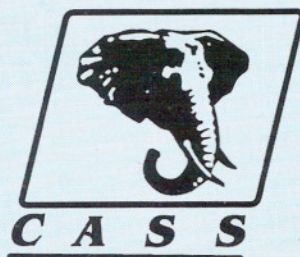

CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STRATEGIC STUDIES



**PROCEEDINGS OF SEMINAR
ON
INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURS :
A REGIONAL SECURITY PERSPECTIVE**

04th January, 2006

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SEMINAR
INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURS : A REGIONAL
SECURITY PERSPECTIVE

04th January, 2006

(Venue : Southern Command Cinema Hall adjacent to HQ
Southern Command)

BACKGROUND PAPER

S. G. Chitnis

Introduction

The Indian sub-continent was a composite entity till the end of the Second World War. Decolonisation resulted in the birth of many independent nations with India as the biggest and largest in terms of area, population and resources. It is saddled with the tag of being the Big Brother in its relations with its neighbours.

India as a nation state lacked strategic foresight to adequately guard and secure its geographic frontiers. The present Pak Occupied Kashmir, the Northern Area, the failure to sort out and resolve the Kashmir issue once for all, the failure to find a permanent solution to the festering Indo-Bangladesh boundary problem are symptoms of strategic blinkers.

Pakistan

Pakistan is now recognized as the epicenter of global terror. Its covert war to wrest Kashmir and disintegrate India is now almost two decades old. The Pakistan army-ISI rulers have used terrorism, drugs, finances, and militant training camps to further their agenda and have also established links with the fundamentalists and militants in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. President

Musharraf appears to be covertly in league with them to keep his hold over his power base, but at the same time, under global, particularly US pressure keeps on posturing and lipping his efforts for peace. The US at present finds it useful to support him and carry him along rather than risk the take over of the country by Islamic fundamentalists with the ICI back up. Siachin located at the strategic tri-junction is likely to remain a bone of contention for long in the Indo-Pak relations. Handing over of Aksai Chin to China was a calculated move to get close to China. People to people contact and greater Indo-Pak trade are factors which promise to lower the adversarial temperature between the two countries. SAARC appears to be inching towards SAFTA.

Both India and Pakistan are de-facto Nuclear Weapon States. This saddles them with enormous responsibility of safe guarding them. However there is a lurking fear of some of these Pakistani nuclear weapons falling in the hands of the jihadis and fundamentalists.

India needs to import 75 percent of its energy requirements mainly from the Middle-east. The requirements are increasing at a fast pace as a result of steady and fast economic growth. Oil and gas pipelines from Iran and Kazakhstan through Afghanistan and Pakistan appear to be likely in the near future due to energy and economic compulsions of the countries involved.

Afghanistan

Taliban funded and supported by Pakistan is creating chronic instability in Afghanistan. Warlords, drugs and arms are creating chaos. President Hamid Karzai's government is weak. It badly needs the crutches of international security force to maintain security and tackle drug menace. The situation is compounded by Pakistan's continuing interest in having its hold over Afghanistan through its support to Taliban.

Afghanistan is plagued by poverty and lacks skilled workers. The infrastructure is crumbling. The environment is highly unstable. A friendly and stable Afghanistan is in India's interest. India's traditional and cultural linkages with Afghanistan need to be revived and strengthened. But the US has refused to allow India to play a bigger role in Afghanistan for fear of offending Pakistan.

Nepal

Nepal is on the verge of becoming a failed state. It is caught between king Gyanendra's autarchic monarchy and Maoist's menace. The king controls the army, Maoists control large parts of Nepal outside Kathmandu Valley. Political parties are disunited.

The Indo Nepal borders are porous. Economic and Political refugees are pouring in very large numbers in India. This is creating social and economic pressures in the bordering states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Uttaranchal. Maoists linkages with their counterparts in India, like MCC and PWG are easily noticeable. This constitutes grave security and economic threat to India.

Since independence the weapons to the Nepalese army were exclusively supplied by India and its officers were trained in India. As a result of the feudal mess and India's confused response, China has got closer to Nepal and is supplying weapons to the Nepalese army.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the poorest, most densely populated and least developed countries. There is rising Islamic fundamentalism. It is fuelled by Pakistan's ISI and Saudi funded madrassas. The political class is deeply divided with vicious political antagonism. Both the main political parties, though overtly secular, have started quickly supporting fundamentalist groups which can be disastrous. There is rampant corruption and bitter political infighting.

There is large scale illegal immigration of Bangladeshis into India. It is almost a demographic invasion. The number of illegal immigrants is estimated over 20 million. This is causing serious repercussions in northeastern Indian states. Consequently many districts which had Muslims in minority have become Muslim majority districts.

Indo-Bangladesh border is unstable. There are continuous border clashes. A very large number of enclaves and back-water areas are disputed border areas. No effort has been made to ensure clarity and to permanently demarcate the national boundaries between the two countries. Frequent border clashes therefore are inevitable.

China has made efforts to penetrate markets in Bangladesh.

Sri Lanka

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) is the world's deadliest terrorist force. Sri Lanka was a peaceful nation. The perfidy of the Sinhalese political leaders since independence, their "sacrosanct" promises to the Tamilians just before the elections and dumping them after getting elected, derecognition of Tamil language as the nations language, burning the historic and very valuable Tamilians Jaffna library, drastically cutting down of educational avenues for the Tamilians and reducing them to the status of second rate citizens all these resulted in the demand for elam (independence) and that of the LTTE in embryonic form, which over a period of time and with India's covert support grew up into a formidable organization.

Sri Lanka is now caught in a vice, between the parochialism of the fundamentalist Sinhalese majority and the Tamil desperados who cannot trust the Sinhalese political leaders.

Sending the IPKF to Sri Lanka was a grave strategic and diplomatic blunder. It came to be detested both by the Sri Lankan

Sinhalese leaders, the Tamilians and the LTTE. The Indian Government, having burnt its boat of IPKF earlier would not be in a position to militarily intervene in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka, even after the visit of the Sri Lankan Prime Minister to New Delhi to seek such help.

A Norway-facilitated process received a severe jolt with the assassination of foreign minister Lakshman Kadirgamar. The past three years cease fire and peace process yielded rich dividend. Sri Lankan economy prospered, tourism is booming. India's aid to the Tsunami devastated Sri Lanka was very prompt and in good measure. The LTTE has wanted a share of the international aid coming into Sri Lanka for the Tsunami devastation, and it is still battling the government for getting it under LTTE control. Kumartunga tried propping up a rebel LTTE commander, Karuna. Prabhakaram, LTTE Supremo wants him out. Instability in Sri Lanka affects India, and impacts the political environment particularly in Tamilnadu and indirectly India. There is a suspicion that LTTE has established links with the Naxalities in India, who have spread their strong tentacles in sixteen provinces of India.

Myanmar

A military junta is suppressing democracy and is ostracized by the international community. India should have remained alert. Adhocism and indifference prevailed. China exploited the situation and enmeshed the country with its economic network. It also established military footholds in the Haggai islands. Ethnic Shan and Karen rebel armies face a government offensive which adds to the civil unrest in the country. It has become a proxy zone of Sino-Indian competition. Pragmatic considerations made India embrace the military junta and has started counter insurgency operations with Myanmar, where anti-India militants particularly from north-east seek refuge. China's increasing presence in Myanmar is a threat to India's security.

Maldives

Present political leadership is grateful to India for its very prompt and effective help at the time of last attempted coup. It finds India's support very valuable in times of emergencies and in dealing with coup attempts. However China as well as Pakistan are trying hard to get some foothold in Maldives. A stable independent and peaceful Maldives is necessary for India's security.

South East Asian Countries

These countries recorded phenomenal economic growth and some cohesion during the last three decades. Sudden and swift flight of capital brought many of them to their knees. They have now recovered a great deal and continue to do so now but at a much lower scale. They have become aware of being under the shadow of China and therefore look forward to India as a countervailing power.

Globalization and International Environment

The US and the developed countries have used the WTO, the IMF, the World Bank and the Weapons of Mass Destruction and Human Rights Issues to ruthlessly advance their perceived interests, to get control of natural and mineral resources and to prise open the markets of the under-developed and developing countries. Yet powerful trade blocs to protect their social and economic interests have come into being, namely the US, and the European Union. Survival instincts are compelling the remaining countries to come together, to speak with one strong voice and counter the unjust and inequitable terms being imposed on them. India has a prominent role to play and has started becoming aware of the responsibility.

Large scale environmental pollution is threatening the very existence of human species, and unless the GHG emissions are substantially brought down, it may become extinct within a period of 50 to 100 years. The US is the biggest polluter. Yet President George Bush refuses to sign the Kyoto Protocol on the ground that it would

seriously affect US economy. India needs to get its neighbours and other countries to step up protests and agitations to compel the US and other major polluters to pay heed and drastically cut down GHG emissions to save mankind.

Energy security is going to be crucial within the next two three decades, and along with it the safety and security of the sea-lanes and choke points. The US and India's eastern neighbours would be looking to India for the safe trade passages in the region. The balance of power is gradually shifting from the Atlantic to Indian Ocean and Pacific region. Trade activity in the region is bound to grow a great deal.

The US is now coming to the conclusion that it is in its own interest that India should grow economically and also to some extent militarily to be recognized as a effective regional power with global dimensions. The necessity for India to handle expertly and tactfully and diplomatically its relations with its neighbours cannot be over emphasized.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SEMINAR

The Seminar on "India and Its Neighbours : A Regional Security Perspective" was held on 04th January, 2006 in the Cinema Hall of Headquarters Southern Command. The first session was chaired by Air Mshl S. Kulkarni with Shri Satish Chandra making his presentation on "Security Threats from our Neighbours : An Overview". The second session on "Influence of India's Neighbours on Terrorism and Insurgency" was chaired by Shri Satish Chandra. In this session Shri KV Rajan made his presentation on "Impact of Developments in Nepal and Bhutan on India", Shri Deb Mukharji on "Impact of Developments in Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka on India" and Shri IP Khosla on "Impact of Developments in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran etc. on India". The third session was chaired by Air Mshl S. Kulkarni where Vice Admiral PJ Jacob made his presentation on "Maritime Security And Neighbours". Dr. Madhav Godbole, President of the Centre chaired the last session on "India and Its Neighbours : Foreign Policy Options" and raised a number of vital points for all the main speakers to offer their comments.

A background paper for the seminar had been circulated to all the participants to enable a well informed meaningful and focused interaction amongst all the participants.

