and manipulation of economic and political differences among groups. On the issue of politicisation of ethnic identity Brass writes ‘...that ethnic identity and modern nationalism arise out of specific types of interactions between the leaderships of centralizing states and elites from non-dominant ethnic groups, especially but not exclusively from the peripheries of those states’. (1991: 8 & 9) Some like Varshney (2002: 29-35) make a fine distinction between ‘Constructivism’ and ‘Instrumentalism’. Instrumentalism is involved when ‘the elite may gain power by mobilizing ethnic identity without actually believing in it, and may therefore behave instrumentally’. (ibid: 29) There is yet another theoretical tradition of ‘institutionalism’. It links identity/ethnic conflicts with the kind of political institutions that exist in multi-ethnic societies: whether the form of democracy is consociational or majoritarian; whether the government is, unitary or federal; the type of constituencies, single member or multi-member; and the kind of electoral system, proportional representation or first past the post system. (ibid:35-36).

Identity differences are seen to be the root cause of conflicts. Psychological, especially social-psychological explanations of conflict draw upon social identity theory as one of the primary explanations for conflict. In sociology, identity is related to self-awareness and self-consciousness which lead to cultural norms and group identities. Within politics, identity politics is seen as a search to reconcile concepts of nation and communal identities. Studies of religion attribute a large part of one's identity to one's beliefs. Anthropology, history, literature, philosophy and other disciplines each have something to add to the discussion on identity and how it relates to conflicts.

One is aware of the terminological chaos generated by terms like identity. Precise definitions or meaning of these notions have proved to be a chimera as they are lost in the multiplicity of attributes from colour and culture to race, religion, language and region. Broadly speaking there is a tendency to group them under an umbrella label of ethnicity. 'When these markers cease to be mere means of social distinctions, and become the basis of political identity and claim to a specific role in the political process or power, ethnic distinctions are transformed into ethnicity' (Ghai, 2000: 4). South Asia has witnessed a number of ethnic, caste and communal and regional conflicts; some very volatile, while some others simmering endlessly. It has an uneasy mix of religion and politics and the post colonial state formation has ridden the South Asian region with a number of identity conflicts. Ethnicity has been a critical variable in the formation and functioning of states in South Asia as well as the violent interaction between the various communities of people in the region. Ethnic groups demand protection and sustenance of their distinctiveness, claim political autonomy and even self-determination. They broadly make four types of demands on the state: political, economic, cultural and psychological. Political demands are about just representation, devolution of power and self-determination;

economic demands stem from the sense of deprivation and are basically aimed at sharing of societal goods and rewards; then there are demands for accommodation of distinct variety of cultural practices in the larger state, and demands that pertain to issue of collective esteem which may include protection of language, socio-cultural practices sanctioned by religion, and certain symbols of distinctness. These demands put identity groups in 'consensual, competitive or conflictual' modes of relations vis-à-vis other ethnic groups. (Phadnis: 1986: 102)

This paper does not aim at documenting the instances of identity conflicts in South Asia nor is it directed at providing case studies of such conflicts. The concerns of this paper are limited to understanding identity conflicts in South Asia in an overarching manner in the context of nation state formation and its evolution in the post colonial period. An attempt is made to situate these conflicts in the manner in which the borders were drawn and nation states formed in the region, different discourses on nationalism, and the mode in which the states envision themselves. I seek to argue that there is a mutuality of influence between the identity formation and internal politics of states and this in turn has been a major cause of interstate tensions in South Asia, challenging peace and stability in the region. The intention is to explore the relationship between the projected national identity on the one hand and the domestic and interstate conflicts on the other. This is not to take a one-dimensional view of identity which is a result of wide ranging and complex network of forces that include politics of power, the crisis of governance accompanied by undermining of political institutions by the top leadership, inability of the system to deal with conflicts in the public arena, mobilization of new groups in politics, significantly the uneven economic development and both historicising and imagining the past. But a single exposition of this kind may

not be adequate to take a comprehensive view of the causes of conflicts.

Nation and nationalism in South Asia

Nation is a historical construct, European in origin. It was the Treaty of Westphalia 1648 that inexorably linked the nation and the state though the Westphalian Peace and the notion of sovereignty have come under attack since the mid 20th century.⁽²⁾ The link between the nation and the state has always been tenuous because 'the state is inherently uncomfortable with the notion of cultural diversity and is prone to label and count citizens; the lesser the number of social categories, higher is the level of the state comfort. In order to be comprehended by the state the socio- cultural world had to be standardised and simplified; the idea of single, uniform, homogenous citizenship had to be created. Consequently the single most important project of nation-state was, and continues to be, homogenization of diversities. In this respect the state's tendency to homogenize minorities is particularly evident'. While the orientation of the nation is against the homogenizing orientation of the state, because nation is essentially a diverse entity; there is a tendency to differentiate one's community from the rest. (Oommen 2004:121)

It is necessary to understand the contradictions between the nation and the state, which are not easily comprehended when 'nation-state' is used as a hyphenated term. Ranabir Samaddar makes a critical and theoretically prolific observation in the above context. Commenting on the contradictory elements in Bangladeshi nationalism that could be understood in the larger perspective of a dilemma between the nation and the state, Samaddar draws attention towards the conflict between the nation in the making and the state formation in the post independence phase. The first phase, he writes, 'acts as ethical backdrop' which legitimates the second. It constructed Bengali nation as an 'ethical

community'. The appeal of the ethicality of nation increases as the nationalist movement is about to gain the statehood. Herein lies the paradox of the nation-state. Unlike a nationalist movement that tends to be romantic, the state building is practical business and the ethicality of the nation loses its aura. Yet the citizens have to submit to the state in the name of an ethical duty to the nation. (Samaddar: 2002: 19) The state may construct and define the 'national' but the very national which becomes, to borrow TK Oommen's phrase, a 'moral entity' starts defining the aspirations of a 'legal entity', the state. (1997: 33)

The final emergence of national governments in Europe at the end of the Holy Roman Empire that had kept the concept of a Universal Dominion alive through the Middle Ages is attributed to two principal causes. One comprises a number of underlying economic causes, including a great expansion in trade and development of manufacturing. These conditions began to undermine the feudal system, which was based on isolated and self-sufficient economic units, and to make necessary the creation of large political units. The other cause was the Reformation, which succeeded in eliminating the restraining influence of the Catholic Church on political development in a number of European countries. The edifice of the nation state was constructed on the ideals of the French revolution and on the universalistic claims of enlightened rationalism. The German Romantic poets and thinkers of the late 18th century had contributed to the discourse on nationalism by promoting the idea that each nation has its own identity and the right to statehood.⁽³⁾

Development of the modern nation state was linked to the industrial revolution, capitalism and a drive to create a common national culture around a common language. Along with capitalism the nation state has been a dominant Eurocentric paradigm for collective political organization and economic development as Europe experienced symbiotic

development of 'state, nation and market'. (Sarvanamuttu, 2005: 186; Tambiah, 1992: 9, 10) Nation state was fortified by territoriality and sovereignty which meant monopoly of using force within the national boundaries. More importantly it also became a hallmark of modernity.

One may briefly deal with the French and the German models of nationalism. French model has been state centric emphasising the territorial dimension, following the path of vertical mobilisation of nationalism thus making nation co-terminus with state. Its understanding of nationalism has been inclusivist and integrationist. For long the French model has been considered as standard and therefore universalised, though now seriously questioned. The German model on the other hand is culture centric and considered to be anti-statist. Its notion of nationalism is rooted in the idea of cohesive culture, community, and language and is anchored in the realm of subjectivity. There is a delinking between the nation and the state and nationalism acquires an exclusivist orientation with a focus on horizontal mobilisation. If in the French notion the state appropriates the nation, in the Germanic version it is the nation that appropriates the state and becomes subversive in its outlook. (Dattagupta: 2007: 4)

In the colonies and dependencies across the world the French model of the 'nation' almost became canonical. At their independence, the state boundaries were drawn by the imperial powers — haphazardly and remorselessly. The Charter of the Nation State was transplanted by West European states onto their dependencies and colonies at the time of decolonization after the WW II. In the developing world the biography of the nation-state unfolded in the diametrically opposite manner than in Western Europe. Sarvanamuttu observes that, 'State preceded nation and became the principal institutional agency in the creation of the nation through strategies of assimilation, integration and coercion. (2005: 186)

Independence movements in Asia and Africa, though conducted in the name of self-determination of nations, were actually demands for political independence along with borders that demarcated the sovereignty or administrative zones of former colonial powers and did not coincide with ethnic distribution in the region. (Connor: 1994:5) Thus the states that emerged in South Asia were left in the possession of the 'nationalist' leaders who then had to create nation states out of the states they had inherited. It is important to remember that 'nation' was taken for granted and national symbols were manipulated by the national elite without seriously taking ethnic or cultural arguments for self-determination as self-determination was construed as freedom from the alien rule. (Mayall: 2000: 190) The states that emerged out of the British colonial system in South Asia were heterogeneous unlike the largely, if not fully, integrated nation-states of Western Europe. These states acquired the hegemonic role in the creation and management of national identity out of their multi-ethnic societies. In some cases like Pakistan, state and nation had to be created simultaneously in the aftermath of the transfer of power. Freedom movements in several Asian colonies symbolised political nationalism that was essentially anti-colonial in nature. The aim was to create civic nationalism with a commitment to the nation and its political norms and values with an implicit expectation that citizenship and nationality coincided to the maximum possible extent. Efforts at conceptualising the nation threw a real challenge to the political elites in these countries for they had to counter the European orientation that had continuously questioned the very basis of 'nationhood' in the region. For example, John Robert Seeley, one of the prominent public intellectuals and Professor of modern history at Cambridge in the late Victorian era wrote in 1883 in his best selling work *The Expansion of England* that 'India is...only a geographical expression like Europe or Africa. It does not make the territory of a nation and a language, but territory of many nations and languages.'(255) John

Strachey, British civil servant in India wrote in a similar vein '... there is not and never was India...no nation, no people of India'.⁽⁴⁾ The Indian effort to conceptualise India as a nation focused on countering these imperial views on her nationhood vehemently; for no other theme in modern Indian history has evoked so much interest and passion than the narrative of Indians becoming conscious of their nationhood to overthrow the colonial rule. And yet Sunil Khilnani chose to name his celebrated work *Idea of India* (1997) and Salman Rushdie spoke of "A Fantasy Called India" for the special issue of *India Today*, celebrating 50 years of India's Independence in 1997? To Shashi Tharoor India continues to be an 'Adventure' even as she celebrated her 60th birthday in August 2007. (See fn. 4) Incidentally Stephen Cohen's recent work on Pakistan is titled *The Idea of Pakistan* (2004). In a review of the same book in *Foreign Affairs* Pervez Hoodbhoy calls Pakistan an 'Enigma of Modern History'. (2004)

How did colonial India visualise itself as nation? Oommen has identified the seven ways in which nation has been defined in the Indian subcontinent that typically emphasised ancient civilisational entity and composite culture among others. (2004: 24) India was conceptualised as an ancient civilisation with its geography and preponderance of Hindu culture as its major elements. Oommen terms this as a synthetic view and had predictable consequences: the Indian nation came to be viewed as a political entity; state and nation became interchangeable. Post-colonial Indian nationalism, according to Tharoor, is not based on language or geography or ethnicity or religion. 'Indian nationalism is the nationalism of an idea, the idea of an ever-ever land — emerging from an ancient civilisation, united by a shared history, sustained by pluralist democracy'. (See fn.4) This is what is termed as perennialist approach which sees nations as 'immemorial' or 'perennial' and therefore 'nationalism is

simply the ideology and movement for an already existing nation.'⁽⁵⁾ (Smith: 2000: 2)

Fixed territorial borders and sovereignty are the two sacrosanct attributes of the nation state that inevitably result in majoritarian nationalist discourse in a multi-ethnic state. Borrowing the metaphor of totems from the writings of Emile Durkheim, Jayadeva Uyangoda explains the nature of nation state which in his opinion is a universal form of totemism. 'The modern state — the original totemic object, the signified — is marked by a set of signifiers that have become eminently sacred in our intellectual beliefs, discourses and practices: territory, territorial unity and integrity, sovereignty, loyalty to the nation, citizenship, and national identity. These are the markers that give the modern state its sacred character' that had no social or historical roots in South Asia. Hence in an effort to acquire these attributes the post –colonial state in South Asia turned no less 'cruel or destructive' than the colonial state. (1999: 177).

Once the nation states were formed in South Asia, the communities bounded for ages by common history, composite culture and common social ethos suddenly discovered and emphasised their distinctiveness from one another.⁽⁶⁾ South Asian states promoted 'civic' nationalism to hold their myriad castes, communities, religious and language groups together but as the 'civic' nationalism was found wanting in keeping people together the states started resorting to nation building through nationalism which asserted the dominant or majority community's culture as the national culture. It became imperative for regimes to create a singular tradition and single culture to hold together the multitude of diverse groups and convert them into a nation. For, 'nation-state is a state that has become identifiable with one people'. (Karl Deutsch: 1969: 19) While disadvantaged minority groups opposed bulldozing of 'national' identity, and in extreme cases even desired secession, the politically dominant 'national' demographic majority veered to oppose

civic and multi-ethnic national identities. This has led to violent ethnic conflicts in deeply divided societies like Sri Lanka.

The debate on identity conflicts in the post colonial societies invariably raises the issue of efficacy and validity of the concepts of nation-state and state building, especially in the context of the Asian and African experience. Nationalism demands that political and cultural boundaries must be congruent. At times there have been attempts to establish a complete congruence between territoriality, religion and culture as in the case of Hindu nationalists in India. While at others, preservation of the nation state becomes a supreme concern, especially in an ideological state as in the case of Pakistan. The South Asian states have by and large followed the French model of nation building, whereas the social groups playing identity politics have harped on the Germanic notion of nationalism.⁽⁷⁾

Ethnic power configuration and typology of nationalism

I find Urmila Phadnis's prototypes of ethnic power configurations (1986: 109) and Oommen's elaborate typology of nationalism in South Asia highly instructive in the context of this paper. Phadnis has discerned three patterns of ethnic power configurations. The first one is of a politically dominant majority against a vociferous and often militant subordinate minority or minorities. This pattern is found in Sri Lanka where the main script of conflict is written between the dominant Sinhalese and mainly the Tamil minority though Moors have increasingly become vocal against Tamil control especially in the Eastern Province. In Pakistan it has been the proverbial Punjabi might that has been challenged by the Balochis and Sindhis and to a lesser extent by Pathans. The tribals in Bengal who are both non-Bengali and non-Muslim with Buddhist

Chakmas in the lead, have been struggling against the Bengali-Muslim domination.

The second pattern is one in which there is a politically dominant minority against a subordinate majority as in the mountain kingdom of Bhutan and the recently-turned republic of Nepal. Bhutan is a country of immigrants, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual and also multi-religious with over a dozen groups each having a language of its own. Among them are the Dzongkha speaking Ngalops or Ngalungs, also known as Drukpas, constitute less than 17 per cent of the population but dominate the rest who together form a numerical majority. Concentrated in western and northern districts, the Ngalops who migrated from Tibet in the 9th century comprise the dominant political and cultural element in modern Bhutan. They are the ruling group who control the monarchy and the government and dominate the economy. The Sharchops in the east of Tibeto-Burman origin are 24 per cent of the population and have migrated from the North-east India while the Lhotshampas of Nepali origin, mostly Hindus in the South, make for 30 per cent of the Bhutanese population. The Bhutanese establishment dominated by Drukpas has been accused of 'Drukpization' or Bhutanization, a policy designed to annihilate the culture, religion and language of Lhotshampas, Sharchhops and other minority, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups. Under this policy, all other ethnic and minority groups are required to assimilate their social and cultural identity as distinct ethnic groups with the society dominated by Ngalungs. To the state 'Bhutanese national identity' meant the forceful assimilation of cultures. Under 'One Nation, One People' programme Buddhism has been used as a political tool by the state. The worst sufferers under this policy have been the Lhotshampas who have been evicted from Bhutan or have been deprived of their nationality, or been intimidated. The Citizenship Act of 1985 denationalised more than 125,000 Lhotshampas who have taken refuge in Nepal and India since then.⁽⁸⁾

In Nepal it is the Hill Hindus that dominate the people of Terai or Madhesh region; then there are the Newars of Kathmandu valley who are believed to be the original inhabitants of the region and the numerous tribes residing in the mountains of the north. While the Hill population comprises 44 per cent of the total population, Terai constitutes 48 per cent and the Himalayan Region the remaining seven to eight per cent.⁽⁹⁾ Early in 2008 Terai region was on fire with violent protests by both civilian and militant groups that left 50 dead. Protests were withdrawn by the end of February when Nepal's government agreed to give autonomy to its southern plains after the national election. Under the deal, different ethnic groups, including the Madheshis, will be given more representation in state institutions, including the army. Interestingly despite the fact that Nepal's President Ram Baran Yadav and Vice President Paramanand Jha under the new political dispensation are Madheshis, it has done little to assuage the frustration over their 'deplorable' socio-economic condition 'along with the loss of their national identity and culture'. Madheshis remain exasperated as their demands are still unmet.⁽¹⁰⁾

The third prototype consists of a multiplicity of ethnic groups 'confounded by a multiplicity of loci of contacts among them to the extent that ethnic configuration in terms of politically dominant and subordinate groups at the state level becomes well nigh impossible'. (p.109) According to Phadnis, India falls into this category. This may be more or less true about many ethno-linguistic groups in India yet one has to explain the north-south/Aryan-Dravidian divide in the early years of independence and the fear of northern domination fortified through Hindi as official language of the country, in the four states of the south. And then there have been demands for 'independent' Khalistan and autonomous Gorkhaland though contained through 'accord' diplomacy. In the north east of India, Nagas and Mizos have been intermittently raring for self-

determination and a number of tribes like Bodos of Assam clamouring for autonomy.

Oommen constructs elaborate typology of nationalisms in South Asia which is quite helpful in understanding the behaviour of identity groups vis-à-vis the states in South Asia. (2004: 52-62) His typology begins with two broad divisions of 'state centred' and 'state renouncing' nationalism. The state centred category consists of two further subdivisions — 'state sponsored' and 'state seeking'. The first type, state centred nationalism, is discussed above at length; it was launched by the post colonial states in South Asia to gloss over their myriad diversities and create a singular image of the nation state. Oommen prefers to call it patriotism and thinks that it leads to nationalistic chauvinism and jingoism affecting the ties with the neighbouring states. Its assimilationist nature may trigger assertion of group identities and claims ranging from autonomy to self-determination.

There is any number of examples of the state-seeking nationalism as already noted above. The most well known is the LTTE projected Tamil nationalism in Sri Lanka that exercises virtual sovereignty over territory under its control though in 2007 and 2008 the Sri Lankan Government has claimed to have 'conquered back' or made successful inroads in the territories held by LTTE. Sri Lankan situation is that of 'state within state'. It is not just that the LTTE has *de facto* control over some territory; it has also claimed sovereignty over land, sea and air in the North and East on 12 May 2006. But even before the formal declaration they had already acquired most of the trappings of a sovereign state including a foreign policy of its own. LTTE has areas where it is more or less in complete control, where the government don't go. 'Travelling from government to LTTE controlled areas resembles a border crossing between two nation states with well guarded border control posts where travellers are required to show identity cards, goods are

inspected and custom fees are collected', writes Kristian Stokke. (pp2 & 3)⁽¹¹⁾ In the North eastern part of India, Nagas have been demanding a 'greater sovereign Nagalim based on the unique history and situation' of the Nagas; and the Mizos have fought a twenty year 'war of independence' between 1966 and 1986. Kashmiris have been fighting for 'self determination' claiming exclusivity for Kashmiriyat but increasingly their demand has shifted from its cultural basis to the religious one. Some of the state-seeking groups are secessionists founding their demand for separation on the primacy of identity and exhibit a strong disaffection towards the extant arrangement. Others are happy with autonomy. The separatist demands of some identity groups could be tamed over a period of time through skilful political engagement, or the groups on their own volition give up such demands or seek temporary retreat seeking to maximise their benefits within the extant political framework. Take the example of Pakistan. Pashtun nationalism in Pakistan moved from separatism to integration. The Jiye Sindh movement spurred by the Sindhi feeling of marginalisation due to Punjabi-Mohajir and later Pashtun domination had its claws clipped over the years and is said to be presently underground. The Balochs resorted to guerrilla warfare that was suppressed by the state violence and the Mohajir anger ignited because their 'El Dorado' had gone sour, which had put Karachi on fire for some time, appears to have subsided at least for some time now.⁽¹²⁾ In India the 'Dravida Separatism' spearheaded by the Tamilnadu based Dravida Munnetra Kazhgam (DMK) in the 1950s also evaporated over the years.

State renouncing nationalism is found in multinational federal polities where ethnic-cultural boundaries are co-terminus with politico-administrative units. India adopted a policy of linguistic reorganisation of states in the 1950s, though not without fierce debates with occasional accompaniment of violence, and the process of

reorganising states on linguistic/ethnic basis has continued long thereafter. The States of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand were created in 2000. Major linguistic-ethnic collectivities have been happy with provincial states of their own where their linguistic and cultural identity is by and large well protected. Provinces in Pakistan are also 'homeland' to linguistic groups. The demand of Saraiki speaking group for a separate province is yet to be met. In Sri Lanka the moderate Tamils would be happy to enjoy autonomy within a federal set up, though the secessionists have been fighting pitched battles for a sovereign Tamil state. In fact accommodation of ethnic groups in federal polity apparently solves the issue of identity when identity and territoriality coincide. But this may still leave territorially dispersed and/or numerically small groups like several tribes in India without any provincial unit or territory of their own. This applies to Mohajirs of Pakistan, Sindhi Hindus in India. Bihari Muslims in Bangladesh, who owed allegiance to Pakistan, is a unique variety of ethnic group that has been rendered 'stateless' with the creation of Bangladesh. Federal arrangement may help eschew vertical identity conflict between a territorially organised ethnicity and the state represented by a central/federal government but that does not in any way prevent horizontal conflicts between different identity groups. This is well borne out by the fact of various 'sons of the soil' movements in India that have successfully created the category of 'outsiders' in a given state. The classic case has been that of Shiv Sena (SS) in Maharashtra in the 1960s and 1970s with its violent protests against 'South Indians' for taking away the jobs from native Maharashtrians before it adopted Hindutva agenda for a broader appeal. The Maharashtra Navanirman Sena (MNS), the recent offshoot of the SS, created ruckus over the issue of 'Biharis' and 'North Indians' for usurping the economic opportunities of Maharashtrians twice in the year 2008 that had nationwide ramifications starting a bitter verbal warfare between the political leaders of Bihar and Maharashtra. The

MNS anger was not only over the usurpation of livelihood opportunities of the natives of Maharashtra by Biharis and North Indians but also over its political corollaries and for the protection of Marathi language and culture and ultimately the Marathi *asmita*- identity and pride.

How do states envision themselves?

South Asian states have sought state- centred and state- sponsored nationalism. The manner in which the national identity is constructed and the ways citizens relate to it have long-term implications for the state. The varying degrees of unease between the two have resulted in the constant striving for national integration. The moot question is how do states envision themselves? Swarna Rajagopalan delves into constitutions to discover how states envision or identify themselves. Constitutions are founding documents of states; their portraits are rendered through constitutions and also through extra constitutional means like education, language, tourism and cultural policies, economic planning, propagation of self image through media. (2001:30) Self image thus envisioned is an important aspect of national security. In fact in the South Asian situation promotion of a distinct self image of a state is seen as imperative for national security in general and cultural security in particular. Within the state national integration is a significant catchphrase because the state identifies itself in one way and the citizens in many different ways.

The Indian Constitution describes India as a 'Union of States'. People of India are 'undistinguished in their citizenship' by any primordial affinities. But the Constitution acknowledged the differences among people through its Preamble which guarantees the 'Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship' and through the chapter on Fundamental Rights which guarantees the Right to Freedom of Religion (Arts. 25-28) and Cultural and Educational Rights (Arts. 28 & 29) to protect the distinct

language, script and culture of minorities. The Eighth Schedule of the Constitution provides recognition to 22 Indian languages. Thus the Constitution acknowledges both religious and linguistic minorities in India; the latter is a phenomenon to be found in the states of the Indian Union. Hindi is the official language of the Union. According to Rajagopalan this is the only place in the Constitution where the state identifies with any particular identity trait. (ibid: 35) She further comments that for a little over three decades identity tensions and conflicts centred on language. They were either the linguistic groups vs. the Centre in demand for the linguistic reorganisation of states or in the southern states of Tamilnadu and Kerala and in West Bengal where especially the students' violence against the 'imposition' of Hindi reverberated in many a university campus. 'Imposition of Hindi was an issue in southern states in India from the very beginning as it indicated the ethnical bias of the Indian state favouring Hindi speaking North Indians'. The state vision in India appears to oscillate between an integrationist and pluralist approach, observes Urmila Phadnis (1986: 115-116) 'Unity of the nation' existed in the Preamble; it was reinforced by adding the words 'and integrity' by the 42nd amendment in 1976. Was it prompted by the fraying consensus around the nature of the republic as suggested by Rajagopalan? (Op cit: 32) It appears so as the word 'secular' was also added to the opening sentence of the Preamble describing the nature of the republic.

Gerald Larson quotes an incisive comment by Lloyd and Susan Rudolph about the nature of secularism in India. "The contradiction in India's concept of secularism was its simultaneous commitment to communities and equal citizenship." (1997: 208) Larson calls it a 'hybrid discourse on modernity' (ibid: 178) wherein there is this 'unusual juxtaposition of 'community' and 'citizen' even in the contemporary context. This simultaneous commitment, according to Larson, has found its way in the Constitution

and in the separate tradition of community based Personal Law. Provisions of some of the important Articles in the Constitution (Art 15, 16, 17, 25, 29, 38, 44, 46, 325, 336, 338, and 340) clearly reflect the inter-weaving of these twin commitments.(ibid: 215-225) These provisions relate to rights and interests of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward classes (castes), Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, and Christians as communities. Though it could be argued that such an arrangement was necessary taking into consideration India's social complexity, there is no denying of the fact that 'community-ship' has acquired official recognition and legal basis through the Constitution. When 'Community-ship' is officially recognized could communal politics be far behind?

In case of India, the concern for law and order in the immediacy of partition and the desire to build a strong, welfare oriented state, laid the foundations for the centralization of powers in the state. However, the dilemma of building a nation-state in a complex plural society was circumvented by creating a secular, "non-ethnic state". Two things must be considered in the Indian case. According to Rajagoplan pan-Indian nationalism and provincial nationalism like that of Bengalis, Maharashtrians and Tamilians developed almost simultaneously. Though there were elements of mutual exclusiveness between the two as in the case of Tamil nationalism, by and large there has been reconciliation and coexistence of the two strands of nationalism. Therefore, the political arrangement envisaged in the Indian Union constituted several provincial states organized on the principle of quasi-federalism. Subsequently, the re-organization of states in 1956 on the basis of language accommodated the ethno-linguistic aspirations of a number of groups.

Pakistan is a self-proclaimed Ideological State, a state based on an Islamic ideology.⁽¹³⁾ This self-proclaimed ideological character of Pakistani state is affirmed through

school and college textbooks and the media. Religious parties and the *ulema* have been at the forefront in reiterating the ideological character of the Pakistani state though they had opposed the creation of Pakistan initially. Was Pakistan envisaged as an ideological state during the Pakistan movement or at its birth in 1947? Pakistani scholars are at variance on this issue. Some like Hamza Alavi (2002) and Javid Iqbal (*Op.cit*: 352) are of the opinion that Islamic ideology was fostered by Pakistani rulers after the creation of Pakistan. Even though Islam was invoked by the founders for mobilising support for Pakistan, it was in the context of British India and for ‘providing an ‘ethical foundation for the Pakistani state and society’. The idea was that Islam would be a source of guidance for social and cultural values having bearing on political processes of the country. Going by Mohammad Ali Jinnah’s oft-quoted presidential address in the Constituent Assembly on 11 August 1947⁽¹⁴⁾ it can be safely said that he visualized Pakistan as a modern, progressive and a secular state. His notion of Pakistani nationalism was comprised of religious freedom, political equality and the state’s distance from religious and sectarian differences. Yet it cannot be overlooked that he repeatedly invoked the Islamic idiom. He hoped there would be “renaissance of Islamic culture and ideals” in Pakistan. On other occasions Jinnah spoke of creating a state of “our own concept”, of taking “inspiration and guidance from the Holy Quran” and making Pakistan a “bulwark of Islam”.(Syed :1984: 60)⁽¹⁵⁾ The fact that it was sought as homeland for a religious community was bound to throw up the issue of Islam’s place in the polity. I. A. Rehman⁽¹⁶⁾ makes a discerning observation on Jinnah’s address in the Constituent Assembly. ‘Those who bank on this address ignore the fact that a single address could not persuade the people to purge their minds of ideas and arguments thrown up not only during the communal confrontation in the subcontinent but which had been fertilising in the Muslim mind across the globe for a much longer time’.

How have the Constitutions of Pakistan envisioned the state? The provisions dealing with the definition of the state in the three constitutions of Pakistan of 1956, 1962 and 1973 (including the Legal framework Order of 2002) have remained almost unchanged, though the provisions related to the structural and functional aspects of government and law enforcement have undergone a change. The second amendment to the Constitution (1974) defines who is non-Muslim;⁽¹⁷⁾ thus the constitution has made pronouncement on 'what is essentially a theological matter' (Rajagopalan: 46). The Third Amendment Order of 1985 defined both Muslim and non-Muslim.⁽¹⁸⁾ While by the Second amendment, as to who is a Muslim, was implied in negative terms, by the Third Amendment Order a Muslim was defined positively and in terms of an individual, but the non-Muslims were just grouped together under community labels. Thus Article 260 of the constitution defines 'citizenship with reference to majoritarian Islamic parameters'. The Principles of state policy confer on the state certain specific responsibilities towards the Muslims of Pakistan.

The Constitution of Pakistan is explicit about the role of Islam in the state of Pakistan. One may quote several provisions of the constitution that elaborate this role. For example, the preamble to the 1973 Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan invests sovereignty in 'Almighty Allah alone' and the authority of the people of Pakistan is to be exercised within the limits prescribed by Him.⁽¹⁹⁾ The constitution stipulates that the principles of Democracy, Freedom, Equality, Tolerance and Social justice are to be implemented as enunciated in Islam (Preamble); that Right to freedom of speech and expression is subject to any reasonable restriction imposed by law in the interest of the glory of Islam (Art.19); that the teaching of Holy Quran and Islamiat will be compulsory in educational institutions. It further stipulates that all existing laws to be brought in conformity with the injunctions of Islam as laid down in the

Holy Quran and Sunnah — Federal Shariat Court is constituted to the realization of this end — but assures that the personal laws of the non- Muslims will be protected (Art. 227). President (Art. 41:2) and Prime Minister (Art. 91:3) of Pakistan are required to be Muslims. Pakistan is an ideological state; a state created by the ideology of Islam. Protection of this ideology is a constitutional responsibility of the highest offices of the country, the President and the Prime Minister; therefore it is necessary that both these offices are held only by Muslims and are expected to be the custodians of Pakistan's ideology. The Constitution provides for an advisory body, the Council of Islamic Ideology (Art. 228) to recommend and advise the executive and legislature ways and means in formulating future legislation in bringing existing laws in conformity with injunctions of Islam.

The Constitution of Pakistan, like any other modern constitution does make provisions for minorities to 'profess practise and propagate' their religions and develop cultures (Art. 20, 21& 22); and guarantees fundamental rights including equality of status, of opportunity before law; social, economic and political justice and freedom of thought, expression, belief and association subject to law and public morality. But when the state envisioned through the constitution is Islamic, how far these rights could be real? (20)

The multi-ethnic character of Sri Lanka became a central issue in defining the state structures as it moved towards independence. Initially, the Sinhalese political elite stood for some composite Sinhalese-Tamil nation. However, the emergence of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism as a dominant political force, particularly since the elections of 1956 which led to the formation of a government with a hegemonic Sinhala Buddhist ideology, was to result in the erosion of safeguards for the minorities. It is a highly centralized state because there is no devolution of power to the local bodies. Consequently, it is the majority Sinhalese community that enjoys state power in Sri Lanka. After 1956,

Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism became the dominant ideology of the ruling class. The governments that have come to power have been populist in orientation in order to sustain their support base in society and build up a system of patronage and reward. Such an approach has inevitably undermined the autonomy of the state.

Majority domination on one hand, and the increasing authoritarian character of the state on the other have played a significant role in promoting the divide between the Sinhala and Tamils.²¹ Right from the Citizenship Act of 1948, disenfranchising one million Tamils, to the Sinhala (language) Only Act of 1956, to the 1972 republican constitution granting Buddhism the foremost place, it has been perpetuating the divide between the Tamils and the Sinhalese. This divide was furthered by some strong measures taken by the Jayewardene regime since 1977. His tough measures like the Prevention of Terrorism Act of 1979 and the Sixth Amendment (4th August 1983) only invited defiance from the Tamil youth. The constitutions of 1972 and 1978 indicate that the Sri Lankan state is an ethno-national state as it has continuously strived to identify itself with the Sinhalese-Buddhist nation. The 1972 Constitution of Sri Lanka did not found a state; it already existed since 1948, in the sense that the Sri Lankan state preceded the Constitution. Between 1948 and 1972 it was governed by the Soulbury Constitution — the Ceylon Constitutional Order in Council 1946 — a product of the British administration. Swarna Rajagopalan describes the 1972 Constitution as rooted in the Sri Lankan (read Sinhalese) ethos and was evocative in character. The 1978 Constitution begins and ends with Pali benedictions, is dated according to both the Buddhist and the Gregorian calendars and describes the Buddhist ideal for the state (2001:37). It has established a free, sovereign and independent republic of Sri Lanka. Both Constitutions have founded a unitary state though in 1978, unlike in 1972, the 24 administrative units are marked and

listed explicitly. The establishment of the unitary state was believed to be in accordance with the ancient tradition that had always held Sri Lanka as a unitary state.⁽²¹⁾ Even the colonial administration under the British had favoured a unitary structure for Sri Lanka as was made explicit by the Colebrook-Cameron Reforms of 1829. If in the 1972 Constitution Buddhism was given the foremost place in the polity and the government was entrusted with the responsibility for protecting and fostering Buddhism, the Constitution of the second republic emphasizes political aspects of Buddhism by enjoining the state to foster *Buddha Sasana*. A Ministry of *Buddha Sasana* was created by President Premadasa in the late 1980s. The 1972 Constitution adopted Sinhala as the official language though the use of Tamil was provided for in certain contexts. In the 1978 Constitution the state had one official language and two national languages. In 1987 though, through a constitutional amendment, Tamil was made a second official language with English as a link language. Rajagopalan makes an interesting comment regarding the 1972 Constitution. The state is enjoined to play an 'interventionist' role in cultural matters. This is obvious from some of the provisions of the Constitution, for example, the state is entrusted with the duty of raising people's moral and cultural standards (Art. 16/2/f); of developing culture and language (Art.16/7) and to 'create necessary economic and social environment to enable people of all religious faiths to make a living reality of their religious principles.' (Art.16/9J) The 1978 Constitution extended the moral and cultural mandate of the state to the fields of 'teaching, education and information in order to eliminate discrimination and prejudice'. (Art. 27/5J) If the 1972 Constitution was a unitary Sinhala, Buddhist state with a strong cultural mandate, the 1978 one is 'painfully conscious of its identity and piously concerned about its mandate'. It created a state with a moral purpose. (*ibid*, 40, 41)

Commenting on the Buddhist ethos of the Sri Lankan constitutions Eric Mayer writes that after independence the Sinhalese nationalists wanted to adopt the principles of democracy bereft of its European origins. They believed that *Sangha* (Buddhist religious body) was prototype of democracy that was older than the European Parliamentary democracy. They pressed for the recognition of the moral authority of the *Sangha* and justified their demands by underscoring the features of the Buddhist doctrine that advocate 'equality, solidarity and welfarism- the moral foundations of a socialist democracy' (Meyer: 2003: 119.120)

The draft Constitution of 2000 which is yet to be adopted describes the Republic of Sri Lanka as '*one* (emphasis added), free, sovereign and independent state'. The state is explicitly charged with promoting a "Sri Lankan" identity while acknowledging that the Sri Lankan society is "multi ethnic, multi lingual and multi religious". (Art.2) The plural nature of the Sri Lankan society is reiterated again by Article 52/1. Sinhala and Tamil are designated as official languages and along with English they are recognised as national languages too. (Arts. 32&33)

The case of Bangladesh is an intriguing one. Despite its near homogeneity in linguistic/cultural and religious terms, the discourse and articulation of nationalism has not only been ambivalent but one that became highly contentious in recent times. What is interesting in the case of Bengali Muslims is the cyclical formation and assertion of religious or linguistic identity in the 19th and 20th centuries. In a short span of little over half a century from 1947 Bangladeshis have used three different connotations of their identity- Muslim, Bengali, and Bangladeshi resulting into two sets of contested and hyphenated identities — Bengali-Muslim and Muslim-Bengali.

The Constitution of Bangladesh at its creation in 1972 was grounded in secularism along with the values of nationalism, democracy and socialism, and the then ruling Awami League had stood firmly in favour of secularism. Secularism required an assertion of *Bangla* identity. Centralization of state power was inherent in Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's (the father and founder of the nation and its first Prime Minister) conception of a unitary system for Bangladesh from its inception. Mujib refused to recognize the Chakmas (non Bengali Buddhist tribes of Chittagong Hill Tracts) as a distinct ethnic group and grant them provincial autonomy when a group of Chakma leaders met him in 1973. Although its struggle against Pakistan was expressed in terms of linguistic nationalism, there has been an underlying religious dimension in nation-building in the relatively homogeneous Bangladesh. Gen. Ziaur Rahman, Mujib's successor, asserted the Islamic cultural identity of the state by introducing a new element in the national identity debate, Bangladeshi, by amending Article Six of the Constitution through the Proclamation order of 1977 ostensibly to emphasize the territorial aspects of citizenship and civico-political identity of the Bengalis. It also meant that territorial definition of nationality could resolve the problems of indigenous communities who were not happy with the assertion of Bengali identity and a drift towards greater conformity to Islamic symbols and values has taken place.

Zia and his successor Hussain Mohammad Ershad began a systematic annihilation of secularism through constitutional amendments. Zia began with sweeping changes in the Constitution brought about by the Proclamation Order mentioned above: he dropped the principle of Secularism from Article Eight of the Constitution and substituted it by 'absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah';⁽²²⁾ Article 12 that spoke of "secularism and freedom of religion" was deleted from the Constitution.⁽²³⁾ The preamble started with an invocation Bismillah-ar-

Rahman-ar Rahim (in the name of Allah, the Beneficent, and the Merciful). Zia-ur-Rahman Islamised education and encouraged Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and tilted his foreign policy towards the Middle East. The tilt was inevitable, for, it was provided a constitutional basis through the Proclamation that added clause 2 to Article 25 declaring that, “the State shall endeavour to consolidate, preserve and strengthen fraternal relations among Muslim countries based on Islamic solidarity”. Ershad was bolder; he proclaimed Islam as the state religion through the Eighth Amendment Act of 1988⁽²⁴⁾ but stopped short of designating Bangladesh as Islamic Republic supposedly to avoid a rebuff from India but to the chagrin of Islamists’ organisations. Ershad received a set back when his efforts to introduce Arabic as a compulsory subject at school level were snubbed by students and intellectuals alike. But once the Constitution was injected with a heavy dose of Islam and the principle of secularism abandoned formally, it paved the way for the establishment of the superiority of Islam in social and political spheres of the nation and for cementing the ties with the Islamic countries further.

Rajagopalan makes a thought-provoking comment. In the context of the constitutional visions of India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, she argues that by identifying with one identity group both Pakistani and Sri Lankan states leave the door open for negotiations with other groups; while the Indian State that is devoid of identity markers, hardly leaves any space for negotiation on identity issues which means integration of various groups in the Indian nation is non-negotiable.

In July 2008 Bhutan adopted its first ever constitution making a transition from monarchy to constitutional monarchy and founding a democratic political order. The Constitution retains and reiterates all the trappings of Drukpa culture, the singularly defining culture of Bhutan. Article 3 of the Constitution titled Spiritual Heritage establishes the

centrality of Buddhism in the state and society of Bhutan. The Constitution includes the structure of the Monastery. The king of Bhutan is the upholder of Chhoe-Sid, the Buddhist doctrine of religion and politics (temporal and secular) and the Chhoe-Sid-nyi the dual system of religion and politics is unified in the person of the King. (Art. 2) Dzongkha is accorded the status of the national language (Art. 1) and no other language finds a mention in the constitution. The state is entrusted with the preservation, protection and promotion of the cultural heritage of the country. (Art. 4) For citizenship by naturalization apart from other conditions, ability to speak and write Dzongkha and a good knowledge of culture, custom, history and tradition of Bhutan are made essential. (Art. 6.3 c & d)

Nepal has brought about a political revolution of immense consequence. With the abolition of 240-year-old monarchy in May 2008, the installation of the Maoist-led government and the country being declared as a secular state by the 2007 Interim Constitution of Nepal, long term, decisive changes are expected to follow. The ethno-linguistic variety in this Himalayan state is stupendous. Nepal has been a Hindu Kingdom and the Hill's upper caste Hindus (Brahmins, Chhetris, Thakuris, and Ranas subsequently joined by Newars) have been the dominant group. In fact there have been constant allegations that tribals have been subsumed under the label of Hindus to bolster the Hindu demographic majority in census reports; and the people of Terai region, the Madheshis, bordering India have been aggrieved at their marginalisation for a long time. Madheshis are culturally and linguistically closer to Indians living across the border than the Nepalese of Hill and Himalayan regions. The Interim Constitution has declared Nepalese nation to be "multiethnic, multilingual, multireligious and multicultural" (Art. 3) and the State of Nepal as "independent, indivisible, sovereign, secular, inclusive and fully democratic". (Art.4) All languages spoken as the

mother tongue in Nepal are recognised as the national languages and also for the use in local bodies and offices while the Nepali language in Devnagari script shall be the official language of the country. Though the 1990 Constitution also provided for all mother tongues to be recognised as national languages and the Article 18 of the constitution clearly stated that "Each community residing within the kingdom of Nepal shall have the right to preserve and promote its languages, script and culture" the ground reality, the Madheshis claim, has been different. The state followed the 'policy of repression' by promoting Nepali as national language threatening the survival of other languages spoken by people of Madhesh. Languages of the 'Indian' origin like Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Hindi, and Maithili were derecognised and ignored in the school curriculum.⁽²⁵⁾ But the Interim Constitution now promises Educational Cultural Right (Art 17), Right to Social Justice of "Dalit, indigenous tribes and Madhesh Community" among others (Art 21) along with Right against Untouchability and Racial Discrimination (Art. 14), and Right to Religion (Art.23) in recognition of country's diversity.