Shri Satish Chandra stated that at one time or another India had an adversarial relationship with all its neighbours and many of them are near failing states unable to provide effective administration. This results in undersirable spillover effects across the borders. All of them have severe governance deficit. Grinding poverty and lack of development in many South Asian countries coupled with rampant corruption make them inherently unstable. The Maoist insurgency in Nepal, large scale illegal migration from Bangladesh, narco-trafficking and gun running from Myanmar, LTTE insurgency in Sri Lanka pose serious security problems for India. Pakistan is an epicenter of global terrorism. Bangladesh has now become a Pakistani clone. China has vastly enhanced its sweep

to envelop Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. The Chinese threat in a longer term perspective assumes graver proportions when one factors in its rapid military modernization programme centred on the acquisition of high tech weaponry and a blue water navy capability. India is seen as a soft state provoking its neighbours to disregard India's security and its vital interests. Given the seriousness of the threat, India should not let its guard down and should keep its deterrent capabilities both conventional and nuclear constantly upgraded and effective.

We have levers with Pakistan because of their regional and ethnic fault-lines, and flow of eastern rivers of Indus waters, and that message could be diplomatically conveyed to the recalcitrant fundamentalist Military Junta that it can mess with India at its own peril. Our massive economic assistance and abundant facilities provided to Nepal give us enough leverage and we should not be diffident in using it.

The second session was on "Influence of India's Neighbours on Terrorism and Insurgency". Shri KV Rajan stated that in Nepal, multi-party media and the constitution itself all have collapsed. India is trapped in a web of mutually contradictory compulsion. Spread of Chinese influence in Nepal bodes ill for India's security, and so does an eventual take over by the Maoists in collusion with the weak political parties while the monarch is fast losing credibility. Shri Deb Mukharji stated that large scale immigration from Bangladesh is seriously affecting the security in the adjoining states as well as the whole country and that as the then High Commissioner, observing the Islamic fundamentalist trends he had said that another Pakistan was in the making. Shri IP Khosla stated that Pakistan always took advantage when India was seen as a soft pliable state and deferred when India showed firmness. A jihadi mindset has permeated wide sections of Pakistani society. Pakistan looks west rather than to South Asia. On strategic level it has a desire for depth, hence its friendship with Afghanistan and perhaps Iran. India's persistence in pushing for greater travel, trade, cultural and other contacts are bearing fruit and need to be pursued. There has been dramatic improvement in India China relations. In

the longer term India and China could continue to be political and even economic rivals.

In the third session Vice Admiral (Retd) PJ Jacob spoke on Maritime Security and Neighbours. He said that in view of globalization safety of Sea Lanes of communication, of ports, of international shipping and trade has become critical. Piracy, international terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction through maritime channels, humanitarian and environmental disasters would be other challenges to be faced. The Indian peninsula saddles five strategic choke points, which if disrupted can completely upset the world's energy and economic equation. The region is the world's energy lifeline and around 1000 million tons of oil transit through these waters annually. India occupies a unique geo-strategic position. Some of the most valuable cargo in the world passes through the Persian Gulf, Malacca Straits and their environs. Maritime terrorism has now become a serious concern. There is convergence of Indo-US interest in keeping the sea lanes safe for transit and in containing/countering maritime terrorism. China is making great inroads in the region with plans to extend its influence into the Indian Ocean. In our neighbourhood, India by virtue of its strategic location and relative military standing would have to don the mantle of ensuring the maritime security in the region including protecting its EEZ. The sea holds the key to India's growth.

The last session on "Foreign Policy Options" was chaired by Dr. Madhav Godbole, President of the Centre. In his opening remarks, he said that most of the discussion in India often focuses more on foreign policy of US than that of India. He raised very pertinent questions for comments by the main speakers and the participants. Should we examine India's security from a holistic view or confine it to raising walls/ fencing around, creating a force, bettering the intelligence and taking care of border management, undertaking pre-emptive strikes, exploiting the fault lines of our neighbours, influencing their elections, and making use of available leverages? What are the foreign policy options for India? Is it in our interest to destabilize our neighbours? India is a Hindu country and is seen as such by our neighbours Electoral Politics has defied reaching a

political consensus in firmly dealing with the huge vote bank of muslims in India and over 20 million Bangladeshi immigrants. There is much dissonance in the youth and also among the political parties in how to address internal domestic issues and also how to handle external policies. How do we build up a consensus within the country on the foreign policy in dealing with our neighbours. The China factor needs to be given adequate weightage in our foreign policy consideration. Is there a need for track two/three/four diplomacy to be developed? At a time gap of 15-20 years can we say that there would be a common borderless market, a common passport, common citizenship in this sub-continent?

The presentation by every main speaker was followed by the subject being thrown open for questions, comments, observations and discussion. The Chairman's opening remarks in the last session was followed by a general discussion which was animated and very lively. However the general feeling was that it was not possible to do full justice to the subject in a one day's seminar and it needed to be further discussed to elaborate on the viable foreign policy options for India vis a vis its neighbours keeping in mind the holistic view of India's national security.

WELCOME BY DIRECTOR

AIR MARSHAL S. KULKARNI

Air Marshal S. Kulkarni, Director of the Centre welcomed all the participants at the Seminar, and introduced the distinguished main speakers. He said that the main speakers had rich personal experience in handling diplomatic relations with the countries in the region and we all look forward to their presentation, as also a well informed interaction by the other participants. He said that Mr. Satish Chandra had vast experience in India's various missions and as head of the missions in various countries, as Chairman, Joint Intelligence Committee and as Deputy to the National Security Advisor. He would be giving an overview of the seminar subject in the first session. The second session would have three main speakers, Shri IP Khosla, former Ambassador to Bhutan, Bangladesh and High Commissioner to Afghanistan and Netherlands, Shri KV Rajan, former Ambassador to Nepal and to Algeria, and Shri Deb Mukharji, former Ambassador to Nepal and High Commissioner to Nigeria and Bangladesh. He said that they would be on Impact on India as a result of developments in the respective neighbouring countries. He said that Vice Admiral (Retd) PJ Jacob, former Commander of the Indian Navy's Eastern Fleet, Director General of Indian coast Guard and Vice Chief of the Naval Staff would be speaking in third session on "Maritime Security and Neighbours". The last session on India's Foreign Policy Options would be chaired by Dr. Madhav Godbole, President of the Centre and former Home Secretary, Govt. of India. Air Marshal Kulkarni further added that after the presentation by the main speakers each session would be thrown open for discussion, comments, questions and answers. The last session would be open for general discussion covering the entire subject of the seminar.

SESSION I**SECURITY THREAT EMANATING FROM OUR
NEIGHBOURS : AN OVERVIEW****Chairman : S. Kulkarni****Main Speaker : Satish Chandra****PAPER PRESENTED BY MR. SATISH CHANDRA**

It is a real pleasure to be here at CASS. My talk is made much easier as the real experts with hands on experience of the neighbourhood will be speaking after me. As regards internal security there is no better expert than Dr Godbole who is amidst you and all that I can say on the issue is what I have learnt from him.

But to get on with my presentation I would suggest that security threats from neighbours essentially originate from two factors or a mix thereof namely an adversarial relationship with them or their inability to provide effective administration and successfully manage internal contradictions which can result in undesirable spillover effects across state boundaries. Since India has, at one time or another, had an adversarial relationship with nearly all its neighbours and since many of them are near failing states or have serious unresolved internal contradictions the present and potential security threats emanating from its neighbourhood are many and varied, I will endeavour to provide a broad brush sweep of our relations with our neighbours and their internal situation, the consequent security threats emanating from them and what we need to do to address them.

India's ties today may be termed as excellent with Bhutan, Sri

Lanka, and the Maldives, correct with Myanmar, on the mend with China and strained or adversarial with Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh. Pakistan, Myanmar, Nepal, Bhutan and China are not democracies and the democratic setups in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and the Maldives are fragile and vulnerable. Moreover, the grinding poverty and lack of development in many South Asian countries accompanied by rampant corruption make them inherently unstable. Nearly all of India's neighbours have a severe governance deficit and accordingly India cannot escape the spillover impact of developments arising therefrom. A consequence of the political instability and the governance deficit in Nepal for instance is the efflorescence of the Maoist insurgency in that country, in Bangladesh it has led to illegal migration, terrorism, gun running and export of Islamic fundamentalism, in Pakistan to terrorism and radicalization of society, in Myanmar to narco trafficking and gun running, and in Sri Lanka to the LTTE insurgency. All these developments pose serious security problems for India. China, too, is not entirely exempt from a governance deficit which has led to unrest in Sinkiang and Tibet and it is also yet to resolve the contradiction between its relatively open economic system and closed political system. If it is not able to resolve these issues peacefully we will face the spillover consequences.

In purely military terms the only two countries that really pose a present or potential security threat to us are Pakistan and China. The current relaxation of tensions with both countries should not lull us into complacency as in the case of Pakistan its military establishment has a vested interest in an inimical relationship with India and in the case of China while its leadership today strives for a "peaceful rise" we cannot be sure whether it will turn hegemonistic after the rise has taken place. The security threat from both countries assumes greater weight as we have been involved in hot wars with them and also have unresolved territorial issues with them which have the potential of exacerbating tensions. Though a full scale military conflict with either country is unlikely, particularly in the present international situation, their considerable force levels, nuclear capability and propensity to act in concert provides them with the wherewithal of acting against our

interests in a low intensity conflict mode or in support of our insurgencies. The Chinese threat in a longer term perspective assumes even graver proportions when one factors in its rapid military modernization programme centred on the acquisition of high tech weaponry and a blue water naval capability. Add to this its bases in Myanmar, its very close links with the military in that country as well as in Pakistan and Bangladesh, and the alacrity with which it has exploited the opening in Nepal to develop closer ties with the King and one cannot escape the conclusion that what one is witnessing is the intensification of Chinese influence in South Asia.

Pakistan's age old inimical mindset vis a vis India finds expression today in a host of activities designed to weaken India such as fuelling the insurgencies in J&K and the North East, attempting to revive militancy in Punjab, exporting terrorism to all parts of India, attempting to exacerbate communal tensions, pumping in fake Indian currency into the country, and establishing a nexus with criminal elements for purposes of destabilizing the country through terrorism, gun running and narco trafficking. Given the LET's close links with AL Qaeda export of WMD terrorism to India is on the cards. Pakistan's key objective remains seeking parity with India and towards that end it strives to destabilize India by all possible means.

Bangladesh has emerged as a Pakistani clone in terms of its anti Indian mindset. The ISI has a close nexus with elements in the Bangladesh establishment including the BDR and is using fundamentalist elements in that country to create terror in India. It is promoting sleeper cells in India which have links to Bangladesh fundamentalists. Bangladesh has been providing shelter and support to many Indian insurgent groups active in the north east like ULFA, KLO etc. There are believed to be about 195 IIG training camps in Bangladesh which is known to have 88 prominent IIGs in its custody whom it refuses to hand over. It has also quietly nurtured many muslim terrorist outfits like MULTA which analysts believe can be activated on demand. It is a key supply route for weaponry for IIGs active in the North East. It has been complicit in the illegal migration of 15-20 million Bangladeshis to India. While the bulk of

these have settled on the periphery of its borders entirely changing the population composition of many districts particularly in the North East which it regards as its legitimate lebensraum, the magnitude of the influx is such that the population mix has been altered in even in areas as far removed as Delhi. This is a serious security issue not only because it places an additional burden on our already fragile resource infrastructure but also because it is a source of heightened ethnic and communal tensions and above all poses a major law and order problem. The efflorescence of madrassas in the areas bordering Bangladesh accompanying the illegal migration therefrom presages the growth of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism in India particularly as Bangladesh has an Al Qaeda presence and Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism have struck deep roots in that country. More than 2 million Bangladeshis study in madrassas and many of these are controlled by the JEI and the HUIJAI BD.

Nepal's emergence as a failing state poses immense problems for India given our open borders and the presence of 2.2 million Nepalese in India who enjoy national status in India and have free run of the country. The inability of the King and the political parties to work together has enabled the Maoists to emerge as a third force and threaten to undermine the existing political system in the country. Indeed the parties and the Maoists appear to be coming together and the monarchy appears under threat. In this process the King has not heeded our advice to work together with the parties against the Maoists and has shown a singular lack of concern to our security interests. As a result one has over the years witnessed an efflorescence of madrassas along our borders through which there has been a steady flow of terrorists and undesirables, contraband of all varieties, fake Indian currency etc. As in Bangladesh so too in Nepal the ISI has had free run of the country and has been able to use it to run terrorist activities directed against India. Above all the inimical attitude of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal has prevented mutually beneficial cooperation directing at dealing effectively not only against terrorism and insurgency but also at promoting economic development in sectors such as trade, transportation, energy, etc.

Sri Lanka's inability to resolve the Tamil problem poses potentially serious problems for India. Should the Rajapakse government reverse the Bandarnaike government's approach of attempting to deal with the Tamil issue on the basis of a federal solution and should the LTTE reject this move the outbreak of hostilities is on the cards. This would on the one hand seriously destabilize Sri Lanka and on the other place India on the horns of a dilemma given the fact that while we feel that the Tamil issue is best resolved within a federal framework we cannot view Eelam with anything other than trepidation. Moreover the destabilization of Sri Lanka would open it up to a host of third party influences which cannot but have unacceptable consequences for us.

While Myanmar has from time to time been cooperative in helping us deal with insurgency in the North East following the pursuit by India of a pragmatic policy vis a vis that country such cooperation has tended to extend to dealing with the NSCN rather than the Meities. However, the Myanmar government is far from stable and its control is less than complete on our periphery. Accordingly much of the activity that takes place there is not within their knowledge and control. Accordingly, our borders with Myanmar are vulnerable not only to use by insurgent groups but also to all types of illicit activity most notably narco trafficking and gun running. Moreover, given Myanmar's close ties with Pakistan and China there is always the possibility of the use of its territory by those countries against us particularly if our ties with Myanmar sour.

Gayoom's regime in the Maldives has of late become increasingly dictatorial and faces considerable opposition which could lead to unrest and instability. This in turn could lead to the enhanced influence of extraneous elements in the Maldives to our detriment.

The first line of defence in countering the threats emanating from our neighbourhood falls in the domain of foreign policy. Such threats would be much diminished if India has friendly ties with its neighbours or, at the very least, is able to ensure that they are

sensitive to its minimal security concerns. The latter is predicated on India's capability of commanding respect amongst its neighbours. It is a measure of the failure of our diplomacy that we have not been able to do so because while on the one hand we have often been petty and appeared arrogant on the other hand we have like a typical soft state allowed our neighbours to thumb their noses at us and disregard our critical interests with impunity. India is well endowed with an armoury rich in carrots and sticks to be respected by all in its neighbourhood. Regrettably we have all too often been hesitant in judiciously availing of this armoury and in particular exercising the considerable leverages that we have with nearly all neighbours which would make it hard for them to work against our interests. While I am sure the other speakers here today would speak on this aspect I would like to briefly dwell upon our leverages with Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh with whom our relations are at present strained.

- With Pakistan our two greatest leverages are provided by its regional and ethnic faultlines and severe water scarcity both of which have already lead to serious tensions in that country. A sophisticated play on Pakistan's faultlines and the mere shut down of the flows of the Eastern Rivers of the Indus Waters to Pakistan which is well within our rights under the Indus Waters Treaty would send a clear signal to the military junta in Pakistan that it can only mess with India at its own peril.
- With Nepal our leverages are greater than perhaps with any other country given the massive economic assistance provided by us, the preponderance of our comprehensive national capabilities as compared to its, and the many facilities provided by India like national treatment to its nationals etc. Yet we have been diffident in using these leverages to ensure that Nepalese territory is not used against our interests and that the authorities are sufficiently sensitive to our security concerns.

- Bangladesh surrounded as it is by India is clearly vulnerable to a variety of pressures from India such as a push back of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, stoppage of cattle export etc. We also have the wherewithal to destabilize any regime inimical to us. These coupled with the fact that we could if so desired virtually underwrite Bangladesh's economy should make it possible for us to ensure that Bangladesh does not disregard our core security concerns.

An improved Indian relationship with its neighbours would have important spin off benefits for the region as a whole leading to its more rapid economic development which in turn would result in a more secure environment on our immediate periphery through better governance.

The second line of defence to counter the threats emanating from our neighbourhood is obviously our military strength. Given the gravity of the threat, present and potential, faced by us from Pakistan and China we cannot afford to let our guard down. We must at all times ensure that our deterrent capabilities both in conventional and nuclear terms are constantly upgraded in tune with the developments in Pakistan and China. It is therefore regrettable that we have gone in for a nuclear deal with the US which would tend to lock our nuclear weapon holdings to a relatively low level. It is also unfortunate that government has not thought it fit to accept the GOM recommendation for appointment of a CDS which would have brought greater jointness to the Armed Forces and provided more focused attention to the development of our Strategic Forces and the evolution of our nuclear deterrent.

The third line of defence against the threats emanating from our neighbourhood is to ensure that the internal security systems and structures in India and particularly on its borders are in good order. A detailed expose of our shortcomings in this regard and of what needs to be done was given five years ago by the task force on border management headed by Dr Godbole and the task force on internal security headed by Shri NN Vohra. Their recommendations numbering over 200 were accepted and included in GOM report on

Reforming the National Security System which were approved in toto by the CCS in May 2001. Regrettably only 60-70% of these recommendations were finally implemented and those implemented were done in a half hearted manner. Accordingly we are in less than good shape to cope with the problems of illicit migration, infiltration, terrorism, drug trafficking, gun running etc from across our borders.

The magnitude of the task in policing India from without may be gauged from the fact that it has 14880 kms of land borders, a coastline of 5422 kms, 1197 island territories contributing an additional coastline of 2094 kms and an EEZ of 2.013 million sq kms which has the potential to go up to 2.9 million sq kms. Indeed barring MP, Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand, Haryana and Delhi all other states have one or more international borders or a coastline and thus are frontline states in terms of border management.

The problem is accentuated by the fact that our maritime boundaries with Pakistan and Bangladesh are still undefined and much of our land borders are not demarcated on the ground. The disputed and unsettled nature of our boundaries makes them both for tension and difficult policing. The GOM had, therefore, recommended that urgent action be taken to resolve these issues and to ensure progress a Group of Ministers be appointed for the purpose which should meet at least once a quarter. Nothing has been done in the matter.

Two major GOM recommendations of an organizational nature which have been implemented and which over time would have a salutary effect on border management are the creation of a Department of Border Management in the Home Ministry and the application of the principle of one border one force in supersession of the prevailing practice of a multiplicity of forces on the same border. The former will over time provide focused oversight to border related problems and the latter would encourage professionalism and ensure accountability of the border guarding forces employed on each border who would not be used for counter insurgency activities except in the case of Assam Rifles. With a view to preventing a clash of interests and promoting coordination the concerned border guarding force has

also been nominated as the lead intelligence agency for the border under its area of responsibility.

An extremely important element in addressing cross border threats is the condition of infrastructure on our side of the border inclusive of fencing where considered necessary, deployment, equipment, morale and integrity of border guarding forces, efficacy and condition of our checkpoints, nature of available connectivity, policing, utilities and condition of border populations. On most counts the situation is most unsatisfactory on all our borders barring perhaps that with Pakistan. The bulk of the borders with Pakistan that could be fenced have been fenced except for about 240 kms in Gujarat. However the Sir Creek area remains under policed by the BSF and a kargil in that sector is always on the cards particularly as it along with the maritime boundary remains disputed. There is also much infiltration in this sector from Pakistan which has long gone unchecked and poses a clear and present danger to us. On the Bangladesh side roughly half the 3300 kms approved for fencing out of the total boundary of 4096 Km is still to be fenced. Urgent fencing of this border had been a GOM recommendation as it is estimated that 300000 Bangladeshis come into India each year illegally apart from scores of terrorists, ISI agents and other undesitables. That five years down the line we have not so far been able to complete the fence is indicative how lackadaisical we are on security related issues. The problem is compounded by the fact that the BSF, which is the border guarding force on our borders with Pakistan and Bangladesh, has been less than professional and its integrity is suspect.

The NSCS had a couple of years ago undertaken an inspection of our checkpoints on our borders with Nepal and Bangladesh. They were in pathetic shape often worse than what was across the border. Housed in several dispersed facilities with inadequate ill motivated staff they lacked the wherewithal in terms of equipment and basic prerequisites like assured electricity supply to carry out any effective checking of what or who entered India. Indeed, our borders with Nepal and Bangladesh constitute a gaping hole through which all manner of undesirables can find easy ingress. Notwithstanding the GOM recommendations and those of the NSCS the creation of

modern and effective integrated checkpoints on our borders is proceeding at a snails pace. The state of our checkpoints is matched by the condition of road connectivity. Distances of 30-40 Kms which at worst should be traversed in a couple of hours require 4-5 hours as roads have all but ceased to exist. Moreover on our borders with Nepal all roads tend to run in a North South direction and there is no East West highway parallel to our borders with that country as is the case in Nepal. Recommendations to address these deficiencies which have an obvious security dimension have been duly made but implementation will take years.

The condition of our border towns and populations is unenviable and in many cases that across the border is better. The GOM had recommended that BADP spending which had languished in the zone of Rs225 crores should be enhanced to at least 300 crores for 2001-2 and then to Rs400 crores annually in the 10th Plan. Regrettably even today spending languishes at Rs 250-275 crores. In fact the GOM had suggested that additional funds should also be earmarked for the BADP through the Rs8000 annual Rural Development Programme. This too is not being done. Failure to look after the people in our border areas will inevitably make them susceptible to inimical influences from across the border.