National identity, identity conflicts and interstate tensions in South Asia

Interstate relations among South Asian states are to be understood in the context of nation-state formations and drawing of territorial boundaries in the region, and the way states envision themselves and project their identity through various means. The antecedents of the territorial boundaries of contemporary South Asian states are of recent origin because the thrust of the region has been civilizational and not statist. Thus the issues of borders, identity and nation building are part of the contemporary history of the region. South Asian borders are largely colonial creations that were sanctified in great earnest in the post-colonial period. The end of colonialism witnessed territorial boundaries created

with utter disregard to ethnic and cultural frontiers. Borders defined the newly created nation states in South Asia because ‘histories of borders have been appropriated within histories of nation formations.’ (Bannerjee: 2004:142) These borders ran remorselessly through homes, villages, fields, common grounds and divided tribes and even families. They ruptured social spaces, and once drawn created binary opposites in terms of ‘us’ and ‘they’. Borders and states legitimise each other and the nation intervenes to create categories of belonging and non- belonging. Though by the time of the withdrawal of the British, ethno-religious differences became the basis of state creation culminating in the creation of India and Pakistan as two separate states; the states that emerged out of the British colonial system remained heterogeneous comprising of various ethnic groups.

Despite the external similarities among the South Asian states that give them a common regional identity there is little sense of camaraderie among them. In fact “these similarities have created problems of political loyalty and national integrity in terms of separate nation state identities of the countries in the region.” (Hossain: 2002: 4, 5) While other states in the region share historical, cultural and social bonds with India, they at once face a tremendous challenge in shaping their identities bereft of India which explains their efforts at eschewing close bilateral relations with India. Interestingly even the erstwhile Hindu kingdom of Nepal wanted to distinguish and distance itself from India by proclaiming itself ‘*asali* (authentic, pure) Hindustan’ and denigrating India as ‘*nakali* (fake) Hindustan’ because Hinduism in India, according to them, was contaminated by the British rule. The issue of national identity, among other things, remains a major determinant of the nature and structure of interstate relations in South Asia. Even the nuclear weapons programme of India and Pakistan is closely bound not just with national security but with national

identity, writes Haider Nizamani. That India had code name *Shakti* for the preparation for explosions in May 1998 and Pakistan celebrated its nuclear anniversary as the Day of Pride is indicative of the fact that nuclear weapons emerged as an inalienable attribute of their identities. (Nizamani: 2001: 99)

Expanding on Alexander Wendt's idea of states as social agents of interstate relations having identities and interests, Hossain focuses attention on the issue of nationalism and national identity in the context of history, culture and geography of states. Hossain finds this national identity of states useful in identifying the 'discursive consciousness of the states as agents'. (Op.cit.: 40, 41) The ideational aspects of the structure of interstate relations in South Asia are determined by the structure of national identity which implies the ideologies of national identity along with their historical and intellectual roots in fact go back to the 19th century. In the Indian subcontinent what surfaced out of this 19th century process was the conflicting religion based 'national' identities among the Hindus and Muslims culminating in the creation of a Muslim state of Pakistan. The ideological frontiers and the subsequent adversarial discourse thus created have had far reaching impact on the national identities of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and the relations between them.

The haphazardly drawn borders in South Asia have created a typology of state in the region; the Kin State. The kin state is one that borders the 'secessionist' region of a neighbouring state and which contains co-nationals of the secessionists with whom the secessionists share and maintain strong ethno- cultural, ethno-linguistic and ethno-religious bonds. The peculiar socio-cultural landscape of South Asia where communities bound by common history, common societal ethos got arbitrarily divided into separate states; the region became proliferated with kin states. 'Disgruntled' ethnic communities residing along the international borders

and that are divided by such borders — ethnic overlap — have caused interstate tensions in the region. Kashmiris, Pashtuns, Balochis, Tamils and Bengalis represent overlapping nationalities. While India became a kin state to Bengalis of East Pakistan and Tamils of Sri Lanka, Pakistan became a kin state to Kashmiris, Afghanistan and Iran to Pashtuns and Balochs of Pakistan respectively. Rajat Ganguly's study of the interventionist role of neighbouring kin states in ethno-secessionist conflicts in South Asia is illuminating. Creation of Bangladesh in 1971 with the active Indian support is the only successful kin state's intervention in South Asia so far. India's intervention was both a necessary and decisive factor in the birth of Bangladesh. Yet as a case of kin state intervention affecting ties between the Bengalis of the east and west played a small role compared to other considerations that ranged from humanitarian to internal security of West Bengal, to refugees, to strategic advantage⁽²⁶⁾ and perhaps most importantly, satisfaction derived from dismembering Pakistan. (Ganguly: 1998 96-129) But ethnic intervention often goes beyond solely ethnic and/or humanitarian considerations. Ethnic unrest in a neighbouring country provides opportunities for the kin state in balancing foreign policies against domestic considerations, 'reordering boundaries and determining interstate relations in the region'. (Chadda: 2005:193) In case of Bangladesh war India had economic and security considerations: it had to send the refugees back who were both an economic burden and destabilising force especially in Assam and Tripura and what most worried Bangladeshi commentators, writing long after the Liberation War, have emphasised, is India's hegemonic role in 1971. Imtiaz Ahmed, for instance, writes about India's organized hegemony on two critical fronts: one among the struggling Bangladeshis; and two, among the Indian population. In the first case it came through its help in the establishment of the Bangladesh government in exile, formation of Mujib Bahini and the support to Mukti Bahini; while in the second it meant

‘resort to extreme coercive measures to halt any counter hegemonic movements’ particularly by the communist parties and the Naxalites in West Bengal. (Ahmed: 1993: 240-253) The Indian government also feared that a continued civil war in Pakistan could have disastrous effect on India’s territorial unity by provoking pan Bengali nationalism.

India is the immediate kin state to Sri Lanka too. Indian intervention in Sri Lankan civil war is the only instance in the region where a government invited military intervention from a neighbouring state for resolving the domestic ethnic conflict and upholding the territorial integrity of the state. India’s concern was two pronged. One stemmed out of a grim fear that LTTE’s insistence on the creation of a separate Tamil state in Sri Lanka would have far reaching negative implications for unity and territorial integrity of India. This was certainly not misplaced considering the fact that India was internally subject to fissiparous pressures from Punjab, Kashmir and from the north eastern parts of the country. Developments in Sri Lanka had made the 55-million strong Tamil Nadu restive since the late 1970s who clamoured for Indian intervention. Indian Government found it difficult to resist pressure. India’s second concern emerged from Sri Lanka’s first Executive President Junius Richard Jayewardene’s (1978-1989) policy of enlisting the American and Pakistani support in the ethnic crisis to create politico- strategic pressure on India. Jayewardene was not averse to seeking mediation from the Commonwealth Secretary General, Britain, Australia, Japan and China too. (Dixit: 2004: 14, 15, 69 & 74) India could not have obviously tolerated the possibility of foreign presence just 18 nautical miles away from its borders. But India’s interest was equally to ‘represent and own the Tamil quest for justice and equality in Sri Lanka... and to apply alternating pressure on the disputants to shape and the course of the conflict’. (Chadda: 202)

The case of Balochistan is yet another pattern of kin state role in the ethnic assertion. The Balochis have their ethnic kin spread across the borders in southern Afghanistan and South eastern Iran. Since independence, Islamabad has come into open conflict with the Baluchis on four occasions prior to the latest outburst in 2006-2007 that was simmering since 2004 — 1948, 1958, 1962, and most bloodily, from 1973 to 1977, when a growing guerrilla movement led to an armed insurrection that ravaged the province. In the 1973 insurgency, Afghanistan and Iran played opposite roles; while the former provided some material assistance to Baloch secessionists the latter extended military assistance to Islamabad with the hope of thwarting any possibility of the spread of insurgency among the Iranian Balochi kin.

Afghanistan presents a different picture. The Durand Line drawn in 1893 that runs between Afghanistan and Pakistan divided the Pashtun tribes, even at the familial level, between the two countries. Pashtuns form nearly 40 per cent of the Afghan population and Afghanistan had never accepted the Durand Line. After the creation of Pakistan its leaders assumed that Pakistan would inherit the functions of India's British government in guiding Afghan policy. But soon after Pakistan's independence, Afghanistan refused to accept the Durand Line arguing that Afghan borders were no longer valid as they were a colonial creation and since a new country was being created where none existed at the time of the treaties of 1893. It supported the demand for greater Pashtunistan or demanded that Pakistani Pashtun areas be incorporated in Afghanistan. Although India publicly never supported the Afghan demand for Pashtunistan, Pakistan's early leaders could not separate the Afghanistan's questioning of the Durand Line, from their (Pakistani) perception of an Indian grand design against Pakistan. They wanted to limit Indian influence in Afghanistan to prevent Pakistan from being 'crushed by a sort of pincer movement' involving Afghanistan stirring the ethnic cauldron in

Pakistan. The civil war in Afghanistan offered Pakistan an opportunity to secure a friendly government in Afghanistan that would forever put an end to the Pashtunistan demand. Thus Pakistan responded with a forward policy of encouraging Afghan Islamists that would subordinate ethnic nationalism to Islamic religious sentiment.⁽²⁷⁾ There was yet another concern. Control over Afghanistan was necessary for Pakistan to acquire 'strategic depth' in its land defences in the event of Indian attack on Pakistan. Therefore Pakistan supported and promoted the cause of Taliban, and India, the non-Pashtun ethnic grouping of Hazaras, Tajakis and Uzbeks known as the Northern Alliance.

Conclusion

Identity politics/conflicts in South Asian states has resulted into sectarian politics and violence, caste atrocities, communalism and communal riots, nativism and sons of the soil movements. The resultant situation is that of social anomie, 'a social condition characterized by instability, the breakdown of social norms, institutional disorganization, and a divorce between socially valid goals and available means for achieving them'.⁽²⁸⁾ Social anomie could result from social change as suggested by Emile Durkheim⁽²⁹⁾ more than a century ago and/or from a sense of relative deprivation, real or perceived, felt by communities, as indicated by Robert K. Merton.⁽³⁰⁾ It is necessary to understand the complexity of group identity. Group identity is never exclusive and singular. Social groups are hydra-headed in the sense that they are made up of layers of identities making identity conflicts immensely intricate. This can be well understood with reference to two instances of recent (2008) conflicts in India; one in Kandhamal district of Orissa and the other in Assam. Kandhamal occupied news headlines for most part of the year and attracted world attention as Christian community the Panas, in the district was attacked and 'massacred' by Kandhas the tribal community who are

pro-Hindus or Hindus and in majority. The Kandhas were allegedly perpetrating violence on Christian Panas in retaliation of the murder of a Hindu Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati who had opposed a conversion camp set up by Christian priests. Obviously the conflict was communal. But there was another equally strong reason for the communal violence. Panas, a dalit community, had claimed a tribal status and was also granted reservation benefits to the utter chagrin of tribal Kandhas. Tribes had been complaining about stealing of reservation benefits by the converts through backdoor for a long time. The conflict in Kandhamal is thus at once communal, ethnic, and political. The October 2008 violence in the Indian state of Assam is equally perplexing. Was it communal or ethnic? The violent clashes between the Bodos, the largest tribe of Assam said to be practicing some variation of Hinduism or who are pro-Hindus and the Muslims gave rise to several interpretations. Muslims were said to be Bangladeshis that made the conflict ethnic; others believed that Muslims were local, therefore the conflict was communal. Still some others explained the violence as targeted against all non- Bodos or to the internal rivalry among the Bodo groups.⁽³¹⁾

How does the state deal with social conflicts that refuse to die out? There is abundant literature available on identity conflicts today that has generated a plethora of terminology such as ‘peace making’, ‘peace building’, ‘conflict transformation’ ‘empathic listening’ and so on, and a variety of measures for their resolution. Democratisation and economic development have been suggested routinely and the conventional wisdom would give them a condescending nod. The findings of a research project of the Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Clingendael⁽³²⁾ investigating the *Causes of Conflict in the Third World* based on twenty case studies suggest otherwise. The report states that many conflicts are centred on the political problem of creating or sustaining states in plural

societies. Experience and research show that democracy, secularism, modernisation and development are essential but not sufficient to deal with the need for identity. Even the governments that were perceived as secular and non-partisan were found to be favouring 'certain sectors of society' to the exclusion and repression of other ethnic, religious or political groups, according to the Clingendael Report. And more significantly the findings also state that when a political system is characterised by politics of exclusion, even democracy and democratisation may not guarantee the prevention of violent conflict because the political agenda could be very well dominated by populist rhetoric. Also democratic regimes are not necessarily free from 'legitimacy deficit' as the majority could be unwilling to share power with minorities. To what extent does the economic development approach help in resolving ethnic conflicts? It may certainly help up to a point but in case of Sri Lanka it appears that there has been overt linking of the development-conflict resolution nexus adopted by the international community.⁽³³⁾

Yet in the year 2008 major political transformations towards democracy have taken place in a number of South Asian countries raising hopes among the oppressed and depressed, among the marginalised and in the vast medley of assertive minorities in the region. Beginning with general elections in Pakistan in February 2008 the trail has been followed by Bhutan with its very first elections in March and with the inauguration of its first Constitution establishing Constitutional Monarchy in July; Nepal followed suit with its elections for the Constituent Assembly in April and with the abolition of 240-year-old Monarchy in May, Nepal has paved the way towards a secular republic. At the time of writing this paper, Bangladesh was gearing up towards general elections at the end of December 2008 with the hope of revival of democracy. It is too early to predict if these major changes in political systems of the South Asian

countries augur well for democracy and social cohesion in the plural societies of South Asia. While on democracy in South Asia it may be pointed out that the states in the region have opted for a majoritarian model with constitutional guarantees of minority rights that have not been adequate to protect their interests. Over the years though coalition governments have become a norm in the region, the coalition building has usually resulted in creation of a minimum-winning coalition, assuring victory of certain political party and eventually leading to the creation of majority in the legislature. Arend Lijphart in his *Democracy in Plural Societies* propounded the concept of 'consociational democracy' to explain the mechanisms of political stability in societies with deep social cleavages. His fundamental assumption is that the stakes of politics are usually much higher in plural societies, than in homogenous societies; therefore a 'grand coalition' of elites is crucial for success of democracy in such societies as against 'government versus opposition' pattern in 'majoritarian' democracy. For him, consociational model implies national pact for power sharing through empowerment of minorities. But identifying genuine representatives of communities may be difficult because a social group is not necessarily politically homogenous.

To conclude I would like to briefly consider three different suggestions made by different scholars in different contexts to contain identity conflicts in plural societies. Firstly I may bring in the civil society argument. Of late civil society has become a buzzword among social scientists. In his highly acclaimed work *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India* (2002), Ashutosh Varshney offers refreshing insights about ethnic conflicts and violence in multiethnic societies. He establishes a direct link between the decline of civic order and rise in the instances of communal violence. He suggests building of civic associations built around common interests to prevent communal violence. Varshney's study strongly recommends

a vigorous and communally integrated associational life through strong associational forms of civic engagement such as integrated business, organizations, trade unions, political parties, and professional associations to prevent polarization of identity groups on communal or ethnic lines.

The Second suggestion has reference to the debate between individual rights and community rights. Liberal political theory is wary of group/ community rights because its thrust is on individual rights. Notions of identity politics and minority rights are unacceptable to the classical liberal theory and the resultant ideas of democracy and rights, as these notions betray the idea of 'universal man' and therefore universal human rights. Liberal critics believe that group based demands celebrate the difference. 'They are not', comments Akeel Bilgrami,⁽³⁴⁾ 'for inclusion within the fold of "universal humankind" on the basis of shared human attributes; nor is it for respect "in spite of" one's differences. Rather what is demanded is respect for oneself *as* different'. In the social ontology of liberal political theory citizens were seen as similar individuals divested of specific identities or affiliations. Their associations were expected to be in the form of interests shared voluntarily and not guided by 'primordialism'. Therefore the guiding principle of liberalism has been integration or assimilation which in practice meant that the minorities conformed to the culture and identity of the majority. What the liberals termed integration is seen by identity/ ethnic groups as their subordination, discrimination, oppression and eventually a near extinction of their language and culture. Identity groups are cultural collectivities who demand community or group rights but the homogenising project of nation state is wary of endorsing collective rights. Phadnis (115) drawing upon the work of Paul Brass reckons two approaches to this debate: the integrationist and the pluralist. The first perspective, the integrationist, puts low premium on group rights has an assimilationist orientation and aims at *unity of diversities*

while pluralist perspective that envisages a role for diversity in the development of the state's personality envisions the *unity in diversities*.

We may consider Will Kymlicka's advocacy of the notion of Polyethnic Rights (group rights) as they constitute recognition of different forms of identity. Basically they include the recognition of different languages either constitutionally or officially and the right to retain the personal laws of the community. Recognition of language, culture or religion provides security to identities but also invite opposition from some sections in the state who fear that this may set an identity group opposed to other identity groups and also challenge integrationist policies pursued by dominant political elite thereby undermining loyalty to the State. This fear emanates from essentially hierarchical and conflictual view of multiple identities with which individuals live and not comprehending the fact that not all identities are necessarily opposed to each other. (Katherine Adeney: 2008:553) As already noted above, the Indian Constitution has provided for similar rights, rights for minorities, for both religious and linguistic, (ethnic) and also institutional arrangements like Minorities Commission but these provisions have had little effect on the abatement of identity conflicts in the country. Yet without them the situation could become much worse.

The third suggestion is in the context of demands of autonomy and self-determination but likely to encounter instant hostility and rejection from several quarters. Samaddar⁽³⁵⁾ refers to an interview of Thuingalam Muivah, a Naga leader from India with the BBC World's 'Hard Talk' aired on 29 April 2005, wherein the latter spoke of the long Naga struggle for self determination and the possibilities of reconciliation, peace and political freedom for the Nagas. Muivah's suggested mode of solution was 'sharing of sovereignty' that involved 'thinking of a state without absolute sovereignty and a political and governing structure

without the essentials of absolute power'. In a nutshell he was suggesting 'federalisation of sovereignty'. As practitioner of politics, Muivah does not carry any theoretical or philosophical baggage over state sovereignty nor is he interested in any hair splitting over legal and political sovereignty; but since sovereignty is an inalienable marker of the modern state, with supportive attributes of centralisation of power and huge bureaucratic- industrial-military complex, will there be any takers for the idea of 'sharing of sovereignty'? Yet, I think that the idea *per se* is worth considering. In fact as Samaddar points out this has been the political tradition in the South Asian region before the advent of the colonial power.

Notes and References

1. Is 'class' itself an adequate tool of analysis when it comes to examining class movements in South Asia? For example the Maoist Movement in Nepal cannot be simply explained away as a class movement. In the early years leadership of the left intellectual movement was provided by the upper castes — Brahmins, Chhetris — but the popular Maoist movement has found support from the tribes of Magars, Tharus, Limbus, Tamangs, and the Dalit castes of Kami, Sarki, Damai, etc . Similarly the Naxalite Movement in India and its late offshoots like People's War Group in Andhra, Maoist Communist Centre in Bihar were supported by Adivasis, Dalit and lower castes. The Ranavir Sena of the landholders in Bihar that had violent encounters with MCC in 1999-2000 was composed of youth drawn from Bhumihar and Rajput castes.
2. The Peace of Westphalia marked the close of the period of religious wars. Thereafter, European armed struggles

were waged principally for political ends. By the terms of the treaty, the sovereignty and independence of each state of the Holy Roman Empire was fully recognized, making the Holy Roman emperor virtually powerless. The Peace of Westphalia is said to have ended attempts at the imposition of any supranational authority on European states. The “Westphalian” doctrine of states as independent actors was bolstered by the rise in 19th century thought of nationalism, under which legitimate states were assumed to correspond to nations — groups of people united by language and culture.

3. The Napoleonic Wars awakened a new sense of national identity in German writers. The nationalistic elements of romanticism were furthered in Germany by the philosopher and theologian Friedrich Ernst Daniel Schleiermacher, who stressed the virtues of national independence and influenced such poets as Ernst Moritz Arndt and Karl Theodor Körner. The work of the philosopher Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling gave the movement a philosophical base for its mysticism and belief in the ultimate oneness of the natural and spiritual world. Johann Gottfried von Herder, thought of nationality in linguistic rather than political terms; his emphasis on the common social experience and culture of a relatively diverse population, however, in many ways paved the way for later political unification.
4. Winston Churchill’s widely quoted remark also likened India to “a geographical expression. It is no more a single country than the equator.” See Shashi Tharoor, “An Adventure called India”, *The Hindu*, 5 August 2007. Also see <http://www.winstonchurchill.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=354>.

5. This is perhaps the case with Bangladesh Pakistan and Sri Lanka too. History writing in Bangladesh is undertaken with the intention of indicating the foreshadowing of Bangladesh. In Pakistan a section of intellectuals have made attempt to describe Pakistan as Indus culture and thereby providing antiquity to it, and in Sri Lanka the Sinhalese claim the island as belonging to Sinhalese Buddhists.
6. Smruti Pattanaik, "Ideological Frontiers and Adversarial Discourse: Nation State and Nation in South Asia", unpublished paper presented at the International Conference on Territorial Boundaries and Cultural Frontiers: Emerging South Asian Consciousness, SIES College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Mumbai , 2, 3 & 4 February 2006
7. Though Hindutva nationalists predicate their discourse on nationalism on cultural premises, what they really advocate is the state-centred, inclusivist and integrationist French model of nationalism
8. See http://www.geocities.com/cemardbhutan/minority_status.html for the status of minorities in Bhutan.
9. Ram Kumar Dahal, "Geographically locked Nepal 's Foreign Policy is largely determined by facilities granted by India", in *The Telegraph Weekly*, 14 February 2007 <<http://www.nepalnews.com/contents/2007/englishweekly/telegraph/feb/feb14/national.php>>.
10. This frustration was voiced by Upendra Yadav, Nepal's Foreign Minister and a Madheshi leader. See *The Asian Age*, Mumbai, 24 November 2008, p.8. Incidentally when the Vice President Paramanand Jha took the oath of office in Hindi it created a furore in Nepal.

11. I have personally experienced this ‘border crossing’ when I took a flight from Colombo to Jaffna in December 2005.
12. For an excellent account of Identity Politics in Pakistan, see Adeel Khan (2005) *Politics of Identity: Ethnic Nationalism and State in Pakistan*, Sage Publication.
13. The core of Pakistan as nation was defined by religion and equally importantly by language. The place of Urdu in the ideological state was projected as invincible. During the early years of *Bhasha Andolan* in the Eastern wing the defence of Urdu as the national language vis-à-vis the demand for Bengali for similar status had almost acquired heroic and moral proportions. Muhammad Ali Jinnah said Urdu “embodies the best that is in Islamic culture and Muslim tradition and is nearest to the language used in other Islamic countries”. Quoted in Philip Oldenburg (1985)pp 716, 717.
14. Mohammad Ali Jinnah had said, “You are free to go to your temples, you are free to go your mosques or to any other place of worship in this land of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion, caste or creed — that has nothing to do with the business of the state”.
15. Anwar Syed’s book provides a comprehensive and in-depth study of Muslim and Pakistani nationhood in the context of national identity of Pakistan.
16. “A Nation of Two Sovereignties”, *The Asian Age*, Mumbai, 11 April 2007
17. The following clause is added to Art. 260, “A person who does not believe in the absolute and unqualified finality of The Prophethood of Muhammad (Peace be upon him), the last of the Prophets or claims to be a Prophet, in any sense of the word or of any description whatsoever, after Muhammad (Peace be upon him), or recognizes such a claimant as a Prophet or religious

reformer, is not a Muslim for the purposes of the Constitution or law."

18. "Muslim" means a person who believes in the unity and oneness of Almighty Allah, in the absolute and unqualified finality of the Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH), the last of the Prophets, and does not believe in, or recognize as a prophet of religious reformer, any person who claimed or claims to be a prophet, in any sense of the word or of any description whatsoever, after Muhammad (PBUH); and (b) "non-Muslim" means a person who is not a Muslim and include a person belonging to the Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist or Parsi community, a person of the Qadiani group or the Lahori group (who call themselves "Ahmadis" or by any other name), or a Bahai, and a person belonging to any of the Scheduled Castes."
19. Khalid Rahman, Director, Institute of Policy Studies, Islamabad, says according to the Islamic teachings, absolute sovereignty lies with Allah Almighty. Muslims cannot deviate from this standpoint, and this distinguishes Muslims from non-Muslims. In "Electoral System and Minorities" paper presented at a roundtable organized by the German think tank Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Islamabad in 2000. <<http://www.gdnet.org/fulltext/IPSelect.pdf>>.
20. Iftikhar H. Malik in his report on *Religious Minorities In Pakistan* draws attention to a glaringly ironic inscription in the main hall of the Federal Ministry of Religious and Minorities Affairs of Pakistan that says "Of course, Islam is the best religion in the eyes of God", p.22.
21. There goes a legend that said that Buddha on his deathbed entrusted the protection of the island to Vishnu and by extension to contemporary Sri Lankan Buddhists. Any territorial division of the island would be betrayal of that trust. (As narrated by Rajagopalan, p.58).

22. By the Proclamations (Amendment) Order, 1977(Proclamation Order No.1 of 1977.
23. Article 12 was deleted by the Proclamations (Amendment) Order, 1977 (Proclamations Order No. 1 of 1977)
24. Article 2A was inserted by the Constitution (Eighth Amendment Act, 1988 (Act XXX of 1988).
25. Jayprakash Gupta , General Secretary, Madheshee Janadhikar Forum “Status of Madheshi in Nepal” 11 February 2006, <<http://madheshee.blogspot.com/2006/02/status-of-madheshi-in-nepal.html>>.
26. See Lailufar Yasmin (2004). She writes, “India's support to Bangladesh's liberation struggle was primarily determined by its aspiration to overcome geo-strategic weakness vis-à-vis Pakistan”.
27. <<http://www.india-defence.com/reports-1510>>.
28. The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition 2008 at <<http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1E1-anomie.html>>.
29. *The Division of Labor in Society*, 1893, and *Suicide*, 1897 both The Free Press, New York.
30. *Social Theory and Social Structure*, 1949, The Free Press of Glenco, New York
31. <www.economist.com/world/asia/displaystory.cfm?story_id=12380901>.
32. Executive Summary *Major Findings of the Research Project: Causes of Conflict in the Third World* (1999) <http://www.clingendael.nl/publications/1999/19990000_cru_paper_douma.pdf>.
33. See for example Sunil Bastian (1999): “Development NGOs and Ethnic Conflicts” in Mithran Tiruchelvam and Dattathreya, CS (ed); *Culture and Politics of Identity in Sri Lanka*, Colombo, International Centre for Ethnic

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34. "Notes towards the definition of 'Identity', in *Daedalus*, Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, Fall 2006 <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3671/is_200610/ai_n16840844>.
35. "Sharing of Sovereignty", Keynote address delivered at the International Conference on Territorial Boundaries and Cultural Frontiers: Emerging South Asian Consciousness, organised by the Department of Politics, SIES College of Arts, Science & Commerce, Mumbai 2,3 &4 February 2007.

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Religious Extremism and Militancy in South Asia

Shabana Fayyaz

Introduction

South Asia is host to major religions of the world including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism.⁽¹⁾ Religion has played both an integrative role in the societies of the region and has also been the cause of disharmony resulting in threats to peace and progress. The paper aims at understanding the trajectory of religious extremism and violence within South Asia by probing the following key queries:

- What is the nature of religious extremism and militancy in South Asia; how it has manifested in aggression and violence at the micro and macro level in the region;
- What factors and variables account for the rise of extremist ethno-religious groups in South Asia? and

- Why and how religion is used in politics and militancy in South Asia?

To discuss the preceding overlapping questions, the paper looks into the religious negativities in India and Pakistan respectively. The central argument of the paper is three-fold:

First, No religion teaches violence. Their fundamental teaching is to promote equality, peaceful co-existence and respect for others. Second, the relationship between religious extremism and militancy is of a complicated nature and scope. Religion has been abused to serve the political ends of violence-prone organizations, communities, regimes, etc. Thirdly, religious militancy does not arise in a vacuum. Throughout history, extremist religious movements have been a response to historical circumstances, particularly arising when groups have felt threatened. Religious extremism develops when some part of a community rejects, often violently, the presence or influence of a challenge to its sense of self. Whether that challenge is cultural, political, or economic — or a combination of these — a violent or threatening response is seen by extremists as religiously mandated.

The paper is divided into three broad parts as per the earlier mentioned key queries and the situation vis-a-vis India and Pakistan is discussed simultaneously.

India: Genesis of religious extremism and violence

Jawaharlal Nehru,⁽²⁾ India's first Prime Minister, proclaimed in Delhi on Gandhi Jayanti 1951:

“If any person raises his hand to strike down another on the ground of religion, I shall fight him to the last breath of my life, both as the Head of the Government and from outside.”⁽³⁾

The question here is, has the promise of equality and justice to all in the form of secularism⁽⁴⁾ enunciated by Nehru and Indian National Congress⁽⁵⁾ respectively been fulfilled in India? Obviously not in the real sense as communalism, civil strife, ethnic and caste-based discrimination remain a bitter reality. Whereas, the Gandhi-Nehru tradition celebrated religious diversity as the basis of unity, the BJP-RSS tradition disowns it. This harsh reality is captured in the following words of a renowned Indian scholar, Mani Shankar Aiyar:

“.....They (that is BJP) view India in majoritarian terms as a Hindu nation (Hindu Rashtra) on account of our being a nation of approximately 85 per cent Hindus. They thus see post-Independence India as freedom from not only the 200 years of British rule but also from the previous 700 years of rule by Muslim potentates. Thus, for the proponents of Hindu nationalism, independent India is not about independence from colonial rule but liberation from non-Hindu rule..... Because non-Hindu rule is thus equated with rule by Christians and Muslims. Hindu nationalism stigmatizes Christianity as a foreign creed propagated by missionaries. It is even harsher on the Muslim community... and its contribution to the composite culture of India. Indeed, this composite character of our culture and civilization is seen as the bastardisation of a pure Hindu flow; thus, “cultural nationalism” becomes the self-description of Hindu nationalist.”⁽⁶⁾

At this juncture, one needs to further elaborate the key strands of “Hindutva”⁽⁷⁾ first articulated by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar,⁽⁸⁾ that form the ideological and political basis militant anti-minority organizations like the Rashtriya

Swayam Sevek Sang (RSS), Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Bajrang Dal (BD), Bhartiya Janata Party, Shiv Sena as well as Patit Pawan in Maharashtra, Hindu Munani in Tamil Nadu, Hindu Jagran Manch in Gujarat, and many such regional organizations or political parties swear by. According to Savarkar, “Hindus are not merely the citizens of Indian state because they are united not only by the bonds of love they bear to a common motherland but also by the bonds of blood of the mighty race incorporated with and descended from the vedic forefathers.”⁽⁹⁾ Thus, Hindu superiority is declared in the racial, religious, cultural and historical terms.

Interestingly, Hindu elites used the Hindutva ideology and politics to gloss over the discrimination based on caste and creed particularly against the Dalits within the Hindu community. The organizations such as Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the Bajrang Dal worked amongst the dalit sections and tribals to co-opt and assimilate these sections in the broader Hindu political identity without any social empowerment.⁽¹⁰⁾ In fact, Hindutva has been skilfully employed by the political groupings to forge unity against the Muslims.

India has the second largest Muslim population in the world. However, “their loyalty to the country in general and Hindu society in particular was to be doubted and they were projected as loyal to Pakistan. They were thus portrayed as anti-nationals.”⁽¹¹⁾

The Ayodhya dispute mirrored the extreme polarization between the Hindu and the Muslim communities. Ayodhya, in Uttar Pradesh, was the site of the 16th century Babri Mosque built during Mughal rule under Emperor Babar. Hindus claimed it was the birth place of the god Ram. From the mid-1980s, the site became controversial giving rise to hostility between Hindus and Muslims. In 1984, the VHP started an agitation for the ‘liberation’ of

Ramjanamabhoomi (birthplace of Ram). The campaign reached its climax in 1991 with the *rath yatra* led by L. K. Advani that culminated in the destruction of the historical mosque by *karsevaks* in December 1992. This was followed by countrywide Hindu-Muslim riots that left at least 2,000 people dead.⁽¹²⁾ As Muslims in various parts of India demonstrated against the destruction of the historic mosque and the killings of Muslims, the Hindu extremists went on a rampage, especially in Bombay, leading to further large-scale riots. This had a significant impact on both internal and regional situation as it polarized the Indian society and also contributed to the rise of a 'militaristic-inclined' government, hostile to Muslims.⁽¹³⁾

The 2002 Gujarat massacre is a tragic example of collective violence by one community against a minority. Between 1,200 and 2,500 people were killed, most of them Muslims. The perpetrators of the violence as well as the *Sangh Parivar* leaders and the Gujarat government maintain that the violence was a spontaneous, uncontrollable reaction to the Godhra train burning.⁽¹⁴⁾ Others have termed it as a massacre and an attempted pogrom or genocide of the Muslim population, emphasizing that the violence was largely directed against defenceless people, indiscriminate with regard to age or sex and alleging that it was pre-planned, organized and aided by the local authorities and political leaders.⁽¹⁵⁾

According to analytical accounts of the Gujarat riots the role of state government was not positive and policemen stood as silent spectators. The Modi-led state government belonging to BJP was reprimanded at various levels including the Parliament, Supreme Court and internationally. In February 2008 Indian Supreme Court condemned the state's government, led by Narendra Modi, in its conduct during the riots.

The US State Department in its International Religious Freedom Report 2003 stated:

“The Gujarat state government and the police were criticized for failing to stop the violence, and in some cases participating in or encouraging it. NGOs report that police were implicated directly in nearly all the attacks against Muslims in Gujarat, and in some cases, NGOs contend, police officials encouraged the mob. The Government dispatched the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to investigate the attacks against Muslims, but the NHRC's findings that the attacks against Muslims "was a comprehensive failure on the part of the state government to control the persistent violation of rights of life, liberty, equality, and dignity of the people of the state," led to widespread criticism in the Hindu community and allegations of government partiality.”⁽¹⁶⁾

To quote Dr Ram Punwani of the Committee of Communal Amity, Bombay, the rise of communalism as the major claimant to power in Indian politics poses a serious challenge to the survival of democracy in India and is even threatening the fabric of the Indian Constitution.⁽¹⁷⁾

The Christian community also comes under attack of the communalists who consider them as a foreign threat to the Hindu fabric of the nation.⁽¹⁸⁾ Extreme Hindutva organizations justify their violent behaviour against the Christian minority on three charges: Christian missionary activity is illegal and a conspiracy to convert Hindus into Christians with the aim of turning Hindus into a minority; the Christian population is increasing dramatically; and that conversions take place forcibly or secured against monetary or other incentives. Thus, attacks and destruction of churches and Christian cemeteries, intimidation and murders of priests, threats to Christian schools and non-governmental charitable organizations, hate propaganda etc are all morally, politically, socially and culturally justified as right.

Reflecting on the bipartisan role of state and the politicization of religion an Indian analyst Vinay Lal observes:

“The increase of violence against Christians must be viewed in the context of the rise of Hindu nationalism and the ascendancy of the BJP to political power at the center of the nation. From 1964 to 1996, only 38 incidents of violence against Christians were registered in the country, though doubtless many incidents were not recorded at all; in 1997 alone, 24 incidents were noted by the United Christian Forum for Human Rights, and in 1998, the number had gone up to 90, though some Christian spokespersons have claimed that the true figure is several times higher. Hindu militants, one can safely conclude, see the rise of the BJP and other like-minded parties as an invitation to commit violence against Christians and other minorities with impunity.”⁽¹⁹⁾

The various Churches in India condemn the unprecedented deliberate and systematic ethnic cleansing of Christians motivated by the Hindutva extremist groups like Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad. From 25th August 2008 onwards, the Hindu extremist groups have been burning, killing, beating, raping and forcing Christians to convert to Hinduism. They are systematically destroying homes, churches, orphanages, Bible schools, even burning entire villages throughout the State of Orissa, particularly in the district of Kandhamal. The persecution of Christians is spreading to other parts of India also.⁽²⁰⁾

Parallel to the rise of Hindu-extremist groupings, indigenous Islamic militant groups, like the Indian Mujahideen,⁽²¹⁾ have sprung up. It is observed that “when you have a community that has been brutalized, it is inevitable that there will be a pool of ready recruits,” says political commentator Manoj Joshi, noting the anti-Muslim riots in Mumbai in 1993 and similar ones in Gujarat in 2002.⁽²²⁾ Similarly, security analyst B. Raman, former head

of the counterterrorism division of the Research and Analysis Wing, India's external intelligence agency opines:

"A growing percentage of India's Muslim population is getting alienated. They are increasingly acquiring their own expertise.... Over the last few years, [Indian Islamist terrorists] have expanded the ambit of their grievances from purely domestic issues to global issues like the US-led war in Iraq. They are a part of the pan-Islamic agenda....It is a very serious situation, which has arisen because our government has failed to accept the ground reality".⁽²³⁾

To quote Indian scholar Mani Shankar Aiyar:

"India is either all of us — or some of us. The country cannot be both....Celebrating diversity is one option. Establishing dominance is another.... Secularism is about contemporaneity. Hindutva is a return to a pre-existing order, a wiping out of the present reality, and a revenge on history. That is why it cannot, will not and must not be allowed to prevail. India's destiny has to be a secular destiny".⁽²⁴⁾

Pakistan: Religious extremism and militancy — harsh reality!

The nature of radical Islam in Pakistan exhibits the following four strands:

"Street agitation; anti-Western intellectual discourse; religious scholarship of madrassas, and; potential for a xenophobic tribal rebellion in NWFP".⁽²⁵⁾

Extreme and narrow interpretation of Islam has led to sectarian clashes between the Sunni majority and Shia minority claiming scores of innocent lives. Attacks on the Christians and other minorities plus discrimination against women are also a reflection of the distorted teachings of Islam. The fusion of religious and political ideals has led to

the creation of private agents of country's foreign and security policy. This was aided by Islamabad's "front line role" in the United States-backed campaign against the former Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The very usage of "Islam and its concept of Jihad" against the atheist Russia created a pool of radicalized militants of Pakistani origin. The situation is well articulated in the following lines:

"We cannot fight holy wars around the world and expect peace within our own boundaries. We cannot think of nuclear mobile launchers and social development both at the same time. We have got to pick one or the other. We could either have a chaotic, Talibanized Pakistan or an orderly, integrated, progressive nation-state. It all boils down to what kind of Pakistan we really want. To be certain, we cannot embrace competition in the economy and continue to deny pluralism in politics for very long".⁽²⁶⁾

Here, it's pertinent to trace the factors internal as well as external that have culminated in the religious extremist tendencies and militant behaviour within and beyond Pakistan. To quote a Pakistan political scientist, Moonis Ahmer:

"The phenomenon of religious extremism and intolerance led to the emergence of sectarian violence in Pakistan. The state of Pakistan failed to curb sectarian conflict and polarization at the societal level (which) promoted the forces of religious extremism. The role of external factors in augmenting sectarian divide in Pakistan and fighting a proxy war on its grounds cannot be ignored".⁽²⁷⁾

Here, the Islamization process unleashed by the military regime of General M Zia-ul-Haq (1977-1987) is of critical value. Under the process of Islamization, religion was politicized for securing and sustaining regime's legitimacy. In the words of Zahid Hussain:

“General Zia cleverly used Islam to consolidate his power and legitimize his military rule. He believed that he had a divine obligation to establish an Islamic society ruled in accordance with the Quran and Sharia.... He introduced a rigid interpretation of Islamic Sharia, thus empowering clergy”.⁽²⁸⁾

Islamic regulations were introduced in all the state institutions at the recruiting, training, planning and education level. This process of creating an ideological Wahabi Islamic state and privatization of Jihad in the Afghan war led to the spread of extremist militant behaviour amongst the young generation of Pakistanis. According to the Brussels based International Crisis Group (ICG):

“Sectarian conflict in Pakistan is the direct consequence of state policies of Islamization and the marginalization of secular democratic forces. Instead of empowering liberal, democratic voices, the government has co-opted the religious right and continues to rely on it to counter civilian opposition. The political use of Islam by the state promotes an aggressive competition of official patronage between and within the many variations of Sunni and Shia Islam, with the clerical elite of major sects and sub-sects striving to build up their political parties, raise Jihadi militias, and expand madrassa networks”.⁽²⁹⁾

In this process of growth of extremism, the role of external factors cannot be ignored. Iran and Saudi Arabia were held responsible for financing and executing a proxy war in Pakistan. Engaged in the race to claim the leadership of the Islamic world, both Iran and Saudi Arabia (along with Gulf States) competed for gaining influence on the religious-political fronts in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the newly independent Muslim republics of Central Asia. The result was the deepening of cleavages between the Sunni and Shia sects within the country. The religious and ethnic organisations representing their respective causes began,

increasingly to use violent methods, including acts of terrorism to achieve their ends, thereby resulting in increasing incidents of violence and worsening law and order situation. The period of the 80s and 90s was marked by bomb blasts in public places in Pakistan, including wanton shooting incidents. The considerable confusion over the role of Islam in politics and different Islamic ideologies also made it difficult for governments to formulate a definitive role of Islam, resulting in crisis of governance.⁽³⁰⁾

The Lal Masjid July 2007 crisis can be termed as a climax of religious extremism turning violent in the heart of the federal capital itself. Radical clerics and armed militants took over the Lal Masjid and started replacing the writ of the state with their own. The government's vacillation and failure to act in time resulted in a bloody showdown that caused heavy casualties. Its aftermath is characterized by the upsurge of suicide attacks on the civilians and state officials across the country. The Lal Masjid crisis is a product of state neglect and failure to deliver on the law and order, educational, and developmental fronts.

According to the HRCP (2007) Report:

“Sectarian violence claimed 580 lives and wounded 1,120 others. The Shia community remained the main target of sectarian attacks; 5 Ahmedis were murdered in 2007 while 36 faced prosecution in faith-related cases; places of worship and graveyards remained a target of land grabbing mafia; The militants entrenched themselves in parts of NWFP and the tribal areas, taking over several towns and implementing their version of Sharia. They also targeted girls' schools and CD shops and threatened religious minorities to convert to Islam or leave the area; number of violations against women remained high and there were countless reports of brutal attacks on women in all parts of the country. HRCP recorded 1,202 killings — of which honour killing crimes were 636 , 755 cases of sexual harassment, of which 377 victims were

raped (166 minors) and 354 victims were gang-raped (92 minors), 736 kidnappings, 143 attacks by burning and many other abuses against women”.⁽³¹⁾

Thus, the challenge of religious extremism and militancy remains acute and alarming. According to Dr Hasan Askari Rizvi:

“Pakistan experienced 63 suicide and car-bomb attacks in 2008, killing 725 — the highest number in a single year since 2001. Most of these attacks were owned by the Taliban and affiliated groups based in the tribal areas....The Mumbai attacks have underlined the need to contain militant groups based in mainland Pakistan. These groups have developed links with the Taliban and help each other launch violent attacks. This means that Pakistan will have to simultaneously take on the tribal areas groups as well as those in the mainland.....Militancy is the biggest threat to Pakistan’s internal stability and foreign policy options in 2009. Civilian and military authorities will have to work together to adopt short- and long-term strategies to cope with this challenge. Without tackling this threat, Pakistan will face serious problems in its interactions at the global level”.⁽³²⁾

Conclusion

This discussion of religious extremism and militant trends in India and Pakistan respectively, leads to the following conclusion:

- In South Asia, religious extremism is not the lone cause of militancy. It has been used for political gains (obvious or hidden) resulting in violence, threats to domestic security and peace in some South Asian countries.
- Grievances (political, social, economic, cultural etc) are camouflaged in religious terms to incite violence.

- Religious militancy can be contained through multi-dimensional policies based on understanding, engagement, dialogue, at the micro and macro level within and across the states.
- In a nutshell, religion has been cast as a political force in South Asia. Religious extremism germinates intolerance, hatred, jealousy and militancy. All religions advocate peace, tolerance and brotherhood but religious extremism uses faith to incite violence for political gains.

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Combating Terrorism

**How to Improve Cultural and
Economic Linkages Between
Afghanistan and Pakistan**

Nasrullah Arsalai

Introduction

Located at the confluence of great mountains and with a turbulent history, the Pakistan-Afghanistan region was once referred to as the "cockpit of Asia" by Lord Curzon. Geography has placed the region at the crossroads of international and regional politics, strategic and economic interests and as a potential conduit for the oil/gas pipelines of Central Asia. But the war-torn region faces diverse problems of conflicting group-identities, narcotics and arms trafficking, money laundering, smuggling and cultural clashes.

At the moment, Afghanistan and Pakistan relations are following a very delicate course. Misperceptions about each other's motives and intentions abound. But bonds of geography, history, faith and culture inextricably link the

destinies of the two nations. Both countries are facing a common threat from extremism and terrorism. Peace and stability are essential to enable Afghanistan and Pakistan to serve as the hub and corridor for trade and economic cooperation between the dynamic regions of South Asia, Central Asia, China and the Gulf. In the war against terrorism both countries need to engage in the implementation of positive initiatives and solution-oriented cooperation, rather than negative rhetoric and hostility. On the other hand, the implementation of any programme of economic cooperation requires firm political commitment. It is also important that the political commitment is translated into policy and necessary administrative measures. This would need the support of the international community in the form of financial and technical assistance.

One objective on the terrorists' agenda is to make national borders into barriers, to erect walls behind which people live in fear, businesses avoid risk and economies — including those most in need of development — stagnate. In a nutshell they want to create a sanctuary where they can recruit and from where they can organize their terrorist activities. Therefore, keeping the borders open and economic development are necessary preconditions for addressing the issue of extremism. While poverty and lack of economic opportunity may not lead directly to conflict, crime or terrorism, they strengthen destabilizing forces.

The following identifies some of the main areas of cooperation that could be considered essential for both countries.

Economic relations

In today's world of globalization and being part of the SAARC and ECO that are making efforts to open borders to encourage free trade and ease visa regimes, Pakistan and Afghanistan should also avoid creating obstacles for each

other and pave the way for development through regional cooperation. In this process of long-term development priority should be given to the private sector and both governments should support and encourage private initiatives.

Mutual benefits of cooperation

Afghanistan is a landlocked country dependent upon transit countries for its foreign trade. Pakistan is its main access to a seaport. At the same time, due to its strategic geographic position, Afghanistan has the potential for becoming a land link for Pakistan with Central Asia and a regional hub for trade and transit between Central and South Asia, the Middle East and China — a role which the country has played historically.

Currently almost 50 per cent of Afghanistan's trade is with its five neighbours — Pakistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. There is considerable trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan, totalling well over US \$1.3 billion, but it is very asymmetric, consisting for the most part of imports from Pakistan, as compared to very little Afghan exports.

Transit to Afghanistan through Pakistan is currently broadly governed by the 1965 Afghan Transit Trade Agreement (ATTA) which specifies the port, route, transport modes and customs transit procedures. Since 1965, the economic and transport conditions for the transit of goods to/from Afghanistan through Pakistan have changed significantly. Both Afghanistan and Pakistan have agreed on the need to negotiate a new agreement, not only to continue to provide Afghanistan with access to the sea through Pakistan but also to provide Pakistan with direct routes to the Central Asian Region (CAR) through Afghanistan.

The major area of concern with respect to Afghanistan's potential as trade hub is trade logistics. In a

recently released World Bank Study, Afghanistan ranked the last in a survey of 150 countries. Pakistan holds the 68th position on the Logistic Performance Index (LPI) that is based on the ability to transport goods reliably and in a cost-effective manner.

Summary of measures to be taken by both countries:

- Re-examine their trade ties and formulate plans to strengthen economic collaboration.
- Revive the transit trade agreement.
- Create an investment friendly environment for investors of both countries.
- Increase development activities on both sides of the Durand line.
- Launch more economic and social development projects in the border areas of the two countries.
- Offer incentives as special motivation for investors.
- Improve border ports services.
- Shorten the waiting times at the borders through quick processing procedures
- Prevent damage to cargo goods while waiting clearance at border ports.
- Allow trucks of both countries to travel in both countries.
- Ensure vehicles' technical standards.
- Have formal financial and insurance systems in place.

The following could be interesting and lucrative sectors for investment for Pakistani investors in Afghanistan:

- Textile industry
- Sugar industry
- Carpet weaving industry

- Construction industry
- Different services
- Trade and logistics

The ongoing construction of Gwadar Port in Balochistan with Chinese aid would bolster trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan as well as the Central Asian countries.

Cultural relations

A strong independent and moderate civil society can help revive traditional mechanisms of solidarity and cooperation between divided groups and fill the gaps between people and governments. Therefore, facilitating social and political harmony while contributing to pluralism and promoting tolerance is necessary. To facilitate this process both countries must engage in the promotion of a broad range of civil society organizations addressing a wide range of issues at the local and national level. Civil society organizations in both countries would promote positive dialogue between society and the government while encouraging understanding of each other and strengthening the sense of civic responsibilities of each citizen.

It is not the role of the civil society to struggle against the government or to take over political power. Civil society serves in the shape of advocacy groups in non-violent ways to influence government policy in political, social, economical and cultural matters.

Initiatives for the promotion of cultural relations

Civil society in both countries should take the lead and the governments support and facilitate:

- Student exchange programmes

- Travel facilities for civil society groups of the two countries
- Increased sports activities
- Co-operation of media
- Pakistan film industry and TV should provide Pashtu drama and movies to the Afghan cinemas and TV channels
- A sister city programme between the two countries that may start with Kabul-Islamabad being declared as sister cities
- Special music and art programmes
- Exchange of visits between military and security personal of both countries
- Exchange programmes between universities of both countries

Such steps would enhance mutual cultural understanding and tolerance. Here is an old adage that “ignorance about faith and culture of each other is the mother of mistrust and violent antagonism”. When the people know each other better and trust each other, it would bring them nearer. The Pakistani people do not know much about Afghanistan’s multiplicity of language, ethnicities and other cultural diversities. Similar is the case with the Afghans.

Trust building process

Good bilateral relations between the two countries depend on Pakistan eliminating the threat of insurgency from the tribal areas from where foreign elements and terrorists are thought to be organizing attacks against Afghanistan. On the other hand Afghanistan should avoid becoming a political playground of India’s rivalry and respect Pakistan’s territorial integrity as well as search together with Pakistan

for an acceptable solution to the border issue. However, for both countries an essential factor to the peace building process is the empowerment and support of the traditional leadership structures in the tribal belt. The elders in these areas can play a key role in rooting out insurgency and helping communities to engage in sustainable fight against terrorism while preparing the environment for the establishment of civil society groups and providing necessary conditions for the development of the region.

The progress of peace building efforts of Pakistan government in the tribal areas is an essential factor for the success of economic cooperation between the two countries. However, the new civil Government of Pakistan has the following major challenges ahead to address:

- Undertaking institutional reforms and establishing economic development programmes in the three provinces (NWFP, Balochistan and Sindh) by addressing the needs and claims of the people of these provinces.
- Ending insurgency and extremist militancy in the tribal areas by bringing peace and stability in these zones.
- Getting the military to support the civil government and not to follow a parallel agenda of its own.
- Transferring the responsibility of Afghanistan agenda from the Ministry of Defense to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Afghanistan is not a threat to the existence of Pakistan.

Conclusion

Relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan for long have been problematic and characterized by recurrent mutual

suspicion, which sometimes manifested in policies of interference and even attempts at destabilization.

Today, both countries are facing a common threat of terrorism which cannot be addressed separately. Both countries need to build a common strategy for fighting insurgency while ensuring political stability. Trust-building process along with strong economic and cultural cooperation would help both nations to win the war against terrorism as well as to become an economic hub between Central and South Asia.

As a bottom-up approach and short-term strategy Pakistan should help the fledgling Afghan government in its efforts to establish peace and stability in the country.

But in the long run for both countries, economic and cultural cooperation is the single most effective counter-terrorist approach. Only carefully crafted development programmes and empowerment of the civil society groups, specifically in the areas harbouring terrorists (mainly tribal areas) can fully and directly address insurgency's root causes. It is important to understand that deprived, frustrated and marginalized populations engender not only terrorism, but also other forms of violence and inhumanity. In the success against terrorism, there is no doubt that economic development and civil society empowerment play a critical role. They are not the whole answer, but they are an important part of it.

As an ice breaker of strained relations, both countries should facilitate and encourage people-to-people contact as well as contact between officials at all levels across the border. Tribes on both sides of the border are clamouring for economic development. Only policy changes in both Kabul and Islamabad can involve their Pashtun populations in mutual confidence building, which could also lead to an amicable resolution of the border issue between the two countries.

India-Pakistan Peace Process

A. G. Noorani

A “peace process”, to be worth the name, implies existence of a structure, continuity and some understanding, however vague, of the result it seeks to achieve. In the 60 years of their existence as independent states, India and Pakistan took 50 years — half a century — to develop a process in 1997, and an unsteady one at that. Only since 2004 has the process become organised, acquired speed and continuity, and an agreement on the fundamentals has seemed within reach. This paper proceeds on the basis that the core issue in the peace process is the dispute on the future of the state of Jammu & Kashmir. One is aware of the fact that there is a strong reluctance on the part of some in India even to acknowledge the existence of a dispute matched by an equally strong insistence by some in Pakistan to assert that it indubitably exists. Such is the state and stuff of the discourse between the two sides.

In a Joint Communiqué issued at Islamabad on 17 July 1989 on the conclusion of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi’s visit to Pakistan at the invitation of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Ms. Benazir Bhutto, the two leaders agreed that “the Simla Agreement provided a firm basis for

the progressive development of bilateral relations between Pakistan and India and for the resolution of all outstanding differences including the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.”

It took the two sides eight more years to set up in 1997 a process for its resolution and a total of 15 to impart content to it in 2004.

In large stretches of time there was little dialogue between them; they talked at, not to each other, while a virulent cold war pursued its ruinous course, with three armed conflicts and four crises in which war was narrowly averted — in 1950, on refugees from East Pakistan; in 1951 on elections in Kashmir, in 1987, after Exercise Brasstacks and in 2002, after India mobilised its armed forces and massed them across the Line of Control in Jammu & Kashmir.

This unfortunate past is being recalled with a purpose. It highlights the remarkable gains registered already in the peace process and the significance of the congruence in the formulations propounded by President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. These statesmen have brought the Kashmir dispute at the very gate of a final settlement.

How intractable these differences were can be gauged from the fact that while there were prolonged but unsuccessful exchanges in 1949-50 and in 1981-84 on the conclusion of a No War pact and a Treaty of Friendship, India and Pakistan had no hesitation whatsoever in recording unreservedly: “Both sides agreed not to attack each other.” This accord was recorded in the “minutes of consultations” between foreign secretary Abdul Sattar and Secretary Alfred S. Gonsalves held from 31 January-1 February 1987 in the wake of Exercise Brasstacks. In Indo-Pak relations the form and context matter as much as the substance.

The record may be divided into four phases — from independence in 1947 to the Simla Agreement in 1972; the barren years 1972-1997 when it was agreed to have a “composite dialogue; from 1997-2004 when that dialogue was conducted only fitfully and to little result; and from 2004 to 2007 when a congruence on the fundamentals appeared to be in sight.

Immediately after independence the leaders of India and Pakistan established a practice of visiting each other freely and without fanfare. Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan was in Delhi on 16 August to receive a copy of the Radcliffe Commission’s Award on the Punjab and Bengal boundaries and was in Delhi again on 16 September. He was back in Delhi, yet once more on 1 October to attend a meeting of the Joint Defence Council. This was after the Junagadh crisis had arisen, with Kashmir looming large in everyone’s mind, Mountbatten arranged for the prime ministers to discuss Junagadh and later joined them at this second summit on the issue. The first was on 13 July 1947, before the partition.

After Kashmir’s accession to India on 26 October 1947 which Pakistan strongly attacked, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah suggested that a Special conference on the crisis be held in Lahore on 29 October. India accepted the suggestion. But rumblings within the Cabinet prompted Mountbatten to propose that the meeting of the Joint Defence council, scheduled to be held in New Delhi on 1 November, be held in Lahore, instead, Nehru did not accompany him to this meeting.

The meeting on 1 November 1947 at Government House, Lahore, saw the beginning of the first peace process, however brief it was. There was continuity, the differences were bridgeable and there was agreement on the principle that a plebiscite must be held.

Mountbatten proposed plebiscite in Kashmir under the United Nations’ supervision and “a joint India-Pakistan

force should hold the ring while the plebiscite is being held.” This was to form part of a wider accord on “procedure for accession of those States in which this matter is in dispute.” That was formulated in a draft which read: “The Governments of India and Pakistan agree that, where the ruler of a State does not belong to the community to which the majority of his subjects belong, and where the state has not acceded to that Dominion whose majority community is the same as the state’s, the question of whether the State should finally accede to one or the other of the Dominions should in all cases be decided by an impartial reference to the will of the people.”

Jinnah’s counter-proposals were set out in Liaquat Ali Khan’s telegram of 4 November to Clement Attlee, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, and to Nehru on 6 November. They are reproduced in full. “(I) To put an immediate stoppage to fighting the two Governors-General should be authorized and vested with full power by both Dominion Governments to issue a proclamation forthwith giving forty-eight hours’ notice to the two opposing forces to cease fire. Governor-General, Pakistan, has no control over forces of provisional Government of Kashmir or tribesmen engaged in fighting but he will warn them in clearest terms that if they do not obey order to cease fire immediately the forces of both Dominions will make war on them, (2) Both forces of Indian Dominion and tribesmen to withdraw simultaneously and with utmost expedition from Jammu and Kashmir State territory, (3) With sanction of two Dominion Governments the two Governors-General to be given full powers to restore peace, undertake the administration of Jammu and Kashmir State and arrange for plebiscite without delay under their joint control and supervision.

These talks failed but the dialogue was resumed with intensity in New Delhi between the two prime ministers and the secretary to the Indian States Ministry V. P. Menon and the Secretary-General of Pakistan’s Cabinet, Mohammed

Ali, with Mountbatten and his Chief of Staff, Lord Ismay, participating. By 10 November a draft was drawn up. But it was rejected by the leaders of both countries.⁽¹⁾

The bilateral talks ended. The matter reached the UN Security Council which passed several resolutions; set up a UN Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) which adopted two resolutions for acceptance by both sides on a ceasefire, truce and modalities for a plebiscite; namely the resolutions of 13 August 1948 and 5 January 1949. Both sides accepted them but differences on implementation prevented the plebiscite. The only gain was a ceasefire on New Year's Day 1949 and the ceasefire line agreed at Karachi on 17 July 1949.

Unknown to the world till 1996, when Nehru's Note of 25 August 1952 was published, Nehru had decided in private against holding a plebiscite. It is necessary to dilate on this at some length because it explains why no peace process was even begun till 1997 formally, and in earnest in 2004. Pakistan was unaware of the change in Nehru's thinking since publicly he continued to support the principle of a plebiscite right till 1954.

He wrote to Sheikh Abdullah on 21 November 1947 that he was aware of "the strong feeling in the leadership of the National Conference against a referendum, in fact I share the feeling myself. But you will appreciate that it is not easy for us to back out of the stand we have taken before the world. That would create a very bad impression abroad and more especially in UN circles, I feel, however, that this question of referendum is rather an academic one at present... There is no difference between you and us on the issue. It is all a question of the best tactical approach, I would personally suggest to you not to say anything rejecting this idea of a referendum but to lay stress on the fact that the people of Kashmir, by their heroic resistance are deciding the issue themselves; also that it is a little absurd for people

to carry on a little war in Kashmir and, when defeated, to want a referendum.”

On 12 January 1949 a week after the UNCIP's plebiscite resolution, Nehru wrote reassuringly to Sheikh Abdullah: “you know well that this business of plebiscite is still far away and there is a possibility of the plebiscite not taking place at all (I would suggest however that this should not be said in public, as our bona fides will then be challenged).”

In 1996 was published a Note Nehru had written to Sheikh Abdullah on 25 August 1952 from Sonamarg in Kashmir. It is a document of cardinal importance. It laid bare Nehru's entire approach to the questions; his strategy and tactics. He revealed that “towards the end of 1948” he concluded that “there were only two possibilities open to us, continuance of the war in a limited way; some kind of a settlement on the basis of the existing military situation.” He had accepted the UNCIP resolutions to get a ceasefire; not to hold a plebiscite, “we are superior to Pakistan in military and industrial power,” with the passage of time Pakistan will “accept a settlement which we consider fair, whether in Kashmir or elsewhere.”

He was “worried to find that the leaders of Kashmir were not so clear in their minds about the present or the future.” He was not worried about the wishes of the people. They were “not what are called a virile people. They are soft and addicted to easy living.” They were interested in “an honest administration and cheap and adequate food. If they get this, then they are more or less content.” The State would retain its “autonomy in most respects.” The leaders must shed doubt as doubt “percolates to their followers.” His recipe was clear. “Make the people think that the association of Kashmir state with India is an accomplished and final fact, and nothing is going to undo it.”⁽²⁾

In public the debate centred on plebiscite; in private the discourse was about partition of Kashmir. Nehru repeatedly offered that. In his mind there was a clear distinction between “negotiations” and “talks.” He said on 14 August 1962 apropos the boundary dispute with China: “There is a world of difference between negotiations and talks, a world of difference, one should always talk, whatever happens, whatever the position and whenever the chances.” Negotiations proper imply readiness to compromise. Talks were another matter.

Given this stand he had adopted in 1948, when constrained to parley, he offered the ceasefire line — to Liaquat Ali Khan in London on October 27, 1948; to Ghulam Mohammad on February 27, 1955; at the Delhi Summit with Mohammed Ali Bogra on May 14, 1955; at a public meeting in New Delhi on April 13, 1956; and to Ayub Khan at Murree on September 21, 1960. On November 29, 1962, he agreed to meet Ayub Khan, but said the very next day that he “rejected anything that involved upsetting the present arrangements.”

In the same spirit, on May 6, 1967, Indira Gandhi was “ready to discuss all questions including the Kashmir question.” Four days later she said, “There is nothing to negotiate on Kashmir.” India offered on November 24, 1993 to discuss “all aspects of Jammu & Kashmir,” not the dispute itself.

The Nehru-Liaquat meeting under the UN Mediator Sir Owen Dixon held in New Delhi from 20-24 July 1950 failed. The Nehru-Mohammad Ali Bogra meetings in New Delhi on 17-20 August 1953 immediately after Sheikh Abdullah’s arrest and imprisonment resulted, formally and surprisingly, in an accord to hold a plebiscite. But Nehru had other ideas as he told the Sheikh’s replacement Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad “inevitably lessen tension internally in Kashmir and give you that chance of working which you

must have.”⁽³⁾ “But for some kind of an agreement between us and Pakistan, the matter would inevitably have been raised in the UN immediately and they might well have sent down their representative to Kashmir. All this again would have kept the agitation alive and made it grow... in the circumstances, this is a good statement and helps us in trying to get a quieter atmosphere.”⁽⁴⁾ On this issue Nehru was decisive. He refused to allow Maulana Masoodi to meet Sheikh Abdullah in prison.⁽⁵⁾

Negotiations were held because the subject was not plebiscite but partition. The Swaran Singh-Zulfikar Ali Bhutto talks were held in six rounds from 26 December 1962 to 16 May 1963. They ended in failure. The talks centred not on plebiscite but on drawing an international boundary through Kashmir.⁽⁶⁾ Swaran Singh asked Palit “If I could consider offering a little more of Kashmir valley because Pakistan’s acceptance of partition would hinge on how much of the valley we were willing to give up.” Palit demurred to this but Swaran Singh was all for it. He went so far as to offer “the Handwara area” in the northwest of the valley to Pakistan. Bhutto asked for the entire state bar Kathua. India was in earnest. The cabinet endorsed the proposal for partition.⁽⁷⁾ On offer were around 3,000 square metres of territory, Swaran Singh said on 16 May.⁽⁸⁾ Bhutto demanded the entire State minus two districts, Kathua and Jammu.

Exasperated at the deadlock Pakistan launched the military ventures of Operation Gibraltar on 5 August 1965 and Operation Grand Slam on 1 September 1965.⁽⁹⁾ The Tashkent Declaration of January 1966 in effect froze the issue. After the Bangladesh war India sought to settle the dispute on the basis of the status quo. The Simla Pact of 2 July 1972 provided in para 6 “Both Governments agree that their respective Heads will meet again at a mutually convenient time in the future and that, in the meanwhile, the representatives of the two sides will meet to discuss further the modalities and arrangements for the establishment of

durable peace and normalisation of relations, including the questions of repatriation of prisoners of war and civilian internees, a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir and the resumption of diplomatic relations.”

It is unnecessary to dilate on the controversy whether Mrs Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto signed the pact on the basis of an “oral understanding.” Para 6 clearly envisaged another summit. It was never held. Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan told the National Assembly on 3 June 1986 that neither side invoked Para 6 to propose talks on Kashmir.⁽¹⁰⁾ In India’s eyes it froze the status quo. In Pakistan’s eyes, it acknowledged the need for “a final settlement.” Simla became a myth and a mantra.

Pakistan invoked it for the first time formally on 14 July 1992 in a letter by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, 20 years after the pact and three years after militancy had erupted in Kashmir. Popular alienation was created by India; the arms and training came from Pakistan. A responsible Pakistani journalist M. A. Niazi revealed in the Lahore daily *The Nation* that in embarking on this course Gen Zia had reckoned with the possibility of war with India. Reporting from Muzaffarabad, in the issue of 21 May 1990, he wrote that its ruling party “credits Zia with laying the foundations for the present uprising” in Kashmir. On 31 May he reported that the “operations mounted during the late president Zia-ul-Haq’s time caused fierce debate in policy-making circles with opponents warning that such activities would cause war.” Rao’s reply invited attention to the Simla Agreement’s insistence on peaceful methods, predictably.⁽¹¹⁾

There is no denying however that by then a new situation had arisen — Kashmiris self-assertion. The militancy enjoyed their total support. India was in a bind. It could not agree to plebiscite or secession in any form, independence or other. It could not be seen to be yielding to

violence, either. But nor could it crush the militancy; least of all the deep popular alienation even if it could crush the militancy. Opinion in India favoured a deal with Kashmiris but those who represented them had no interest in it. Negotiations with Pakistan were favoured by a significant and increasing number of people.

On 19 October 1993 Prime Minister Rao sent a message of felicitations to Ms Benazir Bhutto on her assumption of office as Prime Minister of Pakistan. He offered “a comprehensive dialogue with Pakistan to discussing (sic.) all matters of mutual concern, including issues related to Jammu and Kashmir” — not the future of the state. Her reply of 20 October 1993 paved the way for talks at the level of Foreign Secretaries held in January 1994.

This paper concentrates advisedly on this core issue in the peace process because despite promising developments success eluded on other issues also; for example, on Siachen despite an understanding on 17 June 1989 at the fifth round of talks. The follow-up meeting between the Army commanders on 10-11 July 1989 revealed the progress to be illusory. The Non-papers exchanged at the Foreign Secretaries meeting in January revealed how far apart were their positions. Pakistan’s paper of 18 January 1994 was on “the modalities for holding a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir.” and CBMs confined to it. India’s paper of 24 January 1994 contained “suggestions” and outlined CBMs, in Kashmir, Siachen, Sir Creek, Wular Barrage issue (Tulbul Navigation project in Indian document).⁽¹²⁾

Another message of felicitation to an incoming prime minister led yet another renewal of dialogue. On 17 February 1997 Prime Minister H. D. Deve Gowda congratulated Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and proposed “an early resumption of dialogue between our two countries.” Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif’s reply of 27 February 1997 proposed talks between

the foreign secretaries. They were held on 26-31 March in preparation of the meeting between the PMs Inder Kumar Gujral and Nawaz Sharif on the sidelines of the SAARC summit at Male on 12 May 1997.

The issue was not to settle the issues but to devise a mechanism for their solution; in other words to launch a peace process — organised, continuous and purposeful. The fiasco of this particular venture, after an all too brief period of hope, provided a vivid illustration of the chequered course of Indo-Pak relations and brings to the fore why all such efforts failed from 1948 till 2004; not that success was achieved that year. But the leaders broke new ground and began moving closer to each other's position till 2007 when domestic pre-occupations began to impede progress.

To resume the survey: on 12 May 1997 Inder Kumar Gujral said; "we have mandated the foreign secretaries to meet by the end of June to work out and identify the areas where Joint Working Group can be set up and proceed with it." Nawaz Sharif's statement, also made extempore, was identically worded. The spokesman of Pakistan's Foreign Office was precise when he said on 15 May "working groups were mentioned in the context of the mechanism that is going to be evolved by the two foreign secretaries. There is no agreement yet on how these working groups are going to function. This will be sorted out by the two foreign secretaries."

The Joint statement listed specifically in the first part of Para 4 eight "issues of concern to both sides," (A) peace and security, including CBMs (confidence building measures); (B) Jammu and Kashmir; (C) Siachen; (D) Wullar Barrage project/Tulbul navigation project; (E) Sir Creek; (F) Terrorism and drug-trafficking; (G) Economic and commercial cooperation; and (H) promotion of friendly exchanges in various fields. It recorded the following agreement: "to set up a mechanism, including working

groups at appropriate levels, to address all these issues in an integrated manner. The issues at (A) and (B) above will be dealt with at the level of foreign secretaries who will also coordinate and monitor the progress of work of all the working groups.

In a real sense, the joint statement of 1997 supplements the pact of 1972. For the first time since then that the parties have agreed to fulfil their obligations under it to resolve their differences in such a comprehensively, “integrated” and disciplined manner. No wonder the joint statement generated such euphoria as did the meeting between Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral and Mohammad Nawaz Sharif at Male on 12 May. It was dissipated by 18 September, when the foreign secretaries concluded their talks in New Delhi, with no more than a decision “to adjourn now and reconvene their meeting at a mutually convenient date.” They did not set up any of the working groups as the joint statement envisaged.

India argued that it did not provide for one on Kashmir or on peace and security. Working Groups were to be set up only for the remaining six issues and the foreign secretaries were to “coordinate and monitor the progress of work” of these groups.

In New Delhi, Pakistan no longer insisted that the “mechanism” for Kashmir be called a working group. But it insisted that Kashmir be discussed by the foreign secretaries “with the same seriousness, concreteness, exclusivity (and) equality as the other issues.” In contrast, India urged that Kashmir be discussed by the foreign secretaries in the plenary in any meeting in a session or round of talks convened to discuss other issues besides “the progress of work of all the working groups.”

These differences were not resolved at the Gujral-Sharif meeting in New York on 23 September 1997 or at Dhaka, during the SAARC summit in January 1998.

The dispute was whether the issue should be discussed between their foreign secretaries in a session on Kashmir or at a meeting in the course of a session on all matters at issue. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines a session *inter alia* as the period during which “meetings are held daily or at short or regular intervals,” in Indo-Pak lingo, it is also called “a round” of meetings.

A session can, of course, conclude or adjourn after a solitary meeting instead of extending to several of them. It is still a session proper; convened for a particular business. But, of course, beneath the conflicting interpretations of the Joint Statement issued at Islamabad on 23 June 1997 by the foreign secretaries, lay sub-texts of old. Argument on the structure of talks always stems from disagreement on substance. It was not only unnecessary but destructive of a peace process between the two countries the like of which it had not seen in the quarter century since the Shimla Pact.

At Dhaka on 14-15 January 1998 Gujral proposed to Sharif to discuss all the eight subjects in the composite dialogue together in one go at the same time and place — anything to avoid a discussion on Kashmir as a single most important issue.⁽¹³⁾

The NDA Government led by Atal Behari Vajpayee, the BJP leader, assumed power in March 1998. In May 1998 both India and Pakistan held nuclear tests. Prime Ministers Atal Behari Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif met in New York on 23 September 1998 and endorsed the Foreign secretaries accord “on operationalizing the mechanism to address all items in the agreed agenda of 23 June in a purposeful and composite manner. The talks held in New Delhi from 5-13 November 1998, far from improving matters, made them worse. India now abandoned the agreed fundamental on Siachen; namely mutual withdrawal of troops. The new Defence Minister George Fernandes, proclaimed soon after

assuming office that India needed the Siachen for strategic reasons and could not withdraw from the positions it held.

The next milestone was Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit to Pakistan in February 1999. The Lahore Declaration issued by prime ministers Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif as also the memorandum of understanding on security concepts, nuclear doctrines and related CBMs on 21 February 1999 encouraged hope, especially when it became known that the prime ministers had nominated Niaz A. Naik and R. K. Mishra, a former editor, to conduct talks in the back channel. The Kargil crisis in May overtook these accords.

The peace process launched in June 1997 fizzled out in September 1997. So did the 1999 process by May 1999. A new beginning was made at the Agra Summit between President Musharraf and Prime Minister Vajpayee in July 2001. It failed ignominiously.⁽¹⁴⁾

The documents support the president and his foreign minister's version. The draft Agra Declaration did no more than set up a new mechanism for resolution of pending issues. However, in the light of experience its first Article provided that "settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir issue would pave the way for normalisation of relations between the two countries." Foreign ministers for Jaswant Singh and Abdul Sattar revised it jointly in their own hands. Initially the Indian modification read "progress on addressing outstanding issues, including Jammu and Kashmir and the establishment of a cooperative relationship will be mutually reinforcing," Abdul Sattar proposed a further modification which both wrote out to read thus: "progress towards settlement of J&K would be conducive towards normalisation and will further the establishment of a cooperative relationship in a mutually reinforcing manner." Jaswant Singh took this agreed draft back and promised to return soon, "it would take him 15 minutes." He did not. Instead as hours passed Pakistan's High Commissioner

Ashraf Jehangir Qazi was informed that the talks were off. President Musharraf's account of his talk with Prime Minister Vajpayee thereafter, as recorded in his interview to this writer, has not been contradicted.

Vajpayee had been overruled by L.K. Advani in the cabinet. On 4 July 2000 it had brusquely rejected the J&K Assembly's resolution passed on 26 June 2006 which sought restoration of the state's autonomy to the pre-1953 constitutional position before Sheikh Abdullah's arrest.⁽¹⁵⁾ The BJP Government could hardly yield more to Pakistan. Organisationally, it is controlled by its mentor the RSS.⁽¹⁶⁾ Vajpayee's rhetoric is impressive; not so his policies. On New Year's Day 2001 Vajpayee had promised "to seek a lasting solution to the Kashmir problem", in this quest "both in its external and internal dimensions, we shall not traverse solely on the beaten track of the past."⁽¹⁷⁾ He did not indicate the new track to this day.

A terrorist attack on the parliament building on 13 December 2001 drove India to mobilise troops, mass them along the LoC and deliver a demarche of demands to Pakistan, Operation Parakram, launched on 18 December 2001, was called off on 16 October 2002. This phase saw active US and British mediatory efforts whose significance cannot be underestimated. A joint statement issued on 27 March 2003 after a Bush-Blair summit at Camp David laid down a detailed road map which both sides followed. It bears recalling: "The United States and the United Kingdom condemn all terrorism wherever it occurs and whatever its purported justification, we will continue to work with our partners to eliminate this scourge, violence will not solve Kashmir's problems. Pending the resolution of these problems, the LoC should be strictly respected and Pakistan should fulfil its commitments to stop infiltration across it. Pakistan should also do its utmost to discourage any acts of violence by militants in Kashmir. Both sides should consider immediately implementing a ceasefire and taking other

active steps to reduce tension including by moves within the SAARC context. The differences between India and Pakistan can only be resolved through peaceful means and engagement. Sure enough, on 18 April 2003 at a public rally in Srinagar, Vajpayee extended the hand of friendship to Pakistan, "ten days later Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali phoned Vajpayee. The two discussed improvement of relations. A series of steps followed such as return to their posts of recalled high commissioners, resumption of Delhi-Lahore bus service, etc. CBM proposals were exchanged, On 23 November 2003 Prime Minister Jamali announced that Pakistan armed forces deployed along the LoC have been issued instruction to ceasefire with effect from Eid-ul-Fitr. India welcomed the decision, and to take the process of ceasefire further, suggested extending the ceasefire in Siachen as well. Subsequently, Director General Military Operations of the two countries agreed to observe ceasefire along the international border, Line of Control, and Actual Ground Position Line in Siachen in Jammu and Kashmir with effect from the midnight of 25 November 2003.

Prime Minister Vajpayee attended the SAARC Summit in Islamabad and held talks with President Musharraf. In their joint statement of 6 January 2004 they agreed to "commence the process of the composite dialogue in February 2004." The president assured the PM that he will not permit any territory under Pakistan's control to be used to support terrorism in any manner." Officials resumed the composite dialogue at Islamabad from 16-18 February 2004.

In the May 2004 General Elections the Vajpayee Government was voted out of power. Dr. Manmohan Singh became Prime Minister at the head of a UPA coalition government of which the Congress Party was the major constituent.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's interview to Jonathan Power, published the day he was to take oath, was

of seminal importance. His views were based on the national consensus on Kashmir, and defined the limits beyond which India cannot go. His emphasis was on creativity, on opportunity, not on obstacles.

The prime minister's remarks deserve quotation in *extenso*: "Then we have to find a way to stop talking of war with Pakistan. This is stopping us from realising our potential. Two nuclear armed powers living in such close proximity is a big problem, we have an obligation to ourselves to solve the problem." Jonathan Power reported: "I pushed him on how he himself would accept compromise with Pakistan over Kashmir. Short of accession, short of redrawing boundaries, the Indian establishment can live with anything. Meanwhile, we need soft borders — then borders are not so important." He ruled out both, plebiscite in, and independence for, Kashmir. (18)

That the composite dialogue resumed on 4 September 2004 was part of the course. More significant was the Manmohan Singh-Musharraf meeting in New York on 24 September 2004. The president "read the agreement" to the media. They "agreed that possible options for a peaceful negotiated settlement of the issue (Kashmir) should be explored in a sincere spirit and purposeful manner."

The composite dialogue process has proceeded apace since then but with nothing to show by way of result on Siachen and little on Sir Creek and the Wular Barrage. Exploration of options has been conducted in a back channel comprising the PM's Special Envoy and former High Commissioner to Pakistan Satinder K. Lambah and the National Security Adviser Tariq Aziz. The high level of confidentiality they have maintained makes it impossible definitely to assess the results, informed sources say that considerable progress has been achieved.

The president and the prime minister met in New Delhi from 16-18 April 2005. A joint statement recorded that

"they determined that the peace process was now irreversible" and that they would work "for a final settlement" of Kashmir. They met again in New York on 14 September 2005.

The Mumbai blasts on 11 July 2006 in which 200 people were killed and 800 injured caused a set back. The leaders met at Havana and issued a joint statement on 16 September 2006. Besides continuing the composite dialogue "they decided to put in place an India-Pakistan anti-terrorism institutional mechanism to identify and implement counter-terrorism initiatives and investigations.

Nor must one overlook the visits of foreign ministers to each other's capitals on the progress in the CBMs; most famously the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service. So much for the "mechanics." What is heartening is the emergence of a firm congruence of opinion between the two top leaders in their public pronouncements. They have, in a sense, been educating and moulding public opinion.

President Musharraf has codified his proposals at page 303 of his book *In the Line of Fire* (2006). They envisage identification of Kashmir's geographical regions; their demilitarisation; "self-governance or self-rule" to them "without having an international character" and, lastly, "a joint management mechanism."

Let us analyse the two leaders' pronouncements in this context. By the time Manmohan Singh came to power and spoke to Jonathan Power, Musharraf had declared, on December 25, 2003, that in the quest for accord "we have left that (UN resolutions on plebiscite) aside." The president elaborated his ideas in nine major pronouncements.

1. October 25, 2004: Identify seven regions; demilitarise them and change their status.

2. April 18, 2005, in New Delhi: The LoC cannot be made permanent but it can and should be made "irrelevant." Boundaries "cannot be altered."
3. May 20, 2005: "Self-government must be allowed to the people of Kashmir." Religious basis is ruled out.
4. June 14, 2005: complete independence is ruled out.
5. October 21, 2005: Open the LoC.
6. January 8, 2006: in an interview to Karun Thapar (a) "something between autonomy and independence. I think self-governance fits in well"; (b) "Let us (India and Pakistan) work out self-governance and impose the rules" in both parts, Kashmiris will be involved; (c) demilitarisation, and (d) joint management. "There have to be subjects which are devolved? There have to be some subjects retained for the joint management" (e) India and Pakistan will be "guaranteeing it and overseeing it" with each "having a stake in guaranteeing the situation in the other half of Kashmir."
7. January 25, 2006: What "we cannot give to them (Kashmiris) and what residual powers would be left with the joint management mechanism, which would have people from Pakistan, India and the Kashmiris" should be defined.
8. June 23, 2006, to CNBCs: "I am proposing demilitarisation as a concept of a final settlement actually. Demilitarise Kashmir, give self-governance to the people of Kashmir and have a joint management arrangement on top... we could debate and modify the idea... I think it is the people of Kashmir themselves who need to now generate the kind of ideas and pressure on the Indian Government... I am very glad to say that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has been interacting with all groups of Kashmiris and I am quite sure he is talking of some kind of a resolution obviously."

9. August 1, 2006: interview to this writer for Frontline.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has made five important pronouncements besides his interview to Jonathan Power in May 2004: 1. September 16, 2005, in New York: It would require ingenuity to reconcile the three positions (a) the Indian position that the border would not be redrawn (b) the Pakistani position that the status quo was unacceptable and (c) the prime minister's own formulation that while the border would not be redrawn, it was possible to make the border irrelevant.⁽¹⁹⁾ 2. February 25, 2006, at the First Round Table conference (RTC) in New Delhi. "There is a need to evolve a common understanding on autonomy and self-rule for the state of Jammu & Kashmir and I am confident that working together with all groups, both within and outside the mainstream, we can arrive at arrangements within the vast flexibilities provided by the constitution, arrangements which provide real empowerment and comprehensive security to all the people of Jammu and Kashmir," 3. March 24, 2006, in Amritsar, Manmohan Singh made four points (a) a step-by-step approach; (b) dialogue by both India and Pakistan "with the people in their areas of control", (c) "I have often said that borders cannot be redrawn but we can work towards making them irrelevant — towards making them just lines on a map. People on both sides of the LoC should be able to move more freely and trade with one another; (d) "The two parts of Jammu & Kashmir can with the active encouragement of the governments of India and Pakistan, work out cooperative consultative mechanisms so as to maximise the gains of cooperation", 4. May 25, 2006, at the RTC in Srinagar the prime minister made the last point somewhat stronger still by posing the question, "what are those institutional arrangements which can bring people from both sides of the LoC closer to each other?"

Thus both leaders are agreed on three points: (1) Jammu & Kashmir cannot be made independent; (2) Borders

cannot be redrawn (that is, the state cannot secede from the Union of India); and (3) The LoC can be made “irrelevant.”

The concurrence on some important points is remarkable, it is almost textual. The prime minister told the media on September 17, 2006, as he was returning from the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) meeting in Havana: "President Musharraf recalled what I had stated before that borders cannot be redrawn, and his statement that they cannot accept the LoC as a permanent solution, we both agreed that we have to find a via media to reconcile these two positions. And I do believe that we should work in all sincerity to think out of the box to deal with this situation."

Compare this with the president's remarks to Geo TV on October 23, 2006. He was asked whether he was not feeling some "frustration" since Manmohan Singh had said that borders will not be redrawn though the president had shifted his stand from Pakistan's 60-year-old position (of UN resolutions) and offered many options, Musharraf replied: "No. They say that the borders will not be drawn a second time, we say that the LoC is not acceptable as a permanent border. We need to find a via media between these two positions which would mean self-governance with a joint management system at the top for both sides of the LoC and you make the LoC irrelevant."

Musharraf's remarks to the South Asia Free Media Association (SAFMA) on May 20, 2005 are important. After restating the three principles — no redrawing of borders; no permanence to the LoC and borders becoming irrelevant — he pointedly hinted: "The solution exactly lies somewhere in a compromise of the three. In fact, it lies in the third statement that is boundaries becoming irrelevant, we need to find a via media."

In plain words, if the LoC is rendered "irrelevant", it will become acceptable if — and only if — a joint

mechanism is also put in place and Kashmiris are conferred self-governance.

This was the state of the record when this writer met President Pervez Musharraf in Islamabad on August 1, 2006 for an interview. It was intended to elicit clarification on his pronouncements, in the light of the prime minister's pronouncements, in order to ascertain the areas of common ground and the precise points of difference.

The president made these three significant points: 1. "Demilitarisation can be by steps"; Begin as talks begin and end with conclusion of an accord, 2. The prime minister's suggestion, of "institutional arrangements" between the two parts of Kashmir" is a starter. This is a very good term. The term "institutional arrangements" is "what I think is correct. But we need to define the modality." "We need to define what is the maximum autonomy that you are talking of and what is the self-governance that I am talking of. We need to see how the people should govern themselves. Also "we have to find a word which replaces 'autonomy.' Because it creates negative optics." He suggested "a joint framework for self-governance." An India-Pakistan accord on the quantum of powers each parts of Jammu & Kashmir should enjoy in equal measure would meet these criteria.

The president's memoir was in the press when I met him on 1 August 2006. The "four elements" he has formulated on page 303 of the book, in greater precision than before, facilitate fleshing out the themes and provide ample ground for constructive engagement.

The cautionary words at the end suggesting that the "elements" are open to modification are characteristic of his flexibility. They were stated in interviews to Karan Thapar (January 8, 2006) and to CNBC (June 23, 2006) as well.