As a means to address the problems posed by illegal migration which has already assumed dangerous proportions and which is now a mill stone around our necks the GOM had recommended that:

- There should be compulsory registration of all citizens and non citizens.
- All citizens should be given a MPNIC and non citizens a different ID card.
- The IMDT act should be repealed and all illegally staying foreigners should be proceeded against under the foreigners act.

- Residence records of border villages should be regularly prepared and updated. This would help identify foreigners.

Regrettably little has been done. A pilot project has been underway for several years for preparing a MPNIC card. Its completion is long overdue. Even though the Supreme Court has struck down the IMDT act government does not consider it necessary to move against illegal immigrants.

It would be clear from the foregoing that government has been almost criminally lax in safeguarding the security threats emanating from our neighbourhood. Another instance of this has been its virtual non implementation of the GOM recommendations geared to addressing the threats from the sea and which inter alia required the setting up of a marine police in coastal areas, installation of a Vessel Traffic Management System at all our channel and port approaches and an apex body for the management of maritime affairs for institutionalized linkages between the Navy, Coast guard, and the concerned ministries and departments as well as public sector entities of the concerned Central and State Governments. Similarly, the GOM recommendations designed to ensure that we are not faced with another Purullia also remain largely unimplemented.

SESSION II

INFLUENCE OF INDIA'S NEIGHBOURS ON TERRORISM AND INSURGENCY

Chairman : Satish Chandra

Main Speakers :

I.P. Khosla

K.V. Rajan

Deb Mukharji

PAPER PRESENTED BY AMBASSADOR I.P. KHOSLA

**“Impact of Developments in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran etc.
on India”**

The subject can be viewed from four levels: the global; the regional; bilateral; and the domestic implications. This has to focus largely on Pakistan rather than Afghanistan or Iran, since present security problems do not flow from the policies of the latter two; but there is incidental consideration of them also.

The Global

The international security structure today rests on a single pillar: an unprecedented and seemingly unbeatable US strategic, military and economic supremacy over all other powers and any conceivable coalition of powers. US policies around the globe are based on a strong desire to maintain that position.

The important point for India is whether the implementation of these policies in South Asia will lead to diminished threats from terrorism and insurgency. Given that such threats largely emanate from Pakistan's encouragement we need to consider the kind of influence the US would like to exert to change this.

In meeting the general or global threat from non-state actors, non-conventional means of war and terrorism as a whole US policies

have not been consistent. They have alternately encouraged the actors involved, neglected them, or tried to suppress them, depending on political objectives to guide policy. In Pakistan the aim initially was to ensure full cooperation in securing the end of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, and thereafter in dealing with the remnants of the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Even there, as regards the former, there is some US acceptance that remnants will survive; ex-Taliban have joined the Karzai government; many were elected to the National Assembly.

It has not been a demonstrable (as opposed to words only) US aim to curb Pakistani assistance to terrorist groups operating against India. The US seems interested also in a stable Pakistan which is now nuclear armed, that these weapons should not fall into the hands of radical groups, hence that Musharraf should continue even if he is sponsoring terrorism against India.

It is possible that, as the March 2005 US State Department background briefing specified, the US has decided on a decisively broader strategic relationship whose goal is to help India become a major world power in the 21st century, but whatever Pakistan has actually done to cut down support for terrorism, and this is not very much, has been done due to Indian firmness more than US pressure.

China's policy is the other aspect of the international security structure that impacts the possible threat from Pakistan; China itself is no longer directly involved in generating terrorist or insurgency problems in India. There has been a dramatic improvement in India-China relations since the 1988 visit of Rajiv Gandhi. In 1996 Jiang Zemin told the Pakistan Senate that Pakistan should set aside the Kashmir issue for a more rewarding Indo-Pakistan economic cooperation. Relations between India and China have continued to improve through high level visits, expanded trade and cultural exchanges, CBM's and talks on the border issue. China also shares India's concern with terrorism, specially since the Pakistan sponsored Taliban fuelled it in the Western provinces.

But in the longer term India and China could continue to be political and even economic rivals. If China has supported Pakistan in the past, a support derived more from India China relations than from any desire to dilute Pakistani relations with the US, it could do so in the future.

The Regional

Three points are to be noted.

Firstly the results have on the whole been mixed in the global war on terrorism; there is no clearly delineated decline in the likelihood of terrorist attacks; and victory is no longer achievable. The US State Department 2003 report on international terrorism showed terrorism on the decline and said the war was almost won; then commentators picked apart the statistics and proved the report had both inaccuracies and inconsistencies, so it had to be retracted and revised. In 2005 the report had no statistics at all. Congressional aides were briefed that 'significant' terrorist attacks grew from 175 in 2003 to 655 in 2004, a more than three fold increase; this included a doubling in Afghanistan and a nine-fold increase in Iraq.

Secondly, this is compounded by better coordination between terrorist groups world wide, but particularly in those two countries: in tactics and training and weapons; suicide attacks, roadside bombings, and motor cycle assassinations, which were the speciality of the Iraqi insurgency, have now become regular in Afghanistan. Religion continues to be a strong motivator. Mark Juergensmayer writes (*Terrorism in the Mind of God*) that religion crystallizes the socio-economic deprivations and political wrongs that people in the countries west of India have experienced, that young people would indulge in any act of violence if they believe it to be divinely mandated. Neither in Iraq nor in Afghanistan has there been the kind of socio-economic reconstruction that would compensate for this.

Thirdly Pakistan is in similar position. A jehadi mindset has permeated wide sections of society, there is little evidence that the state has seriously attempted to counter it. It is easier now than at

any time in the past for Pakistan to take advantage of regional developments in terrorist activity to target India using highly skilled terrorist mercenaries.

Considering the region as a whole, there has been some tendency to blame the US for sponsoring and financing jihadi groups during the war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan; or US policies in Iraq or Afghanistan; or anti-Muslim attitudes in the US or the West; or the very existence of madrasas in countries like Pakistan; or the very inclusion of a concept like jihad in Islam. And to assert that terrorism against India emerges from such phenomena.

It is true that there is an existential problem in Pakistan. An Islamic state should be a kind of Islam, not a kind of state; in other words one should be able to distil the elements of what is an Islamic state from the Islamic texts and ideas, just as it is possible to distil the elements of what is family life, inheritance or a code of punishment. So the state should emerge from the religion. But the leadership from the outset regarded it as a kind of state. So they built the state and tried to put in elements of Islam into it in a top down process. To be convincing this tokenism had to be taken sometimes to extremes to satisfy critics who found fault with the structure of the state. The promotion of jihadism was one way to do this. Steve Cohen (*The Idea of Pakistan*) says unemployed graduates, college youth with no hope of a job, rapid population growth, provided the means and the encouragement for this purpose.

But this applies not only to Pakistan but also to other Islamic states in the region and beyond. It is not the reason for Pakistani actions against India.

Bilateral

Two possibilities have to be considered, though there could be some overlap: that there are a number of factors behind Pakistani hostility to India and we should try to deal with these factors; or that Pakistani hostility is so deep rooted that only time will wither it.

On the first possibility six points are often mentioned.

First there is India's size, military and economic strength and potential. Pakistan's official policy is based on the idea that Akhand Bharat is an Indian objective, ever present in the Hindu mind; military deterrence, diplomacy and economic engagement are needed to counter this, the last mainly through regional cooperation.

Second, and seemingly in contradiction, there is India's weakness, expressed in ideas about the fighting capability of the Indian forces, for example, or the deviousness of the Hindu mind. If India displays weakness Pakistan has traditionally stepped up the pressure. After the Lahore agreement, Feb. 1999 there was Kargil, May 1999, and the hijacking of IC 814, Dec. 1999. After Agra, July 2001, there was the attack on the J&K Assembly, 1.10.01, and then on the Parliament, 13.12.01. The display of firmness through 2002 led to, eventually, to the breakthrough Islamabad Joint Press statement of Jan. 2004 and the Musharraf step down on the UN resolution. This subject is further elaborated under the domestic section below.

Third is the issues: J&K, the Pakistan 'core' issue. Pronouncements by Pakistani spokesmen have varied, but there is a trend towards acceptance of bilateralism, no independent J&K, no change of borders, softening of the LOC, people to people contact. There has also been some reduction in cross border infiltration, though this continues and the infrastructure for stepping it up at short notice continues to be in place on the other side of the LOC. There is on state-to-state basis, Pakistani antagonism to greater travel and trade contacts. Cultural exchanges are discouraged, the opening of an Indian consulate in Karachi, from where the large demand for visas comes, has been delayed for years, the transit of Indian goods to Afghanistan has not been given and it is to be seen whether the pipeline will come through. In the media, in school textbooks and in training courses for the military, to give a few examples, hatred for India is openly declared. Several Indian TV channels were banned some weeks ago, to give one more example.

Other issues like Siachen, the Sir Creek and CBM's would be easier to solve if the atmosphere could be improved through such exchanges.

Fourth Pakistan gives the impression of a state without clear central control of policies. The ISI is often said to operate independently of the military high command; Islamic groups have their lobbies in the military and in the bureaucracy. Musharraf does not seem to be fully in charge. It is said that Kargil was planned without the Prime Minister knowing about it, so it was not a sign of hostility so much as a case of rogue agencies trying to spoil a peace process.

Fifth Pakistan looks west rather than to South Asia in building its policy, attaching more importance to ECO than to SAARC. There are two components to this. On the religious and political level Pakistan's leadership believes its friendships should be with the Islamic states with a non-democratic system similar to its own. Even while considering the move to democracy Musharraf chose Turkey as a model, given the role of the military there. On the strategic level it has a desire for depth, hence its friendship with Afghanistan and perhaps Iran. This was one reason, though not the major one, for the sponsorship of the Taliban. That policy continues and it has good relations with the Karzai government, and though India too has excellent relations Pakistani policy has consistently been to undermine them.

Sixth, it is argued that if only democracy would come to Pakistan relations would improve. A military government needs tension in order to justify staying in power.

India can respond to these points. That India is large is something our South Asian neighbours have to accept, though we need not voice it repeatedly. Without doubt any sign of weakness will again be answered by Pakistan in similar manner and is to be avoided, and this applies in particular to the question of J&K. Persistence in pushing for greater travel, trade, cultural and other

contacts has already borne fruit in the last year and a half and needs to be pursued. Such firmness need not be relaxed because Pakistan and some of its friends wish us to believe that some or many of the actions taken are without central control and direction, for there is a highly centralized control system in the government there. As for the desire to look west this is to be encouraged, for we too will need to look there for our future energy needs.

Democratic peace theory has respectable antecedents, but there is some considerable doubt about its applicability to South Asia.