There is clearly room for negotiation, only three matters are to be spelt out: the terms of reference defining

the objects of the institution; its powers and functions and its composition and structure.

Meanwhile, a lot can be done to improve on the present set up. On 15 July 2007 Manmohan Singh said: The natural resources of the state of Jammu and Kashmir could then be used for the benefit of all its people. They need no longer be points of contention or a source of conflict. We could, for example, use the land arid water resources of the region jointly for the benefit of all the people living on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC). Similarly, there are vast opportunities to jointly work together for the mutual benefit of our people." The PM, in effect, indicated a major remit of "a joint management mechanism" for the state.

All this will be part of an Indo-Pak accord which would ensure the end of violence and full restoration of democracy and autonomy in both parts of J&K. "We are committed to winning the hearts and minds of all... we will also continue our dialogue with Pakistan."

The PM's speech indicates clearly that the peace process has become irreversible. The consensus between India and Pakistan is widening with each respecting the concerns of the other.

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The Kashmir Stalemate

Victoria Schofield

One does not have to be a rocket scientist to understand the importance of the Kashmir issue which has been like a thorn in the side of both India and Pakistan's relationship for over sixty years. How different that relationship might have been, had there not been this interminable dispute over the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir! Open borders and unrestricted movement between one country and another, such as now occurs throughout Europe; trade, cultural, educational, social exchanges, free from bureaucratic impediment, budgets spent on health and education rather than military build-up, all this and more could have been the hallmark of India and Pakistan's co-existence as neighbours on the same landscape in South Asia, had it not been for Kashmir. The question today in 2008 is whether the issue has become one of stalemate or whether there is any progress which makes one confident that political and economic linkages between India and Pakistan can be enhanced.

In my presentation I am firstly going to review where the stalemate over the Kashmir issue stands today; in other words, what has not changed since the insurgency began in

the valley twenty years ago and the dispute between India and Pakistan over sixty years ago? Secondly, what progress is there, if any? Is there light at the end of what has been a long dark tunnel? Lastly, where do we go from here?

Stalemate

The Kashmir issue is still an issue; there is no resolution. India and Pakistan can still only agree to disagree on the state's status. The government of India has not even given official recognition that that part which is currently under Pakistan's administration, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the Northern Areas, clearly does not form part of the Indian Union. Maps issued by the department of tourism in Jammu and Kashmir do not give any indication at all that there is a line of control, separating the one-third administered by Pakistan and the two-thirds of the state administered by India. Even the line of control is still where the ceasefire line was established in 1948. There has been no alteration of the line one way or the other. There is no agreement over the Siachen Glacier, where people are only existing artificially as one army facing the other. There is still disaffection in the valley of Kashmir and some regions of Jammu. People are still dissatisfied with their status as part of the Indian Union and are still demanding their right of self-determination, their independence or their accession to Pakistan. Granted that aspirations differ, which makes resolution more difficult, but to move away from the stalemate, there has to be some resolution of the state's political status, acceptable to both India and Pakistan and the people living in the state. Throughout the valley of Kashmir, there is still a strong military presence. Such a large contingent of troops in the state is also part of the stalemate.

Human rights are still being abused; there are still cordon and search operations and numerous checkpoints in the valley of Kashmir. The security forces still act with impunity. Srinagar still feels like a city under siege with

troops bunkered down, surrounded by sandbags and barbed wire. The same is true — even worse — for other towns in the valley. Custodial and indiscriminate killings as well as torture are routine. There are still thousands of disappeared Kashmiris who have not been accounted for. One only has to study the reports of Amnesty International to realise the extent of suffering to which the people of Kashmir are still subjected. Revelations of mass graves beg the question: how many more are yet to be found? Local journalists are still harassed and do not feel entirely free to write what they want.

Next, the rule of law — although there has been a marginally better functioning of the courts from the virtual breakdown in the early years of the insurgency, the lack of respect for the rule of law remains part of the stalemate. There are still discriminatory laws which enable the security forces to act with relative impunity. I say relative because there has been an improvement in their behaviour and training but, as I have stated, human rights abuses continue. POTA, the ‘Prevention Of Terrorism Act’ was repealed in 2004 by the Congress government of Manmohan Singh – but the National Security Act and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, enacted to curb ‘terrorism’ can also be used with impunity. For all these reasons one can endorse the view that there is stalemate over the Kashmir issue, both politically and socially. This stalemate has adverse consequences for the people of Kashmir and in the broader context also hinders improved political and economic relations between India and Pakistan.

‘Counter-stalemate’

In 2005 the border was opened and remains open. This has paid some dividends; it is still not ideal but the ability to cross the line of control, albeit with bureaucratic delays, has purged the idea of a ‘Berlin wall’ existing between the two regions of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Some people have been able to see what life is like on the other side and this knowledge has enhanced their understanding of the ground realities. Others have managed to see members of their family from whom they have been separated for over half a century. Until the summer of 2007, when once again people felt compelled to agitate on the streets to protest at the allocation of land around Amarnath to Hindus only, the law and order situation had improved. People were able to move about more freely and the curfew had been lifted. Tourists were even beginning to return to the valley, thereby benefiting the livelihood of the local Kashmiris.

The governments of India and Pakistan have been and remain prepared to sit at the negotiating table, whereas previously there was an ongoing war of words as well as actual wars fought and thousands dead. We are no longer viewing a situation where, with armies massed on the borders, there is talk of a nuclear war between the two countries over Kashmir as happened in 2002. More importantly, as part of the composite dialogue, the Indian government has recognised that Kashmir *has* to be discussed – this signifies a significant change since the early days when successive Indian leaders refused to talk about Kashmir with Pakistan, insisting instead that, since Kashmir was an integral part of the Indian Union, there was no need to discuss the issue with its neighbour. The Indian government has also shown itself willing to hold discussions with the disaffected Kashmiris, the members of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), which is another important milestone, even if the dialogue does not go as far as the Kashmiris would like.

There *is* greater freedom of the press. There are still constraints but journalists do operate more freely. Thanks to the World Wide Web, censorship has become an outmoded method of curbing freedom of expression. This means that more people beyond the confines of the state and the region

are aware what is going on and are not reliant on government propaganda for their information.

As a result, the eye of the world *is* on Kashmir. When I first started writing on Kashmir it was barely on the international agenda – today it is. People know about Kashmir and they know how important it is to resolve the issue. Invariably, in international seminars and think tanks, the issue is twinned with Palestine and it is recognised that, for there to be world peace, these two issues must be resolved. And because the eye of the world is on Kashmir, it is no longer possible for security forces to act with total impunity – something which the Indian government has also recognised. Indian leaders now realise that any violation by the security forces is detrimental to the ‘hearts and minds’ policy which they have been trying to operate. Although Amnesty International representatives have still not been allowed into the valley of Kashmir, other groups have been able to report on human rights abuses and their reports, as well as those of the Amnesty, help to keep Kashmir on the international agenda.

In political terms, the Kashmiris’ right to self-determination is also on the international agenda, helped by the large number of the Kashmiri Diaspora living in numerous countries throughout the world, especially in Britain, the United States, Germany, Norway. There are numerous bodies and think tanks deliberating, trying to work out how the Kashmiris’ wishes can be fulfilled. The dissenting political leaders – members of the APHC — *are* allowed to move about and talk; once again, when I began to write on Kashmir over fifteen years ago, I couldn’t interview the leaders because they were in jail. Then, when they were released, they weren’t allowed to travel abroad, now they are. They can express their views freely in international seminars. And they have done so. I am not saying there are not constraints, delays with visa applications, but, when looking at the larger picture of the stalemate, the situation

has improved since the insurgency was at its height in the 1990s. Finally, local Kashmiris, those who are not interested in politics and yet whose lives became convulsed because of the unresolved dispute, are better able to go about their daily lives.

Beyond stalemate

So, where does this leave us with the stalemate? It goes without saying that all the alterations to the stalemate mentioned above have further room for improvement. For example, the bureaucracy can be reduced for those families wishing to visit Azad Jammu and Kashmir and vice versa, the press has to be more free, governance has to improve. Talks have to be meaningful and not, as they so often have been in the past, a dialogue of the deaf.

Looking to the future, to move beyond the stalemate, there is still a question mark over the representation of the Kashmiri voice. The APHC has not and cannot participate in elections held in the state because its members refuse to acknowledge that Kashmir is part of the Indian Union. But until and unless these dissident Kashmiris are included, there will always be a voice which is not being heard in the inclusive environment of the legislative assembly. And as much as it is important to listen to the voices of the APHC leaders, ways have to be found to listen to the views of other groups in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, those who support the National Conference, People's Democratic Party, Congress Party, not forgetting the Kashmiri Pandits, the Sikhs, the Buddhists of Ladakh, Bakerwals and Gujars. There has to be a way to find that representative voice, because you cannot talk about a resolution for some and not for others. This also means talking to political leaders in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the Northern Areas, including those who are dissatisfied with their status as part of a Pakistani-administered Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The will of the minorities is as important as that of the majority.

There has to be good governance for all. There has to be respect for the rule of law so that people can lead their lives in dignity. There also has to be a situation where there is even greater fluidity between the two regions of the former princely state. Notwithstanding the current lack of political resolution, there is clearly a general will amongst the Kashmiris that they would like more interaction and so this has to be embodied in any preamble to a solution, for both social and economic reasons. There are still Kashmiris alive who have not forgotten that the Jhelum River was used for transporting logs from the forests of Kashmir before the border was sealed at Baramulla. We have to remind ourselves of the geography – the distance between Muzaffarabad and Srinagar is not much more than 120 miles yet, until the border was opened, anyone wishing to visit both cities had to make the long and expensive journey down to Lahore, across at Wagah, then to Delhi and up to Srinagar, which made any idea of enhancing trade prohibitive.

Finally, to move away from the stalemate, it is important to revise our rhetoric – it is now over sixty years since the original dispute over the state of Jammu and Kashmir began as a territorial issue in 1947 at partition; although not so obviously recognised at the time, the issue of the rights of several million people was also at stake. At the time it was envisaged that the whole state would either become part of India or part of Pakistan and that the will of the people would be ascertained by a general referendum or unitary plebiscite. The world has changed dramatically since 1947 and new generations have grown up with different aspirations, some of whom are demanding independence or autonomy of all or part of the state. While the collective will of the inhabitants still remains to be determined, we have to recognise that the accession of the entire state to one or the other country is no longer a foreseeable reality. If we really do want to build political and economic linkages in South Asia and beyond, it is important to try – and I say ‘try’

because it is going to be hard – to draw a line under past conceptions, to reconcile these new aspirations and to look forward.

The India-Pakistan ‘Peace Process’: ‘Stronger, but with some interference’

Dr. Christopher Snedden

Introduction

Since my paper last year for the Institute for Regional Studies (IRS),⁽¹⁾ some significant changes have occurred in India and Pakistan that make it difficult to provide an up-to-date analysis of the current state of the India-Pakistan ‘peace process’. First, Pakistan has a new government, which came into being after a credible election process in February — and of which process Pakistanis generally can be proud. However, we do not know yet the exact diplomatic approach that the new Pakistan People’s Party government will take towards India. However, some of President Asif Zardari’s early statements have been — depending on your point of view — positive, including labelling ‘the militant Islamic groups operating in [Indian] Kashmir as “terrorists.”’⁽²⁾ Second, India has started to move into election mode, albeit slowly, with the current parliament’s term due to expire on 1 June 2009.⁽³⁾ General elections in India will probably be held in April-May 2009. Given the Congress Party’s poor record in state elections to date and some significant left-wing

dislike of India's civilian nuclear agreement with the United States (the so-called '123 Agreement'), the Indian voters seem likely to elect a new government. Historical trends suggest that this new government will be another coalition. While it almost certainly will speak of wanting to engage with Pakistan, the extent of this engagement will remain to be seen. It will depend on matters such as the composition of the coalition, who obtains the External Affairs Ministry and the subcontinental situation prevailing at the time.

In my paper last year, I used a naval term, 'weak but readable', to describe the India-Pakistan 'peace process'. By this, I meant that this process was 'alive', but progress had stalled somewhat due to President General Musharraf's political predicaments in 2007 and due to the Indian government's distraction over the 123 Agreement. Another naval-inspired term is appropriate to describe the current status of the India-Pakistan 'peace process': 'stronger, but with some interference'. Currently, it appears that both the Indian and Pakistani governments would like 'more of the same' — continued dialogue to develop the India-Pakistan relationship and to further the 'peace process'. Despite no major 'groundbreaking' agreements as yet, India and Pakistan have entered the fifth round of their steady, broad and engaging Composite Dialogue (discussed below). Both nations are to be congratulated for continuing this engagement. New Delhi and Islamabad appear to be exercising patience, forbearance and resilience while other issues, such as terrorist incidents, internal insurgencies and political problems, occur or intervene to complicate their (already difficult) relationship. Unforeseen events, such as the terrible recent terrorist attack on the Marriott Hotel, the 'face' of Islamabad,⁽⁴⁾ or the terrorist incidents in New Delhi shortly before the Marriott tragedy, have historically had the potential to hinder or even de-rail the India-Pakistan 'peace process'. Consider the attack on the Indian parliament in late 2001, after which India and Pakistan engaged in such serious

mobilisations of their military forces that war looked imminent. Conversely, the need to prevent such recent terrorist-related atrocities may actually be drawing India and Pakistan closer as they seek to procure and exchange intelligence and/or coordinate anti-terrorist strategies and activities. The regular contact between senior ministers and senior officials from both nations in the Composite Dialogue in the face of these obstacles (or ‘interference’) suggests that the India-Pakistan relationship is, indeed, ‘getting stronger’.

Given that this paper will be submitted ten days before the actual holding of the IRS’s International Seminar on *Building Political and Economic Linkages between South Asia and Central Asia*,⁽⁵⁾ it provides as precise and up-to-date analysis of the status of the India-Pakistan ‘peace process’ as possible. Thereafter, it examines some entrenched factors that have historically impacted on the India-Pakistan ‘peace process’ and limited the ability of both nations to conclude significant and meaningful agreements that would improve and further their relationship. There are (at least) three entrenched factors: first, the need for strong, popular, conciliatory and decisive leadership concurrently in both nations to make appropriate agreements on divisive issues; second, the need for strong public support in both nations to push for such agreements and then to enable any agreements made to be implemented, particularly in relation to the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K); and, third, the need to overcome the so-called ‘trust deficit’ that exists between both nations and many of their people. These factors are related. None has yet been overcome to allow the India-Pakistan ‘peace process’ to progress beyond what currently appears to an ongoing, slow and steady pace of consultations. This situation appears unlikely to change in the short term.

The composite dialogue

The India-Pakistan Composite Dialogue is the most positive development in recent times. This dialogue dates back to January 2004. It arose out of, and after, the serious negativity and downturn that occurred in India-Pakistan relations from the late 1990s until late 2003. During this period, three major events occurred in India-Pakistan relations. First, both nations confirmed their respective nuclear capabilities via nuclear tests in 1998. Second, they engaged in a localised conventional conflict — some call it a war as there were over 1,000 deaths — in the Kargil area of the disputed former princely state of J&K in 1999. Third, they mobilised forces for apparent war in late 2001-early 2002 after India's strong response to the attack on its parliament on 13 December 2001 that New Delhi alleged involved terrorists sponsored by Pakistan.⁽⁶⁾ Encouraged by strong external diplomacy, cooler heads in New Delhi and Islamabad ultimately — and thankfully — prevailed. Thereafter, as a result of an agreement between Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and General Pervez Musharraf, the India-Pakistan Composite Dialogue began in 2004. As India sees it, the dialogue is built on 'three pillars': the absence of violence, including Pakistan not permitting terrorism against India 'in any manner' from its territory; finding peaceful solutions to all outstanding issues, including J&K; and, building a cooperative relationship between India and Pakistan.⁽⁷⁾ For Pakistan, the 'overall objective has been to construct [a] multi-faceted good neighbourly relationship with India and build durable peace in the region.'⁽⁸⁾

Since 2004, four rounds of serious discussions have taken place between India and Pakistan officials on eight issues in order to try and resolve all of their outstanding and contentious issues 'to the satisfaction of both sides.'⁽⁹⁾ This so-called Composite Dialogue continues, even though 'the peace process has been under strain in recent months.'⁽¹⁰⁾ The eight issues being discussed in the dialogue are: peace

and security, including confidence-building measures (CBMs); Jammu and Kashmir; Siachen Glacier; the Wullar Barrage/Tulbul Navigation project; Sir Creek; terrorism and drug trafficking; economic and commercial cooperation; and, the promotion of friendly exchanges. In the four rounds so far concluded, there have not been any significant or groundbreaking agreements on any of the big issues. However, there has been 'a number of important bilateral achievements', including MoUs and agreements on various issues, a reaffirmation of a 'determination not to let terrorism impede the peace process' and 'progress...on promoting a stable environment of peace and security including CBMs.'⁽¹¹⁾ At the conclusion of the fourth round, which was delayed due to political events in Pakistan, dates for the fifth round of the Composite Dialogue were announced for July 2008. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Asif Zardari re-affirmed that this dialogue should proceed in their joint press statement made recently when they met at the United Nations General Assembly.⁽¹²⁾ The fact that this dialogue is continuing, despite a temporary downturn in relations earlier this year, including some firing across the Line of Control (LoC) and a very negative statement by India's National Security Adviser, M.K. Narayanan, after the bombing of the Indian embassy in Kabul, is a positive development.⁽¹³⁾ Anything that keeps India and Pakistan engaged is a good thing.

The fifth round of the Composite Dialogue began in July 2008.⁽¹⁴⁾ Speaking before the start of this round, Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi believed that 'the early resolution' of the Siachen Glacier and Sir Creek issues was 'doable', provided that there was 'the political will for their expeditious resolution'. These resolutions then would 'enable us [India and Pakistan] to move speedily in other areas.'⁽¹⁵⁾ India's External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee was more sanguine. He applauded the 'resurgence of democracy and popular

participation in Pakistan’ as a ‘positive factor’ for the India-Pakistan relationship. However, he also saw the need to ‘deepen the levels of cooperation in the economic and commercial fields’ and hoped for further ‘concrete achievements...[to] pave the way for a qualitative transformation of our bilateral relations.’⁽¹⁶⁾

The statements above by Mr Qureshi and Mr Mukherjee suggest that India and Pakistan have different approaches to the Composite Dialogue. For Pakistan, its desire appears to be to get India to agree as soon as possible to resolutions to some of the serious issues that have bedevilled the India-Pakistan relationship. This desire appears to continue General Musharraf’s commando style of rapid, focused, ‘capture the mountain’ and ‘take-no-prisoners’-type of diplomacy. But it also reflects Islamabad’s desire — or, arguably, its need — to achieve something concrete, given the significant compromise that Pakistan made by renouncing its long-held stance to resolve the ‘unfinished business of partition’, the Kashmir dispute, as a prerequisite to entering into a more involved and complex relationship with India. For India, the idea seems to be to ‘hasten slowly’ and build up strong economic links. This, arguably, has always been India’s stance, although New Delhi also has compromised by agreeing to actually discuss the Kashmir dispute in a meaningful way as part of the India-Pakistan Composite Dialogue. As late as October 2003, prime minister Vajpayee was still insisting that the issue was not about how to resolve this territorial dispute but about when Pakistan would vacate those parts of J&K that it occupied.⁽¹⁷⁾

The respective stands of India and Pakistan on the Composite Dialogue also reflect their differing strategic positions. Pakistan needs, and wants, to resolve some of the issues in the Composite Dialogue fairly quickly, both to satisfy its population that typically is suspicious or fearful of India and also to enhance its generally inferior strategic or

diplomatic position in relation to India. In terms of the eight items in the Composite Dialogue, Pakistan is in a lesser or weaker position on five of these: it is in the inferior territorial position in J&K, with no access to the coveted Kashmir Valley; it is in the downstream position on the water issue of the Wullar Barrage/Tulbul Navigation project (and generally on all of the rivers in the Indus Waters Treaty); its forces are apparently in the downhill or tactically-inferior position on the Siachen Glacier issue (although they are in the superior position in terms of accessing the glacier);⁽¹⁸⁾ it has frequently been on the 'backfoot' on the issue of terrorism and alleged Pakistan-inspired terrorist attacks in, or against, India, and, to a lesser extent, on drug trafficking, with significant amounts of drugs being smuggled from Afghanistan through Pakistan to foreign destinations, including India; and, given that Islamabad has not (yet) reciprocated the 'Most Favoured Nation' status to India that is the basis for engaging in effective two-way trade, it is under some obligation on the issue of economic and commercial cooperation. For the other three issues (peace and security, including CBMs; Sir Creek, and the promotion of friendly exchanges), both nations appear to be at parity.

Conversely, India is the *status quo* power, with seemingly little incentive or desire to resolve many of the important India-Pakistan disagreements. India is in the superior strategic or diplomatic position on many of these issues. These include: in J&K, where India has what it — and Pakistan — both want: the Kashmir Valley; waters for irrigation and hydro-electricity that flow through disputed J&K and on to Pakistan, with India able to control and manipulate many of these important flows; the high tactical positions on Siachen Glacier (positions the Indian military is very reluctant to forego); the stronger, more dynamic and more resilient economy (which Pakistan might obtain benefit from being involved with); and, the moral 'high ground' on terrorism. Unlike Islamabad, New Delhi does not appear to

feel any need to obtain quick solutions on any of the eight items in the Composite Dialogue. Indeed, with Pervez Musharraf's political demise, New Delhi might well have missed a genuine opportunity to resolve the Kashmir dispute on terms that may have been reasonably acceptable to it — although much more negotiation and clarification was needed to determine whether Musharraf's 'out of the box' four-point solution in December 2006 applied to all of J&K.⁽¹⁹⁾ One area outside the dialogue where Pakistan potentially is strong would be the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline, via Balochistan. However, India also appears to be in no rush to conclude this agreement, partly because it has been finalising its 123 Agreement with the United States. The US also apparently has been pressuring India to move away from Iran, including by not supporting IPI.

The first entrenched factor: leadership

Historically, three entrenched factors have impacted on the India-Pakistan 'peace process' and limited, or prevented, both nations from concluding significant and meaningful agreements on contentious bilateral issues, particularly the Kashmir dispute. The first factor is the need for strong, popular, conciliatory and decisive leadership concurrently in both nations that can make appropriate agreements on divisive issues. Both India and Pakistan have had strong and decisive leaders at times. They also have had popular and conciliatory leaders at times. However, neither nation has had leaders with all of these four qualities at any one time — and at the same time. Hence, while the Indian leaders such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi or Rajiv Gandhi were strong and/or popular, they generally were not sufficiently conciliatory and/or decisive in relation to Pakistan, especially over the contentious issue of Jammu and Kashmir. Later leaders such as Atal Behari Vajpayee or Manmohan Singh may have been relatively more conciliatory than the Nehru-Gandhis in wanting to advance

India-Pakistan relations, but they have lacked the political strength and/or popularity to enable them to be decisive and to deliver solutions. Pakistan has suffered from the same problem. Many of its leaders have been strong and/or decisive, but they have not been sufficiently conciliatory and, particularly, they have lacked popular support, especially military leaders such as Ayub Khan or Zia-ul-Haq. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was a strong and popular politician, but his nation's position on J&K was weak and compromised due to the effects of the 1971 India-Pakistan war. Nawaz Sharif was in a strong and popular political position in 1997-1999 but his Indian counterpart, Atal Behari Vajpayee, was not. A similar situation applied to the Pervez Musharraf-Manmohan Singh relationship. Musharraf was strong but increasingly unpopular, while Singh was popular but increasingly politically weak.

History shows, therefore, that India and Pakistan generally have not been able to overcome many of their major issues because they have lacked leaders with sufficient amounts of all of the four above-mentioned characteristics concurrently. There have been some India-Pakistan agreements achieved, such as the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960, 'the only agreement that has been faithfully implemented and upheld by both India and Pakistan',⁽²⁰⁾ and the Rann of Kutch arbitration of 1968. Interestingly, the completion of these has involved third party assistance. However, the problem for the Indians and the Pakistanis is that the presence of the requisite leadership that I describe is amorphous, arbitrary and something that cannot be produced or installed in any planned or contrived way. Indeed, the appearance or production of appropriate leadership that might be willing — and able — to solve the Kashmir dispute is out of the hands of the people of India and Pakistan. Such suitable conciliatory leadership will only appear as a result of a period of good luck in both nations. That is, it will be arbitrary — and purely fortuitous. One way that weaker, less

decisive leadership could be encouraged or compelled to act would be by an active, forceful and conciliatory democratic polity that strongly wanted to see India-Pakistan relations improve and normalise. However, India and Pakistan each lack such a polity, which brings us to the second entrenched factor limiting India-Pakistan relations and the ‘peace process’.

The second entrenched factor: public opinion

The second entrenched — and limiting — factor in India and Pakistan is the need for strong public support — or public opinion — in both nations to push individually and concurrently for the resolution of some of the major issues that confront both nations, particularly the Kashmir dispute, and then for this public support to ensure that any agreements concluded also are implemented. To this outsider, the people of India and Pakistan historically appear to have been brought up on a diet of hatred and/or mistrust of the other nation. This factor appears to have waned in India in recent years, particularly as India has become more obsessed with China. It has only started to wane in Pakistan since early this century, possibly due to the need to deal with major internal economic and social issues and possibly due to pressure associated with the United States-led Global War on Terror. However, as a result of this mutual antipathy, a strong, popular and sustained movement by people in either or both nations to encourage the resolution of many of the difficult issues that confront India and Pakistan, particularly the bitter Kashmir dispute, has never developed. Indeed, it is only in the recent years that more moderate, and generally middle class, citizens of either nation have been able to pursue second-track diplomatic efforts to build a better India-Pakistan relationship. Furthermore, according to a recent opinion poll conducted among the Indians and the Pakistanis, ‘...there is no approach for Jammu and Kashmir that gets majority support on both sides’, while ‘Only

minorities on either side call for their government to take a harder or softer line on the Kashmir issue in its dealing with the other country'. Additionally, according to this opinion poll, 'Two in three Pakistanis endorse their government's approach to the [India-Pakistan] relationship, while just half of Indians approve of their government's handling of it'.⁽²¹⁾ This latter statistic is despite such approaches and handling not yet allowing for the India-Pakistan relationship to be considered normalised, as noted by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Asif Zardari very recently. In their joint press statement after their meeting at the United Nations General Assembly, 'They agreed to work for an *early and full normalization of relations between India and Pakistan*, on the basis of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and non-interference [my italics]'.⁽²²⁾

The weak and ineffective singular and/or joint desire of the Indians and the Pakistanis to resolve issues, especially Kashmir, is significant. Should their political leaders ever agree on a solution to some of the more contentious issues confronting the India-Pakistan relationship, they can only rely on, or tap into, a limited domestic constituency enthusiastic to overcome some of these issues, or keen to encourage their government to do so, or able to support any resolutions that are agreed. There is no strong pro-solution political constituency. Furthermore, opportunistic political opponents can gain easy political capital by suggesting that a government's stance vis-a-vis the other nation is weak and/or a serious compromise to national security, integrity, pride, etc. Hence, the Indian and the Pakistani politicians confront the significant challenge of needing to re-educate their populations. They need to be able to successfully 'sell' their solutions to their respective electorates which, at best, are somewhat disinterested in the 'other' nation, or middling in terms of their desire to resolve issues, or, at worst, are hardened by dislike, or frequently hatred, of the 'other' nation. Conversely, these electorates have never put strong

and sustained pressure on their political leadership to solve the various divisive and debilitating bilateral issues, such as the Kashmir dispute. This may be because these issues do not directly impact the people the way that a lack of water for crop and food production, or a devastating and disruptive war over water, might.

It is not surprising that India and Pakistan were able to agree to the Indus Waters Treaty in 1960 (although I do not know how much public pressure or input there was into this agreement). However, were the people of India and Pakistan to lobby their political leaders hard on the need to resolve certain bilateral issues, in the face of such unanimity and popular pressure, some of these issues might have been resolved a long time ago. Such lobbying also would greatly lessen the need for strong, popular, conciliatory and decisive leadership concurrently in both nations. Indeed, strong lobbying by the peoples of India and Pakistan would compel their respective political leaders to reach agreements on divisive issues.

The third entrenched factor: the ‘trust deficit’

The third entrenched factor is the need to overcome the so-called ‘trust deficit’ that exists between both nations and many of their people. This poses actual problems in resolving some specific issues. The litmus test is the Siachen Glacier (discussed below). The ‘trust deficit’ is not just a factor that affects the people of one nation only. Based on personal experience, it can be found in copious quantities among people on both sides of the India-Pakistan border.⁽²³⁾ ‘The trust deficit is actually a deep and abiding mutual mistrust of each other based on a strong and residual sense of having been aggrieved by actions perpetrated by the other nation.’⁽²⁴⁾ The fact that the people of both nations have had almost nothing to do with one another since 1947 has only helped this phenomenon to grow.

The 'trust deficit' between the Indians and the Pakistanis traces its origins back to issues in 1947. These included: the Radcliffe Award and Lord Mountbatten's alleged nefarious part in this award, by which some Pakistanis believe that Pakistan was cheated out of Muslim-majority Gurdaspur District (thereby giving India a land route to J&K); to Maharaja Hari Singh's accession to India on 26 October 1947, which the Pakistan Government believed was obtained by India by means of 'fraud and violence';⁽²⁵⁾ to the invasion of Kashmir province by Pukhtoon tribesmen on 22 October 1947, which India alleges was supported, if not instigated, by Pakistan (but which resulted in Hari Singh's accession to India).⁽²⁶⁾ For India, mistrust of Pakistan was reinforced by events in 1965 (discussed below). For Pakistan, mistrust of India was furthered by the nefarious part that New Delhi played in the Bengali insurgency and the dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971. For India, mistrust was again fuelled by alleged 'foreign hand' involvement in many of its more recent internal insurgencies, such as with disenchanted Sikhs in the 1980s and with Pakistan-sponsored anti-Indian militants/terrorists in the Kashmir Valley since 1989. Conversely, Pakistan has seen, and continues to see, 'foreign hand' involvement in its problems in Balochistan,⁽²⁷⁾ and recently in the Federally-Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of the North-West Frontier Province.⁽²⁸⁾ For Pakistan, it was heightened by Indian military activities like 'Operation Brasstacks', when the Indian military massively and provocatively mobilised near the Pakistan border in 1986-1987 in a purported exercise, by India's development of a military nuclear capability, and more recently, by India's attempts to acquire a 'blue water' naval capability. These Indian actions confirm the belief held by some, perhaps many, Pakistanis that India does not accept Pakistan's existence and that it wants to re-integrate Pakistan. This (unrealistic) belief is a very telling aspect of the entire India-Pakistan 'trust deficit' regime. It limits Pakistan's ability to

engage fully with, and to benefit fully from, relations with India.

Siachen Glacier

Siachen Glacier is one of the most difficult issues in India-Pakistan relations.⁽²⁹⁾ Attempts by the Indian and the Pakistani forces to take control of this desolate region reflect a policy that both nations share and pursue but rarely openly enunciate: the policy either of seeking to obtain a tactical or strategic advantage in J&K by probing the enemy's defences or of 'not giving an inch of territory' to the enemy in that contested former princely state. Siachen Glacier is the highest profile, and perhaps most serious, example of this seemingly contradictory — but actually complementary — policy. Siachen Glacier is located in a remote region of north-east J&K beyond map point NJ980420, which marks the end of the demarcated LoC. At its highest, the glacier is some 6,700 meters (22,000 feet) above sea level; the average altitude is 5,400 meters (17,700 feet) above sea level.⁽³⁰⁾ When the LoC (then known as the ceasefire line) was being demarcated, the Indians and Pakistanis believed that no one would fight on the high and inhospitable glaciers beyond NJ980420. However, since the early 1980s, the Indian and the Pakistani soldiers have occupied this high-altitude 'battlefield' where those men who die do so from factors such as exposure, altitude-related diseases and avalanche — not from actual fighting.⁽³¹⁾ While India currently appears to be in the superior position on Siachen Glacier, maintaining its position there involves a large military and financial effort — as do Pakistani attempts to alter this situation.⁽³²⁾

Apart from denying territory to the enemy, one further possible reason for India and Pakistan to engage in such a difficult military struggle is the desire of each nation to secure a strategic advantage — and some more territory — in case the LoC is ever extended northwards to the J&K-China border. India is also concerned to secure its land-based

supply routes to its military forces manning the contested India-China border, beyond which lies the Chinese-occupied region of Aksai Chin that India also claims, and to secure the strategically important Karakoram Pass to China. The area also is a major source of water for the important Indus River system. International mountaineering tourism is another factor, with some of the world's highest mountains located in, or near, this region, including K2 (Mt Godwin Austin). Foreign currency can be earned from expeditions by foreign mountain climbers. Should the Siachen Glacier issue ever be resolved, India and Pakistan could contemplate running joint war tourism events to this battlefield!

While Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Mr Qureshi, may believe that 'the early resolution' of the Siachen Glacier issue is 'doable', it is a complex issue. Before any agreement can be struck, the Indian Army must first be convinced that it can trust the Pakistan Army to adhere to any demilitarisation of this high-altitude battlefield. India's Defence Minister, A.K. Anthony,⁽³³⁾ after visiting Siachen Glacier in May 2007, 'reportedly made it clear that there would be no withdrawal without the consent of the [Indian] military'.⁽³⁴⁾ Indian military chiefs have apparently made their intentions clear to Indian politicians: they do not want a blanket withdrawal back to the pre-1984 positions when no military forces were located on the glacier; at the very least, they want the Actual Ground Position Line of the Indian and Pakistan armies delineated and aerial photos of these positions kept in case of any future violation of any agreed treaty.⁽³⁵⁾ The reason for such demands is that the Indian Army is apparently very suspicious of the Pakistan Army and its intentions.⁽³⁶⁾ (The Pakistan Army is also suspicious of the Indian Army, but that is more to do with strategic and military rivalry and operations.)

There are a number of reasons for the Indians' suspicions of the Pakistan Army. One reason dates back to 1948 when Pakistan only informed the United Nations

Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP)⁽³⁷⁾ between 7-9 July 1948 of the official entry of the Pakistan Army into J&K ‘during the first half of May’, although India also believed that Pakistani regulars were fighting in J&K before then.⁽³⁸⁾ Another relates to the Pakistan Army’s activities during 1965, including skirmishing in the Rann of Kutch in April and the infiltration of saboteurs into J&K in September via ‘Operation Gibraltar’, that led to the 1965 India-Pakistan war. More recently, the Indian Army has been suspicious of the Pakistan Army because of the Kargil episode in May 1999 when pro-Pakistan ‘militants’ took up positions on the Line of Control in an area of the strategic Kargil region close to India’s major land-based supply lines to Ladakh, after which the Indian Army and Air Force had to forcefully remove them in order to recapture these positions.⁽³⁹⁾ (Conversely, some in Pakistan saw the Kargil episode as defensive action to deter any Indian attempts to alter the LoC.)⁽⁴⁰⁾ Finally, the alleged role that the Pakistan Army’s Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) plays in fomenting various internal issues in India, including ‘militants’ or ‘terrorists — depending on your point of view — in Kashmir. The above-mentioned position of India’s National Security Advisor M. K. Narayanan on the ‘mounting evidence that Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate organised the bombing of the Indian Embassy in Kabul’, tends to reflect the Indian Army’s position that the ISI is a rogue organisation.⁽⁴¹⁾ Its opinion will not have changed after the Pakistan Army re-asserted its control over the ISI following a brief attempt by the new civilian government to try to bring the intelligence body under the Interior Ministry’s jurisdiction.⁽⁴²⁾

The Siachen Glacier issue is a — or perhaps, the — real challenge in the India-Pakistan Composite Dialogue. If it can be resolved, a lot of other issue also can be resolved. Unlike few other issues in the dialogue, the Siachen Glacier issue raises great suspicion and angst for a major Indian

stakeholder involved in it — the Indian Army, which has a strong, abiding and entrenched interest to ensure that, at the very least, the *status quo* remains. It is India, therefore, that has to move first on this issue. However, two factors need to change. First, the Indian Army's mistrust of the Pakistan Army has to be overcome. This might be possible if Pakistan can provide suitable 'cast-iron', internationally-enforceable guarantees to India and/or if the Actual Ground Position Line of the Indian and the Pakistan armies on Siachen Glacier can be agreed and delineated to the satisfaction of both sides. However, this is only a 'might', and a lot more work needs to be done before the Indian Army will be convinced to leave its hard-won positions and vacate the glacier.

Certainly statements from Mr Qureshi that 'the early resolution' of the Siachen Glacier issue is 'doable', provided that there was 'the political will for their expeditious resolution',⁽⁴³⁾ seem to be either opportunistic or an attempt to put pressure on a reluctant New Delhi. Second, Pakistan needs to find some attractive or compelling reasons to encourage India to conclude an agreement on Siachen. Currently, New Delhi really has little incentive to resolve this issue. It is the *status quo* power with little to gain and a lot to lose by ceding ground — figuratively and literally — on the Siachen issue. This is because, as the former Chief of Indian Army Staff, V.P. Malik, has stated, 'India can afford to be patient'. It can continue to develop its increasingly powerful economy knowing that if it keeps its 'house' in order, including in J&K, 'political bullying or the terrorists' guns from across the [Pakistan] border are meaningless' as India has 'the resilience and hard and soft power to ignore them, or to respond, if that becomes necessary'.⁽⁴⁴⁾ It is hard to see what Islamabad can offer to change India's attitude, except possibly greater access to Pakistan's markets. Nevertheless, if India and Pakistan can successfully come to an agreement on the vexed and difficult issue of Siachen Glacier — and also successfully implement this agreement

— then this level of trust and cooperation suggests that almost all other bilateral issues are resolvable, including the Kashmir dispute.

Conclusion

The India-Pakistan ‘peace process’ has been going on for some time — arguably back to 1947 in relation to trying to resolve the bitter dispute over which nation should possess the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. However, in the current context, it is actually a misnomer to call Indian and Pakistani attempts to improve their relations a ‘peace process’: they are not seeking peace (if peace be the absence of war) as the two nations are not currently at war (and therefore have peace), nor have they been at war since their so-called ‘Kargil war’ in 1999. Rather, the current so-called ‘peace process’ comprises a positive, ongoing ‘Composite Dialogue’ in which both nations have been engaged since 2004. The fact that India and Pakistan call their latest attempts to establish more normal relations a ‘peace process’ reflects the sad situation that these nations have been in strong, ongoing opposition to one another virtually since both came into existence on 14 and 15 August 1947. While it is positive to hear Prime Minister Singh and President Zardari talk of seeking an ‘early and full normalization of relations between India and Pakistan’, it is sad to think that both nations are still seeking such a relationship after more than 61 years of existence.

From the perspective of someone not from the subcontinent, the India-Pakistan relationship has been — and remains — rather diabolical. There is still no normalised trade between them; both nations are heavily militarised, including with nuclear arms; both nations station substantial forces along their international border and along the Line of Control in disputed J&K; there is only one international land border crossing, two international rail crossings and very few international flights between the two nations to allow trade,

tourism, family reunion and other people-to-people contacts to occur;⁽⁴⁵⁾ limited cross-border contacts are exacerbated by tight and restrictive visa regimes that ensure that the Indians and the Pakistanis cannot freely mix and mingle with each another.⁽⁴⁶⁾

Nevertheless, the Composite Dialogue shows that India-Pakistan relations are advancing slowly, although I think it unlikely that there will be any groundbreaking agreements in the short- to medium-term. In Pakistan, the Zardari-led Pakistan People's Party government suffers from being a minority government that requires outside support to govern and pass legislation and with which opposition parties may well become disenchanted if its leader continues to make statements that cannot be taken at face value. Equally, next year's election in India is likely to deliver a coalition government in which no one party will be able to impose its will, including in relation to concluding important, but possibly contentious, agreements with Pakistan. Given these factors, plus the three entrenched factors discussed above that historically have hindered the furtherance of the India-Pakistan relationship, the 'peace process', while positive, still has a long way to go.

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mounting evidence that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate organised the bombing of the Indian Embassy in Kabul, National Security Adviser M.K. Narayanan proposed a solution: "I think we need to pay back in the same coin". "Talk-talk is better than fight-fight," Mr. Narayanan concluded, "but it hasn't worked so far" '.

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Reviving Traditional Linkages Between Kashmir and Central Asia

Dr. Hameedah Nayeem

Kashmir for the last five hundred years before 1947 had been at the cross roads of a civilizational interface where the Chinese, Central Asian, Indian and Persian civilizations, cultures and economies met. In addition to its northern links and more particularly with the Indian sub-continent on the north west, it had close trade and cultural relations with places in present day China, Tibet, Central Asia, Afghanistan, Iran and even Europe via the ancient Silk Route. Kashmir remained connected to these places at different points of time through routes along Ladakh-Tibet, Ladakh-Xinjiang (eastern Turkistan); Kargil-Iskardu-Gilgit, Bandipora-Gurez-Chillas-Gilgit; Srinagar-Muzaffarabad-Rawalpindi and Poonch-Rawalakot. Most of these routes moving to north would link the state to areas that are known today as Afghanistan, Central Asian countries, Xinjiang province of China (Turkistan), Tibet and through the Silk Route to the West. Kashmir was well connected to areas now comprising Pakistan when the British left. The only all-weather road in pre-partition Kashmir ran west from Srinagar along the Jhelum Valley and through the Bramulla

Pass to Muzaffarabad and South to Rawalpindi where it met the rail road network of the Punjab connecting the state to the entire subcontinent. Before partition this road carried the larger part of Kashmir's traffic in men and merchandise. Most of the tourist flow to the Valley came from this route.

The other routes connecting Kashmir to Central Asia, China and Tibet were instrumental in the exchange of knowledge, culture and technology which proved far more significant than commerce. The intellectual interaction and movement of scholars, priests, pilgrims and missionaries revolutionized the cultural scenario of the region as a whole. The advent of Buddhism from China and then Islam and Sufism from Iran and Central Asia is the testimony of this interaction.

Through these routes a wide variety of merchandise flowed from and into Kashmir. Salt and wool were the most important items of import into Kashmir in medieval times and mostly came from Punjab via Pir Panjal and partly from China via Ladakh. Shawl wool was imported through Rodak and Chanthan and from Ladakh and Yarkand. Silk worm eggs for the largest silk factory in Kashmir were imported from Badakhshan, oriental jade from Khotan besides paper, pottery, brass and copper vessels. Musk and silk was also imported from Kashgar. Precious stones like agate, opal, turquoise were also imported from Badakhshan and Yarkand. These were later exported to different countries from Kashmir. In return, Kashmir exported shawls to India and Central Asia throughout the year. This was in addition to musk, crystals, silk, woolen cloth, saffron, resins, paper and fruit — both dried and fresh. Thus Srinagar was entry-port for traders in medieval times. The traders from Central Asian countries had their permanent rest houses and places of worship. In fact trade between Kashmir and Central Asia was so prosperous and regular that some localities in Srinagar came to be named after Central Asian cities like Yarkand Sarai which exists even today in Srinagar.