Domestic

There is a fundamental reason for believing that even if these factors are mitigated in their operation Pakistani antagonism to India will not be. The deep roots of that antagonism are found in the belief, not just that the Muslims of the subcontinent are a separate nation, but that they are a separate and equal or superior nation. This was only the view of an elite, but the British before 1947 exploited it to help divide India; the US thereafter to fuel Indo-Pakistan tension. It permeates the Pakistan ruling groups and percolates into society through history lessons, the literature, the think tanks, and the media. Pakistan is still a society in which the non-economic and non-modern forms of integration predominate: the military and the bureaucracy; a common external foe. The emergence of economic forms of interdependence and integration is essential to overcome this root cause and this will take time. However India can help; we have already shown the way through our own growth and skill in 21st century technologies; we can promote a widening constituency of those taking interdependence within the country and in Pakistan's links with the region forward.

**PAPER PRESENTED BY
AMBASSADOR K.V. RAJAN**

“Impact of Developments in Nepal and Bhutan on India”

Of the three aspirants to power who have been in confrontation with each other--King, Maoists and political parties the first two converge in three respects: they are anti-democracy, anti-India, and pro-China. Both have armies. The third group lacks leadership, unity, cohesion, and has lost much credibility because of its record in the twelve years of multi-party democracy (1990-2002).

Maoists have called for a Republic and the Army (which is loyal to the King, not to the civilian authority) has vowed to crush them. China is not encouraging the Maoists; the latter have also recently moderated their stand on India. But in terms of the strategic political landscape, a Maoist takeover or a government in which they have overarching influence should be a matter for very great concern to India. This is because of the 1700 km long open border, the proximity of States like UP and Bihar, and the already existing linkages between Nepal's Maoists and Indian Naxalites. The latter are known to be receiving training in Nepalese camps and vice versa.

The King has assumed absolute power and has the full support of the Army, but the security situation continues to deteriorate. The RNA was earlier receiving arms and equipment as well as training from India, US, UK and other countries. These have been mostly suspended following the King's coup on Feb 1, 2005. The RNA's capacity to take on the Maoists has always been in doubt--by training and culture, it is more comfortable as a ceremonial adjunct to the Royal family.

There is a complete breakdown of trust and confidence between the three groups competing for power the King, Maoists and political parties.

The struggle is increasingly becoming a bipolar one---between the King and the Maoists. The King has been confronting the Maoists on the one hand and the political parties agitating for restoration of democracy on the other. The Maoists and the political parties are being pushed into an uncomfortable alliance, united in their opposition to the King. They have reached a twelve point agreement in which the King has been given the option of retracing his steps and restoring full democracy, after which there could be elections to a constituent assembly---but the King has rejected this. He has his own road map municipal elections in February, and eventual return to a democratic order at a pace and in a manner to be decided by him.

The RNA is totally loyal to the King. If the Maoists and political parties start posing a serious challenge to the King's authority, there is a real possibility of major escalation in violence.

Maoists had declared a three month ceasefire which has been extended until Jan 2, 2006.

The King and his advisors have made their intentions vis-à-vis India very clear. The extent to which this group will work against Indian interests will depend on how confident they feel about provoking India and being able to get away with it, and also on the extent to which India is seen as spoiling the King's game plan. But if they turn out to be the winning side, we should take it that our strategic concerns will not be respected.

The political parties are presently united in their agitation against the King, but not on most of the other issues: Should the House be restored or not? Should there be a commitment to constitutional monarchy if the King reverses course, or should they endorse the Maoist goal (now accepted by the CPN(UML) also) of a republic? How much can the Maoists be trusted? Should the UN be involved? In the present situation they are important, but the weakest of the three aspirants for power.

The real need is for inclusive democracy which delivers sensitive governance and rapid development for people needing it most. Delivery of better governance and development are however unfortunately likely to remain elusive for many years to come.

Nepalese unwillingness or inability to adjust to the realities of its geography; Nepal's insatiable appetite for more sovereign space; its over-estimation of its bargaining strength as the yam between two boulders---this psyche will continue to complicate India-Nepal relations irrespective of the outcome of the present crisis.

The Maoist insurgency could be only the first of organized rebellions by marginalized and excluded groups. Nepal has had a highly feudal power structure in which power has rotated among a few families and castes (so called Bahun-Chhetri, who dominate the country with less than 30% of the population; the Adibasi/Janjatis constitute 36%, Dalits 15%, Madhesis 17%, Muslims 5%). Nepalese writers have said that the Maoist insurgency could be the "tip of the iceberg".

There has been a comprehensive failure of institutions: Multi-party democracy, monarchy, parliament, bureaucracy, local government, media, the constitution itself all have collapsed. Governance is conspicuous by its absence. There is no leadership available to take the country out of its crisis. The people view all actors in the conflict monarchy, political parties, and Maoists in increasingly harsh light.

Nepal's ongoing crisis finds India trapped in a web of mutually contradictory compulsions: it would like to encourage the 'democratic forces' without undermining the monarchy; engage with the Maoists without prematurely or without justification legitimizing them; suspend its arms supply commitments to the Royal Nepal Army without weakening it vis-à-vis the Maoists or diluting the traditional linkages between the RNA and Indian Army; keep alive the 1950 Treaty while actually inviting its erosion through its own policies;

minimize Chinese influence in Nepal while promoting the inevitability of its expansion by provoking a breakdown of traditional linkages.



**PAPER PRESENTED BY
AMBASSADOR DEB MUKHARJI**

“Impact of Developments in Bangladesh, Myanmar & Sri Lanka etc. on India”

Bangladesh impinges on the Indian consciousness only infrequently. And then for the kind of reason - sanctuary to insurgents, nursery for a new generation of fundamentalists, fount of a never ending stream of illegal migrants etc which reinforce the negative image first formed after the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman over thirty years ago. Bangladesh has come to denote, at least in the official Indian mind, either problems of security or a succession of demands, be it for concessions on trade or the flow of rivers, together with a refusal to be positive on issues like transit. It is also felt that even when a positive attitude is adopted, as on trade, it is reciprocated not by acknowledgement but by further demands. The positive elements of our relationship are submerged in the high decibel count of accusations. Engagement has become sporadic.

Despite figuring among the ten most populous nations of the world, the state of Bangladesh is distrustful of the much larger neighbour and feels that insufficient sensitivity is shown by India to her requirements in commerce, the flow of rivers or generally in matters of interest to her. India, on the other hand, has been at a loss on how to evolve a framework of trust and co-operation. The relationship is marked by a feeling of disquiet and evident absence of mutual trust and confidence. And this is despite the obvious that there are no rational reasons why there should not be a much closer relationship. There is no apparent reason why India should not wish for the welfare and progress of Bangladesh which would be in India's interest as well. Nor any why Bangladesh should be wary of close co-operation with India. And even the issues that exist are either normal between any two neighbouring areas, even within a state, or

capable of resolution given a modicum of goodwill and commitment. Yet, if there is no hostility, there is a degree of wariness in mutual approaches, a negative media, and little progress in issues that either may consider important, of which many would be of benefit to the peoples of both.

Putting aside matters of perceptions and their validity or otherwise, it would be useful to see from the Indian viewpoint the importance of Bangladesh not as an exercise of foreign policy in the abstract but as being of crucial significance for our security.

The Indo-Bangladesh border stretches over four thousand kilometers and India has undertaken fencing at the border to prevent illegal migration. The step itself may be overdue, but the nature of the border, passing through riverine tracts and dense forests may not make it wholly effective. There should be no illusion that it is possible to institute a virtual state of quarantine. Much of the border is along states of north-eastern India which have, over the past five decades, seen a variety of insurgent and disruptionist movements. Clearly, the co-operation of Bangladesh in dealing with the problem would be greatly desirable, if not essential. Instead, the opposite has been the case. The porousness of the border is also now leading to increasing number of instances of collaboration between *jehadi* elements on both sides with terrorist actions within India by Bangladeshi nationals.

When we speak of a challenge, attention invariably focuses on the negative. In the quest of considering strategies to counter real or perceived threats, this can lead us to ignore positive and existing assets. Any serious discussion must therefore take into account the existing positive elements of India-Bangladesh relations and the possibilities of building on them which may require some changes in India's own perceptions and approaches. This, too, is a challenge.

What are the positive elements? Half a million or so Bangladeshis visit India annually with valid visas for tourism, education, medical treatment, cultural inter-action and business. If

they gain a positive impression of India, this should be considered an asset and encouraged. Lately, perhaps as a reaction to difficulties faced by Indian visa applicants, there are signs of restrictions and delays on the Indian side. Such reciprocity in international relations is understandable, but caution needs to be exercised so that genuine visitors or eminent people are not inconvenienced. Bangladesh is today, and has been for some years, one of India's largest trading partners with a balance substantially in India's favour. Yet, the facilities at the land border on the Indian side continue to be pathetic. This sends a message of Indian indifference to the Bangladeshi, sensitive at the best of times. There is increasing awareness and acknowledgement in West Bengal of the excellence in cultural fields achieved in Bangladesh and this could be built upon for greater understanding among peoples. People to people interaction could smoothen some of the edges left by official apathy. Lastly, we need to appreciate that the people of Bangladesh as a whole, and an active civil society in particular, are deeply worried at the growth of fundamentalism and what it would mean for the future of the country. It is a serious problem for India: for Bangladesh it is grievous.

From an Indian perspective, the following are matters of concern which need to be either addressed or noted carefully:-

Illegal migration. There are widely varying estimates of illegal immigration from Bangladesh, but the numbers can be reasonably assumed to run into millions. There is also a certain degree of ambivalence in India towards the immigrants. Though there is no encouragement to minorities in Bangladesh to migrate to India, nor is it considered in any way desirable, attitude to Hindu migration is not as negative as it is to Muslim migration. It is recognized that whereas Muslim migration is due entirely to economic compulsions, feelings of insecurity, including property related issues arising from the laws relating to vested properties, are additional compulsions for Hindu migration which, proportionate to population, is substantially

larger than Muslim migration, though numerically the latter may be larger. The percentage decline of the Hindu population in Bangladesh over the decades tells its own story. There is concern that the demographic balance in many districts of Indian states bordering Bangladesh has been radically altered through continuous migration. At the same time, it is the political parties in Indian states, notably Assam and West Bengal, which have in the past turned a blind eye to migration for electoral ends. Meanwhile, the government of Bangladesh continues to be in a state of denial on the issue. It also needs to be recognized that some of the cross-border movement is seasonal, with people looking for temporary work.

In a rational framework, the issue could be addressed without great difficulty. The people who cross frontiers at some risk do so because of the attraction of better economic prospects elsewhere. It may also be assumed that they fulfil an economic need in the country of their destination. If they could be issued with work permits, identifying their nationality and specifying their status, there should be no problem. But the refusal of Bangladesh to acknowledge ground realities and the inability of India to stem migration, or put in place citizen's identity cards, has led to an untenable situation where the illegal immigrants are being absorbed as citizens. The confused thinking in India is illustrated best by the politically inspired exceptions made for immigrants to Assam, recently struck down by the judiciary and again perhaps being re-installed in a different garb. Questionable political expediency and a section of liberal view in India which either does not recognize the problem or sees no difficulty in unchecked migration from Bangladesh, does not in any way serve the interests of the Muslim community of India.