But 1947 developments pushed Kashmir into a corner. The division of the sub-continent and de facto division of Jammu and Kashmir and the placement of its two parts under the actual control of two hostile countries and the resultant hardening of borders due to constant conflict isolated the Valley economically, socially, politically and even emotionally. Almost all of its major connecting points were blocked and Jammu and Kashmir became dependent on a highway that had never been considered reliable in comparison to roads and connections that historically connected Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of the world.

The division not only separated the land but also families on the two sides of the Line of Control which in itself was a human tragedy. The disadvantages of this division did not remain confined to the Valley but were shared by surrounding regions like Kargil and Leh and Poonch Rajouri which suffer more from the communication blockade. In fact the great harm separation has done has been felt on both sides of the divide and continues. The crippling disadvantages of political uncertainty and the impact of the on-going conflict on the place created its own predicaments and problems of serious nature for the people of Kashmir. The fact to be noted is that about 82 per cent borders of J&K are with China, Pakistan and Afghanistan and only about 18 per cent of the state touches the Indian mainland. Much of this narrow strip is in the Himalayan range of Himachal with no possible motorable link to Kashmir. Of this connecting strip, in terms of topography, only about 2 per cent touching Punjab at Akhnoor is road worthy and provides a surface link to Jammu alone. This point referred to as Chicken Neck is surrounded by Pakistan and has been a sensitive point of defence for India. The so-called National Highway which links Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of India passes through this strip.

Connecting the valley of Kashmir through Jammu has been a strategic as well as practical problem all along

because it is a fair weather road and remains blocked during winter months and the rainy season when snow storms and landslides take a heavy toll in human and material terms. The road closure creates serious food shortages in the Valley. The recent blockade of the road in Jammu by communalists has exposed the other risks for the valley. Compared to the Muzaffarabad Road, it is less secure and also longer to carry goods to centres of trade. Even though it is not generally articulated (because Kashmiris are so much used to being strangled) this fact has socially and economically marginalized the people of the Valley as well as parts of Jammu. People therefore naturally recall times when the Muzaffarabad Road was operational.

The resumption of the truncated bus service in April 2003 with lengthy formalities defeated its very purpose of reuniting divided families. Now the unprecedented agitation by people for opening this route for free flow of people and goods has compelled the two countries to allow Kashmiris to start trade via this route but all the indications tell us that it is still merely symbolic. If that be so then it will again defeat the very purpose for which people demanded the opening of this road, i.e., for free flow of people and goods. One expects that with globalization and improvement in Indo-Pak relations, the process of dismantling of artificial barriers will be expedited and the Jhelum-Valley Road will be made functional for regular travel of people and free flow of goods, removing economic and emotional barriers between the two divided parts of Kashmir and further open linkages to Central Asia and beyond to revive the traditional links and economic cooperation.

The Jhelum-Valley Road is not an outlet for Rawalpindi alone. Free access to Muzaffarabad will also connect Kashmir via Balakote to Mansehra — in frontier province, then onwards to Afghanistan and Central Asia. The Rawalakot Road can provide an outlet to people of Poonch and Rajouri. The Kargil-Iskardu Road historically links

Kashmir with Gilgit and Baltistan, the gateway to Central Asia. The Northern Areas, parts of erstwhile J&K is located across the high Himalayas on the ancient Silk Route, “bordering China and linking Xinjiang through the Karakoram Highway in the north and Afghanistan and Tajikistan through the narrow Wakhan corridor to the west.” A crow’s flight takes less time between Srinagar and Dushanbe than Srinagar and New Delhi. Kashgar on the Karakoram Highway (Xinjiang, China) is not as far as it seems, neither a journey from Kashmir to Kashgar a pipe dream provided we continue to strive for change, free communication and economic prosperity.

It is the opening of this route that could have tremendous positive impact on the economy of the people as this route has huge economic advantages for the transportation of goods and services to the outside world. Because of its relative advantages of security, distance and smoothness, it is safer, shorter and more stable. This route will particularly be helpful to fruit growers and the handicrafts sector in the state. The fruit-growers’ time and freight cost of supply to markets will be considerably reduced. For example for apple growers at Sopore, the distance to Delhi is more than one thousand kilometres and a truck load on an average takes three days to cover the distance to Delhi. Compared to this, Sopore to Rawalpindi is only 250 kms and can be covered in 6-7 hours. Compared to the Mumbai port where Kashmiri traders at present take the goods, Karachi port is about 1200 kms nearer to Kashmir. As against the distance of 3000 kms between Mumbai and Srinagar, Karachi is only 1800 kms away from the Valley. Karachi in turn is nearer to marketing places in the Gulf and Europe, hence allowing full-fledged trade through Srinagar-Muzaffarabad Road, besides boosting the economy, will make Kashmiri goods more competitive in the international market.

Indian government has been trying to link the North-east to South-east Asia to remove its seclusion. This needs to be expedited. What is important is that this is an opening not between two separate sovereign states but two parts of one political entity, so recognized by both India and Pakistan . So the travelling should be simplified and made regular on a daily basis like the Jammu-Srinagar Road. Significantly even PM Manmohan Singh has hinted at opening of more roads for travel and trade beyond the sub-continent across even to Central Asia. People hope this promise too does not become a victim of an ossified, aggressive, obscurantist and narrow 'nationalistic ideology'.

The EU and G-8-Initiatives on Afghanistan and Pakistan: German Perspective

Ambassador (Retd) Dr. Gunter Mulack

Introduction

The region of Central Asia at the convergence with West Asia and South Asia, so including Afghanistan and Pakistan, is of utmost importance to Europe and also to Germany as one of the important member states of the EU. For strategic reasons but also for economic reasons it is of utmost importance to stabilize this region and to develop regional cooperation which would help overcome the many socio-economic problems the countries of this region are facing today. A joint action plan to improve infrastructure, economic ties, develop energy resources and fight poverty and ignorance is the only way to stabilize this important area. This supposes, of course, the full cooperation of all states in this region. There is no doubt that Pakistan is one of the most important actors.

Without Pakistan's active and full cooperation the international community cannot reconstruct Afghanistan and

defeat the Taliban and also international terrorism. As we all know, Pakistan itself is threatened by the ongoing terrorist activities on its soil. There is growing public pressure, especially from the USA, that Pakistan has to do more in these joint efforts to fight the Taliban and international terrorism. This became particularly evident in the running election campaign in the USA.

A serious question remains, however, whether Pakistan can really do more than it is already doing and whether it is able to act in a more efficient way which leaves no doubts about its commitment. The extreme voices of criticism are even accusing Pakistan of actively undermining the efforts of the international community in Afghanistan and in the fight against terrorism. We all will agree that the situation is very dangerous and that the crisis in FATA and in Afghanistan is becoming more acute day by day. On the other hand there should be no doubt that Pakistan is now actively engaged in this combat with heavy losses and painful consequences. One of the greatest challenges in the fight against international terrorism is the ongoing violence and lawlessness spreading from the border areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan into the other areas of both countries. As long as these tribal areas are not under effective direct control of the respective governments they remain potential safe havens for international terrorist organization like Al-Qaeda. The West is not only concerned because of the Taliban movements in both countries which up to now have not played any active role in international terrorism but especially because of the presence of foreign terrorists and training camps for foreigners in Pakistan. Unfortunately, there is ample evidence of this international presence. Recent arrests in Germany of terror suspects have again proven this dangerous link. These camps and the training of foreign terrorists, many of them also from Europe, are causing great concern in Europe including Germany. The stabilization of Afghanistan and a rapid

improvement of the security and development situation are the main aims of the engagement of the international community in Afghanistan. Pakistan as an important regional power and a traditional partner of the West also needs security and stability for further economic and social development. The actual security situation in parts of NWFP and FATA as well as Balochistan is cause for concern among the friends of Pakistan whose internal and external security have become inseparable issues.

There is no doubt that both issues are interlinked and need a joint approach for achieving a long lasting solution. This necessitates a better coordination and cooperation of all sides: Afghanistan, Pakistan, ISAF, EU, NATO and the USA. Furthermore, it is important to look into the root causes of violence to develop the right strategy. Widespread poverty, unemployment and ignorance are a fertile breeding ground for recruitment especially of frustrated young men into terrorist organizations.

The situation in Afghanistan is far from satisfactory; security outside Kabul is deteriorating almost daily and anti-government forces are becoming more effective in the guerrilla warfare against ANA, ISAF, OEF and the police force. The situation in the Pashtun border areas of Afghanistan is especially dangerous. This is also true for the Pakistani border areas in FATA, parts of NWFP and Balochistan. The democratically elected government of Pakistan is trying hard to fight this insurgency in its own territory and is shouldering a very heavy burden of the international fight against terrorism.

The overall improvement of the present situation in Afghanistan and the international assistance to security and stabilization are fully supported by the member countries of the EU, especially those which are also members of NATO.

Member states of the EU are making significant contribution to military, diplomatic as well as reconstruction

and development assistance in Afghanistan. The military involvement of EU member states is significant: 25 out of the 27 member states contribute to the ISAF mission accounting for more than 50 per cent of the force. Collectively these states also accounted for some 32 per cent of the 12.5 billion US dollars grants pledged by the international community. At the London conference in 2006 the EU and member states pledged a further 2.5 billions dollars. The EC on its own spent more than 150 million dollars per year from 2002 to 2008. The EC was the second largest donor of ODA to Afghanistan in 2004-2006.

In 2007, the EC adopted a new country strategy for 2007-2013. This strategy provides that the EC assistance will focus on areas where the EC has expertise and experience or where other donors are not engaged. These focal areas are rural development, governance and health. Cross-cutting issues are human rights and civil society (including gender and media issues). These focal areas are also important for cooperation with Pakistan in the tribal areas or in NWFP and Northern Areas. In my opinion, fast and visible progress in development of these vulnerable areas is of utmost importance if we really want to stabilize this region.

If we want to win the battle for the hearts and minds, it is of fundamental importance to fight ignorance, prejudice and the culture of hatred. Unfortunately, in the tribal areas, in NWFP and Balochistan the masses are illiterate or semiliterate. The madrassa network is often the only alternative available for basic education. Their teaching often creates an atmosphere of hatred conducive to the polarization of society and to the radicalization of its most marginal elements. Often the intolerant teaching in certain 'deeni madaris' is also the basis for sectarian violence. The mindset of the Taliban is clearly a product of madrassa education in Pakistan which was cultivated by the West to motivate the jihad against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan during the 1980s. Unfortunately this jihadi-mindset has continued and

there was never a programme for re-education in the region. So, the teaching of orthodox doctrine, religious intolerance, anti-modernism and jihad continues in certain madrassas up to this day.

It is this mindset and the failure of the state education system which have created along with poverty, joblessness and economic hardship a fertile breeding-ground for extremism like the Taliban movement.

Let me come back to the problems we are facing in Afghanistan and the attitude of Europe in general and Germany in particular.

We Europeans see Afghanistan as a key security and foreign policy challenge outside Europe.

Despite the European engagement in the Balkans, many EU-member countries have contributed soldiers to the ISAF in Afghanistan. Germany has just decided to increase the number of soldiers from 3,500 to 4,500. This engagement in Afghanistan will have to continue until the Afghan security forces are able to uphold security by themselves, which will take another couple of years.

What is the special role of Germany in this context?

Germany has a long history of excellent relations with Afghanistan, dating back to the First World War. It played an important role as a friend and partner in the economic and social development of Afghanistan, especially in the time after the First World War. It should be mentioned that there is an explicit respect and friendship for Germans among all Afghans, particularly the Pashtuns. That is, of course, also true for the human relationship with Pakistanis, especially again with the Pashtuns. Germany is being seen as an impartial friend, which has no colonialist history or particular political interests in the area. This became also clear in the set-up of the new Afghanistan after the ousting of

the Taliban movement. The German involvement is well known, just to mention the Bonn process.

Germany has adopted a comprehensive “civil-military” approach arguing that both these elements are necessary and complimentary prerequisites for reconstruction and development.

Germany has been widely criticized for its unwillingness to contribute to ISAF combat missions in eastern and southern Afghanistan.

Unlike other countries the German government requires an explicit mandate from the Bundestag before German troops can be sent on military missions abroad. As a result German participation in ISAF and OEF is widely seen as being particularly susceptible to domestic political pressure. And Germany is entering into an election campaign next year which will even create more pressure in this context. During the festivities on the German National day 2008, this year in Hamburg, Afghanistan was presented to the German public through exhibitions and discussions to raise awareness about this country and the importance of the German engagement there.

There are serious concerns about the negative impact of combat operations, especially aerial bombardments, on the political stabilization and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. German politicians and the public are rightly concerned about the negative impact of civilian casualties on the overall acceptance of foreign troops in Afghanistan and the necessary trust which is the basis for achieving a good cooperation with the Afghan population as well as state actors.

The EU and its member states have shown their commitment to provide significant levels of assistance in reconstruction, education, good governance, human rights, the judicial system and the police. There is, however, a

growing scepticism in Europe among the general public and also among politicians about the efficiency of international efforts to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan and the timeframe for our presence.

The strong focus on military efforts in this US-led war against terrorism is widely regarded as failing under the special conditions of asymmetrical warfare with heavy use of airpower if it is not supported by a political process and dialogue with the population and faster and more visible reconstruction efforts.

There also is a growing concern that the current strategy lacks sensitivity to the historical, cultural and ethnic specificities of Afghanistan. It is of absolute necessity to educate the military personnel with the culture and history of these areas and train them not only to win the military battle but also the battle for the hearts and minds of the people. The same is true concerning FATA and NWFP as well as Balochistan.

Most specialists will agree on the urgent need for reassessment of the international efforts and strategies. Also, the problem's solution should involve not only the Afghan government but also local structures and tribal leaders as well as all parties to the actual conflict. Only a solution which is agreed and implemented by all sides will be effective. There is no solution to the conflict without getting all concerned parties on board. Up to this moment the impact of military thinking and strategy is so strong that all other necessary elements do not carry the necessary weight in the solution finding. Without more Afghan involvement the international community will fail in its efforts to establish an everlasting peace in Afghanistan. We can only assist the Afghans to find a durable solution to this multi-faceted conflict.

It is also absolutely necessary to include the neighbours of Afghanistan in the efforts to stabilize the

country. Pakistan has a long border with Afghanistan, some 24,00 kms, and is the most important neighbour in this context. Long-term security and stability of Afghanistan can only be established with full cooperation of Pakistan.

We have to overcome the historic mistrust and suspicion which is very strong in Afghanistan because of Pakistan's support to the Taliban regime. Also the question of the border between both countries has to be settled. The Durand Line was drawn by the British and the agreement has expired. Nobody questions the actual border but a definition of the present border valid under international law could ease the tensions rising from this subject among Pashtuns in both countries.

Pakistan and Afghanistan have intensive relations, the trade volume is around 1.4 billion US dollars, comprising mostly Pakistani exports to Afghanistan. In addition to that there are tens of thousands of Pakistanis working in Afghanistan's reconstruction. Pakistan also remains the main transit country for trade.

It is of utmost importance to create more trust between these two neighbouring countries. Only when we overcome the Afghan fear of Pakistani interventions and the Pakistani fears of Indian interventions, we will have a basis for a close and trustful cooperation. The existing rivalry between the two big South Asian nations has turned both countries' relations with Afghanistan into a zero-sum-game. Pakistan, the weaker of the two, might follow a certain logic by still supporting extremist Islamic groups as a means of securing its geopolitical goals in the regional context. Therefore, it is absolutely mandatory to improve the relations between Pakistan and India. This is possible to achieve, but we still have a long way to go.

The importance of a stable Afghanistan as well as a stable Pakistan has become evident for politicians in Europe and the international community. The EU and member states

as well as the G-8-members have therefore decided to launch initiatives to support both Afghanistan as well as Pakistan in finding ways to improve the bilateral relationship and cooperation in order to achieve control, stabilization and finally peace in the borderland and develop friendly and good neighbourly relations. We want to engage positively with Pakistan rather than isolate it further. Pakistan is an indispensable partner for us. The fight against terrorism has become a matter of priority also in the interest of Pakistan's security. The suicide bomb attack against the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad has made this very clear. The stability of Pakistan is under threat. Pakistan is a proud country with a well disciplined Army and we in Europe respect its sovereignty. We are ready to assist and help whenever this is asked for. There is no doubt about our interest in Pakistan becoming a stable and secure partner and not a nation in a permanent state of political crisis and instability on the verge of becoming a failed state. The newly elected democratic government of Pakistan is struggling to overcome this crisis and deserves all our possible assistance and attention.

The G-8 initiative

It was under the German presidency of the G-8 in 2007, this year Japan holds the presidency of G-8, that the German Government, or more precise, the German Foreign Office, developed a strategy to help improve the relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan which evidently had gone sour and was at its lowest when accusations of not doing enough or even of interference were publicly exchanged. The key priority of Germany and the G-8 was and is to actively assist Pakistan and Afghanistan in developing peaceful good-neighbourly relations and cooperation. Given the deep and growing gap between these two countries there was much concern about the negative impact on peace and stability in the region. Germany and the other member states of the G-8 were convinced that an initiative had to be developed to

bring the relationship between these two important neighbouring countries on better terms. Also, in this case a negative relationship had developed between the two leaders, President Karzai and General Musharraf. The cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan not only deteriorated but came almost to a complete stand still under the former military regime.

To contain the mounting insurgency of the Taliban in the Pashtun areas of Afghanistan and increasing attacks on western targets the close coordination and cooperation between the two countries is absolutely necessary also in security terms. An improvement in their relationship and development of the border area on both sides is focal for the success of the international engagement in Afghanistan. In concrete terms, the security situation in the southern and eastern provinces of Afghanistan had to be improved. Already in October 2006, Germany had started consultations with the other G-8 members as well as with Pakistan and Afghanistan. All sides agreed to this initiative in order to improve the relations and to develop cooperation and dialogue between the two neighbours.

Afghanistan is clearly the weaker part in the difficult relationship with Pakistan, which is militarily but also as a state much more developed and stronger. Afghanistan is accusing Pakistan of being responsible for infiltrations of Taliban across the border and for the instability in the Pashtun areas adjacent to the border. To counter the accusations Pakistan had declared its readiness to close the border with fences, mine fields and walls. This was reaffirmed to the author by Prime Minister Gilani on August 20, 2008. The huge cost of such an operation could not be borne by Pakistan but should be shouldered by the international community. The Afghan side rejected this idea because it would separate the closely related tribes in the borderland and cement the Durand Line. Many experts also were sceptical whether this would really help to stop the

infiltration and illegal cross border movements forever. Even the wall between East and West Germany did not prevent people from crossing; also the billions-dollar project of the US-Mexican border has failed to prevent thousands of crossings.

The G-8 initiative was not aiming to be a mediator between the two states but a facilitator of a better cooperation in areas which both countries have to determine jointly based on their own will. Furthermore, concrete confidence-building measures are being seen as necessary to improve trust between the two sides. In view of the difficult relationship and growing mistrust and evident lack of trustful and effective cooperation between the two neighbouring states, the G-8 states were and are willing to bring into this process all their political weight.

For the first time in the history of the G-8, Germany invited the two foreign ministers of Pakistan and Afghanistan to attend the G-8 FM conference in Potsdam on May 30, 2007.

A joint declaration was agreed which renewed the commitment to strengthen cooperation and dialogue between their countries and governments, in particular in the fields of security, refugee issues, economic development and increased contacts between civil societies. The members of the G-8 committed themselves to work closely with the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan in support of their endeavour through concrete projects and targeted assistance in various fields. The G-8 members also commended the joint peace and security jirgas as well as the commitments Afghanistan and Pakistan had made in the Ankara declaration on 30 April 2007 to enhance their cooperation and to combine their efforts to improve the security and prosperity of both peoples.

It is in Pakistan's perceived national interest to remain an active player in Afghanistan. Pakistan wants the

Karzai government to sign an internationally valid agreement on the border and acknowledge Pakistan's interest in preventing Afghanistan from becoming an unreliable or even hostile, pro-Indian state. A settlement of the Afghan problem cannot be achieved without Pakistan's active engagement. Therefore, the world community needs a positive relationship and cooperation between these two countries. Only through this we can effectively fight the criminal alliances between internationally operating terrorists, Taliban and the criminal connection with internationally-organized drug cartels.

This logic of the G-8 initiative is actively being followed by the Japanese presidency of the G-8. It is still an ongoing undertaking.

After the Potsdam FM conference which both foreign ministers welcomed as an important step to improve the relations, an expert meeting was held in Berlin in October 2007 in order to draw up a list of possible fields of cooperation and projects which would be financed by the G-8 member countries. Both the actual Japanese presidency of the G-8 and the future presidency in 2009 of Italy, have openly endorsed this programme.

The projects

The G-8 members agreed to more than 160 concrete project proposals in different fields including improved border protection, control and training and many technical aspects of a higher standard of operational capabilities of the border forces. These projects are to be implemented on bilateral basis and are now in various stages of implementation.

Unfortunately the deteriorating security on both sides of the border and the further degrading of trust between the two countries has made it even more difficult to implement these projects.

Germany has earmarked an amount of more than 22 million Euros for the years 2007-2009 for specific projects in this context.

Without going too much into details the following projects might serve as an example of what Germany is willing to contribute in this process.

Security

- Training facilities for border police (in cooperation with Canada and USA).
- Supply of specialized equipment for border control measures.
- Building of an Academy for the Afghan border police in Kabul.

Refugees

- Financial support for the return of Afghan refugees from Pakistan in cooperation with UNHCR —Specific support for Afghan refugees in Pakistan on the basis of data from the Registration.
- Information Project for Afghan Citizens (RIPAC) in cooperation with UNHCR.
- Schools, vocational training institutions, health care facilities, micro credits, other preparatory measures for safe return to Afghanistan.
- 50 schools for Afghans in NWFP.

Civil society contacts

In order to strengthen trust between both countries, it was agreed to facilitate increased contacts between civil

societies through arranging joint meetings and seminars and joint projects.

In the following I would like to mention just a few examples:

- Establishment of a Joint News Agency for the border area.
- Exchange between journalists from Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- International youth exchange.
- Meetings, cooperation and exchange programmes for members of parliament and their technical support staff.

Regional security and border issues

- Track-II-Dialogue on the development of the border regions.
- Water resources management.
- Monitoring and assessment of Ice water.
- Development and use of renewable energy sources.
- Working group in Pakistan on FATA development.
- Media projects (radio stations).
- Higher education cooperation.
- Cooperation between parliaments to enhance the administrative capacities.
- Building of an Afghan-Pakistan young leadership network.

These are just a few examples of concrete projects which will be financed and implemented by Germany in close cooperation with the Afghan and Pakistani authorities and partners.

The German political foundations — like the KAS — but also others play an important role in the implementation of civil society projects in this context.

The GTZ is implementing technical development projects. An effective water-management for example, is very important for the development of agriculture in the border areas, in NWFP and FATA as well as in Balochistan and Afghanistan. Water is generally scarce but the spring/summer floods have a devastating impact in many areas. Many water resources are wasted because of poor management and lack of smaller dams and an effective use of melting water from the glaciers.

So we do not only concentrate on security measures and refugees but we aim at larger measures not only to build the necessary trust between the two countries but to create in many concrete cooperation projects more interaction between both countries. This applies to the field of civil society contacts and cooperation as well as technical projects which will improve living conditions for the population on both sides of the border.

Any improvement through joint efforts in effectively combating poverty and ignorance as well as prejudice and creating joint mechanisms to overcome the misconceptions on both sides of the border will help improve the overall situation in these areas.

Let me also touch once again on a delicate issue, the *deeni madaris* and their reform. Not enough has been done to control these institutions in FATA and NWFP. They still are an important recruitment institutions for jihadi outfits.

Many young Pashtuns from Afghanistan join these madrassas because the lack of normal schools on the Afghan side of the border is even worse. Unless we prepare young men and also women for the 21st century and give them the necessary tools to find adequate jobs, there always will be the danger that out of ignorance and lack of opportunities they will be tempted to join local groups which under the banner of jihad are becoming quite attractive for those who only benefited from a deeni madaris education and have no alternative choices.

All these projects necessitate a close and efficient cooperation with our partners in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Here we clearly see the limits of implementation due to the lack of existing capacities and sometimes also a slow and burdensome bureaucracy which is not really interested in fostering an effective cooperation in favour of Afghanistan.

The list of projects is not complete and can be extended. But this has to be done in close cooperation with Pakistan and Afghanistan. Only when we achieve full identification of the partner countries with specific projects we will be able to achieve our aim: establishing peace and stability through better coordination and cooperation between the two countries.

This is a long way to go and not as easy as it may sound. But when I think back to the historical animosity between the Germans and the French who fought many wars against each other or the difficult relationship between Poland and Germany, I am not pessimistic. As we have been able to settle our problems and differences in a peaceful manner in Europe, the same should be possible in this volatile and unstable region. I am sure that we and our friends in the region can learn from our experience from history. The historical reconciliation between former enemies in Europe can set an example to be followed also in this region. Only on the basis of trust and sincere cooperation, mutual respect

and knowledge of the other can we all together build a solid basis for a better future.

We can only assist and help but real reconciliation and trust can only be built by those concerned. The future relationship of Pakistan and of Afghanistan has to be decided and developed by both governments and populations and not by even very well-meaning foreign friends.

I am convinced that seminars and conferences like this can also help in this mission.

Building Political and Economic Linkages Between South and Central Asia

Farzana Raja (MNA)

EU Resolution on Afghanistan and Pakistan: Pakistani perception

It gives me pleasure to be a presenter in this morning's session on 'EU's Resolution on Afghanistan and Pakistan: Pakistani Perception'. As a matter of fact, on 30 May 2007, the foreign ministers of the G8 countries and the foreign ministers of Afghanistan and Pakistan issued a joint statement on the "G8 Afghanistan-Pakistan Initiative." They reiterated their strong commitment to work for security, stability, development and lasting peace in Afghanistan and the region. In that they underlined the need for continued support of the international community for the region which is considered to be the vital element in the global fight against terrorism and for the promotion of freedom, democracy, rule of law, human rights and economic growth and prosperity of the people. In that, the foreign ministers of Afghanistan and Pakistan renewed their governments'

commitment to strengthening cooperation and dialogue at all levels, particularly in the fields of security, refugee issues, economic development and increased contacts between the civil societies.

This morning I am going to dilate upon Pakistan's perception on the above said Resolution in the overall context of the theme of the seminar i.e. 'Building Political and Economic Linkages between South and Central Asia.'

South and Central Asia have lagged behind other regions in fostering regional cooperation in political and economic fields. Despite the realization and affirmation of its critical need at various levels, almost two decades have passed without significant endeavours and sustained efforts in this area. Political discords rooted in the history of the Sub-continent and the geographical uniqueness of the regional groupings i.e. geo-political positions of some countries, and geo-physical strengths of others, remained the major factors in preventing the 'political will' necessary to make progress towards building greater political and economic linkages between the two regions.

Re-emergence of Asia as the most dynamic economic region of the future has created new vision for the strategically located sub-regions within Asia. The spectacular economic expansion, coupled with strong growth indicators and poverty reduction initiatives across various sub-regions of Asia in the past few decades, have set a stage for creating a unique environment for fostering political and economic cooperation between South and Central Asia. Following the disintegration of the former Soviet Union and emergence of independent Central Asian Republics (CARS), the world, especially major powers like the United States, European Union, China and Japan, have focused their increased attention on developing linkages with the newly independent Central Asian Republics.

Central Asia occupies an extremely important geo-strategic position for being located at the cross-section of three important power blocs, namely the Russian Federation on the north, China on the east and Muslim countries of West Asia and Middle East on the South. The land -locked Central Asia is a region rich in untapped natural resources, especially oil, gas, hydroelectric potential and minerals. Being part of the former Soviet Union, it was and still remains oriented towards Russia for trade, transportation and communication links. Due to the phenomenal rise in demand for energy, countries like China and India are especially attracted to Central Asia for the supply of much needed oil and gas. It is said that the 21st will be the Asian century. The existing pace of development of Japan, ASEAN region, China and India to some extent is an indication of a resurgent Asia. This Asian resurgence is not possible without availability of energy resources to these fast developing countries.

Coming to South Asia, Ladies and Gentlemen, South Asia today is considered as one of the fastest growing regions in the world. There have been strong growth indicators and poverty reduction initiatives across South Asia in recent years, which have set a stage for creating a unique environment to foster political and economic cooperation between South and Central Asia. South Asia has its strengths in trained human resources, fertile land as well as high economic performances. The synergetic strengths of the two regions provide immense opportunities for Pakistan and Afghanistan to take steps for building substantial political and economic linkages with Central Asia to tap the latter's resources for sustainable economic growth and prosperity of our people. However, the peace and prosperity of both regions is directly linked with peace and stability of Afghanistan and the tribal belt in Pakistan. This objective can be achieved only if greater political and economic

linkages are established. between South Asia and Central Asia in general, and Pakistan and Afghanistan, in particular.

May I mention here that this vision is not new to the Government of Pakistan, as it is part of the PPP's election manifesto. It forms the basis for the foreign policy of the PPP -led governments at sub-regional, regional and international level. The geo-political location of Pakistan makes it more imperative that it should play its vital role in providing impetus to strengthen linkages between the two regions.

As the positive economic developments in the two regions unfolded in the preceding years, the events following 9/11 brought new political realism to the two regions. Both regions were compelled to focus on security within and around, to be able to protect their growing economic prosperity, as prosperity could not be envisioned without stability and peace. This shared concern provides a basis to form a collective vision of interdependence, triggered by a perceived common threat i.e., the security threat.

The “thawing” of relations between India and Pakistan in the past several years as a result of initiation of the Comprehensive Dialogue Process (CDP), despite its being fraught with complexities and some inherent serious challenges over several years, has led to a stage where there is a continued willingness between the two countries to resolve all outstanding issues peacefully. Bilateral trade is growing despite the barriers, and people-to-people contact is also growing. In the same way, the continued willingness in Islamabad and Kabul to build mutual confidence and their mutual resolve for joint efforts for peace in the region are laudable. Such historic endeavours, as bringing countries, economies and peoples together for a 'higher cause' i.e., collective and shared prosperity and peace for all peoples of the region, need championing. And here too, the region is not lacking.

In Pakistan, the PPP-led government is committed to stopping cross-border terrorism in Afghanistan. The government of the day firmly adheres to the principle of non-interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs. Taking guidance from the PPP manifesto, the Government of Pakistan would engage the Afghanistan Government for reaching an overall understanding on border security, exchange of intelligence, exchange of information and non-use of force in one another's territories etc. The PPP-led government is committed to restoration of close cultural, economic and trade ties between the two countries.

The PPP Manifesto 2008 is a resounding statement of the integrated process leading to domestic, regional and universal linkages between diverse cultures. The manifesto stresses growth with equity, satisfaction of basic needs, good governance and friendship with our neighbours in particular and the world in general. The party of martyrs proposes across the board reconciliation to counter the forces of darkness and extremism. Shaheed Benazir Bhutto laid down her life for peace, progress, democracy, and moderation. Her ideals remain the guiding principles and the fighting faith of her party. It is in this context that the Charter of Democracy known as the Magna Carta of Pakistan was born which calls for the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission along the lines of South African experience. It is the best antidote to the scourge of terrorism.

We believe that good-neighbourly relations with India and Afghanistan define a corner stone to building political and economic linkages within South Asia as well as between South Asia and Central Asia. To turn that dream into reality the party proposes an Asian Common Market to attract investment, create jobs and build bridges of peace and trade through all of South Asia. A peaceful South Asia will be in a better position to build bridges which are being discussed in this forum. PPP also seeks to sign a Treaty of Peace and Cooperation with Afghanistan to root out the

growing menace of terrorism from our part of the world. As terrorism is born "in the bowels of dictatorship" we firmly stand for tolerance, democratic pluralism and international harmony. PPP government is doing whatever is possible locally and regionally to make our region and the world a safe place in spite of the formidable challenges posed by the forces of darkness ironically in the name of the great religion which advocates peace, love and human brotherhood. We are committed and actively engaged in Herculean efforts to avert the chilling threat of the so-called clash of civilizations by dialogue and reconciliation.

Religious radicalisation in Pakistan has been introduced to a large extent by the growth of madrassas. But madrassa can be made less attractive for our youth if the state can gear up to provide alternative places of learning. However, that would be futile unless the NGOs are able to provide free lodging and boarding educational institutions to counter and reduce the influence of these madrassas as is being done in Indonesia. Bringing change to the madrassas will help the moderates win the war of ideas in Pakistan. Education enables people to think correctly and use knowledge for betterment of all. I urge upon members of this forum as well as world at large to help us in establishing appropriate educational institutions so that people prefer to send their children to these educational institutions instead of institutions where extremist thought is promoted.

To create the initial momentum for building political and economic linkages between South and Central Asia we need activities which can secure interests, sense of ownership, and generate tangible results. This approach is particularly relevant in this region as mutual trust and confidence among participating countries are not in place at the outset. We should initially focus on physical connectivity, and then gradually expand to include trade, investment and other issues. The 'National Trade Corridor' project of Pakistan is a step in the right direction. The

physical connectivity will result in yielding tangible and intangible dividends in terms of increased connectivity, improved competitiveness and a greater sense of community. This model can be replicated across the borders in the whole region. As a by-product, such connectivity will be the harbinger of greater people-to-people contact and more civil society interactions. Transport infrastructure will accelerate market-driven economic linkages and improved access to basic social services, especially for the poor in border areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan in particular, and every where in general.

The establishment of close linkages between South Asia and Central Asia is based on a couple of imperatives. They are.

1. Since ancient times, the two regions had been linked together by trade and travel. There has been movement of people and goods between the two regions till the start of the European era towards the end of 15th Century and British rule in India. Colonialism severed the traditional links that had existed between these two regions for centuries.
2. After becoming a part of Russia towards the end of 19th Century Central Asia lost contact with its southern neighbours. Through the building of roads, railways and other type of communication networks the Russians integrated this region with Russia. This pattern of relationship was not only maintained but strengthened under Communism. Central Asia became a source of raw materials and a market for manufactured goods by the industries largely based in the European part of the former Soviet Union, presently Russian Federation.

3. Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union and declaration of independence, the CARs have shown strong desire to act as independent entities in international politics. But it is not possible unless their dependence on Russia is reduced, which is still there because of the absence of alternative infrastructure, which could enable these countries to trade with their southern neighbours, and through them reach the markets of India, Southeast Asia and Africa.
4. CARs are energy rich, whereas South Asian countries like India and Pakistan are energy-deficit. This inevitably creates a situation where the South Asian countries would make serious efforts to establish links with the countries of Central Asia for the supply of oil and gas and even electricity. The gas pipeline project for transporting Turkmenistan gas to Pakistan through Afghanistan, known as TAP has been conceived for the same purpose.
5. South Asia is inhabited by more than one-fifth of the total population of the world. Pakistan and India have a very large and lucrative consumer market. The achievement of an appreciable level of growth in Pakistan and India during the last about two decades has created an attractive consumer market in South Asia, which the countries of Central Asia would like to exploit through the establishment of trade links.
6. There is also a possibility that countries like Nepal and China could also be associated with the planned gas transportation networks between Central Asia and South Asia.

7. Likewise, the countries of South Asia would also like to explore the Central Asian markets to expand trade in goods and services.
8. For political and strategic reasons, and also for the purpose of trade, India is pressing Pakistan for the grant of transit-trade facility to send by land route its goods to Afghanistan, and beyond Afghanistan to CA and even Europe through Turkey. Pakistan, however, is resisting the Indian demand due to unsettled status of Kashmir dispute. But Pakistan may agree to a limited facility in view of Afghanistan's membership of SAARC and progress in Pakistan-India peace process.

Agreements and Measures: The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) provided yet another framework under which efforts were made to increase trade, economic, political, cultural and communication links between Pakistan and Central Asian region. But unfortunately there has not been desired level progress in this direction so far. The trade between Pakistan and six Central Asian Republics remains abysmally low. The agreements signed for the development of communication, rail-roads links have not been implemented. Even the project for the transportation of gas from Turkmenistan to Pakistan through Afghanistan (TAP) which was initiated in 1994 has not made much headway. However, there has been some improvement in the cultural relations.

From Pakistan's perception, the insecurity in Afghanistan is the biggest stumbling block in the way of establishment of linkages between South Asia and Central Asia. The increase in the Taliban insurgency has made such a possibility further difficult but the present government has adopted a unique method of combination of dialogue and military operation with the help of tribal Lashkars. This

combination of carrot and stick has started yielding results and we strongly hope that this issue will be resolved. For establishing linkages between Central Asia and South Asia, resolution of Pakistan-India disputes, especially the dispute over Kashmir is very important. Communication and transportation networks between the two regions need to be built to foster establishment of broad based linkages.

Mere statements of perceptions and perspectives of various stake holders, though important, are not enough. Conferences of this kind need to find common ground and common threads from intellectual discourse and knit them together to form a basis for united action. If a minimum consensus does not emerge from seminars of this magnitude the enormous effort invested in such exercises becomes an exercise in futility. Let me, therefore, spell out some common factors which should crown this conference:

- a. Democracy is the best revenge (against terrorism, dictatorship and war) as propounded by Shaheed Benazir Bhutto in her celebrated thesis on 'Reconciliation: Democracy, Islam and the West.' This time tested philosophy could be adopted by this seminar to promote the linkages under discussion here. This thesis is the best response to the theory of clash of civilizations.
- b. All democratic parties of South and Central Asia must get together in an effort to weed out all forms of terrorism including the scourge of suicide bombings. Dictatorship which is the midwife of terrorism must be banished from our region once and for all
- c. The western nations should be thanked for their support of civilian supremacy and democracy and warned against appeasement of dictatorship.
- d. Peaceful and non-violent struggle should be encouraged to achieve political objectives.

Democratic movements do not gain anything from the madness of death squads masquerading as holy warriors.

- e. Dialogue should be the preferred option over all manifestations of armed conflict because dialogue helps build bridges whereas violence destroys them. This is what our western partners need to factor in their anti-terror policy.
- f. Political and economic development of nations and regions must go hand in hand because both are complementary. In isolation from each other any progress achieved cannot last long. Our cherished idealism should be based on the principles of dialogue, deterrence and development and none at the cost of the other.

Strategic Strengths and Weaknesses of Central Asia: Pakistani Perspective

Prof. Dr. Sarfraz Khan

Introduction

Central Asia for this paper refers to modern states of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Afghanistan. The total population of the five Central Asian states is approximately 60.4 million and the population of Afghanistan is 32.7 million. The total area of the five Central Asian states is roughly 4 million sq. km while the area of Afghanistan is 6,52221 sq. km. The region borders Iran, Pakistan, China, Russia and Azerbaijan. Some of the most important natural resources include gold, ferrous and non-ferrous metals, oil, coal, mercury, uranium, natural gas, hydropower, aluminum and petrochemicals.

Among important agricultural produce are grains, cotton, tobacco, fruits and vegetables, wool and livestock.

It has a fairly developed industry based on its mineral and agricultural produce such as textiles, petroleum and gas, iron and steel, machinery, metallurgy, chemicals and fertilizers, farm machinery, food processing, construction

materials such as cement, electrical goods, small machinery, leather, wood and consumer items. Extraction of rare metals and minerals is an important part of industry in these countries.

Except Afghanistan where literacy rate is very low, and setbacks suffered in Tajikistan during the civil war, almost 100 per cent population of the rest of the region is highly literate. A huge pool of scientists, both in exact and social sciences is available in Central Asia, barring Afghanistan. A large number of skilled labourers, technicians, engineers etc., comprise the multi-ethnic work force including Turks, Tajiks, Slav-Russians, Tatars and Koreans. Mostly liberal, secular Muslims, predominantly Sunni, and orthodox Christians with liberal secular attitude comprise the population of the area except Afghanistan where a more conservative and orthodox Islam prevails.

Strength: Central Asia is a huge land mass connecting Europe with Asia and various parts of Asia, with relatively smaller population but abundant resources, both natural and agrarian. That makes it a potential hub of surface and transit trade. It possesses large reserves of energy both hydrocarbon and hydel. A highly literate population, availability of energy and raw materials provide bases for industry and trade. Economies are largely debt free and the countries possess foreign reserves and attract foreign investment too. It has a developed railroad network and communications system. Military budget is low and the region depends for defence largely on Russia and peaceful diplomacy, barring Afghanistan that depends on USA/ISAF.

Weaknesses: Central Asia is a landlocked, non-nuclear region, surrounded by powerful, mostly nuclear neighbours — China, Russia, Pakistan and Iran. Two of them, Pakistan and China, are energy-starved and also look for markets to sell their finished and semi-finished goods. The region seems vulnerable to Muslim fundamentalism,

political instability, threat of terrorism and narcotics trade. State control over its population is strong and civil society and political parties are weak. It is trying to transform from a command economy to free market system at various levels and suffers from the various difficulties in this process. It has little experience of working with international financial and other institutions and organizations. Its banking system and private companies are relatively less developed except in Kazakhstan. It has almost no experience of multi party governments. It has underlying differences on ethnic borders too, a potential for instability.

A few indicators of individual countries are given below to demonstrate the weaknesses and the strengths of the region:

Uzbekistan

Population: 27,345,026 (July 2008 est.)

Location: Central Asia, north of Afghanistan

Current concerns include terrorism by Islamic militants, economic stagnation, and the curtailment of human rights and democratization.

Like Liechtenstein, it is the only other country of the world which is doubly landlocked.

Religion: Muslim 88% (mostly Sunnis), Eastern Orthodox 9%, other 3%

Literacy: 99.3 per cent above the age of 15 years can read and write -- men 99.6%, women 99% (2003 est)

Government type: Republic; authoritarian presidential rule, with little power outside the executive branch.

Economy-overview: Uzbekistan is a dry, landlocked country, 11 per cent of its territory comprises intensely cultivated, irrigated river valleys. It has a huge artificial irrigation system. Densely populated rural communities

comprise 60 per cent of its population along with big historically important cities such as Tashkent, Samarqand and Bukhara. Uzbekistan is world's fifth largest producer and second-largest exporter of cotton. Cotton production is its major source of export earnings besides gold, natural gas, and oil. Following independence in 1991, it continued for some time with Soviet-style command economy granting subsidies and tight controls on production and prices. To improve the investment climate, it has been supporting policies that often increase, not decrease, state control over business decisions. Sharp increase in the inequality of income distribution has hurt the lower ranks of society specially in agrarian and state sector employees, since independence. In 2003, the government accepted Article VIII obligations under the IMF, providing for full currency convertibility. However, strict currency controls and tightening of borders have lessened the effects of convertibility and have also led to some shortages that have further stifled economic activity. The Central Bank often delays or restricts convertibility, especially for consumer goods. Potential investment by Russia and China in Uzbekistan's gas and oil industry may boost growth prospects. In November 2005, then Russian President Vladimir Putin and Uzbekistan President Karimov signed an "alliance," which included provisions for economic and business cooperation. Russian businesses have shown increased interest in Uzbekistan, especially in mining, telecom, and oil and gas. In 2006, Uzbekistan took steps to rejoin the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Eurasian Economic Community (EurASEC), both organizations dominated by Russia. Uzbek authorities have accused US and other foreign companies operating in Uzbekistan of violating local tax laws and have frozen their assets. It also asked US to vacate military facilities offered soon after 9/11.