The issue has now acquired the potential for being a serious destabilizing element in the India as also for Indo-Bangladesh relations unless greater understanding and commitment is shown by both in addressing it.

Minorities. Though India is a secular state, there have been

serious blemishes in the record of the treatment of minorities. Gujarat 2002 and Delhi 1984 come readily to mind. It could, however, be said that the political and legal framework in India does permit space for Muslims to fight their battles for a fair deal. Despite the concerns of civil society and important judgements by the judiciary, the percentage of Hindu population in Bangladesh has declined even after 1971. The Nehru-Liaquat Agreement of April 1950, observed more in the breach and quite rightly put officially to rest after 1971, permitted a display of concern for minorities in either country by Pakistan and India. The prime motivation behind the pact may well have been to ensure that the east did not see the mass migration seen in the west following partition. This was not, however, to be, even if the migration was to be staggered.

India, quite correctly, has never raised with Bangladesh the question of treatment of minorities. It is heartening to note the active interest taken in the welfare of minorities by the civil society of Bangladesh. This is an issue to be dealt with by the sovereign government of Bangladesh. Nevertheless, because of the emotional factor and migration, this would always remain a sensitive issue with India.

The rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Bangladesh. Over the past five years international attention has been increasingly focused on terrorist acts carried out by fundamentalist groups in Bangladesh. There has been investigation and extensive reporting in the Bangladesh press about training camps for terrorists and their network. Starting with the attack on a cultural function in Rajshahi in 1999, numerous attacks have taken place on NGOs, cultural programmes and Awami League gatherings, including the attack in August 2004 on the Leader of the Opposition when Sheikh Hasina escaped most narrowly. Former finance minister, SAMS Kibria was killed in a bomb blast and in another incident the British High Commissioner was injured. In the past year there have been indiscriminate suicide attacks on the public and efforts to terrorize

the judiciary. Separately, in north-western Bangladesh there has been a series of brutal killings of those suspected of belonging to revolutionary left-wing organizations. Attacks have been mounted on Ahmediya mosques and calls made for the establishment of a full-fledged Islamic republic. The most striking demonstration of the reach of fundamentalist elements was the 400 simultaneous bomb explosions in August, 2005, in 63 of Bangladesh's 64 districts.

Until the August 2005 explosions to which the people and the civil society of Bangladesh reacted in horror at the show of disciplined and calculated force, the government had stolidly maintained that the problem was being blown out of proportion by an irresponsible media. It was suggested at various times at various levels, including in Parliament, that the terrorist attacks may have been caused by the opposition parties with political objectives or that India had a hand in it. Some of the prime motivators and perpetrators of terrorist acts were at times arrested and subsequently released. There was also satisfaction that these elements were doing a good job by eliminating leftist activists.

It cannot escape attention that once the government felt obliged to take action, due both to internal pressures and international concerns after the countrywide blasts, the incidence of terrorist attacks has come down and several significant arrests have been made. One may justifiably conclude that it was government indifference, if not patronage, that has allowed the rapid growth of fundamentalism in Bangladesh. This may have been owed to the electoral calculations of the ruling party where it was felt that extreme right-wing elements could not be alienated with elections due in a year. In fact, some of the Islamist elements of the ruling coalition have cautioned the majority BNP that stern action against fundamentalist elements would adversely affect them in the forthcoming elections.

While the inspiration for the spread of fundamentalism may have been provided by those who had participated in the Afghan

resistance to Soviet occupation and returned to Bangladesh after the fall of the Taleban regime, they have clearly had the support most notably of the Jamaat e Islami, a leading member of the ruling coalition. There is not much that India can do unless the mainstream political parties see the danger. However, the increasing arrests of Bangladeshi nationals in India accused of engaging in terrorist activities underlines the direct threat posed to India by increased fundamentalism in Bangladesh. It is, therefore, not an academic exercise but a major challenge for the future. It needs emphasizing, however, that the trend towards fundamentalism is a mixture of external inputs, such as returning *jehadis* from Afghanistan and Pakistani ISI influences, together with misplaced and short sighted political calculations. It does not reflect a surge of fundamentalist feeling among the people in general who, in fact, are distressed at the developments. It is important to bear this in mind for too often is religiosity mistaken for rabid and extreme fundamentalism, thus, in consequence, giving sustenance to the latter.

The ISI links . Connected with these acts of terrorism is the role of the ISI of Pakistan. The ISI links with Bangladesh have never ceased to exist and came into play after the assassination of Mujib in 1975 and the rehabilitation of the collaborators of Pakistan of 1971. Over the years, the ISI has found it convenient and cost effective to use their Bangladeshi friends for activities against the security of the Indian state, gauging the importance of Bangladesh's geographical location below the soft under-belly of India. This included assistance to the insurgents of India's north-east. In recent years, the emphasis has been on training of Bangladeshi *jehadis* for terrorist strikes in India. Indian *jehadis* too use the porous Indo-Bangladesh border to find their way onward to Pakistan for training by the ISI. The increasing arrests of Bangladeshi nationals in India for bomb attacks etc. may only be the tip of the iceberg for what is being planned. It appears entirely possible that while maintaining the facade of trying to improve relations with India, Pakistan may be concentrating on Bangladeshi nationals willing to carry out terrorist acts in India.

Pakistan and the ISI have been successful because many in Bangladesh are still motivated by the traditional Pakistan outlook on India based on confrontation, the quest for parity, and the conviction that the security of the state lies in a self-definition of being non-India. Policies based on such an approach rules out a holistic relationship of collaboration.

The north-east. Bangladesh borders four of the seven sisters of the north-east Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram, and is not too far from the rest. Locationally, Bangladesh thus has far greater ease of access to the north-east than the rest of India. As the foreign minister of Bangladesh chose to remind India in September 2004, if Bangladesh is India-locked, the north-east is Bangladesh locked.

Because of the relative difficulty of access from India, as compared to Bangladesh, the north-east is among the severest of the challenges from Bangladesh. A variety of opinion in Bangladesh serve as warning signals. There is occasional talk of *lebensraum*. Even if this is ignored as the wishful thinking of a few, India cannot ignore calls from mainstream politicians about assisting the people of the north-east in their struggle to be free of Indian occupation. It is seriously stated that one of the reasons why transit facilities cannot be afforded to India is that it would impair the possibility of Bangladesh developing the north-east as its exclusive commercial preserve. Similar arguments are made with regard to investment. Curiously, while Bangladesh is anxious for the utilization of its ports by Nepal and Bhutan, these are not open to the north-eastern states of India. It is clear that so far Bangladesh policies are directed towards keeping the north-east as distant from mainland India as possible. Meanwhile, there is good reason to believe that the north-eastern insurgents receive sanctuary in Bangladesh. Direct ISI links with the insurgents of the early nineties may or may not have continued. That there is support from elements of the government machinery, with or without political approval, is beyond doubt.

These signals may in themselves be explained or explained

away, but cumulatively carry a warning, and in the given circumstances the intentions of Bangladesh towards the north-east must be considered suspect. Until there is evidence of a genuine change of perspective, no measures to facilitate Bangladesh's contacts with the north-east should be permitted.

External presence in Bangladesh. Occupying as it does a position at the head of the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh has considerable strategic importance. An inimical presence in Chittagong would be of the deepest concern to India and Myanmar. In the past China has provided assistance to Indian insurgents. There is substantial Chinese military co-operation with Bangladesh and there has been a phase when many influential Bangladeshis looked to China to offset the presumed threat from India. Attempts to gain privileges by the United States with a proposed Status of Forces Agreement in the late 90s proved abortive due to public outcry. A more comprehensive and insidious attempt to gain a 99 year lease of an area at Chittagong port with extra-territorial rights by the SSA of the United States was also foiled by local agitation.

Decisions to provide permanent facilities or privileges to foreign powers would, obviously, be considered by Bangladesh in the light of its national interests. But this is an area which India would have to monitor closely. Though India is presently in a phase of improving relations with China and those with the United States have reached almost unprecedented levels, it would not be in our long-term interest to have permanent presence of major powers across the border.

Looking to the future, India's objective has to be the development of relations along a broad spectrum of interests with a demonstrable win-win situation for both. A running theme in Bangladesh is that as the elder brother in the relationship, it is India's responsibility to make the first move, to be the more generous in any transaction. While it is true that a certain degree of responsibility in this direction does devolve on India, there are also pitfalls. This approach removes the relationship away from one of

equality between two sovereign states and encourages the attitude of condescension of which the Indians are so frequently guilty in their dealings with neighbours. From being a considerate elder brother, it is easy to slip into the image of a big brother. Secondly, it leads to unavoidable frustration on the Indian side as Bangladesh is perceived as not having reciprocated. It is now forgotten in both India and Bangladesh that in the discussions in the mid-nineties in resolving the Ganga waters issue, the matter of Bangladesh granting transit facilities for India's north-east was invariably considered by both sides. It is another matter that Bangladesh has a right to a fair share of the waters, though obviously in the absence of any international guidelines the amount would depend on India's goodwill. Though the question of transit was not a factor in the final negotiations, the fact remains that nearly ten years after the signing of the treaty, transit remains distant as ever, to the extent that Bangladesh has declined even to enter into the Asian highways network, the minister-in-charge stating that he was not willing to concede transit to India under the garb of Asian highways connectivity.

To meet the challenges to our relationship, it is necessary for India to show greater sensitivity to Bangladeshi concerns. The question of trade deficit may have political overtones as little is said in Dhaka about the equal deficit with China. But river waters would require imagination and statesmanship. As a country of the delta, Bangladesh is dependent on the rivers flowing in from India. Sharing of the flows of each river, as demanded by Bangladesh, would inevitably bring in the question of needs and available alternatives, on which agreement is unlikely. The future can only lie in a comprehensive dialogue involving all countries involved, namely India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and China.

From an Indian perspective, it is not possible to move forward if there is no corresponding desire on the other side. Where issues acquire urgency and further delays become unacceptable, it may be wiser to leave a co-operative Bangladesh out of the calculus and move

independently, as in the case of a gas pipeline from Myanmar directly through the north-east, or for investment in greater direct connectivity with the seven sisters.

One of the surprising, and unfortunate, elements of India-Bangladesh relationship has been the singular lack of communication at different levels. Leaving aside the intermittent interaction between governments, it is a sad commentary on the seriousness on either side that even in commercial matters, despite the substantial trade, there is no institutional framework where questions and problems can be placed for resolution. Consequently, issues whose rationale can be explained or where both sides may decide to pursue with their respective government, are allowed to fester and acquire dimensions far larger than the original. The same is true across the board in almost all aspects of interaction. This only helps those who have a vested interest in continuing frost in relations. The responsibility for trying to ensure greater flow of information must rest to a larger extent on Indian civil society, media and institutions.