GDP (purchasing power parity): \$64.4 billion (2007 est.)

GDP (official exchange rate): \$22.31 billion (2007 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 9.5% (2007 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP): \$2,400 (2007 est.)

GDP - composition by sector: Agriculture: 29.4% Industry: 33.1% Services: 37.5% (2007 est.)

Labour force: 14.6 million (2007 est.)

Labour force - by occupation: Agriculture: 44% Industry: 20% Services: 36% (1995)

Unemployment rate: 0.8% as per Ministry of Labour data for 2007(est), plus another 20% underemployed

Population below poverty line: 33% (2004 est.)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

Lowest 10%: 2.8%

Highest 10%: 29.6% (2003)

Distribution of family income - Gini index: 36.8 (2003)

Inflation rate (consumer prices): 12% officially, but 38% based on analysis of consumer prices (2007 est.)

Budget: Revenues: \$6.478 billion, Expenditures: \$6.5 billion (2007 est.)

Public debt: 18.7% of GDP (2007 est.)

Agriculture - products: Cotton, vegetables, fruits, grain; livestock

Industries: Textiles, food processing, machine building, metallurgy, gold, petroleum, natural gas, chemicals

Industrial production growth rate: 12.1% (2007 est.)

Electricity - production: 49 billion kWh (2006 est.)

Electricity - consumption: 47 billion kWh (2006 est.)

Electricity - exports: 6.8 billion kWh (2006)

Electricity - imports: 10.5 billion kWh (2006 est.)

Oil - production: 109,400 bbl/day (2007 est.)

Oil - consumption: 155,000 bbl/day (2005)

Oil - exports: 6,941 bbl/day (2004)

Oil - imports: 11,230 bbl/day (2004)

Oil - proved reserves: 594 million bbl (1 January 2006 est.)

Natural gas - production: 62.5 billion cu m (2006 est.)

Natural gas – consumption: 48.4 billion cu m (2006 est.)

Natural gas - exports: 12.5 billion cu m (2006 est.)

Natural gas – imports: 0 cu m (2005)

Natural gas - proved reserves: 1.798 trillion cu m (1 January 2006 est.)

Current account balance: \$4.615 billion (2007 est.)

Exports: \$8.05 billion f.o.b. (2007 est.)

Exports - commodities: Cotton, gold, energy products, mineral fertilizers, ferrous and non-ferrous metals, textiles, food products, machinery, automobiles

Exports - partners: Russia 24.6%, Poland 10.4%, Turkey 9.2%, Kazakhstan 6%, Hungary 5.9%, China 5.4%, Ukraine 4.7%, Bangladesh 4.4% (2007)

Export of cotton fiber in 2000: 897.1 million US \$.

Imports: \$4.48 billion f.o.b. (2007 est.)

Imports - commodities: Machinery and equipment, foodstuffs, chemicals, ferrous and non-ferrous metals

Imports - partners: Russia 25.8%, China 14.3%, South Korea 13.7%, Germany 6.7%, Kazakhstan 6.6%, Ukraine 4.3%, Turkey 4.2% (2007)

Economic aid – recipient: \$172.3 million from the US (2005)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold: \$6.75 billion (31 December 2007 est.)

Debt - external: \$3.927 billion (31 December 2007 est.)

Market value of publicly traded shares: \$36.89 million (2005)

Currency (code): *soum* (UZS)

Exchange rates: Uzbekistani *soum* per US dollar - 1,263.8 (2007) 1,219.8 (2006), 1,020 (2005), 971.265 (2004), 771.029 (2003)

Kazakhstan

Population: 15,340,533 (July 2008 est.)

Location: Central Asia, northwest of China; a small portion west of the Ural River in eastern-most Europe

Natural resources: Major deposits of petroleum, natural gas, coal, iron ore, manganese, chrome ore, nickel, cobalt, copper, molybdenum, lead, zinc, bauxite, gold, uranium

Religions: Muslim 47%, Russian Orthodox 44%, Protestant 2%, other 7%

Literacy: 99.5% in the age group of 15 years and above can read and write — men 99.8%, women 99.3% (1999 est.)

Government type: Republic; authoritarian presidential rule, with little power outside the executive branch

Economy-overview: Kazakhstan, the largest state in Central Asia by territory, has colossal fossil fuel reserves and abundant supplies of various minerals and metals. It has a huge agricultural sector along with livestock and produces bountiful grain. Extraction and processing of natural resources forms the backbone of Kazakh industrial sector.

Following collapse of the USSR in December 1991, a temporary slump in demand for Kazakh traditional heavy industry products contracted its economy till 1994. Economic reform efforts and privatization policy shifted sufficient assets into the private sector in the late 90s. Booming energy sector, good harvests, economic reform and foreign investment in Kazakhstan helped it achieve a double-digit growth in 2000-01 and more than 8 per cent per annum in 2002-07. Inflation, 10 per cent in 2007, has been the sole negative indicator. The energy sector raised formidably its export capacity, following construction of the Caspian Consortium pipeline in 2001, from western Kazakhstan's Tengiz oilfield to the Black Sea. Kazakhstan completed the Atasu-Alashankou part of oil pipeline to China in 2006 that would extend after its completion from the country's Caspian coast eastward to the Chinese border. Efforts to diversify the economy away from over-dependence on oil sector and to develop manufacturing potential are hallmarks of its industrial policy which also aims at curtailing influence of foreign investment and foreign personnel. Several disputes with foreign oil companies over terms of production agreements and renegotiation of terms have been a source of tension. Upward pressure on the local currency continued in 2007 due to massive oil-related foreign-exchange inflows. Aided by strong growth and foreign exchange earnings, Kazakhstan aspires to become a regional financial centre and has created a banking system comparable to Central Europe's.

GDP (purchasing power parity): \$168.2 billion (2007 est.)

GDP (official exchange rate): \$103.8 billion (2007 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 8.5% (2007 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP): \$11,000 (2007 est.)

GDP - composition by sector: Agriculture: 5.8% Industry: 39.4%

Services: 54.8% (2007 est.)

Labour force: 8.229 million (2007 est.)

Labour force - by occupation: Agriculture: 32.2%
Industry: 18%

Services: 49.8% (2005)

Unemployment rate: 7.3% (2007 est.)

Population below poverty line: 13.8% (2007)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

Lowest 10%: 3.3%

Highest 10%: 26.5% (2004 est.)

Distribution of family income - Gini index: 30.4 (2005)

Inflation rate (consumer prices): 10.8% (2007 est.)

Investment (gross fixed): 30.3% of GDP (2007 est.)

Budget: Revenues: \$23.58 billion, Expenditures: \$25.33 billion (2007 est.)

Public debt: 7.7% of GDP (2007 est.)

Agriculture - products: Grain (mostly spring wheat), cotton; livestock

Industries: Oil, coal, iron ore, manganese, chromite, lead, zinc, copper, titanium, bauxite, gold, silver, phosphates, sulfur, iron and steel; tractors and other agricultural machinery, electric motors, construction materials

Industrial production growth rate: 7.2% (2007 est.)

Electricity - production: 76.34 billion kWh (2007)

Electricity - consumption: 76.43 billion kWh (2007)

Electricity - exports: 3.7 billion kWh (2007)

Electricity - imports: 4 billion kWh (2007)

Oil - production: 1.355 million bbl/day (2007 est.)

Oil - consumption: 234,000 bbl/day (2005 est.)

Oil - exports: 1 million bbl/day (2005 est.)

Oil - imports: 113,600 bbl/day (2004)

Oil - proved reserves: 9 billion bbl (1 January 2006 est.)

Natural gas - production: 16.69 billion cu m (2007)

Natural gas - consumption: 8.4 billion cu m (2007)

Natural gas - exports: 10.27 billion cu m (2007)

Natural gas - imports: 3.901 billion cu m (2007)

Natural gas - proved reserves: 1.765 trillion cu m (1 January 2006 est.)

Current account balance: -\$7.184 billion (2007 est.)

Exports: \$48.35 billion f.o.b. (2007 est.)

Exports - commodities: Oil and oil products 59%, ferrous metals 19%, chemicals 5%, machinery 3%, grain, wool, meat, coal (2001)

Exports - partners: China 15.6%, Germany 11.5%, Russia 11.5%, Italy 7.3%, France 6.8% (2007)

Imports: \$33.21 billion f.o.b. (2007 est.)

Imports - commodities: Machinery and equipment, metal products, foodstuffs

Imports - partners: Russia 34.5%, China 22.5%, Germany 8.1% (2007)

Economic aid - recipient: \$229.2 million (2005)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold: \$17.63 billion (31 December 2007 est.)

Debt - external: \$96.36 billion (31 December 2007)

Stock of direct foreign investment - at home: \$40.16 billion (2007 est.)

Stock of direct foreign investment - abroad: \$3.97 billion (September 2007)

Market value of publicly traded shares: \$10.52 billion (2005)

Currency (code): *tenge* (KZT)

Exchange rates: *tenge* per US dollar - 122.55 (2007), 126.09 (2006), 132.88 (2005), 136.04 (2004), 149.58 (2003)

Currently Pakistan is not a trading partner of Kazakhstan which imported 1,082.6 million US \$ worth of prepared foodstuffs. Pakistan can explore for its share in this trade.

Tajikistan

Tajikistan became independent in 1991 following dismemberment of the Soviet Union. It plunged into a civil war in 1992-97 and is now attempting to strengthen democracy and transforming to a free market economy. Ethnic Uzbeks form a substantial minority in the Sughd province. There have been no major security incidents in recent years, although the country remains the poorest in the former Soviet Central Asia. Attention by the international community in the wake of the war in Afghanistan has brought increased economic development and security assistance, which could create jobs and increase stability in the long term. Tajikistan is in the early stages of seeking World Trade Organization membership and has joined NATO's Partnership for Peace. It has a great potential of hydel power and aluminum industry. Cotton production, livestock and karkul (fur) are other significant potential growth sectors.

Location: Central Asia, west of China

Population: 7,211,884 (July 2008 est.)

Religions: Sunni Muslim 85%, Shi'a Muslim 5%, other 10% (2003 est.)

Literacy: 99.5 per cent of population in the age group 15 years and above can read and write --- men 99.7%, women 99.2% (2000 census)

Economy-overview: Tajikistan has the lowest per capita GDPs amongst former Soviet Union states, with only 7 per cent of arable land area. Cotton production is most important but the economy is now burdened with debt and an obsolete infrastructure. Mineral resources include silver, gold, uranium, and tungsten. Industry comprises only of a large aluminum plant, hydropower facilities, and small worn out factories in light industry and food processing. The civil war (1992-97) destroyed the existing weak economic infrastructure and industrial and agricultural production fell sharply. Tajikistan grew economically after 1997. Economic growth reached 10.6 per cent in 2004, but dropped to 8 per cent in 2005, 7 per cent in 2006, and 7.8 per cent in 2007. Its economy has been fragile owing to uneven implementation of structural reforms, corruption, weak governance, widespread unemployment, seasonal power shortages, and the external debt burden. Nearly two-thirds of the population continues to live in abject poverty. It has been on a course of privatization of medium and large state-owned enterprises to increase productivity. Russia in December 2002 restructured its debt and \$250 million of Tajikistan's \$300 million debt were written-off. Tajikistan has plenty of water, numbering third in the world in terms of water resources per head, still winter power shortages are common. Poor management of water levels in rivers and reservoirs are cited as the reason. Completion of the Sangtuda I hydropower dam - built with Russian investment - and the Sangtuda II and Rogun (the world's tallest dam) dams will enhance its electricity output.

The Chinese government granted loans to Tajikistan for infrastructure development and improve roads and electricity transmission network. To help increase north-south trade, the US funded a \$36 million bridge which opened in August 2007 and links Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

GDP (purchasing power parity): \$11.96 billion (2007 est.)

GDP (official exchange rate): \$3.712 billion (2007 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 7.8% (2007 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP): \$1,600 (2007 est.)

GDP - composition by sector: Agriculture: 23.8% Industry: 30.4%

Services: 45.8% (2007 est.)

Labour force: 2.1 million (2007)

Labour force - by occupation: Agriculture: 67.2%
Industry: 7.5%

Services: 25.3% (2000 est.)

Unemployment rate: 2.4% official rate; actual unemployment is higher (2007 est.)

Population below poverty line: 60% (2007 est.)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

Lowest 10%: 3.3%

Highest 10%: 25.6% (2007 est.)

Distribution of family income - Gini index: 32.6 (2003)

Inflation rate (consumer prices): 13.1% (2007 est.)

Investment (gross fixed): 12.4% of GDP (2007 est.)

Budget: Revenues: \$712.1 million, Expenditures: \$674.5 million (2007 est.)

Agriculture - products: Cotton, grain, fruits, grapes, vegetables; cattle, sheep, goats

Industries: Aluminum, zinc, lead; chemicals and fertilizers, cement, vegetable oil, metal-cutting machine tools, refrigerators and freezers

Industrial production growth rate: 5% (2007 est.)

Electricity - production: 17.4 billion kWh (2007)

Electricity - consumption: 17.9 billion kWh (2007)

Electricity - exports: 4.259 billion kWh (2007)

Electricity - imports: 4.36 billion kWh (2007 est.)

Oil - production: 282.1 bbl/day (2005 est.)

Oil - consumption: 8,000 bbl/day (2007 est.)

Oil - exports: 0 bbl/day (2007)

Oil - imports: 7,600 bbl/day (2007)

Oil - proved reserves: 12 million bbl (1 January 2006 est.)

Natural gas - production: 39.32 million cu m (2005 est.)

Natural gas - consumption: 689 million cu m (2007 est.)

Natural gas - exports: 0 cu m (2005 est.)

Natural gas - imports: 650 million cu m (2007 est.)

Natural gas - proved reserves: 5.432 billion cu m (1 January 2006 est.)

Current account balance: -\$351 million (2007 est.)

Exports: \$1.606 billion f.o.b. (2007 est.)

Exports - commodities: Aluminum, electricity, cotton, fruits, vegetable oil, textiles

Exports - partners: Norway 16.6%, Turkey 12.9%, Italy 9.8%, Iran 9.7%, Russia 8.7%, Uzbekistan 8.3%, Germany 4.5% (2007)

Imports: \$2.762 billion f.o.b. (2007 est.)

Imports - commodities: Electricity, petroleum products, aluminum oxide, machinery and equipment, foodstuffs

Imports - partners: China 22.4%, Russia 20.6%, Kazakhstan 9.2%, Uzbekistan 8.7%, Azerbaijan 6.8%, Turkey 5.1% (2007)

Economic aid - recipient: \$241.4 million from US (2005)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold: \$242 million (31 December 2007 est.)

Debt – external: \$1.56 billion (31 December 2007 est.)

Currency (code): *somoni* (TJS)

Exchange rates: Tajikistani *somoni* per US dollar - 3.4418 (2007), 3.3 (2006), 3.1166 (2005), 2.9705 (2004), 3.0614 (2003)

Kyrgyzstan

Location: Central Asia, west of China

Population: 5,356,869 (July 2008 est.)

Religions: Muslim 75%, Russian Orthodox 20%, other 5%

Economy-overview: Kyrgyzstan is a poor, mountainous country with a predominantly agricultural economy. Cotton, tobacco, wool, and meat are the main agricultural products. Only tobacco and cotton are exported in any quantity. Industrial exports include gold, mercury, uranium, natural gas, and electricity. Following independence, Kyrgyzstan was progressive in carrying out market reforms such as an improved regulatory system and land reform. Kyrgyzstan was the first Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) country to be accepted into the World Trade Organization. Much of the government's stock in enterprises has been sold. Decline in production had been severe after the demise of the Soviet Union in December

1991, but by mid-1995, production began to recover and exports began to increase. The economy depends more on gold export and a decline in output at the main Kumtor gold mine sparked a 0.5 per cent decline in GDP in 2002 and 0.6 per cent in 2005. GDP grew more than 6 per cent in 2007, partly due to higher gold prices internationally. The government made steady strides in controlling its substantial fiscal deficit, nearly closing the gap between revenues and expenditures in 2006, before boosting expenditures more than 20 per cent in 2007. The government and international financial institutions have been engaged in a comprehensive medium-term poverty reduction and economic growth strategy. In 2005, Bishkek agreed to pursue much-needed tax reform and, in 2006, became eligible for the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative. Progress in fighting corruption, further restructuring of domestic industry and success in attracting foreign investment are keys to future growth.

GDP (purchasing power parity): \$10.55 billion (2007 est.)

GDP (official exchange rate): \$3.748 billion (2007 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 8.2% (2007 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP): \$2,000 (2007 est.)

GDP - composition by sector: Agriculture: 33.6% Industry: 18.9%

Services: 47.5% (2007 est.)

Labour force: 2.7 million (2000)

Labour force - by occupation: Agriculture: 55% Industry: 15%

Services: 30% (2000 est.)

Unemployment rate: 18% (2004 est.)

Population below poverty line: 40% (2004 est.)

Inflation rate (consumer prices): 10.2% (2007 est.)

Investment (gross fixed): 25.6% of GDP (2007 est.)

Budget: Revenues: \$964.6 million

Expenditures: \$961.1 million (2007 est.)

Agriculture - products: Tobacco, cotton, potatoes, vegetables, grapes, fruits and berries; sheep, goats, cattle, wool

Industries: Small machinery, textiles, food processing, cement, shoes, sawn logs, refrigerators, furniture, electric motors, gold, rare earth metals

Industrial production growth rate: 9.3% (2007 est.)

Electricity-production: 15.15 billion kWh (2005)

Electricity-consumption: 8.206 billion kWh (2005)

Electricity-exports: 2.684 billion kWh (2005)

Electricity - imports: 0 kWh (2005)

Oil-production: 1.37 million bbl/day (2007 est.)

Oil-consumption: 12,000 bbl/day (2005 est.)

Oil-exports: 3,221 bbl/day (2004)

Oil-imports: 13,770 bbl/day (2004)

Oil-proved reserves: 40 million bbl (1 January 2006 est.)

Natural gas-production: 28.77 million cu m (2005 est.)

Natural gas-consumption: 709.7 million cu m (2005 est.)

Natural gas-exports: 0 cu m (2005 est.)

Natural gas-imports: 680.9 million cu m (2005)

Natural gas-proved reserves: 5.432 billion cu m (1 January 2006 est.)

Current account balance: -\$267.9 million (2007 est.)

Exports: \$1.337 billion f.o.b. (2007 est.)

Exports-commodities: Cotton, wool, meat, tobacco; gold, mercury, uranium, natural gas, hydropower; machinery; shoes

Exports-partners: Switzerland 21.2%, Kazakhstan 20%, Russia 18.2%, Afghanistan 13.6%, China 8.5% (2007)

Imports: \$2.636 billion f.o.b. (2007 est.)

Imports-commodities: Oil and gas, machinery and equipment, chemicals, foodstuffs

Imports-partners: China 64.4%, Russia 15.5%, Kazakhstan 4.5% (2007)

Pakistan is not a trading partner of Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyzstan imported 62.6 million US \$ vegetable products and prepared foodstuffs, beverages and tobacco worth 141.6 million US \$ and textile and fabrics worth 51 million US \$ in the year 2006. Pakistan can explore this market for its exports.

Economic aid - recipient: \$268.5 million from the US (2005)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold: \$1.177 billion (31 December 2007 est.)

Debt - external: \$2.966 billion (30 June 2007)

Exchange rates: *soms* per US dollar - 37.746 (2007), 40.149 (2006), 41.012 (2005), 42.65 (2004), 43.648 (2003)

Turkmenistan

Location: Central Asia, bordering the Caspian Sea, between Iran and Kazakhstan

Population: 5,179,571 (July 2008 est.)

Religions: Muslim 89%, Eastern Orthodox 9%, unknown 2%

Economy-overview: Turkmenistan is a desert country with intensive agriculture in irrigated oases, possesses large gas and oil resources. Half of its irrigated land produces cotton. It had been the world's 10th-largest producer. Owing to poor harvests in recent years a 50 per cent decline in cotton exports has been witnessed. An authoritarian regime is in power and it has a tribal social structure. Turkmenistan has not accepted economic reform programme of the West. It uses revenue from gas and cotton sales to sustain its economy. Privatization goals remain limited. From 1998-2005, Turkmenistan suffered from the continued lack of adequate export routes for natural gas and from obligations on extensive short-term external debt. At the same time, however, total exports rose by an average of roughly 15 per cent per year from 2003-07, largely because of higher international oil and gas prices. Prospects of higher export of oil and gas to further south Pakistan and India are blocked due to the Afghan situation. In the past, Turkmenistan's economic statistics were state secrets. The new government has established a State Agency for Statistics, but GDP numbers and other figures are subject to wide margins of error. In particular, the rate of GDP growth is uncertain. Since his election, President Berdimuhamedov has sought to improve the health and education systems, ordered unification of the country's dual currency exchange rate, begun decreasing state subsidies for gasoline, signed an agreement to build a gas line to China, and created a special tourism zone on the Caspian Sea. All of these moves hint that the new post-Nyazov government will work to create a friendlier foreign investment environment.

GDP (purchasing power parity): \$26.92 billion (2007 est.)

GDP (official exchange rate): \$26.91 billion (2007 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 11.5% (IMF estimate)

note: official government statistics are widely regarded as unreliable (2007 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP): \$5,300 (2007 est.)

GDP - composition by sector: Agriculture: 11.5% Industry: 40.8%

Services: 47.7% (2007 est.)

Labour force: 2.089 million (2004 est.)

Labour force - by occupation: Agriculture: 48.2% Industry: 14%

Services: 37.8% (2004 est.)

Unemployment rate: 60% (2004 est.)

Population below poverty line: 30% (2004 est.)

Investment (gross fixed): 32.5% of GDP (2007 est.)

Budget: Revenues: \$1.664 billion

Expenditures: \$1.624 billion (2007 est.)

Agriculture - products: cotton, grain; livestock

Industries: Natural gas, oil, petroleum products, textiles, food processing

Industrial production growth rate: 10.3% (2007 est.)

Electricity - production: 12.05 billion kWh (2005 est.)

Electricity - consumption: 7.602 billion kWh (2005 est.)

Electricity - exports: 2.918 billion kWh (2005)

Oil – production: 196,800 bbl/day (2007 est.)

Oil - consumption: 156,000 bbl/day (2007 est.)

Oil - exports: 40,000 bbl/day (2007 est.)

Oil - proved reserves: 500 million bbl (1 January 2007 est.)

Natural gas - production: 72.3 billion cu m (2007 est.)

Natural gas - exports: 58 billion cu m (2007 est.)

Natural gas - proved reserves: 2.86 trillion cu m (1 January 2007 est.)

Current account balance: \$1.705 billion (2007 est.)

Exports: \$7.567 billion f.o.b. (2007 est.)

Exports - commodities: Gas, crude oil, petrochemicals, textiles, cotton fiber

Exports - partners: Ukraine 48.5%, Iran 17.5%, Azerbaijan 5.4%, Turkey 4.7% (2007)

Imports: \$4.516 billion f.o.b. (2007 est.)

Imports - commodities: Machinery and equipment, chemicals, foodstuffs

Imports - partners: UAE 14.8%, Turkey 10.6%, China 9.5%, Ukraine 9%, Russia 8.4%, Iran 7.2%, Germany 6.8%, US 5.8% (2007)

Economic aid – recipient: \$28.25 million from the US (2005)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold: \$5.172 billion (31 December 2007 est.)

Debt - external: \$1.4 billion to \$5 billion (2004 est.)

Exchange rates: Turkmen *manat* per US\$ - 6,250 (2007) official rate

note: the commercial rate was 19,800 Turkmen *manat* per US\$ (2007)

Afghanistan

Location: Southern Asia, north and west of Pakistan, east of Iran

Natural resources: natural gas, petroleum, coal, copper, chromite, talc, barites, sulfur, lead, zinc, iron ore, salt, precious and semi-precious stones

Population: 32,738,376 (July 2008 est.)

Religions: Sunni Muslim 80%, Shi'a Muslim 19%, other 1%

Literacy: 28.1% of the population in the age group of 15 years and above can read and write — men 43.1%, women 12.6% (2000 est.)

Economy-overview: Afghanistan's economy is recovering from decades of conflict. The economy has improved significantly since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001 largely because of the infusion of international assistance, the recovery of the agricultural sector, and service sector growth. Real GDP growth exceeded 7% in 2007. Despite the progress in the past few years, Afghanistan is extremely poor, landlocked, and highly dependent on foreign aid, agriculture, and trade with neighboring countries. Much of the population continues to suffer from shortages of housing, clean water, electricity, medical care, and jobs. Criminality, insecurity, and the Afghan Government's inability to extend rule of law to all parts of the country pose challenges to future economic growth. It will probably take the remainder of the decade and continuing donor aid and attention to significantly raise Afghanistan's living standards from its current level, among the lowest in the world. International pledges made by more than 60 countries and international financial institutions at the Berlin Donors Conference for Afghan reconstruction in March 2004 reached \$8.9 billion for 2004-09. While the international community remains committed to Afghanistan's development, pledging over \$24 billion at three donors' conferences since 2002, Kabul will need to overcome a number of challenges. Expanding poppy cultivation and a growing opium trade generate roughly \$4 billion in illicit economic activity and looms as one of Kabul's most serious

policy concerns. Other long-term challenges include: budget sustainability, job creation, corruption, government capacity, and rebuilding a war-torn infrastructure.

GDP (purchasing power parity): \$35 billion (2007 est.)

GDP (official exchange rate): \$8.842 billion (2007 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 11.5% (2007 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP): \$1,000 (2007 est.)

GDP - composition by sector: Agriculture: 38% Industry: 24%

Services: 38%

note: data exclude opium production (2005 est.)

Labour force: 15 million (2004 est.)

Labour force - by occupation: Agriculture: 80% Industry: 10%

Services: 10% (2004 est.)

Population below poverty line: 53% (2003)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

Lowest 10%: NA%

Highest 10%: NA%

Inflation rate (consumer prices) 13% (2007 est.)

Budget: Revenues: \$715 million

Expenditures: \$2.6 billion

note: Afghanistan has also received \$273 million from the Reconstruction Trust Fund and \$63 million from the Law and Order Trust Fund (2007 est.)

Agriculture - products: Opium, wheat, fruits, nuts; wool, mutton, sheepskins, lambskins

Industries: Small-scale production of textiles, soap, furniture, shoes, fertilizer, cement; hand woven carpets; natural gas, coal, copper

Electricity - production: 754.2 million kWh (2005)

Electricity - consumption: 801.4 million kWh (2005)

Electricity – imports 100 million kWh (2005)

Oil – production 0 bbl/day (2005)

Oil - consumption: 5,000 bbl/day (2005 est.)

Oil - imports: 4,120 bbl/day (2004)

Oil - proved reserves: 0 bbl (1 January 2006 est.)

Natural gas - production: 19.18 million cu m (2005 est.)

Natural gas - consumption: 19.18 million cu m (2005 est.)

Natural gas – imports / Natural gas - exports: 0 cu m (2005 est.)

Natural gas - proved reserves 47.53 billion cu m (1 January 2006 est.)

Exports: \$274 million

note - not including illicit exports or re-exports (2006)

Exports-commodities: Opium, fruits and nuts, hand woven carpets, wool, cotton, hides and pelts, precious and semi-precious gems

Exports-partners: India 23.7%, Pakistan 22.7%, US 21.3%, Russia 4.1% (2007)

Imports: \$3.823 billion (2006)

Imports-commodities: Capital goods, food, textiles, petroleum products

Imports-partners: Pakistan 37.2%, US 11.1%, India 5%, Germany 4.2% (2007)

Economic aid-recipient: \$2.775 billion (2005)

Debt-external: \$8 billion in bilateral debt, mostly to Russia; Afghanistan has \$500 million in debt to Multilateral Development Banks (2004)

Exchange rates: afghanis per US dollar - NA (2007), 46 (2006), 47.7 (2005), 48 (2004), 49 (2003)

Conclusion

Central Asia has strategic strength to develop since it possesses vast territory, energy, literate population and agrarian resources. It can become the hub of international surface trade and has a great potential for industrialization. It can promote peace and international cooperation. It can bring neighbouring nuclear powers to negotiating table and cooperate in development. At the same time it is vulnerable to intimidation and threats of its neighbours and can get embroiled in inter- and intra-ethnic conflicts. It is also vulnerable to threats of fundamentalism, terrorism and narcotic trade. In case of not finding routes for export of hydrocarbons, the region may stagnate as it did when the maritime route was discovered and sea trade replaced surface trade.

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Politics of Religious Extremism and Response of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan

*Problems and Perspectives of International Terrorism
and Religious Extremism in Central Asia.*

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Introduction

Extremism is aimed at violent capture or control of power, as well as violent change in the constitutional structure of government. It can be described as violent attack on the security of society. Terrorism must be separated from extremism as an event of socio-political significance, when violence becomes a weapon of political struggle in the hands of the extremists.

Of the many forms of extremism we can select political extremism (pointed on destroying existing governmental structures and installing dictatorship); national (defending “your nation”, its rights and interests, its culture and language); nationalistic (struggle for separation) and

religious (sects and minorities). The violence itself can take the form of political fighting, as well as criminal activity.

Terrorism has deep historical roots. Near the end of the 20th century, from local inside factor it turned into an international occurrence in terms of participants and objectives. It is now threatening general security and the lives of millions of people who are not involved in its politics in any way.

International terrorism has now spread to almost all corners of the world across national frontiers. For the past couple of years, it has grown in size as the number of organizations using methods of terror has increased as also the capacity to execute terrorist acts. This has created a serious threat to national and regional stability as well as international security.

The following trends in the rise of terrorism have been observed:

- Rise in number of terrorist acts
- Massive increase in number of victims
- High financing level of terrorist activity
- Use of different governments by separate terrorist groups and widening the sphere of geopolitical control
- Participation of international terrorist organizations in distributing their influence to other regions; active attempts to acquire control over territories with rich energy resources, and useful fossils
- Professionalism in preparation of terrorist acts and growing experience of terrorist groups in participating in different conflicts.
- International character of terrorist groups

- Installing strong connections between terrorists organizations and transnational organized crime as seen in the drug business.

Terrorism and extremism in Central Asia

Turkistan, which includes the territory of present-day Uzbekistan, was one of the oldest centres of human culture, as well as the arena of constructive activity and struggle of a great number of peoples and tribes.

For Central Asia, the main source of terrorism has always been Afghanistan. Without a doubt, the campaign of Americans and their allies to crush the Taliban movement and the Al-Qaeda structure in Afghanistan has substantially changed the military-political scenario in the region. Mainly, we can say that Afghanistan is not labelled any more as a military intruder. Central Asian governments do not look at the situation in Afghanistan as having a potential for destabilizing and exporting instability out of its territory. However, there may be threats to the security of Central Asian region, directly or indirectly in terms of drug trade or infiltration of terrorist groups from Afghanistan and actual threat of terrorist acts from such elements.

All five republics of Central Asia – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – have experienced terrorist activity in one form or the other which is a threat to their security and stability. But there is one threat that has not been given due attention. This threat is connected with integration of extremist and terrorist organizations. These organizations act across international borders and unite with each other, creating a chain of structures, impacting not only national but regional and global security. Therefore, even if the goals and motives of the Islamic movement of Uzbek and Uygur separatists be of an inside character, these movements are transnational and

have an impact on regional and global security. They connect with each other on inter-regional and global level.

In Central Asia the problem of terrorism sharply increased occurred by the end of the 90's. Uzbekistan was the first to feel its impact. A series of terrorist acts occurred in Tashkent in 1999, 2002, 2004 in which a great many innocent people were killed. The Government of Uzbekistan came down heavily against the terror groups and the extremists. This action curbed the terrorist activities nearly totally inside the country but the threat from outside remains, particularly from extremist groups in Afghanistan which threaten not only Uzbekistan and Central Asia but the whole world.

Legal and judicial structures in affected countries are not adequate to tackle these elements. Other issues relate to devising military, economic, political, social and financial policies to not only fight terrorism but finding and removing the factors that assist the rise of terrorism.

Though the international forces to fight terrorism in the last couple of years have become more active, in reality shows the approach of different countries confronted with terror threats is significantly different. Mostly in international politics, the powerful countries can use double standards in their dealings. We see that in the international community's inability to find an accepted legal definition of what constitutes terrorism.

There are five different aspects of extremism and terrorism in Central Asia.

The first is political. Most extremist organizations in their sphere an activity are political and not religious. The second is international. All extremist organizations in Central Asia have a branch structure in the entire region and have financing or managing centres in foreign countries. Thirdly, all extremist organizations in Central Asia sooner or

later start using terrorist methods. The fourth aspect is their long-term character. Extremist organization in Central Asia plan their activity over a period of many years, they create networks, carry out propaganda, and try to sneak into power structures. And finally these organizations are financed from foreign countries in addition to incomes from drug trade.

Terrorist organizations rapidly relocate in countries of Central Asia. This sometimes complicates their relationship. For example, after the Andijan events, a section of terrorists escaped to Kyrgyzstan. The government of Uzbekistan called for their extradition, but the government of Kyrgyzstan declined. That brought tension in their relationship. Now there is a possibility of relocation of terrorists from Tajikistan to Uzbekistan or the other way round. Both governments are forced to strengthen the border security which most of the times results in misunderstandings between them.

Russia

Russia is closely integrated in the Central Asian zone of security, especially in the sphere of military safety. In the beginning, Russia lacked a clear strategy in relation to the countries of post Soviet era. After obtaining independence, Uzbekistan was in need of equal partnership in external affairs. The Russian government could not offer partnership on equal terms as she was used to regarding Central Asia as a strategic buffer against internal threats, but many strategic interests forced Russia to have closer ties with Central Asia. Its policies underwent serious change in the face of terrorist threats forcing it to form anti terror coalition with Uzbekistan and some other Central Asian governments. Russia was really concerned about the presence of the US in the region and tried to find a niche of its own to strengthen its presence in Central Asia. Russia carefully watched the development of the events in the region and tried to use any opportunity for recovering the parity. From the opinion of Russian analysts,

USA had the intention to use the extremist movements in the region for destabilizing the situation on Russian borders. Moscow thought that Americans will try to create some kind of controlled conflict in the region in order to restrain its hand in the Caucasus. In connection with the threat to its national security from Central Asian radical Islamic groups, it was necessary to change its policies in the region. There were other interests also: questions about resources in the region, transport and pipeline projects, the cultural conflicts due to different life styles as well as problems relating to drug abuse within Russia.

Alerted by American and Chinese influence in the region, Russia, to safeguard its strategic interest in the region, made efforts to consolidate its ties in the Central Asian countries but one of its major concerns was in cooperation in the sphere of fighting terrorism. Russia started to establish active cooperation with Uzbekistan and other countries of the region to fight Islamic extremism, drug traffic and weapons smuggling etc.

To make the task of re-establishing their impact in the region simpler, Russia declined the policy of strengthening bilateral relationship and used the strategy of creating a regional integral organization with Russia as one of the participants. Russia strived for the integration of Central Asian countries. These efforts were successful as the countries of Central Asia also considered such an organization as a source of stability and regional security. After the Andijan events, Uzbekistan was on the verge of political isolation. Russia backed the government of Uzbekistan and its anti-terror measures.

Closing of the American military base put an end to the strategic partnership of Uzbekistan and USA. Russia became a new strategic partner of Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan started to actively participate in all regional organizations.

Russia intended to strengthen the Central Asian countries' political participation through structures like the SCO, Organization of Collective Security Treaty and the Euro-Asian Economic Union. The strengthening of Russian influence in the region is aided by connecting the region through one energy supply system. For Uzbekistan, cooperation with Russia is profitable as relationship with Russia brings balance between the impact of USA and China in the region. The relationship between Uzbekistan and Russia is also profitable in fighting against terrorism and external threats.

Uzbekistan cooperates with Russia in such organizations as SCO and Organization of Collective Security Treaty. There are two-way agreements in the sphere of security. More or less, there is no complexity involved in solving problems of safety in the region. Russia tries to strengthen Central Asia as a stable buffer zone against the spread of terrorism as well as preventing it from becoming a source of threats like that.

USA

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, USA's policy in the countries of Central Asia can be characterized as of high self-interest since the independence of the Central Asian was in line with the objectives of Washington. Quite a few American experts now regard Uzbekistan as having a special role in that region.

According to numerous statements, USA is chasing three goals in Central Asia:

- Supporting the development of stable, democratic governments, including the settlement of regional conflicts;

- Promoting friendly relations between countries of the region, and their relations with USA and its allies;
- Promoting development of market economy in countries of the region and prevent misuse of their natural fossil deposits.

The interests of the US and Central Asia in the sphere of fighting terrorism and religious extremism are not at cross purposes. Central Asia has become a part of the international fight against terrorism due to operation “Enduring Freedom”, thanks to its geographical borders with Afghanistan. The relationship between the US and the countries of that region are therefore developing due to mutuality of concerns about terrorism.

Research shows growing Uzbek-American political partnership both in bilateral matters and international problems. But there are matters that seem to hinder progress such as American concerns about human rights violations, registration of opposition and religious parties. There was a period of dynamism in their relations when the US helped Uzbekistan in a big way but then their relations declined. USA, being a strategic partner, did not support Uzbekistan even morally in the aftermath of Andijan events. So in the last 16 years Uzbek- American relations have progressed on the whole particularly between 2000 and 2005 peaking in 2002 when Washington signed a Joint declaration on strategic partnership with Uzbekistan as well as following active joint actions against the sources of terrorism in Afghanistan.

The US strategy in Central Asia is to promote regional cooperation in the sphere of security, energy, economy and intermediate reforms. USA chases all three groups of strategic interests in tandem, as losing in one sphere will hamper success in others.

Washington and Moscow, traditional rivals in the big game, have a real opportunity now for coordinating their Central Asian politics on the base of past strategic interest. They can prevent nuclear proliferation from Southern Asia; clear drug traffic from Central and Southern Asia; cut off religious extremism and international terrorism in the region. In fact the goals and politics of USA and Russia in these spheres do not contradict each other, but are actually mutually supporting. Central Asia, being divided as a result of cold war politics can now experience real unity and cooperation if the two powers learn from past mistakes.

In the mean time USA and Uzbekistan are interested in further widening cooperation in the sphere of fighting against terrorism. The spread of terrorist threats is not in their interest. Cooperation in that sphere can be profitably developed. The declaration of president of Uzbekistan, I.A. Karimov, on the occasion of NATO summit in Bucharest, on the readiness of Uzbekistan to present an opportunity to transit non-military products, confirms that Uzbekistan is ready to cooperate with USA and NATO in spheres of security and fight against terrorism. USA and NATO highly rate this kind of support from Uzbekistan.

Pakistan

USA thinks that on the situation in Pakistan depends the whole safety of Southern and Central Asia. In the mountain regions of Pakistan the main base of Taliban and Al-Qaeda is located. The unstable political situation in Pakistan causes jitters in the world community. After the murder of Benazir Bhutto, the internal stability of Pakistan has been threatened. The Government of Pakistan realistically evaluates the situation in Afghanistan. Pakistan tries to balance its territorial integrity with peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Pakistan's interest in Central Asia is high. Pakistan strives to promote actions that would help to unite Central Asia and Pakistan in political, economic and cultural relationship. Pakistan has close friendly ties with Iran and strong bilateral relations with Afghanistan while relations with Central Asia are being established. Pakistan is interested in development of regional pipelines, transport, communications and economic cooperation with countries of Central Asia. For that, peace in Afghanistan and the whole region is necessary. This is acknowledged by countries of Central Asia and Pakistan.

Pakistan also looks for an ally in Central Asia who can support them in efforts to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan and Kashmir.

Uzbekistan has had close connections with Pakistan for a long time. Trade and economic cooperation is developing. Uzbekistan and Pakistan are interested in developing a dialogue on problems of security and terrorism. Cooperation of Central Asian governments with Pakistan could become a starting point for creating a new security structure in the region.

CIS

After the collapse of USSR, Uzbekistan, as other countries of the region, became a member of the new developing Union of Independent States. The Commonwealth was created on the 21st of December 1991. In Alma-Ata eleven heads of independent states signed a declaration on cooperation of commonwealth participants comprising the Republics of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Republics of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine. Uzbekistan backed the idea of the Commonwealth, and became its founder member. In Minsk, on 22 December 1993, a statute of Commonwealth was signed, where were

defined the principals and goals of Commonwealth; where it is underlined that this organization is based on widely accepted principals of international law.

The inception of CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) was an attempt to save the economic and cultural connections between the states of the former Soviet Union. Russia tried to play the leading role in CIS and to keep its influence intact in countries of the former USSR through this structure. However, after the collapse of USSR, Russia had no financial sources and economic opportunities to fulfil its plan. From the beginning, CIS was an amorphous organization and existed mostly on paper. All member countries of this unity had different external and internal political orientations, and there was no shared economic conception.

The goals of the CIS were cooperation in economic, political, ecological, humanitarian, cultural and other spheres; creation of common economic base; providing rights and basic freedom of people according to widely accepted principals of international law and documents of OSCE; members will cooperate in providing international peace and security and realization of disarmament; assisting citizens of states in free communication and movement in the commonwealth; cooperation in spheres of judiciary relationship; peaceful resolution of conflicts between the countries of the commonwealth.

Uzbekistan became a member of this organization in the hope of economic cooperation. But conflicts arose which brought instability to the whole region itself.

After the cooling of relationship between USA and Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan evolved a new external policy on getting closer with countries of CIS but in the meantime cooperation with more goal oriented, compact organizations like Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Euro Asian Economic Union became more beneficial. Therefore the CIS

remains an organization with vague goals and no mechanism for cooperation. This prevents its growth and full use of its potential.

Organization of Collective Security Treaty and SCO

Organization of Collective Security Treaty (OCST) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) play a limited role in the fight against t extremism and terrorism.

In addition to CIS, another organization, UACS was created to reach agreement on collective security but when it did not prove useful in combating the threat from the Taliban, Uzbekistan decided to cool their participation in that organization and started to look for other sources on defending its security.

Uzbekistan left the agreement on collective security, disappointed by its inability to provide real defence from external enemies, particularly threats from Afghanistan.

SCO was created by Russia and China to strengthen the security and stability of the region. This objective was emphasized again and again in its meetings. But when Andijan events occurred, SCO couldn't react or make some concrete decisions. It was pointed out that it was an internal matter of Uzbekistan. The SCO has no existing mechanism for tackling situations like that. It is therefore too early to talk about SCO as an organization capable of tightening security in the region.