Ultimately, the state of Bangladesh has to come to a decision as to the kind of relationship it wants with India. If India continues to be largely an element to be used at convenience for internal political dynamics, then forward movement will be slow. The extraordinary denials by the Bangladesh government on the increasing fundamentalism in the country, and at times holding India responsible, is unfortunate proof of the extent to which political calculations have overtaken considerations of national interest. But the decision on the way forward, to the extent it vests in Bangladesh, cannot be rushed or expedited. The internal dynamics will have to be sorted out by the political classes and the civil society of Bangladesh. India has to be clear that while she should always approach all matters with goodwill and an open mind and be prepared to go the extra mile, concessions as such will not move relations forward but may, unfortunately, be seen merely as signs of weakness. This is an area where known Pakistani attitudes may be operating in

Bangladesh today. Distinctions would also have to be made between the policies of the Bangladesh government and the people. The former need to be treated as appropriate between sovereign governments charged with the protection of their national interests, while the latter should have no reason to question India's respect, consideration and goodwill.

SESSION III**MARITIME SECURITY AND NEIGHBOURS**

Chairman : S. Kulkarni
Main Speaker : P.J. Jacob

PAPER PRESENTED BY VICE ADMIRAL (RETD.)
P.J. JACOB

Introduction

The demise of the Cold War, accompanied by the onset of globalization and the revolution in communications, transportation and technology, has dramatically and permanently changed the social, economic and political environment, not only in the so-called industrialized world, but also in the developing countries, and in countries in transition. However, the opportunities which globalization present for legitimate business in the operation of a worldwide economy, also exist for the non-legitimate business of crime, with an intensification of networks of interaction, and interdependence. The transformation of organized crime from a predominantly domestic issue posing challenges to local law enforcement, to a transnational phenomenon threatening national and international security has only recently been recognized. Today, the international situation is undergoing profound changes, as the world has entered the new century. Economic globalization is developing, and science and technology are advancing with each passing day. Competition in the overall national strength has become increasingly fierce, and mankind is faced with new opportunities for development, and, consequently, new challenges. Peace and development remain the themes of the present era. Economic interdependence among nations has deepened. The role played by global and regional economic cooperation organizations is on the

increase. It is against this backdrop that we must examine our maritime security framework.

If we consider our immediate maritime neighborhood to stretch from the horn of Africa to the straits of Malacca, we can see that it interfaces many politically, economically, socially, and culturally diverse countries. As globalization involves restructuring of organizational patterns beyond national states into new models, it generates new synergy and creates the possibilities of new conflicts. While conflicts generated by terrorism and drug trafficking pose a threat to global society, ethnic and genocidal conflicts, wars of secession, and the illicit supply of arms endanger security of individual nation states and regional environs. The region is home to vast geographical, historical and economic diversity. Inevitably perhaps, the region is an area where many differing cultures, religions, ideologies and political systems compete and struggle to survive or expand their own interests.

Maritime security in these waters is, therefore, perhaps, the most significant variable in this highly dynamic region. In almost any scenario describing the region, we would find a very complex maritime security environment given the number of forces affecting it. It has now become more critical than ever that the world's Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC) and ports are safe for international shipping and trade. While this will be an essential part of this new challenge, so will piracy, international terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction through maritime channels, energy security, humanitarian and environmental disasters, refugee migration and so on. Before we go into the various elements that would determine our approach to maritime security, let us examine a few perspectives.

Continental Mindset

Traditionally, India has had a continental mindset, since the main threats to India's security post independence have been across

our land borders. This is inspite of the historical fact that all those who came across India's land borders went back or merged into and became a part of the country. It was the invaders who came in the guise of traders from across the seas that subjugated India for over 250 years. Fortunately, we have belatedly learnt our lessons, and matters maritime are now receiving the attention they deserve.

India's Strategic Location

India's location is so significant from the maritime point of view that an entire ocean has been named after it. The peninsula straddles the five strategic choke points in the region, namely the Straits of Bab El Mandeb, Hormuz, Malacca, Sunda, and Lombok, which if disrupted can completely upset the world's energy and economic equations. As can be seen, the region is the world's energy lifeline, and around 1000 million tons of oil transit through these waters annually.

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands dominate the approaches to the Malacca Straits while the Lakshadweep group lies across the Nine Degree channel. The Persian Gulf is only 600 miles from Indian shores. One can easily see, that by virtue of geography, India is in a position to greatly contribute to the safe movement and security of shipping along the SLOCs in the region.

The Concept of National Security and Peacetime Threats in the Region

Our maritime strategy is founded on basic national security objectives, which broadly aim

to preserve India as a sovereign nation, free to develop its economy in a favourable international arena. It aims to harness and enhance the country's maritime assets, and provide a framework for the development of all aspects of maritime power which encompasses all that pertains to the sea that has a bearing on the security and the economic well being of the country.

Though maritime power is not singularly about the Navy, there can be little doubt that it plays the pivotal role. For the purpose of this discussion, I would not distinguish between the Navy and the Coast Guard as their roles in peacetime and in war would be well known to this audience.

Here, it must be appreciated that maritime strategy has a peacetime dimension also, and Navies have always been noted for their versatility and, in particular, their utility in situations short of conflict. This versatility comes from the characteristics of reach and endurance, the ability to threaten and apply force in a finely graduated way, and the fact that warships are diplomatic instruments unlike any other kind of armed force. Great maritime powers have always understood and fully exploited these unique characteristics of the Navy to achieve their political and strategic objectives.

Throughout history, the concept of security has emphasized the use of armed forces, and, has therefore had almost exclusively military connotations. The nuclear era has, of course, introduced a new factor that focuses on stockpiling of weapons as a deterrent. In the twenty first century, the concept has now become more inclusive and holistic, with considerable emphasis on economic performance in an increasingly interdependent, free market, export oriented world. While energy security has always been a vital consideration throughout the industrial and mechanized era, it has assumed an even more significant dimension in this context. As has been brought out earlier, some of the most valuable cargo in the world passes through the Persian Gulf, Malacca Straits and their environs. Now, there is an increasing concern that this free flow of commerce is threatened by maritime terrorism. The terrorist attack on the French oil tanker Limburg steaming through Yemeni waters in 2002 has raised fears about the threat posed by terrorists to ocean-going commerce in the world's strategic shipping lanes. This is indicative of the fact that the Al Qaeda's 'Naval Jihad' wing poses a clear threat

to both commercial and naval shipping in a number of locations. Other organizations like the LTTE also have a seaward attack capability. Commercially transited straits and waterways close to the coast are especially vulnerable as they provide safe havens for terrorists to launch their attacks and withdraw. It can be clearly seen that provision of seamless defence to the innumerable ships that transit these waterways would be a daunting task to say the least, if not well nigh impossible. It is also not beyond the realm of possibility to have a "North Sea Hijack" type scenario in one of our offshore oilfields, where an offshore platform is hijacked and held to ransom. Needless to add, any spillage of oil on a large scale as a consequence of any terrorist action will result in an environment disaster of unimaginable proportions.

Security Environment in the Region

The North Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf are the focus of a number of extra regional powers, more so in the wake of 9/11 and the American invasion of Iraq. While India is actively involved in co operating with the US and the world community at large in combating the scourge of terrorism, care needs to be taken to ensure that these conflicts do not spill over and affect India's vital interests. While a number of countries including Britain, France, and recently even Japan are maintaining presence in the region, ostensibly to ensure security and also to aid in the rebuilding of Iraq, The United States must get a special mention here. Even before the invasion of Iraq and the war on terror in Afghanistan, the US maintained considerable presence in the region with a capability for power projection deep inland as envisaged by their "Forward from the Sea" posture. They have military presence or arrangements for access almost across the entire gulf region. It would be naïve to expect this situation to change dramatically in the near future, or to discount the tremendous influence that is wielded by the US in the region, and indeed in the affairs of the world at large. Despite statements to the contrary, it is apparent that the US has had a considerable role to

play even in reducing tensions between India and Pakistan. It is also clear that Indo US relations are now at a different plane. After years of blowing hot and cold, the US has realized that it is in their interests to foster a strategic partnership with India in order to achieve lasting stability in the region. A report from Washington states that, "The Bush Administration has consistently made it clear that it views deeper bilateral naval cooperation as a major part of improving defence ties with India, and more broadly, of boosting the strategic relationship between the two nations." For India too, forging ties with the US would be in our interest, both economically and militarily.

While on the subject of extra regional powers, one must highlight the great inroads China is making in the region. China appears to have ambitious plans of extending its influence well beyond South China Sea into the Indian Ocean. So we see that initial forays by cooperating with Myanmar and later with Bangladesh have now matured. It has also assisted in the development of Gwadar port and, in Thailand, it is considering funding a canal across the Kra isthmus. For that matter, I am given to understand that a Chinese firm has been allowed to bid for the privatization of the Chennai port. Apparently, this has come about after initially being rejected on the grounds that it may impinge on our security. While one of the reasons for this intensified activity could be to ensure security of its maritime trade, the other is that it does not want to be over dependent on traditional oil transit routes to support its burgeoning economy. For our part, we must ensure that there are adequate checks and balances to ensure that our liberalization and privatization drive does not afford China the opportunity to make forays into sectors which have strategic implications.

Closer home on the Western seaboard, it may be prudent to accept that Pakistan's dissonance with India is essential to its very existence. As such, even though there are ongoing attempts at rapprochement, the potential for conflict is ever present. Though the

capability of effective neutralization at sea must be planned for in the event of hostilities, one must, at the same time, guard against a Pakistan centric focus in Naval defence planning.

On the Eastern side, the straits of Malacca are now synonymous with widespread piracy, and this scourge is spreading, the Bay of Bengal also now being termed as one of the hotspots of piracy. Though some degree of patrolling by the regional states is in place, other countries cannot afford to be complacent about the threat of terrorism and piracy considering the economic significance of these waterways.

Our Approach

In arriving at a viable framework for maritime security, let us now examine its different dimensions.

The first would be maritime security in times of hostilities, which would have a purely military connotation and would include defence of territory and the protection of the SLOCs for ones own strategic interests.

The second would encompass peacetime non military law enforcement aspects like terrorism, piracy, drug trafficking, arms running, SLOC patrolling, coastal surveillance and environmental issues.

The third would include maritime activities like SAR, fishing control, maritime resources and the like.