Fight against terrorism in Tajikistan

Tajikistan has endured a civil war and fighting terrorism and extremism has been its important role. Tajikistan does not support terrorist groups or activities and would fight against them. This was declared by President

Rakhmanov in the general assembly session of the United Nations in 2003.

On the national level the government continues to develop counter-terrorist legislation in addition to the existing anti-terrorist laws which provide severe punishment including capital punishment. The government of Tajikistan closely follows terrorist groups operating on its territory, including the Islamic movement of Uzbekistan. In addition, Tajikistan tries to block funding of terrorist elements.

For fighting extremism Tajikistan has chosen reconciliation with Islamic opposition offering them seats in parliament and government. Effective authority in the country was virtually divided between government and Islamic opposition. This experience of Tajikistan was studied carefully by western experts and was acknowledged to be positive that other countries of the region could emulate to solve similar problems.

In the international arena Tajikistan participates in antiterrorist initiatives that are promoted by SOC and by anti-terrorist centre of CIS. President Rakhmanov in his appeal to General Assembly of UN in 2003 called to attention questions that related to the fight against international terrorism and ways of its eradication. He warned against the role of drugs trading in financing terrorism and called for global partnership in counteraction of drugs trafficking.

The United States at present provides technical help to anti-terrorist subdivision of Tajikistan government. With assistance of USA and other countries, members of law enforcement authorities engage in crisis management, searching for bombs and necessary measures in the event of explosions. Tajikistan and Russia jointly take initiatives to prevent terror activities.

Drugs and terrorism

Drugs' trafficking from Afghanistan poses a threat to regional security. The rise of narcotic production in 2007, according to UN, rose by 17 per cent over the previous year. After the fall of Taliban regime, Afghanistan had a record rise in opium production. In 2007, the production of opium in Afghanistan rose to 59 per cent.

Intensive rise in production of heroin in Afghanistan from the end of 2001 bankrupted the producers of opium narcotics in countries of the Golden triangle. From 2003 Afghanistan became the world monopolist in production of heroin. Taliban and Al-Qaeda used the narcotic incomes for buying weapons and organizing terrorist acts not only in Afghanistan, but in other countries also. Particularly funds from the sale of narcotics were used in Central Asia. These funds are an important part of Afghanistan's informal economy.

Struggle against terrorism in Uzbekistan

The Republic of Uzbekistan believes in the principle of the indivisibility of security which implies "safety as a continuous state without borders". Another principle of policy is: it is impossible to achieve any development outputs without secured stability and safety. Strengthening of international cooperation (both multilateral and bilateral) in all urgent regional and world matters is considered as an efficient way of implementation of the principle of "safety through cooperation". The foreign policy of Uzbekistan is being constructed on the basis of this principle with reference to state strategy of struggle against religious extremism and related terrorism. Uzbekistan is striving for establishing long-term relations with all the concerned countries of the world.

Being a country having common borders with all the Central Asian republics and having half of the region's

population, Uzbekistan is aware of the threats and challenges, as well as her own portion of responsibility for common safety in the Central Asia. Uzbekistan plays a major part in multilateral efforts undertaken in the region against terrorism.

At present and in the future perspective the serious threat to the national safety and territorial integrity is coming from radical world Islamic organizations which try to strengthen their position in the region. These organizations are engaged in efforts to fomenting separatist movements and establishing state formations of a radical Islamic type.

In the communist period, thousands of clergymen were repressed, mosques and madrassas were demolished to suppress the ideological struggle. As a consequence mosque imams did not have special religious education. They were just "self-educated". Muslims did not have access to the holy writings of Islam. This was exploited by the diverse extremist forces in the first years of independence.

Despite their different creeds, the target of the extremist groups is common: they want to weaken the Muslims' confidence in the state; destroy stability and create division among the social strata and create a negative image of Uzbekistan in the Moslem and non-Muslim countries.

The Taliban government actively helped dissident Islamic groups in Uzbekistan and openly declared it wanted to overthrow the legal government and establish Islamic state in Uzbekistan. After 1999 they tried direct invasion from Tajikistan with the help of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). The goal of the armed gangs of IMU was penetration into the territory of Uzbekistan with subsequent preparation of hiding-places with weapons, ammunition and food stuff to secure their future diversion to terrorist activity. IMU's leader D. Namangani was planning to deploy "a partisan war" in Ferghana Valley, where significant number of the Movement supporters was concentrated. In case the

Government of Uzbekistan would lose control over the district they planned to create their own enclave. The Uzbek frontier guards dislodged fighters from the territory of Uzbekistan. The Uzbek special services revealed evidence of Taliban's support in financing and organizing of these raids.

IMU's activity was not restricted only to the deployment of military actions within the Ferghana valley. The supporters of the Movement were to start attacks from all districts and with the support of foreign extremist organizations internationalize the conflict, forcing official Tashkent to initiate talks with the terrorists following the example of Tajikistan. With these aims the leaders of the Movement were actively involving the fighters from the countries of the Middle East and Near East.

"Khizb ut-Tahrir" Islamic Party's activities also threatened the stability of Uzbekistan. The party leaders intended to distribute the influence of radical Islam not only in the territory of the Central Asian countries, but also on the territory of Russia. They founded their network all over Uzbekistan, calling to overthrow the existing government. Their activities had become noticeable since the end of 1998. This religious political organization is prohibited in all Muslim countries. The danger, coming from "Khizb ut-Tahrir" Islamic Party, first of all, consists in developing a united theocratic state not only in separate Muslim countries but also in the whole Moslem world. Moreover, their ideology is based on the principle of establishing a world caliphate. To achieve this goal all the Muslims are called to live in the state of "permanent dzhikhad".

Uzbekistan is a centre of Islamic culture. A great many Islamic sites are located on the territory of Uzbekistan. Al-Buchari, At-Termezi, Al-Moturidi and other Middle-Asian thinkers of the Middle Ages rendered great influence to development of intellectual potential of Islam. The basic spiritual and moral qualities and guiding lines of behaviour

were developing under the influence of such world-known systems of mystic practice as the Chishtiyah Tariqahs, Naqshbandiyah, Qubraviyah, and the Yassaviyah. On the other hand, the mode of life of the Moslems of Uzbekistan imbibed the best cultural values of pre-Islamic period from Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Manichaeism and other sources.

That is why the religious and cultural orientation of the population combines conventionalism and Islamic rules. However, the urge to know one's cultural roots and emphasize ethnic originality and regeneration of the Islamic culture, the problem related to activation of diverse religious forces is becoming more urgent. Exploiting and concealing their intentions by the Islamic slogans, they are striving to achieve their own political goals. The strategy of struggle against religious extremism in Uzbekistan is closely related to development of social and political technologies, applied in the process of liberalization and taking into consideration the spiritual, cultural and historical traditions of the people's life. This is one of the major directions of state strategy in the struggle against extremism and related terrorism.

Uzbekistan took a set of actions to check terrorist actions in the country. All non-traditional religious organizations, unusual for Uzbekistan, were prohibited; the control over the activity of foreign missionaries was intensified. In December, 2001 the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Struggle against terrorism" was adopted, in which the main principles of struggle against terrorism were concretized, and the Republic of Uzbekistan applies them.

Uzbekistan supports the UNO in strengthening the world legal base of anti-terrorist cooperation. It is important to expand the circle of the parties involved in conventions directed against terrorism and encouragement of development of new agreements in this field. One of the UNO's achievements is the International Convention on

Struggle against Bomb Terrorism and the International Convention on Struggle against Finding of Terrorism.

Conclusion

In the sphere of struggle against terrorism Uzbekistan used all the means including cooperation with USA, Russia, China, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, which raised much hope, but did not play any significant part in the struggle. That's why Uzbekistan had always to rely upon its own forces. Uzbekistan achieved a lot in the struggle by strengthening the army, developing fighting efficiency and potential of the power structures.

The actions — undertaken in the sphere of development of legislation related to safety and struggle against terrorism, to power structures, establishment of special departments and units involved in the struggle against terrorism — permitted the Uzbek government to strengthen the safety of the country and its citizens. Strengthening of the existing and establishment of new regional structures involved in the struggle, development of bilateral relations with the countries in the region and cooperation in the field of safety, development of relations with SCO countries, as well as with NATO countries in the field of regeneration and strengthening of security in Afghanistan as the main source of terrorism – are the most meaningful directions in the struggle against terrorism.

It is obvious that it is impossible to conquer forces of religious extremism and terrorism by only using forceful methods. Together with strengthening spiritual and religious and social and cultural immunity of the society against influences of destructive ideologies, it is also necessary to formulate juridical measures, based first of all, on observing internationally accepted basic human's rights.

Strengthening and development of tolerant social interrelations in the society is a basic principle of struggle

against religious extremism and related terrorism. It is necessary that all countries became aware of the dangers of religious extremism and related terrorism as an important condition for security of national and regional safety. Awareness of challenges and extent of threats on the part of religious extremism and terrorism causes desire of the states in the region for consolidating their efforts in achieving the common state of safety. Religious extremism and international terrorism present threat not only to individual countries and regions, but to the whole civilized world, that's why they are to be neutralized by all accessible and legal ways. The whole world community is to be concerned in this.

Appendix

Legislative base of security in Uzbekistan

National legislation, legal acts, laws:

№	The name of document	Date of issue
1.	Law of the republic of Uzbekistan about freedom of comprehension and religious faith	14.06.1991
2.	Act about Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan	Act of the Cabinet of Ministers OT 25.10.1991 N 270
3.	Act of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan Plenum about judge's activity on the crimes concerned drugs turnover and psychotropic things	27.10.1995. N 21
4.	Act about National-analytical centre on the control under narcotics and drugs turnover at the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan	Appendix 1 to the Cabinet of Ministers Act from 07.11.1996. N 382
5.	Act about State Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the control under narcotics	Appendix 2 to the Cabinet of Ministers Act from 30.04.1994 г. N 229
6.	Decree of the President of Uzbekistan about amnesty Uzbek citizens participated in terrorists organizations on delusion	06.09.2000 N UP-2712
7.	Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on terrorism	15.12.2001 N 167-II

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Economic Cooperation Between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan: A Means of Regional Political Stability

Najeeb ur Rehman Manalai

This paper focuses mainly on economic and political cooperation between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan but effort has been made to assess the issues within the regional context. Trade between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan would get more importance when Afghanistan bridges Turkmenistan with the largest demand sites in South Asia. Therefore insecurity and instability in Afghanistan which impede this role acquire a regional dimension requiring appropriate adjustment in the strategies and approaches.

The context

The landlocked status of Afghanistan was considered an obstacle to the development of the country until late 1992. After the double landlocked Central Asian countries emerged on the map in 1991, Afghanistan became important as Central Asia's land route to the sea. This can serve as a big source of finance for the reconstruction and development of

the war ravaged economy of Afghanistan if the route becomes safe for the transit trade.

Central Asia has abundant energy resources which the large markets in Europe to the west and Asia to the east badly need. Substantial demand for energy resources exists in South Asia. In addition, Central Asia — populated by about 70 million inhabitants — is regarded as a reliable market for South Asian goods. South Asia is eager for this export destination which Afghanistan can provide as the shortest and cheapest transit route.

The uneven distribution and diverse control over energy resources in Central Asia make it necessary for the countries to have some kind of a regional economic cooperation. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have potential hydroelectric energy capacity. Kazakhstan has extensive reservoirs of oil and coal while Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan can provide huge amounts of natural gas. This dissimilarity of energy resources also calls for a mutual working arrangement between the countries of the region if their potential exportable energy resources — gas, oil and electricity — are to reach South Asia and Europe.

The Central Asian countries can access the sea ports of Pakistan and Iran through Afghanistan. These regional linkages will help the countries in improving their productivity and trade while generating significant income for Afghanistan which will help stabilize the country by improving the life of the Afghan people who can hope to enjoy the economic and political backing of the stakeholders.

Afghanistan and Central Asia

The almost two decades of insecurity and political instability in Afghanistan have been a significant factor in halting development of trade relations between Afghanistan and Central Asia and South Asia. After the Mujahideen took over in 1992 in Afghanistan, the desire to link Central Asia

with South Asia through Afghanistan was there on both sides but the parties were reluctant because of the uncertain situation of international politics and new challenges facing the stakeholder countries. Once clarity emerged in the situation at a broader level and plans and programmes matured, talks started between the parties.

The Taliban, after seizing 90 per cent of the territory of the country, established security and returned to the land a semblance of stability. This security established by the Taliban encouraged the neighbouring countries and the international investors to think about possible promotion of trade and transit through Afghanistan. UNOCAL had pursued a possible natural gas pipeline from Turkmenistan via Afghanistan to Pakistan, but pulled out after the US missile strikes against Afghanistan in August 1998. Taliban authorities signed some trade agreements with the Turkmenistan government which included import of oil and natural gas and improving transit services of Turkmenistan. Meanwhile, Afghanistan had limited trade with Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan mainly importing food items while exporting fruit. After relations between the Taliban and Iran, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan worsened the borders with these countries were closed and trade activities stopped. However, relations and trade with Turkmenistan continued.

Afghanistan and Turkmenistan

The relations between the two countries

Afghanistan and Turkmenistan enjoy good relations since the establishment of Turkmenistan. Even though Afghanistan had a number of governments since Turkmenistan got independence, their relations never soured. It means that the economic interests of the two countries served to keep them friendly despite fundamental changes in their internal affairs. Establishment of the Islamic state by the Afghan Mujahideen after the communist regime of Dr.

Najibullah was a big shift. The policies of Taliban's Islamic Emirate were also different from the Mujahideen's and the policies of the current government are also quite different from the Taliban's. But Turkmenistan has kept friendly relations with all of these regimes and has been keen on building strong trade relations with Afghanistan.

However, the insecurity and instability in Afghanistan have greatly impeded the development of trade with Turkmenistan. Yet the current status of economic cooperation between the two countries is the highest ever in their history.

Economic cooperation

When Turkmenistan became an independent country in December 1991 and the Mujahideen took over Afghanistan no significant economic relations could be established at the government level but private sector trade in food items continued and the latter also utilised transit services of Turkmenistan to a limited degree. Not only a weak government but insecurity conditions in Afghanistan as well Turkmenistan's own internal problems also prevented the development of economic cooperation.

Later, despite failure in building and keeping good relations with Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Iran, the Taliban managed to maintain good diplomatic and trade relations with Turkmenistan among the neighbours until their regime was toppled by the US-led coalition forces. The reason of weakened relations of the Taliban with the other two northern neighbours, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, was the likely influence of the fundamentalist regime and possible support to the extremist Islamic ideologues and terrorist groups in those countries. In September 1998, the Taliban authorities signed an agreement with the Government of Turkmenistan on the import of petrol, diesel and jet fuel. The first consignment of the fuel reportedly arrived in mid-

December via Torghundi. This development, to some extent, reduced Afghanistan's dependency on fuel imports from Iran which had been the case for decades.⁽¹⁾ In December 1998, the Taliban Government signed another agreement with Turkmenistan for the import of 600 tones of liquefied natural gas.⁽²⁾ Supply of electricity to Herat province in the west and Mazar-e-Sharif city in the Northern Balkh province were also among the important developments.

After the defeat of the Taliban, Turkmenistan resumed talks with Afghan interim administration under Hamid Karzai which, in addition to economic cooperation with each other, ended up with a trilateral agreement between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkmenistan on extending a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan via Afghanistan.⁽³⁾ The agreement on this project of gas pipeline was repeatedly supported by the parties thereafter. However, the insecurity in Afghanistan still remains a big challenge to furthering the plans and implementation of the project. Therefore, bilateral trade between the two countries is still small. The Afghan-Turkmen trade was estimated at less than \$40 million in the year 2000 while it was around \$143 million in 2007.⁽⁴⁾

Apart from the gas pipeline project, an agreement was signed between Turkmenistan and Afghanistan on trade-economic cooperation on July 5, 2007 in Ashkabat.⁽⁵⁾ According to this agreement the parties will consider mutually beneficial economic projects for which a Joint Intergovernmental Commission on Economic Cooperation has been formed. The agreement also urges the parties to encourage their entrepreneurs and companies to participate in trade activities in the two countries. Turkmenistan will render cooperation in mining operations, oil and gas output, construction of railways and highways, electric energy supply and development of agriculture. The agreement will be valid for five years and will be automatically renewed for the next five years at the completion of this period.⁽⁶⁾

The current situation of trade

IMF data shows that the total trade of Afghanistan with its neighbouring countries equalled US\$5.4 billion in 2005 with an exports share of US\$1.7 billion. But only US\$0.5 billion has been the real export and the rest was counted for re-export of goods.⁽⁷⁾ Re-exporting/smuggling of imported goods is a characteristic of the Afghan trade. A large volume of the imported goods are re-exported to Pakistan, Iran and to a lesser extent to some countries in the Central Asia. Recent studies show that of the total trade 84 per cent is imports, 6 per cent is exports and 10 per cent is transit trade.⁽⁸⁾

The trade between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan comprises a very small proportion of the total Afghan trade with the neighbouring countries. Afghanistan exports to Turkmenistan include fresh and dried fruits, animal skins and intestines, carpets and sesame seed. From Turkmenistan, Afghanistan imports fertilizer, gas, petrol, oil, flour, rice, wheat and other food stuff (biscuits, soft drinks, ghee etc.), electronics, glass, cosmetics, vehicle and motorcycles and their spare parts. Moreover, Afghanistan has obtained limited electricity from Turkmenistan which is transmitted through a 220 KV transmission line reaching two points: Herat province in the west through Torghondi, and Faryab province which is then extended to Mazar-e Sharif in Balkh province in the north.

The transit trade between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan comprises Turkmenistan's iron exports to Pakistan and Pakistan's exports of cement, fruit and vegetables, cloth and auto spare parts to Turkmenistan via Afghanistan.⁽⁹⁾ As the exports of Afghanistan remain at a very low level, Afghanistan has no significant export in transit to Turkmenistan. The number of trucks crossing Afghanistan — Turkmenistan border (Torghandi and Aquina) averages at about 250 trucks per day.⁽¹⁰⁾

The future of trade and transit

Afghanistan is already flooded by imported goods and products of countries like China, Pakistan and Iran. The cheaper labour force availability and expertise in identifying the needs and demands, experience in production and delivery of goods and understanding the marketing techniques in Afghanistan by these countries would make it too difficult for Turkmenistan to compete in marketing its commodities in Afghanistan. Therefore, Turkmenistan would need to step forward cautiously and assess the unstable political and economic situation in Afghanistan from time to time to plan its trade with Afghanistan.

In addition, if Afghanistan achieves peace and stability, efficient management of its natural resources would make the country self-sufficient in many areas. For example, agricultural development and water management would eliminate the need for importing wheat. The oil and natural gas resources identified in recent studies may stop the demand for imported oil and gas in the future. Thus, selective items would be possible to import from Turkmenistan in the future.

However, Afghanistan can serve as the best transit route for Turkmenistan to get connected with South Asia and the sea ports for exploring further trade opportunities. At present, South Asia is looking towards the energy resources of Turkmenistan and other Central Asian countries. Meanwhile, this transit providing capacity of Afghanistan would connect South Asia to the big markets in Central Asia and Europe. Receiving the transit fee from different parties, the financial constraint to reconstruction of Afghanistan will be partly overcome while providing enormous advantages and financial benefits to Turkmenistan and other stakeholders.

Among the different transit trade options between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan, the most significant is the building of the Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India gas pipeline (TAPI). The transit fee of this pipeline would be paid to Afghanistan in the form of gas from the pipeline to meet its energy needs. The project is intended to start in 2010 and to be completed by 2015.⁽¹¹⁾ The transit fee in the form of gas would cost about US\$500 million.⁽¹²⁾

Electricity transmission from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan remains at a very low level. From the 100 million kWh electricity export of Turkmenistan in 2007,⁽¹³⁾ only about 12,000 kWh electricity was exported to Afghanistan.⁽¹⁴⁾ Turkmenistan has not been seen to have planned export of electricity to South Asia, though such a capacity of the country could not be ruled out in the future where Afghanistan could be seen to provide transit route for transmission of electricity.

The constraints impeding promotion of trade

The war-ravaged Afghanistan is currently dependent on international aid. Reconstruction of the ruined country, establishing and rehabilitation of state institutions, security and stability, protecting land integrity of the country, delivery of the basic services to the people, providing livelihood for the populace, planning and investment for future development, all-in-all are dependent on foreign aid in Afghanistan. It might be more complicated and difficult to predict the direction of movements ahead with certainty. Nonetheless, the commitment of the international community to save and develop Afghanistan could be, up to some extent, attributed to the security threat at the international level linked with the problems of Afghanistan. In such a context, future projections of trade could not be precisely anticipated. But, the trade relevant plans made upon strong commitment and technical and financial support of the world could not be regarded impractical and less important.

The trade relevant strategy of Afghanistan includes promoting all aspects of the trade including imports, exports and transit. The most challenging constraints impeding promotion of trade in Afghanistan and the region could be assessed as follows:

Insurgency related insecurity

The insecurity in the country has been the biggest challenge to reconstruction and rehabilitation of the country. It has not only undermined the relative developments and reconstruction works carried out in different sectors, but it also has discouraged national and international trade companies to invest in Afghanistan.

Building of the trans-Afghanistan gas pipeline project from Turkmenistan to South Asia has been halted because of insecurity. Even now, the security forecasts in the coming years do not promise the security required for stretching the gas pipeline, as it is intended to start the work of the project in 2010. The word security here refers to non-existence of armed struggle and violence. The first and foremost security threat in the current context is the Taliban.

Because of their links with Al-Qaeda and other extremist groups in the region, the Taliban are the main cause of insecurity in today's Afghanistan. Taliban have posed a serious security threat impeding all kinds of development works. In addition to controlling large areas in the southern provinces — the place where the pipeline should go through — and some other places in Afghanistan, through utilization of certain terrorist tactics such as, suicide attacks, IEDs, roadside bombings and kidnappings, they have discouraged the national and international stakeholders from taking action for realization of the gas pipeline and promoting other trade relevant projects. While democracy was embraced through the elections held in 2004, the last three years have seen a continued escalation in violence and

deterioration of security and mounting discontent of the population.

An important issue which has complicated the security climate in the country is the violent activities of the insurgents and terrorists on both sides of the Durand Line in the south and east of Afghanistan. In classical terms, insurgents need a cause; a sanctuary; support of the people who serve as a shield and source of recruitment; and limited amount of money sufficient for running irregular warfare. The Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) serves as a sanctuary for the Taliban while there exists sufficient support and sympathy for the Taliban both among Afghan and Pakistani religious schools/Madrasa students and fundamentalist Islamic movements.

Development in Pakistan's transit trade with Central Asia is directly linked with security and stability and further developments in Afghanistan. A stable Afghanistan would allow exploring many other economic opportunities for the neighbouring countries, particularly Pakistan. Therefore, genuine cooperation of Pakistan is crucially important for bringing peace and stability to Afghanistan.

Extensive narcotics production

The spike in poppy cultivation in Afghanistan translates into proliferation of narco-trade in Central Asia and the world. Smuggling narcotics from Afghanistan to Turkmenistan has been a big constraint to facilitating cross-border legal trade and transit. Despite serious custom procedures at both sides of the border, sufficient amounts of drugs cross the border to enter Turkmenistan.

Details about the problem of narcotics go beyond the scope of this paper, however, it is worth noting that most interventions to stem the drug trade are aimed at the supply of the poppy, while ignoring the demand, which is the main locomotive of narco-trade in the world. The measures to

tackle narco-trade should contain interventions in every phase of the supply chain; cultivation, harvesting, supplying drugs to the local markets, processing, trafficking beyond the Afghan borders, and at the consumers' level. The counter-narcotics measures in Afghanistan should be part of a comprehensive strategy which should address all of the aforementioned phases of narco-trade.

In addition, if the history of world's narcotics trade is reviewed, it will show that "insecurity" has preceded the evolution of poppy cultivation in certain areas/countries, which is evident from examples of Turkey (1960s and 1970s), Colombia (1970s and mid 1980s), and the Golden Triangle (mid 1980s and 1990s). The spike of growing poppy in Afghanistan demonstrates a trend similar to that experienced in Turkey, Colombia, and the Golden Triangle. Establishing security is thus a pre-requisite for implementation of effective counter narcotics measures.

Weak state economy

Both Afghanistan and Turkmenistan are economically weak to initiate and build giant developmental projects. The TAPI pipeline project is estimated to cost over three billion US dollars. Exploring oil, gas and mines and improving road infrastructure to promote transit trade in Afghanistan also requires huge amounts of money. Neither Afghanistan nor Turkmenistan or any other country in the neighbourhood can afford implementation of big projects and are dependent on aid from the international donors. The case of Afghanistan seems to be more complicated for Afghanistan needs enormous resources while lacking the purchasing power. Managing such challenges would require the countries involved in the issues to step ahead cautiously in long term mega projects.

Lack of administrative capacity

Lack of administrative capacity has been a huge challenge to development programmes in Afghanistan. It might be relatively better in Turkmenistan and other stakeholders like Pakistan, but missing a single link would leave the chain incomplete. The corruption in these countries was also attributed to a lack of capacity by an Afghan analyst who labelled corruption to be a result of bureaucratic administrative procedures which are linked with lack of capacity of the government officials to understand the situation and make on time decisions.⁽¹⁵⁾ In such conditions, some of the government officials with a better know-how capacity monopolize the actions and run the programmes the way they want rather than to tailor them to the actual needs.

Moreover, there is little capacity to design, implement, and monitor bilateral, trilateral, and regional trade and transit agreements. Slower progress has been seen in negotiations with neighbouring countries to facilitate cross-border trade. Afghanistan and its neighbours should initiate discussions to promote bilateral, trilateral and multilateral agreements.

Problematic transit infrastructure

After lack of security, lacking road infrastructure has been the biggest challenge to promotion of transit trade. Afghanistan can serve to connect the Central Asian countries with South Asia through the shortest and cheapest way. However, transit trade comprises only 10% of the Afghan trade,⁽¹⁶⁾ it can grow by many folds if properly facilitated. Afghanistan considers the transit trade as an effective means of economic growth. To realize the potential gains from regional connectivity, trade and transport, Afghanistan will have to rehabilitate infrastructure, streamline, rationalize and harmonize transit and customs procedures and modernize trade agreements with neighbours. Afghanistan's neighbours and the international community have to play a proactive

role in assisting the country to realize its 'land bridge' potential.

Two regional road corridors, North-South and East-West have been identified and these are at various stages of development. The North-South Corridor runs from Central Asia through Afghanistan to Pakistani ports of Karachi/Port Qasim and Gwadar and the East-West Corridor runs from Central Asia through Afghanistan to Iranian ports of Bandar-e-Abbas and Chabahar. A recent review by the Central and South Asia Transport and Trade Forum (CSATTF) secretariat shows 19 per cent of the North-South corridor is in bad condition; 43 per cent is being improved while the balance 39 per cent is in good condition. The corresponding figures for East-West corridor are 21 per cent, 39 per cent and 41 per cent respectively.⁽¹⁷⁾

The constraints to trade and transit identified and analyzed through a survey facilitated by ADB which puts them into three categories:⁽¹⁸⁾

Physical constraints: The insufficiently developed transport and trade infrastructure in Afghanistan has been destroyed in the three decades of conflict while today's trade requires updating the old routes and addition of new routes.

Institutional constraints: Trade related institutions such as port capacity and efficiency and customs environment at present do not allow expansion of trade with Afghanistan or transit through it. Engagement of all countries involved is necessary to create a more advantageous environment for trade.

Policy constraints: Transport, transit, trade and tariff policies of different countries in the region have been a major constraint to effective trade in the region. Currently, regulatory framework does not conform to international regulations, conventions and treaties. Afghanistan and its

neighbours should rationalize the standards and facilitate bilateral and multilateral trade and transit agreements.

The politics beyond the two countries

The development of economic relations between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan has been vulnerable to the influence of the politics beyond the two countries. The insecurity in Afghanistan, the biggest obstacle to realization of economic development between the two countries, is not merely an indigenous problem. Existence of the coalition forces in the country, extensive involvement of the international community in the decisions, practices and policies in Afghanistan and backing of insurgency by Al-Qaeda and other Islamic entities outside Afghanistan prove this reality.

At the regional level, two countries play significant role in stability in Afghanistan: Pakistan in the South and South-East and Iran in the West.

Iran

Iran tries to maintain its obscured interventions through cultural engagement and indirectly supporting anti-government elements or the opposition parties. The strategic objective of Iran behind such interventions is to hold back the influence of the US and keeping economic dominance in the region. However, no clear and observable evidence have been shown to prove the intervention of Iran.

Pakistan

Despite sharing common culture, similar traditions and the same religion, Pakistan and Afghanistan have fluctuating relations marked by cross-border infiltration and hostility on both sides. The dominating issues between Pakistan and Afghanistan are the Durand Line, conflicting strategic interests and currently, the resurgence of Taliban.

Many Afghan analysts view Pakistan's current interests in keeping Afghanistan under its influence for gaining "strategic depth" against India and having sufficient control over the trade route to gas and oil- rich Central Asian states. In addition, it is likely that Pakistan wants to redirect local fundamentalist elements towards Afghanistan in the form of Taliban or other cross border activities to keep its own political situation calm and stable.

Conclusion

The energy resources in Turkmenistan prompt the country to build friendly relations with the neighbouring countries which will help to access better markets for the products. Afghanistan and Turkmenistan enjoy good political and economic relations. However, promoting economic cooperation and getting advantage of the friendly relations with one partner will require the countries to establish friendly relations at the regional level. To meet the goal of regional cooperation — economic growth of all of the countries in Asia — regular series of negotiations and talks should be held between the conflicting parties.

Regional cooperation is the key for any kind of trade between Central Asia and South Asia. For Turkmenistan, economic cooperation with Afghanistan means opening a trade route towards South Asia rather than marketing its products in Afghanistan. The same way, not much of the trade needs of Afghanistan could be provided by Turkmenistan. Promotion of economic cooperation between the two countries requires regional cooperation and sharing responsibilities among all the stakeholders.

As the insecurity in Afghanistan is a major constraint to regional trade promotion, all countries in the region should try to identify their role and take actions aimed at establishing viable security in Afghanistan. Given the lack of livelihood being a major cause of Afghan youth joining the

insurgents groups, the Central Asian countries can reduce this trend by economic assistance in the form of investment in Afghanistan to create employment opportunities. In addition, through effective mediation, they can bring different conflicting parties to the table of negotiations and facilitate understanding and agreement in certain aspects.

Iran has had a bigger role in development of Afghanistan, especially in Western Afghanistan through building roads and other infrastructure and aid delivery. However, though Iran may not have a direct role in the trade between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan, its development work such as building roads and relevant infrastructure would promote trade with Turkmenistan. In addition, friendly relations with Iran could help in bringing stability and security to Afghanistan.

The extremist Islamic ideologues and fundamentalist Islamic parties and the “no man’s land” of FATA are among the big supporters of the insurgency in Afghanistan. However, Pakistan does not have control over such causes, the possibility of Pakistan genuinely cooperating in efforts aimed at resolving the conflicts could not be ruled out either.

Engaging in efforts to solve the huge problems and respond to the big challenges is perceived by many people to be only responsibility of the state. The role of the civil society in cross border efforts aimed at addressing these challenges has not been explored in this case. The disagreement of the states always has clouded the minds of the public in both Afghanistan and in Pakistan. But, if the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan together decide to solve the problems, they can expect high chances of success.

The conflicting issues which affect relations between the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan, such as recognition of the Durand Line as formal political border of Pakistan, require longer time and strong governments at both sides. Such issues would never be solved by the two countries

unless truthful and just mediation from the outside world is sought. However, other conflicts over water resources and transit issues could be easily addressed through negotiations. It is time that prior to rejecting a proposal which at first glance seems in conflict with the interests of one party, an effort be made to understand the needs and causes and explore other opportunities. For example, if building a dam on Kunar River in Eastern Afghanistan, which could have enormous advantages for Afghanistan, is thought to affect water reservoirs inside Pakistan, prior to rejecting it, the Pakistani authorities should think about other possibilities of compensating it in other areas, such as claiming rights of using any projected electricity from such a dam. The interdependence created through such projects could be helpful in making the parties more flexible about issues and solve bigger problems through proper understanding in the future.

It is not only the case between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Many conflicts last for decades between Afghanistan and Iran and Tajikistan, Iran and Pakistan, Pakistan and India and Pakistan and Afghanistan. Promotion of regional economic cooperation will create the sphere of understanding in the region and will help to realize peaceful coexistence.

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Regional Cooperation in Eurasia: Reviving Linkages between Central & South Asia

Swaran Singh

Mapping of spaces has always been a political exercise reflecting the vision and bias of great powers of the day. Such mapping of surface of the earth has in turn greatly influenced the evolution of 'the way of life' and the nature of international relations. Expressions like 'Middle East' versus 'West Asia' or 'Middle' Asia versus 'Central' Asia or 'Caucasia' versus 'Eurasia' have often been center of contentions for carrying varied connotations and implications. However, the ever increasing awareness and interconnectedness around the world have further reinforced such dichotomies as the interests of dominant powers have come to be increasingly questioned by their own intellectuals and by intellectuals and power elites from middle and marginal powers. Recent bestsellers like *The Clash of Civilizations*, *The World is Flat* and *The Pentagon's New Map* clearly elude to this dilemma unfolding in case of the United States trying to redefine the 21st century world and its respective regions.⁽¹⁾

Over centuries, there has emerged a specialized field of geopolitics where regions of the world have repeatedly been constructed and contested as ‘pivot’ versus ‘brim or as ‘heartland’ versus ‘rimland’ and so on. However, it is important to note that in the wisdom of great modern thinkers, like Halford Mackinder, Alfred Mahan or Spykman, Eurasia had been one region that was identified by all as the region of great significance. So much so that it was sought by all to be controlled or contained using their land, naval or air power. The fact that the 20th century was dominated by ‘security’ concerns had made security as the dominant feature of all regional interactions. Accordingly, scholars like Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wild have produced impressive work on mapping the world in terms of ‘regional security complexes’ while others like Kenneth Boulding, Mary Parker Follett and David Mitrany, respectively, proposed alternative models of security communities, pluralism and functional cooperation.

By the time world witnessed the collapse of former Soviet Union and ending of the ‘bipolar’ system, the format of regional cooperation had already become the most popular way of achieving peace and security. Regional cooperation had also witnessed some serious initiatives following the end of World War II but Cold War had undermined its salience which has once again been revived from the early 1990s. Thus, when in February 2006, US State Department, decided to merge Central & South Asia bureaus under Richard Boucher as the new Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs, it was reflecting not only the dominant power’s perceptions but also recognizing as well as offering the new framework for debates amongst Eurasia’s opinion-makers. And in January 2009, the Obama administration has followed the tab by appointing Richard Holbrooke as Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan describing “managing Afghanistan” as “not simply an Afghanistan problem but an Afghanistan-Pakistan-India-

Kashmir-Iran problem” which highlights continuity in US vision on linkages between Central & South Asian countries.⁽²⁾ The actual evolution on the ground though remains overwhelmed by persistent hiccups and pitfalls.⁽³⁾

It is in this emerging complicated context that this paper makes a contention that (a) this time round, in addition to great powers, regional cooperation amongst local players of Eurasia is playing a critical role in redefining the broad contours of Eurasia’s 21st century map-making and (b) that one fundamental trend underlining this change remains this ever increasing overlap of the politico-security issues and interests of Central & South Asian countries.⁽⁴⁾ Together, this promises to highlight the enduring processes of integration of Central and South Asia, rather than their separation and isolation that had been so deeply etched out by the ‘Great Game’ proponents of the colonial times. And, with this revival of their past assimilation, their evolving new cooperative security paradigms of multilateral regional cooperation are beginning to provide the leads to the shape of things to come.

Theoretical framework

To begin with, though it has moved much beyond its fixation with territoriality, the concept of ‘Region’ remains delimited on the basis of geographical proximity, common ethnic, linguistic, social, religious customs and similarity of interests and threat perceptions. Debates on ‘region’ now increasingly emphasize on (a) commonality of interests and (b) intensity of interactions amongst nation-states that explains why United States become part of every region and regional cooperation. The related concept of ‘regionalism’ accordingly implies collective action at the regional level which makes it primarily a transactional category and therefore relatively easier to obtain. Regional cooperation represents an idea which has gained political currency for its creating conducive environment for pursuit of national

objectives.⁽⁵⁾ To begin with, regional cooperation does not necessarily aim at any political or economic integration but aims only at facilitating intergovernmental coordination towards achievement of defined objectives. Given that security discourses have remained dominated by realists, regional cooperation often denotes states as main actors though it also has scope for other actors and agencies.⁽⁶⁾ Then there is also this debate about regional economic and security communities that stresses on the flexibility and plurality of such transactional categories. Especially, the pluralistic community-building is sure easier than building formal associations, alliances or unions. That is why some commentators had once proposed for Turkey-led initiatives for an ASEAN-like integration amongst Central Asian Republics (CARs).⁽⁷⁾

Others, who follow experts like Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wild, define region in terms of security complex i.e. “a set of states whose major security perceptions and concerns were so interlinked that their national security problems could not reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another.” But, at the same time, even for them, security “cannot be limited to state and interstate relations and to politico-military issues; they must make room for other types of security units and issues.”⁽⁸⁾ This is what makes innovative debates so promising in re-defining Central and South Asia’s linkages within the evolving Eurasian regional cooperation initiatives. What would, for example, be the picture of Eurasia defined in terms of security complex theory? Writing in year 2002, a Kazakh professor from Almaty, Rustam Burnashev⁽⁹⁾, had proposed a set of three possible circles to explain his thesis that includes one SAARC country in its inner most and three SAARC countries in its second inner most circles which clearly underline this growing overlap of Central & South Asia –

- *The Inner Circle* consists of Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan;
- *The Second Circle* includes states with vital interest in the inner circle as also those that constitute external circle of threats (Russia, China, Pakistan, Iran, and perhaps Turkey);
- *The Third Circle* encompasses the first two circles plus actors that can play substantial role in the future of the core region (the United States and the European Union).

As regards mapping of the geographies in terms of functional, pluralistic community format, well-known expert Shirin Akiner⁽¹⁰⁾ has done impressive work in highlighting the conceptual flexibility and evolution of semantics. The English literature and, following it, in other European languages, she says, Central Asia has variously been described the vast swathe of the Eurasian landmass. At its wildest limits, the term may encompass a belt that stretches from the Hungarian plains in the West to the Ussuri and Amur rivers in the east, from the Arctic Circle in the north to the Indo-Gangetic plain in the south. All this again underlines the unison of Central & South Asian landmass. Given the flexibility of frontiers in case of pre-Westphalian political entities of this region, the rise and fall of great powers had never undermined linkages between Central & South Asia. Even in the Turkish language, ‘Orta Asya’ described Central Asia comprising all the Muslim states of Eurasia and ‘Turkestan’ (land of Turks) – an expression that held the longest sway in history – enjoyed constructive interactions with the South Asian kingdoms.

However, starting from the mid-19th century, says Akiner, following Russian conquests of Tashkent (1865), Samarkand (1868), Khiva (1873), Kokand (1876) and Turkmenistan (1881), this map making of Eurasia was to

come under the Russian influence; and was to remain so for the next hundred plus years. In the Russian language (and in most other regional languages under the Soviet influence), distinction was sought to be made between ‘Middle Asia’ (Srednyaya Aziya) and ‘Central Asia’ (Tsentral’naya Aziya) where the former comprised only the current four CARs (minus Kazakhstan) and the latter included also the Chinese regions of Mongolia (both Inner and Outer), Xinjiang and Tibet.

The collapse of the Soviet Union, therefore, was to herald one more transformation allowing this region to revive its age-old linkages though this is done now in the context of new political realities of post-Colonial identities and nation-building crisis of new leaders. In 1993, therefore, the heads of state/government of these newly independent five CARs adopted the term Central Asia as their collective designation and it has since come to be accepted as an international usage. But, as the following analysis tries to highlight, even this classification of Central Asia continues to locate the region at the center of Eurasia and it is beginning to engage itself in this larger region given the new global trends of multilateralism. Central and South Asia are, as a result, once again, finding themselves much closer to each other than ever.⁽¹¹⁾

The ‘New Regionalism’ in Eurasia

The current trends of regional cooperation form part of this wave of ‘new regionalism’ in international relations that can be traced as far back as 1980s. Since then while several old models and structures have been revived, the debates have also provided ‘regional cooperation’ with newer connotations. First, the number, scope and diversity of regionalist schemes have grown significantly since the last wave of 1960.⁽¹²⁾ Second, this revival of interest in regionalism remains increasingly linked to globalism which itself has undergone a transformation, though intra-regional

forces have not altogether disappeared. Third, the new regionalism has also moved beyond the conventional dichotomy of developed versus developing or least-developed countries and asymmetry has often become an advantage in this new regionalism. And finally, the dividing line between economic, political and security regionalism has also become difficult to draw as issues and actors in various forums seem to overlap and influence each other all the time. ⁽¹³⁾

Eurasia has always been at the confluence or intersections of various rising and falling empires and has occupied a critical space in their successive map making adventures since ancient times. In contemporary times, its large energy reserves bring it even greater significance as a highly sought after region by all major and rising powers. Starting from the disintegration of the Soviet bloc, Eurasia's increasing integration into the global economy has together created this new context of regional dialogue that has brought Central & South Asian countries so much closer together. The major visible driver for this growing *rapprochement* remains the energy needs in countries like China, India and Pakistan and enormous energy supplies in Eurasia creating complementarities between their increasingly dynamic economies. But, at the same time, their age-old baggage and political expediencies also continue to dwarf their potential.

Their recent initiatives at regional cooperation, as a result, remain overshadowed by their politico-security rather than development needs. The evolution of their deliberations remains especially tied to the recent implosion of non-traditional threats and challenges. Most of these have but little connection to the skills and frames of the conventional Westphalian territorial nation-states (read liberal democratic) system that these newly independent states continue to aspire to build. These new challenges have also transformed the nature of their conventional threats. Conversely, continued

conventional threats have complicated their non-traditional challenges. As a result, the dominant categories of International Relations literature that describe regional cooperation initiatives – like alliance, security complex, security community etc – no longer explain any of Eurasia's diverse and fast-evolving new initiatives. It is much less acceptable today to define or judge the range of regional groupings using terms and semantics from American or Euro-centric models.⁽¹⁴⁾

The United States military presence in the region, for instance, is now often cited as the most formidable conventional threat to the regional stability in Eurasia and it seems to further complicate this region's unconventional security problems.⁽¹⁵⁾ Put simply, while the continued instability in Afghanistan remains the most immediate conventional security challenge to countries of both South and Central Asia, all their religious extremism, ethnic disharmonies, drug and arms trafficking, refugee influx and terrorist activities have also developed implications for as also beyond this combined Southern Asian region. Conversely though, decades of continued instability have also further reinforced the conventional linkages of common threats and challenges amongst Central and South Asian nations. It is not only naïve but counter-productive today to think of any of their security challenges or their solutions in isolation.

The Central and South Asian landmass has also become more integrated due to new *global* trends. Constituting over a quarter of world population and being seen as economically vibrant and increasingly democratic, this region still remains home for 'global' threats from the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), Islamic extremism, terrorism, to narcotics production and trade, pandemics and refugees. All of these factors continue to reinforce its rampant poverty, illiteracy and corrupt ways of life constraining its capacity to realize its full potential.

Accordingly, it becomes imperative that these countries begin to think out-of-box and, to some extent, they have already begun this exercise by initiating efforts to redefine their map making of Eurasia; some of which can be seen happening with induction of Afghanistan into the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and by induction of India, Pakistan, Iran and Mongolia in Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Indeed, countries of both Central and South Asia have been working together in several other regional and international multilateral structures, coordinating, on regular basis, their regional strategies, that are aimed at ensuring their security and stability without allowing undue dependence upon any single source of power.⁽¹⁶⁾

It is this combination of both positive and negative trends that has triggered a whole multitude of multilateral forums around Eurasia which has since begun to transform the contours of Eurasia's regional personality. These forums include the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building in Asia (CICA), the pan-Turkic Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and its Collective Security Council, Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Russia-China-India strategic triangle and even the East Asian Summits (EAS) that seem today to redefine Eurasia's regional cooperation both substance and style.

At the very outset, all these multilateral initiatives at regional cooperation share one noticeable distinction: none of these has the US as its member or even observer and is often projected (except OSCE) as the microcosm of new pan-Asianism as also new paradigm of multilateral diplomacy and regional security. Before these, it is the ASEAN-led pan-Asian initiatives that have been representing the unique Asian wisdom and personality as ambitious yet co-opting the US as part of a unified Asian

entity. Even while some of these were conceived within the limitations of Cold War politics which privileged pacific-Asia, growing engagement between South and Central Asia carries the potential to further strengthen these Eurasian trends of Asian autonomy and provide it with new strategies in dealing with its security and development challenges. In this, though the progress in strengthening their regional frameworks remains at best only slow and steady so far yet, these new trends of Central and South Asian linkages conform to the wisdom of geo-strategy that once defined Eurasia as the 'pivot' and ASEAN as its brim. And, emerging new trends in multilateral cooperation in Eurasia seem to reinforce these old axioms.

ECO as the Islamic common market

The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) is the revised version of the earlier Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) of 1964. The RCD was formed as a counterpart of Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and had once enjoyed a strong backing of the United States during 1950s and 1960s.⁽¹⁷⁾ The ECO was set up in 1985 by Turkey, Iran and Pakistan and is the oldest amongst Eurasia's contemporary regional forums. It today joins ten countries across Eurasia. After the collapse of the former Soviet Union, while many rising powers viewed this situation as one of 'power vacuum', it was Turkey-led ECO that took the lead in engaging the newly independent resource-rich CARs. This new context offered Turkey inherent advantage as four of the five CARs speak one of Turkic dialects. In November 1992, as a result, the ECO managed to shepherd these five CARs, the trans-Caucasian republic of Azerbaijan as well as Afghanistan, into its fold.

It is important also to note that each of these ten members of the ECO is Muslim or has large Muslim populations though it does not include all the Muslim nations of Eurasia. As a result, there was also this talk about the

ECO emerging as the world's largest Islamic Common Market.⁽¹⁸⁾ This could have been ECO's very strong linkage with South Asia's Muslim-majority nations (Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Maldives) but it was not to be the case. Indeed, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan continues to compete with Turkey for expanding its presence in the region.⁽¹⁹⁾ Pakistan's close links with the Taliban regime resulted in gradual erosion of its credibility with both the ECO and the CARs. Members of Pakistani elite, however, used to describe India's alignment with Iran and Russia to engage the CARs as reason for Islamabad feeling compelled to recognize the Taliban regime in Afghanistan so as to use Afghanistan as its bridge to Eurasia. Pakistan's Afghan policy, of course, is said to have suffered from the flawed expectations about an early and complete victory as also loyalty of the Taliban leaders to work as Pakistan's bulwark in Central Asia.⁽²⁰⁾ However, even if the Taliban had run over entire Afghanistan and stayed loyal to Islamabad, it remains uncertain if CARs would have trusted the Taliban or Pakistan with their trade and energy flows without their ethnic cousins from north Afghanistan being part of power-sharing in Kabul.⁽²¹⁾

As regards the CARs, the main attraction for them lay in the ECO's concrete plans for economic development, particularly in communications and other infrastructure building though they did acknowledge their other historical, linguistic, cultural and religious links as well. Starting with Turkey's 1992 pledge of \$1.2 billion in loans and trade credits to the CARs — more than any other international agency or country — Turkish firms were reported to have invested over \$6 billion in the region's construction of important buildings, hotels, airports and industrial projects.⁽²²⁾ Turkey was unable to bring about any security and regional development framework into practice as it found it insurmountable to deal with bureaucratized and Sovietized Turkic-speaking power elite of the CARs as also

the intra-ECO competition between the US-backed Turkey and post-Islamic-revolution-Iran and Taliban-friendly Pakistan.⁽²³⁾

India has had its own reasons to engage the CARs. Many Western commentators had highlighted how, in India, the rise of independent CARs was initially perceived as unfavourable. Given New Delhi's fears on how the CARs may move Pakistan closer to the Islamic world and West Asia, CARs were expected to push Pakistan away from South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Similarly, given the nature of India-Pakistan relations, Pakistani debates on India's role in Central Asia often highlighted only the 'alarmist' views amongst India's opinion makers. To quote from one well-known Pakistani commentator, India was seen as analyzing these new initiatives of the ECO's economic, political and security integration of Central and Western Asian states (including Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan) in terms of the rise of 'Islamic fundamentalists' and an anti-India bloc in-the-making, having implications for the Kashmir question.⁽²⁴⁾ In the end, however, expanding engagement of the US, China, Japan and India was to discourage the original proponents of the ECO and this has resulted in the ECO gradually becoming dysfunctional as a force in Eurasian regional cooperation.

Conference on interaction & confidence-building measures in Asia

The CICA⁽²⁵⁾ remains the single largest regional framework that combines South and Central Asia. It was first proposed by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev in October 1992, at the 47th UN General Assembly session, as a "Conference on Security and Cooperation in Eurasia". Despite initial cold shouldering of this proposal, this gradually led to successive meetings of officials and experts

and to the first conference of deputy foreign ministers from 23 countries that established the CICA during 7-8 February 1996 meeting at Almaty. Three years later, the foreign ministers of the 15 CICA countries signed *Declaration of the Principles Guiding Relations* at Almaty on 14 September, 1999, and their first formal Summit held in Almaty on 4 June 2002. This is where the heads of state/government of sixteen nations signed the *Almaty Act*, establishing the CICA and pledging to work “towards promoting peace, security and stability in Asia.”⁽²⁶⁾

Held in the backdrop of 9/11, the first CICA Summit had adopted a *Declaration on Eliminating Terrorism and Promoting Dialogue amongst Civilizations*, condemning all forms and manifestations of terrorism and proposing civilizational dialogue as an alternative strategy. In terms of its further expansion, the CICA foreign ministers inducted Thailand as its 17th member in October 2004 when they also adopted *Catalogue of Confidence-Building Measures* (CBMs) and *Rules of Procedure*. The second CICA Summit was held on 17th June 2006. It adopted a *Political Declaration* and the *Statute of the CICA Secretariat* and admitted South Korea as its 18th member. The third CICA summit was held on 25th August 2008 at Almaty and adopted *CICA Progress in Confidence-building measures Realization* and *Protocol on Relocation of CICA Headquarters from Almaty to Astana*. This summit also inducted Jordan and UAE as full members, while Qatar entered as observer.

The salience of the CICA regional cooperation framework lies in its large size and pioneering vision to bring initiative in the hands of the Eurasian nations in evolving their post-Cold War alternative geopolitical paradigms. Secondly, like other Eurasian forums, it also brings together strange bedfellows like India and Pakistan or Iran, Palestine and Israel and so on. In 2002, the CICA was the first forum where leaders from India and Pakistan were sitting and talking face-to-face within five months of India's

Operation Parakaram⁽²⁷⁾ and leaders from China, Kazakhstan and Russia were seen offering to mediate between India and Pakistan. As regards India, its major interests in the CICA lay in its approach to resolving regional security issues, settling the Afghan conflict and combating religious extremism, terrorism, drug trafficking and in helping to build mutual confidence.⁽²⁸⁾

India has also utilized CICA meetings in evolving bilateral agreements with Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan on forming inter-governmental anti-terrorist working groups, exchanging experience, and carrying out joint military exercises and training. Military cooperation is particularly close between India and Tajikistan whose forces are trained in the Indian military academies. India invested \$25 million towards reconstruction of the Ayni aerodrome near Dushanbe that was used to deliver humanitarian aid in Afghanistan. There were even reports of India planning to deploy a squadron of Mi-17 helicopters and Mig-29 fighter planes and *Kiran* exercise-training planes at the Ayni aerodrome and to turn it over time into India's military air base in Central Asia.⁽²⁹⁾ More recently, following waiver by Nuclear Suppliers Group for nuclear commerce with India in October 2008, Kazakhstan offered to supply uranium to fulfil India's growing energy needs.⁽³⁰⁾ But after 10 years and three summits, the CICA has also been criticized as an oversized talking shop and, as yet, far away from its original dream of a Eurasian Union. To be effective, it needs to explore more innovative 'regional' approach and/or strategies as also better coordination with other regional organizations like SCO and SAARC.

SCO: From resolving borders to regionalization

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization comprising China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan as members and India, Pakistan, Iran and Mongolia as observers, was created way back in 1996 as the

Shanghai Five with a limited mandate of building confidence and resolving borders of Russia and China as also their borders with the newly created three CARs. But given its quick success on these initial issues, within two years, the Shanghai Five (from *Almaty Declaration* of 1998) began to expand its cooperation to larger regional issues of combating ethnic separatism, religious fundamentalism, international terrorism, arms-smuggling, narcotics and other cross-border crime etc. The success of the Shanghai Five turned it into Shanghai Forum and later Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 2001 and it has since moved from conflict resolution to cooperation and institution-building. It has increasingly begun to focus on economic integration and development across the larger region of the ancient Silk Route network. It included transport corridors from Central Asia to Indian Ocean via Afghanistan on the one hand and from China via Central Asia to the Caucasus to Europe on the other. Such facilitation by the SCO of this ever-expanding intercourse and interdependence of the post-Cold War Eurasia promises to help a future of cooperation and integration of South & Central Asian nations.

The SCO is the forum that has made most significant progress in having its influence across the Eurasian region and has come to be the centre of debates regarding its credentials in emerging as a counter-balance to the growing US presence in Eurasia. This has put focus on how the SCO has not only rejected the US application for observer status in 2005 but asked it to provide a timeline for withdrawing its forces from Eurasia as also issued several statements underlining its autonomy and irrelevance of the US to its activities. The SCO's call from its Astana summit of 2005 to the US to vacate its military bases in Central Asia has only further exasperated these speculations about SCO's anti-US bias. To reconcile these contrasting images remains SCO's most important challenge.

As regards the future of the SCO in bringing Central and South Asia together, given the limitations of India-Pakistan (and India-China) relations and Pakistan's equations with radical Islamic movements, especially Taliban, both China and Russia had been initially reluctant to allow these two countries into the SCO.⁽³¹⁾ Iran's support of radical Islamic movements had also been a matter of concern. But some of these issues have subsided leading to the SCO taking these countries in as observers. As a regional organization that is increasingly embracing both Central and South Asia, the SCO is making headway in economic, trade and cultural relations, as well as transportation and institution-building. The activism of the SCO promises to become an important platform for promoting the building of a harmonious Eurasia, an idea that was advocated by China at the SCO's 2006 Shanghai summit.⁽³²⁾

In the end, however, the SCO remains far more complex and noble initiative. Even its critics agree that the SCO is the only forum with a potential to transform Eurasia and bring Central and South Asia closer. To quote one such expert, the SCO is:

...seen as vehicle of Asian powers to justify and legitimize their own forms of domestic politics while providing a balance to US hegemony. Independent of this, however, there is a need to realize the benefits involved with increasing engagement across the East Asia/Central Asia/and South Asia divide. Such engagement could do much to make use of trade complementarities and poor interconnectedness in infrastructure across national and regional boundaries. Not to mention how greater interdependence could raise the costs of conflicts among the Eurasian states. Any development promoting increased regional

dialogue about trade and other issues may promise to have conflict-preventive effects in this conflict-prone region. ⁽³³⁾

Linkages between Central and South Asia

Most South Asian perspectives remain fascinated with their integral and inherent linkages with Central Asia that are seen to re-enforce their shared values and vision on their current security challenges. Many of the tribes and clans of South Asia have descended from Central Asia. Sufism, inherited from Central Asia, equally thrives in parts of continental South Asia. Archaeological finds link South and Central Asia from the Bronze Age of the 5th millennium and the Harappan people had road and other communication links with Turkmenistan. These links were re-enforced by the 'Achaemenid empire' and Alexander the Great and later, from the 7th century, Buddhism became the channel of pervasive South Asian influence (in language, culture, art, philosophy) across Central Asia. ⁽³⁴⁾ The founder of the great Mughal Empire of South Asia, Babur was born in Andijan in the Ferghana Valley in 1483 further signifying this link. Much has been written on both the imprint on and linkages of Central Asia with South Asia of medieval and early modern times. ⁽³⁵⁾

These historical links between Central and South Asia remained close and important until the mid-19th Century, when the khanates of Turkestan came under the Russian influence and rule. It was from the mid-19th Century that Russian (later Soviet) takeover of Central Asia followed by the post-World War II partition of India that had created a certain disconnect between South & Central Asia. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, therefore, changes in the political map were to make it quite natural to speculate whether, or how far, old patterns of their relations will be resorted. ⁽³⁶⁾ But some of the Cold War legacies were also to sustain their influence.

During the Cold War years especially, the West had encouraged radical bogey of Islam to flourish as a tool to undermine atheistic communism. Later, it was also used both by and against various national CAR regimes and this has since facilitated perusal of messianic and maximalist foreign policies by some of these regimes.⁽³⁷⁾ On the positive side, from early-1960s itself, soft religious policies of post-Khrushchev Soviet leadership had allowed outside Islamic leaders to visit various parts of Soviet Central Asia. This revived some restricted links between Central and South Asian people. But as early as 1970s, experts had begun to talk of renaissance, even politicization, of Islam in Central Asia.⁽³⁸⁾ Starting from the late 1970s, President Zia-ul Haq's Islamization of Pakistan was to swing the tide to the other extreme and though Pakistan's military-Islamist cocktail proved a potent instrument in undoing the Soviet expansionism into Afghanistan, it was also to result in this region's Talibanization with Al-Qaeda being its most unintended outcome.

A book by a former head of 'Afghan Cell' of Pakistan Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) vividly details the role of Pakistan, especially during the mid-1980s, in disseminating copies of the Quran and other literature in native dialects of the CARs.⁽³⁹⁾ And, from mid-1990s, after series of anti-West attacks, the 9/11 in 2001 was to make 'clash of civilization' prophecy of Prof Samuel Huntington appear as definitely credible. While post-Taliban Afghanistan remains still uncertain, some of this uncertainty has also impacted north-western frontiers of Pakistan, making Afghanistan as centre of new security concerns across Central and South Asia. This has undermined the bridging role of Afghanistan and threatens to turn it into a strong buffer, if not a barrier. This has also often resulted in creating populist images of dichotomy between Islamic Pakistan and Hindu India.

This, however, does not mean end of opportunities provided India and Pakistan are able to focus on the larger canvass and do not allow their short-term gains to derail their long-term interests in working together towards integration of Eurasia. For instance, given Central Asia's urgent imperative to find connections to open oceans, India and Pakistan can become their gateway to warm waters of Indian Ocean. Instead, the two have been fighting over highways and railways routes connecting Central Asia to alternative seaports of Iran and Pakistan. The two have also been competing for energy procurement and pipelines. This zero-sum approach clearly calls for greater coordination between Indian and Pakistani regional policies.

Need for India-Pakistan policy coordination

Counter-terrorism and energy exploration remain the two main drivers of India-Pakistan engagement with Eurasia and the SCO has clearly emerged as their main foreign policy network for action. Given the historical contentions between China and India – and in view of growing suspicions in Beijing about the Indo-US security cooperation – China remains skeptical about India's forays into Eurasia. Beijing and Islamabad have accordingly often sought to project their jointness in dealing with India. Even when alone, Pakistan has not made South Asia's interactions with Eurasia any easier; driving a physical and strategic wedge between South Asia and Central Asia by being both the supporter as also victim of radical Islam in Afghanistan. Historically, strategic passes of Afghanistan that connected South Asia to Central Asia are now with Pakistan which has repeatedly used Muslim card to intensify its cooperation with CARs. ⁽⁴⁰⁾

Secondly, South Asia's engagement with Central Asia also remains hostage to the situation within Afghanistan. For Afghanistan to stabilize both India and Pakistan must stop their strategies of counterbalancing each

other — a strategy which is often extended even into their engagement with the whole of Central Asia and Eurasia.⁽⁴¹⁾ Pakistan sees itself as ‘cultural extension of the Central Asia and India describes CARs as its ‘extended neighbourhood.’⁽⁴²⁾ Both India and Pakistan, nevertheless, remain narrowly focused. Experts have alleged that Islamabad perhaps wants to strengthen its position in Central Asia, create a ring of Muslim states around India, and extract advantages from a transportation route that would pass through its territory and link Central Asia with the Indian Ocean.⁽⁴³⁾ In the early 1990s, for instance, while Pakistan’s business elite was proposing ways to expand trade, Jamaat-e-Islami was propagating Islamic revolutions in Central Asia.⁽⁴⁴⁾ However, Pakistan’s Islamic card has not found many takers (except Turkmenistan) and has only eroded Islamabad’s credibility and stature.

The India-Pakistan divide remains the fundamental stumbling block in dealing with the immediate crisis in Afghanistan as a first step towards South Asia’s integration with Central Asia and the Eurasian region. To some extent, vested interests have also contributed to this lack of mutual confidence and coordination between Islamabad and New Delhi. For instance, India’s interest in Central Asia lay in a mixture of politico-strategic concerns and, to a lesser extent, in perceived economic and commercial prospects for India’s continued growth and development. However, the western media only highlights how, for some political circles in India, the independence of these ex-Soviet republics was interpreted in an alarmist fashion as a highly unwelcome development strengthening Pakistan’s regional position.⁽⁴⁵⁾ To quote from Scott Moor of the Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, Monterey (California):

In terms of a buffer, the purpose of Central Asia is, in Indian eyes, three fold: to prevent the creation of an ‘Islamic belt’ allied to Pakistan, to forestall

encirclement by either China or the USA, and finally to insulate India from the narco-terrorism that now plagues its northern borders... As a bridge, Central Asia provides a 'near abroad' market for India's emerging exports industries. It also promises overland routes to the rich resources of Russia and the Middle East. Perhaps most importantly for India's short-term growth, the region possesses significant energy supplies at relatively short distance from Indian markets....Significantly for India's great power ambitions, some Central Asian governments support New Delhi for its candidacy for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, and help foster a direct link with Russia, on whom India increasingly relies as counterweight to Chinese and US encroachments.⁽⁴⁶⁾

This perhaps explains South Asia's continued reliance on bilateral channels and how India has made some inroads with its recent political and economic investments in Afghanistan and its security cooperation with Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. In Afghanistan, India stands today as the fifth largest bilateral donor country having (after the US, Japan, the UK and Germany) pledged aid of over \$1 billion.⁽⁴⁷⁾ Most of it is targeted at humanitarian assistance, small development and low visibility projects with community participation and long-term development projects, all channeled through the Afghan government. But India has also pledged an annual contribution of \$200,000 to the multi-donor Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) that is aimed to be in tandem with multilateral international initiatives which also seeks to highlight India's commitment to the democratization of Afghanistan.⁽⁴⁸⁾ Such a prospect promises to turn Afghanistan from being a barrier into becoming a bridge joining South and Central Asia in the larger regional cooperation across Eurasia.

Conclusion

In Eurasia of today, centripetal tendencies are more powerful than centrifugal ones and it is already reflected in the regional cooperation proposals that have been mooted by some of the Central Asian leaders. This is seen as a potent method to strengthen their normalization and integration process and to resolve their complex internal and external equations.⁽⁴⁹⁾ President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan had, in 1992, put forward the idea of Eurasian Union (with a framework and structures similar to that of European Union). Similarly, in 1993, leaders of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan had proposed a Commonwealth of Central Asian States.⁽⁵⁰⁾ This framework can provide India and Pakistan a new multilateral ambience to become both the beneficiaries as also benefactors of Eurasian integration.

The re-assertion of Russia in the recent military showdown in 2008 in South Ossetia is expected to undermine the perennial US-factor in Eurasia and is likely to further encourage local initiatives at regional cooperation and integration. Broadly speaking, the discourses on regional cooperation and integration in Eurasia have listed four possible scenarios that include (a) reinforcement of linkages with the CIS countries based on economic and institutional priorities, (b) the formation of a community around the CARs, (c) integration led by neighbouring countries with similar challenges and, (d) strengthening alignment with NATO or other Western sponsored initiatives.⁽⁵¹⁾ Recent trends indicate that these scenarios elude to a certain order which privileges the promotion of linkages between Central and South Asian countries. Thus, the processes of Eurasian regional cooperation have increasingly demonstrated their direct linkages to being both the cause and consequence of a positive engagement between India and Pakistan.

For the future of South Asia's engagement with the CARs, the onus lies primarily on India and Pakistan. Both

India and Pakistan need to work together and begin from reviving normalcy in Afghanistan and, from there, build their larger joint strategies for their future engagement with Eurasia. Afghanistan cannot become South Asia's bridge to Central Asia (and Eurasia) without Pakistan resolving the Pashtun problem and finalization of their border (the Durand Line) which also brings into focus the current security situation in the northwest of Pakistan. But to ensure that external powers are not able to bully local powers, it is imperative that local powers like India and Pakistan must find and work for local solutions. To quote a senior general from Pakistan, nearly all countries of the region, stretching from the Middle East to South East Asia, including Central Asia, see greater political, economic and strategic benefits to themselves and the region from the easing of tensions between India and Pakistan.⁽⁵²⁾ Meanwhile, at present the future of South Asia's linkages with Central Asia remains intricately intertwined with the future of Afghanistan.

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11. G. M. Mir, "Emerging Central Asian Issues – The Geographical Agenda", in Gulshan Majeed and M. Afzal Mir (eds.), *Studies in Central Asia*, (Srinagar: University of Kashmir, 1997), p. 253. Prof G M Mir defines Central Asia as landmass comprising five Central Asian states of

Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan (members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS); Xinjiang and Tibet (inside China); Outer Mongolia; Ladakh and Kashmir (Indian part); Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Khorasan. This makes Central Asia clearly overlap with the landmass defined as South Asia. By comparison Eurasia has been defined to include the Asia Minor, China, Commonwealth of Independent States, East and Southeast Asia, Europe, Japan and South Asia which again brings South and Central Asia together as one continuum.

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Afghanistan Between South and Central Asia: Common Perceptions

Dr Wadir Safi

Afghanistan is a landlocked and mountainous country that has suffered much throughout history, in particular during the 19th and 20th centuries. Its strategic position sandwiched between the Middle East, Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent along the “Silk Route” means that Afghanistan has long been fought over — despite its rugged and forbidding terrain.

It was at the centre of the so called “Great Game” in the 19th century when Imperial Russia and the British Empire in India vied for influence.

And it became a key Cold War battleground after thousands of Soviet troops invaded it in 1979 to prop up a pro-communist regime, leading to a major confrontation that drew in the US and Afghanistan’s neighbours.

But the outside world eventually lost interest after the withdrawal of Soviet forces, while the country’s protracted civil war dragged on.

Unfortunately, after the collapse of the pro-Soviet regime, the Islamic State of Afghanistan could not establish a strong government based on a constitution. Instead, each party started war against the other for power which caused more destruction and loss of life for Afghans and led to the establishment of the Taliban regime. The Taliban were opposed by an alliance of factions drawn mainly from Afghanistan's minority communities and based in the north.

In control of about 90 per cent of Afghanistan until late 2001, the Taliban were recognized as the legitimate government by only three countries. They were at loggerheads with the international community over the presence on their soil of Osama bin Laden, accused by the US for the attacks of 11 September 2001.

After the Taliban's refusal to hand over bin Laden, the US initiated aerial attacks in October, paving the way for opposition groups to drive them from power.

As a result of this war, Afghanistan faces many problems in the spheres of security, economy, social, political and cultural affairs, reconstruction of a war ravaged economy, repatriation of the Afghan refugees abroad, drug trafficking and an armed insurgency against the regime propped up by America and its allies. In this back drop we shall try to see how Afghanistan exists or coexists with its neighbours in the North and South Asia. And what are the common perceptions?

South Asia

South Asia, also known as Southern Asia, is a southern region of the Asian continent, which comprises the sub-Himalayan countries and, for some authorities, also includes the adjoining countries on the west and the east. It is surrounded (clockwise, from west to east) by Western Asia, Central Asia, Eastern Asia, and Southern Asia.

South Asia consists of the following countries:

- Bangladesh
- Bhutan
- India
- Maldives
- Nepal
- Pakistan
- Sri Lanka

These countries are also currently members of a regional co-operation group, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which was jointly formed by them.

Some academic and/or cultural institutions from the US and United Kingdom also classify the following countries and territories as South Asian:

- Afghanistan (Otherwise considered Central Asian or Middle-Eastern but now a member of SAARC),
- Myanmar (Prior to August 1947, for nearly a century, it was part of the British Raj and a region of South Asia proper, otherwise considered Southeast Asian),
- Tibet, PRC (Otherwise considered Central Asian or East Asian; PRC is an observer member of SAARC).

The United Nations also includes Iran, but not Tibet or Burma, as part of Southern Asia:

Iran (Iran is an observer nation in SAARC, otherwise considered Southwest Asia).

Geophysically, the term Indian subcontinent is used to describe those regions which lie on the Indian Plate, bordered on the north by the Eurasian Plate. However, a good proportion of the Pakistan land mass is not on the Indian Plate, but on the fringes of the Iranian plateau. As in the case of the Hindukush Mountains, everything to the south-east of the Iranian plateau is considered South Asia. But, geopolitically, Southern Asia subsumes the Indian subcontinent and includes both, the territories found internal to the Indian Plate and those in proximity to it. Afghanistan, for instance, is sometimes grouped in this region due to socio-political, historical, and ethnic (Pashtun) ties to neighbouring Pakistan.

The South Asian economy is characterized by chronic poverty, and inequality of wealth. While some elites in South Asia are incredibly rich and wealthy, more than 40 per cent of their populations live below the poverty line, which is just managing to survive, without the basic amenities of life.

Corruption at all levels is highest among South Asian countries. While India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are emerging economies, Nepal, Myanmar and Iran are stagnating economies, marked by high inflation as a result of international isolation.

History

The peoples of the region possess several distinguishing features that set them apart including a network of means of transportation and communication as well as banking and training of requisite workforce; the existing rail, post, telegraph, bank and education facilities have evolved out of the base established in the colonial era, often called the British Raj. Most of the region gained independence from Europe by the late 1940s.

Since 1947, most South Asian countries have achieved tremendous progress in all spheres. Most notable achievements are in the fields of education; industry; health care; information technology and services based on its applications; research in the field of cutting edge sciences and technologies; defense related self-reliance projects; international/global trade and business enterprises and outsourcing of human resources. Areas of difficulty remain, including religious extremism, high levels of corruption, disagreements on political boundaries, and inequitable distribution of wealth.

Almost all South Asian countries were under direct or indirect subjugation at some point. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar were colonies of Great Britain from 1757 to 1947, almost 200 years. Iran was under direct American control from 1945 to 1979, and Nepal was a protectorate and sub-colony of Great Britain from 1840 to 1950. Tibet at times has governed itself as an independent state and at other times has had various levels of association with China. It became under Chinese control in the 18th century in spite of British efforts to seize possession of this Chinese protectorate at the beginning of the 20th century. Tibetan and Chinese views on the Sino-Tibetan relations vary significantly. The Tibetans saw the Dalai Lama's relation with the Manchu emperor in more of a religious light than what would be considered political.

Ethnic groups

South Asia, which consists of the nations of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, is ethnically diverse, with more than 2000 ethnic entities with populations ranging from hundreds of millions to small tribal groups. South Asia has been invaded and settled by many — ethnic groups over the centuries including various Dravidians, Indo-Aryans and Iranian groups. The amalgamation of Dravidians, Indo-Aryan and

local tribal cultures over the centuries created common culture, traditions and beliefs. The Vedic Sanskrit language and Vedic religion combined Indo-Aryan, Dravidian and local tribal beliefs to give rise to the ancient South Asian religions of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and also Sikhism, even though Sufi tradition of Islam had also significantly influenced nascent Sikhism and its holiest scripture. As a consequence, they share many similar cultural practices, festivals and traditions. Throughout time, the traditions of different ethnic groups in South Asia have diverged, and sometimes given rise to strong local traditions, such as South Indian culture in earlier times. Other ethnic groups, successively streaming in later mainly from Central Asia and Iran, e.g. Sakas, Kushans, Huns etc., influenced pre-existing south Asian cultures; the last of these new arrivals — the Turks and Pathans — brought in much cultural influence and the Abrahamic religion of Islam to the Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashtun, Baloch and Kashmiri people in the northwestern parts of South Asia, to North India and to Bangladesh. However, their Turkish/Persian languages have ceased to be prominent; replaced now by Urdu, a syncretic language of combined Hindi-Persian-Turkic-Arabic heritage.

There are many other similarities and common historical, religious, linguistic factors between Afghanistan and South Asian countries that the time frame of this conference doesn't allow us to go so much in detail about that.

About the most important and very relevant spheres which link Afghanistan with both South Asian and Central Asian countries, economically and politically, will be taken into consideration in the following pages which study Afghanistan in a greater Central Asia context.

As we know, Central Asian states (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan) are newly independent entities arising from the break up of the Soviet Federation in the

1990s and can be associated to the south towards Afghanistan and other South Asian countries, especially, from economic and political point of view.

Afghanistan and Greater Central Asia

To be precise and short on the point, progress in Afghanistan has opened a stunning new prospect that was barely perceived when Operation Enduring Freedom was launched. This prospect is to assist in the transformation of Afghanistan and the entire region of which it is the heart into a zone of secure sovereignties sharing viable market economies, secular and relatively open systems of governance, respecting citizens' rights, and maintaining positive relations with the US.

The emergence of this zone, referred to herein as "Greater Central Asia," will roll back the forces that give rise to extremism and endanger continental security. It will bring enormous benefit to all the countries and peoples of the region, and, significantly, also to major powers nearby, notably Russia, China, and India.

Many of the greatest threats to Afghanistan today are regional in character: Instability exists to the east and southeast, and could arise from countries to the west or north if evolutionary processes are thwarted there or if any single outside power expands its influence and control in the region at the expense of a reasonable balance among them. Any such instability is bound to involve global powers.

Also, many of the domestic challenges facing Afghanistan, including issues of security, governance, economics and culture, are regional in character, and not purely national.

If significant foreign and domestic challenges facing the new Afghanistan are regional in scope, so are the solutions. Only a regional approach will enable Afghanistan

to take advantage of the many commonalities and complementarities that exist between it and its neighbours.

The major potential engine of positive change for Afghanistan and its immediate and more distant neighbours is the revival of regional and continental transport and trade. The arrangements that make possible such trade exist only in embryonic form today.

To minimize the threat and maximize the potential, the US must adopt a strategy very different from that which guided its forces in 2002, one that is framed in terms of long-term objectives rather than immediate needs.

These objectives include:

1. Advance the war against terrorism and terrorist groups, building US — linked security infrastructures on a national and regional basis, basing these on perceived mutual interests, and in such a way that the US can use its presence there to respond to crises in the proximate regions such as South Asia and the Middle East.
2. Enable Afghanistan and its neighbours to protect themselves against radical Islamist groups, both foreign and domestic.
3. Assure that no single state or movement, external or internal, dominates the region of which Afghanistan is a part, and those resources which are its economic base.
4. Strengthen sovereignties by continuing to develop the Afghan economy and society and by strengthening trade and other ties between Afghanistan and its neighbours in the region.
5. Foster open, participatory, and rights-based political systems that can serve as attractive

models for other countries with Muslim populations.

To ensure positive economic and political developments in the region, the international community should help countries of the region in order to bring peace and stability in the region which will affect world peace and stability as well.

Summing-Up

Ross Masood Husain
(*Rapporteur*)

It is now time to bring the proceedings of this international seminar on “Building Political and Economic Linkages between South Asia and Central Asia” to a close. As your Rapporteur, I have pleasure in presenting a summary of the proceedings of this seminar.

Several learned papers have been presented by renowned scholars, academics, intellectuals, leading journalists and policymakers who assembled here on a short notice from all over the world and from our own country, Pakistan. A distinguished audience has been continuously in attendance through all the nine working sessions of this seminar as well as at the inaugural and concluding sessions of this two-day meeting, and has exhibited a sustained intellectual interest in this special, topical and vital issue through a series of lively question-answer sessions that followed the presentation of the papers. Indeed, the seminar generated so much enthusiasm and heated discussion that the chairmen of working sessions and participants from the audience were tempted to make learned comments based on

their personal experience or inside knowledge. In this sense, the seminar has been a resounding success.

My heartiest felicitations are due to the President, Institute of Regional Studies, Major General Jamshed Ayaz Khan and his team of dedicated men and women from the staff of the Institute, and equally to Dr. Babak Khalatbari, Resident Representative, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung of Germany, whose active collaboration made this intellectual gathering possible.

A brilliant inaugural address by the chief guest, Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Foreign Minister of Pakistan, set the tone of the Seminar. The theme of the Seminar was neatly structured into a number of sub-themes, each vital and each topical. Going by the published programme, the sub-themes covered a broad spectrum of issues — ranging from a strategic appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of South Asia to a similar strategic appraisal of the strengths and weaknesses of Central Asia; from an analysis of internal dynamics (stabilizing and destabilizing factors) of South Asia to a similar examination of the internal dynamics of Central Asia; from nuclearization of the subcontinent and its impact on the regional security to the role of SAARC and the India-Pakistan peace process; from identity politics and religious militancy in South Asia to the politics of religious extremism in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan; and from common perceptions of linkages between South Asia and Central Asia to the issues of economic cooperation between the two regions, with special emphasis on energy and trade. Interspersed in between, there were some fine presentations on the European Union's Resolution on Afghanistan from Pakistani perspective and on the G-8 Initiative on Pakistan/Afghanistan. The learned scholars offered all kinds of recipes for strengthening the linkages between South Asia and Central Asia, including a very learned and comprehensive paper on ways and means of

improving cultural and economic linkages between the two regions.

A detailed reference to some of these issues discussed in the seminar may not be out of place in this brief summing-up. One of the first papers presented at the seminar was the one related to SAARC. The observations on it were of particular interest. The author argued that because of the continuing suspicion and distrust between the two main actors in SAARC, namely India and Pakistan, the role of SAARC has become “marginalized”, especially in the areas of trade and the combating of terrorism. While admitting the existence of this “Trust Deficit”, many members of the audience felt that things were not that bad. People see SAARC according to their own lights. To some SAARC is a puny, even sickly infant, compared to the robust creature that the European Union has over the decades grown into. For others, it is a backward, handicapped child compared even with ASEAN. For still others, it is little more than a pious hope wherein the result-oriented programmes of meaningful regional cooperation have yet to emerge. Most felt that the very founding of SAARC and its ability to survive these odd score years without dissolving into acrimony constituted in itself a considerable accomplishment — and a remarkable one at that, given the volatile nature of South Asia’s political equations. Indeed, the history is replete with instances where its meetings have provided South Asia’s political leaders opportunities to meet, discuss and defuse tensions in an informal environment, free from the constraining rigidities of official policy and official position. The general sense of the seminar was that SAARC today is like a complex protein molecule. To understand it at all, the analyst must break it down into its component parts and weigh them individually. Also since SAARC is a process and not just an event, it would be more relevant to evaluate its progress in a long-term context.

An entire session was devoted to the India-Pakistan peace process — the so-called composite dialogue. It was in this session that the audience heard a cry of anguish, a cry of despair, from a daughter of Kashmir, who called for a revival of the traditional trade links between Central Asia and South Asia via Kashmir — links that had been disrupted by the current conflict, occupation and division of Jammu and Kashmir. Regarding the peace process itself, the learned scholars spoke of the “trust deficit” between India and Pakistan, and the need for a strong popular, conciliatory and decisive leadership “capable of propelling the talks to their logical conclusion. Many in the audience, however, felt that there was a dilemma for Pakistan in the sense that in this composite dialogue, India held most of the cards both on issues of process (to talk or not to talk) and on issues of substance (to give territory or not to give territory). The absence, partial if not total, of any meaningful process on even comparatively less contentious issues than Jammu and Kashmir, in the composite dialogue process (after five rounds) raised a huge question mark over the future of bilateral talks. There were many in the gathering who wondered how long the peace process could sustain without any forward movement on contentious issues and without coming to grips with the core contentious issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

The general sense of the seminar was that the independence of the Central Asian Republics came at a crucial moment in the histories of South Asia and Central Asia. The historical connection between the two regions extended so far back into the past that there was proven evidence of historical routes long before the urban settlements of the Indus Valley civilization of Harrapa and Moenjodaro (that themselves were some 5,000 years old). Indeed, the entire ethno-cultural life of the area that comprised the northern parts of South Asia (including and in particular Pakistan) was moulded on the patterns of Central

Asia. The national dress, cuisine, language and even religious traditions were profoundly influenced by this connection. The cities of Thatta, Multan, Lahore, Peshawar, Muzaffarabad and others had direct trade links with Samarkand, Bukhara and other Central Asian cities until the 19th century when the colonization of Central Asia by Czarist Russia and the South Asian subcontinent by Imperial Britain broke the connection and led them to look in different directions. The desire to restore and develop this connection was overwhelmingly mutual and spontaneous. Speaker after speaker in the seminar endorsed the imperative need for strengthening political, economic, security and cultural links between the two regions and offered their views and opinions on how this could best be done. I think that I would be reflecting the sentiments of the participants of the seminar by saying that this seminar is a humble contribution towards the achievement of these cherished goals.

Farewell Remarks

Ladies and Gentlemen,

After the Marriott bomb blast in Islamabad on 20 September 2008, many of our friends and supporters suggested to us that this being a very important International Seminar and on a very significant subject: "Building Political and Economic Linkages between South Asia and Central Asia", I should either cancel or postpone it for some time. After deliberating on all the suggestions I and my colleagues at the Institute of Regional Studies thought that we must not give in to the terrorists by going on the defensive. I thought that the show must go on. I am very thankful to the participants, specially the foreign participants, to have found time to be with us, to have come and participated in the seminar, to make it a great success. I would particularly like to mention Mr. Thomas G Houlahan to have come all the way in spite of the travel advisory issued by the US Embassy/Government.

One can simply marvel at the standard of the papers read by the speakers and the serious nature of questions from the audience. We will, of course, print a book of the proceedings of the seminar including an analysis of the two-days proceedings by rapporteur, Mr. Ross Masud Hussain. I am sure this will be very useful for all of us.

I would just like to re-emphasize a few points which were pointed out by our learned speakers:-

- a. There is a trust deficit in this area as a whole and no progress can be made politically or economically if this trust deficit, like the way it exists between India and Pakistan and between Afghanistan and Pakistan, continues. As Mr. Thomas G Houlahan brought out, even for some trade to take place or a minor dispute to be resolved, there has to be a level of minimum trust between the two parties.
- b. We have to get out of the “narrow-mindedness” and think of the South Asian region or Central Asian region as a whole. The regional alliances like EU or ASEAN have understood the importance of being together in order to bargain with other regions/powers. We in South Asia, besides keeping the interest of our own nations in mind, should also work for the stability and prosperity of the region.
- c. People-to-people contact is the essential element of any regional development. We have to increase people-to-people contact within South Asia and between South Asia and Central Asia. The system of visas has to be simplified and the transport systems, like air, rail and road links have to be developed and increased.
- d. We have been talking about building on historical ties between South Asia and Central Asia, by enhancing trade and economic/political cooperation. We even talk about offering warm water ports like Gwadar to Central Asian Republics, China, Russia and beyond. This will only work if we make trade and

economic/political cooperation meaningful and lucrative for all parties.

For the mutual benefit of Central Asia and South Asia as well as Iran, we must promote all round cooperation as the energy needs of South Asia can thus be met internally within these two regions.

In the end I would like to thank the speakers for their in-depth inputs and the chairmen of the various sessions. I would like to thank all of them for their worthy contributions and the audience for its great interest in the proceedings.

Lastly I would like to thank Mr Babak Khalatbari for his great support before and during the seminar, without which it would have been difficult to conduct the proceedings so smoothly.

Maj Gen Jamshed Ayaz Khan (Retd)

The Contributors

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Ms Victoria Schofield specializes in South Asia and has written quite a few books including : *Kashmir in Conflict — India, Pakistan and the Unfinished War* (1996); *Kashmir in the Crossfire* (1996); *Bhutto: Trial and Execution* (1990 and 79); *Every Rock, Every Hill: North-West Frontier and Afghanistan* (1987). She is the editor of *Old Roads, New Highways: Fifty Years of Pakistan* (1997). Ms Schofield is also a broadcaster.

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Ms. Farzana Raja (MNA) is politically affiliated with the Pakistan People's Party (PPP). She is currently Chairperson of the Benazir Bhutto Income Support Programme.

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Ms. Marina Pikulina is working as an expert and translator for DCAF Project, Kabul, Afghanistan. Previously she worked as a leading analyst at the Foundation for Regional Policy, Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Her recent publications include *Problems and prospects of Afghan crisis*, KISI journal, Almaty, 2008, and a report on *Religious freedom in Uzbekistan — current situation*, December 2007.

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Mr. Wadir Safi is the Executive Director of Independent National Legal Training Centre (INLTC) of Afghanistan. Has participated in many international conferences. He has contributed to more than 30 books and academic magazines.

He mostly deals with public international law, the nationality question, human rights and the right of self- determination of nations.

NOTE:

The following experts made their presentations but did not send their papers for the book:

Dr Tanvir Ahmed Khan, Air Commodore Khalid Banuri, Dr C. Raja Mohan, Sen. Engr Rukhsana Zuberi, Prof Dr Aftab Kazi and Mr Masud Ahmed Dahir.

Regrettably, the publication is poorer without their contributions.

Ms Victoria Schofield sent in her paper but could not attend the seminar owing to her commitments elsewhere. Ms. Marina Pikulina was held up due to delays in processing of her travel papers but emailed her paper nevertheless.