We must realize, that today, security threats to a nation now emanate not only from other states, but also from transnational threats. For instance, narcotics, fundamentalism, piracy, gun running and environmental degradation lie outside the province of any one state, but pose a formidable challenge to all free thinking, democratic, and responsible nations. It is our view that the high seas are the common heritage of mankind, and that the SLOCs need to be

free for legitimate use by all nations. Considering both the volume and value of sea borne trade in these regions, it is imperative that India has the wherewithal to achieve this.

Over and above this, we have our own national interests to consider, our offshore interests of both coastlines and our EEZ of over 2 million square kilometers. As such, these aspects would need to be taken into consideration while determining a national maritime security policy, and consequentially, any regional security mechanism that can be put in place.

Maritime Powers in the region

There can be little doubt that outside of the extra regional powers (including China), India has the most formidable Navy in the region. Though growth was stagnant for a few years in the 90s, ambitious plans have been drawn up to have close to 200 ships by 2017. This would include 2 to 3 aircraft carriers, a potent submarine and surface fleet, and would be capable of fulfilling India's aspirations of having sea based nuclear deterrent as also exerting greater influence in the region. Going a little beyond our immediate neighborhood, but of consequence nonetheless, Australia, too has a modern navy consistent with their policy of having a high technology medium power navy that they can afford to maintain. In their thinking, the country is as hard to attack as to defend, and their focus is mainly in keeping their trade routes open. In the Gulf region, the littoral navies of the Gulf such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Oman and the UAE are augmenting their naval forces to give them a sea denial capability. Lying between the Straits of Malacca on its west coast, and with the South China Sea to the East, Malaysia occupies a geo-strategically important, and sensitive area. An essentially maritime nation with numerous offshore territories, it is also embarking on what is probably SE Asia's most significant naval procurement plan. On order are 3 submarines, and up to 27 New Generation Patrol Vessels (NGPV) to be inducted in the next 15 years. Singapore is also embarking on an acquisition programme that seems to be somewhat

inconsistent with their stated mission of protecting the SLOCs that encompass the Singapore Straits and its access routes. It appears more likely that it is aimed at countering Malaysian superiority in the strategically important Malacca Straits region. Closer to home, the Pakistani Navy is submarine centric, and the surface fleet has not grown in any great measure. There are few other navies of note, and even the Indonesian Navy, though possessing considerable numbers is understood to be beset with problems of maintenance and spares.

Whereas China and Japan being two of the major stake holders with a commercial interest in safe maritime transit through this region, could conceivably influence the maritime scenario in the West Pacific, it is clear, that in our neighborhood, India by virtue of its strategic location and relative military standing would necessarily be the dominant regional maritime power. It would therefore have to don the mantle of ensuring the maritime security in the region.

It can clearly be seen that only the Indian Navy has the force levels, competence, and the will to discharge its responsibility in the region. The Indian Navy is a balanced force comprising all elements of a Blue Water Navy in its inventory with a dynamic plan to progressively upgrade this capability to also meet the challenges of littoral warfare and SLOC security. In carrying out its missions. It would be complemented by the Indian Coast Guard, in itself a credible force. Over the years, the capability of the Indian Navy to respond to crises in the region has been well demonstrated, as indeed the acceptance by less capable countries in the region that India would be the country to turn to in an emergency, be it military, diplomatic, or humanitarian. Nowhere was this capability better demonstrated than during the recent Tsunami disaster in December 2004, where, in addition to providing assistance to the parts of India that were affected, the Indian Navy launched a massive relief operation in the Maldives, Sri Lanka, and the epicenter in Indonesia. Having already

established its presence in the disaster zone, the Indian Navy took the lead providing the first assessments on the damage and the kind of assistance needed.

In order to provide the degree of security necessary to provide a stable maritime environment in the region, the missions of the Indian Navy in peacetime could broadly be as follows :

To provide Deterrence from a position of strength. The level of deterrence would be such that India's sea power cannot be ignored by any littoral state singly or by a regional grouping.

To Raise the Cost of Intervention by extra regional powers and deter them from initiating action inimical to India's security interests.

To Exercise Sea Control in designated areas in the North Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal and at the entry/exit points to the IOR.

To Safeguard India's Mercantile Marine and sea Borne trade in the Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC) both during peace and war.

To provide Security to India's coastline, Island territory, offshore assets VA's & VP's from Sea borne threat.

To protect India EEZ against illegal exploitation of Sea Bed resources and assert India's rights under UNCLOS III working in conjunction with the Indian Coast Guard.

To develop suitable Healthy Maritime Partnerships and acquire the confidence of the littoral neighbours of the region, with a view to provide assistance when sought and as part of overall Confidence Building Measures.

Collective Security

While an independent maritime security policy is actively

pursued and implemented, one must, without compromising our national interests, also look at the benefits of a collective security regime, at least in peacetime. Considering the huge proportion of the regions' trade that is carried by sea, the important question of what should be the strategic response by regional navies to ensure the safe and efficient carriage of these cargoes needs to be answered. Indeed, there are also countries outside the immediate region who are also dependent on secure shipping. Thus they too have a legitimate interest in fostering a regime of cooperation and calm. It is therefore apparent that some sort of collective maritime security arrangement in the region has become imperative, more so because of the number of strategically important SLOCs in the region. What then are the latent and potential areas of friction that could surface to threaten freedom of navigation or otherwise impede the free flow of trade in the SLOCs of the area?

To begin with, there is the historical territorial, religious and ethnic conflict among many nations in the region. Confrontationist attitudes especially with regard to oceanic interests and disputes over island possessions have added to the instability. The transition of India and Pakistan from perceived nuclear powers to real ones, and aspirations of other countries in the region to acquire that status has only made the situation that much more complex.

The next is international terrorism. The ramifications of 9/11 are still being felt in the form of terrorist attacks in all parts of the world. The other factor is the increase in internationalized and organized criminal activities such as piracy, drug trafficking and illegal activities such as over-fishing, unsanctioned ocean resource surveying and environment damage.

By and large, economic growth in the region continues to be strong, and trends indicate that this is likely to continue. Therefore the issues of this region will be the problems necessarily faced by any country experiencing rapid economic growth, for example, securing energy and resources to maintain economic growth, and

environmental degradation produced by economic development. Even developed countries that have already addressed the issues of maritime pollution, overfishing, habitat destruction or global warming will need to adopt new and effective measures to allow for the participation of additional countries. Addressing these issues will not be easy politically or technologically. Rather, each country will likely consider and protect its own national interests first. Which may lead to the rise of new confrontations between neighboring countries or in the region as a whole, generating an unstable regional security situation. Therefore it is imperative that the countries of the region establish a maritime coalition to oversee safety and security in the SLOCs.

As it would be readily apparent that Maritime cooperation would be directly influenced by the maritime powers in the region, here again, I feel it would necessarily be India that would need to play a proactive role, though, as brought out earlier, the presence and consequent influence of extra regional powers like the US cannot be discounted.

In today's world, the most effective way to address security issues would be to seek a common approach to peacetime issues. This relationship in the political, economic and maritime spheres, when fully matured, could also provide a mechanism for the resolution of conflicts before they arise. Here, I would like to put forth some of the maritime security initiatives that can be taken towards this end : Sharing of responsibility and assets to patrol and safeguard SLOCs. Increasing the frequency and broaden the ambit of joint exercises. In recent times, the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard has conducted and participated in exercises with a number of countries including the US and Japan. These exercises, inter alia, help in identifying solutions to problems of interoperability. Confluence meetings like the biannual "Milan" series being held in the Andaman and Nicobar islands have gone a long way in fostering cooperation and a spirit of camaraderie among the navies of the region. The event provides a forum for formal and informal interactions, seminars and the like.

More venues and participants could be added to gain full mileage out of similar meetings. Institutionalized approach to cooperation in the event of natural calamities, SAR and environmental disasters. This could also include cost saving measures like sharing multilocational stockpiles of relief supplies especially those which have limited shelf lives.

Sharing of intelligence, information, and access to relevant databases. This could include criminal and revenue intelligence, poaching, SAR, meteorology and oceanology and the like.

Strive towards common legislation for dealing with offenders. Common approach towards implementation of international and regional treaties and security codes.

Pooling of assets in terms of training and technology.

Increase scope of participation in relevant conferences and seminars so that every voice is heard and all concerns are addressed.

Conclusion

While the urgent need for regional cooperation cannot be overemphasized, actual implementation may prove to be a little more difficult. A serious challenge is the difference in perceptions between various states, especially those that are major users of the trade routes and the littoral states that straddle these routes. Perceptions also differ between the littoral states themselves, as in the case of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore vis a vis patrolling of the Malacca Straits. Another hurdle is the perceived infringement of sovereignty. It is evident that regional countries are sensitive of incursions in their maritime territories and are careful about who is allowed to transgress it. For example, Malaysia had reacted strongly to the US deployment conceptualized under the Regional Maritime Security Initiative (RMSI), and had noted that the US should get permission from regional countries as it impinged on their national sovereignty. This fear has also been well demonstrated during the Tsunami disaster when the Indonesian government set a deadline asking all foreign militaries to vacate their territory. Having said that, it is also clear that all states no doubt realize that cooperative security and a commonality of purpose is the prudent way ahead, and, hopefully, it should only be a matter of time before individual reservations are addressed and overcome, and failsafe procedures are in place. The United Nations World Commission on Oceans has suggested that navies should cooperate and uphold international law and order at sea. Other countries including the US and Japan have acknowledged the role of the Indian Navy and have shown considerable interest in nurturing a closer working relationship with the Indian Navy and Coast Guard. The Alandro Rainbow incident in November 1999 was probably one of the factors, which contributed to the Japanese Navy's turnaround post-POKHRAN II. To my mind there is a great deal that the Indian Navy and other regional navies can do together to ensure the safety of shipping in the region. To this end, the Indian Navy has transcended multifarious obstacles to fully cooperate in all regional initiatives addressing maritime security

concerns. In fact, the recent establishment of a new APSO (ACNS (FCT) (Foreign cooperation and Transformation)) in Naval Headquarters, in meant, in part, to oversee such regional joint planning and operations.

Having said that, one must put our ambitions and ground realities in perspective. In April next year, Pakistan is due to assume command of a nine nation maritime coalition (CMS) which includes Germany, Britain and the US. A newspaper report has said "The region's aspiring naval power, India, is not included in the Maritime Coalition". Similarly, overtures towards countries like Myanmar and Bangladesh with a view to dilute Chinese influence were late in happening, despite our knowing about Chinese intent for quite some time. I am trying to suggest that foreign policy initiatives should be in resonance with other strategic objectives.

Is there likelihood of major conflict in the region in the near future ? I would tend to think not, but the inherent economic development setting off an underlying struggle for maritime dominance cannot be overlooked. At all levels, we must be unambiguously clear that the sea holds the key to our growth. To quote from our Maritime Doctrine, "to safeguard these interests, it requires a strong and credible maritime force, with a clear and simple concept of operation.

SESSION IV

INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURS : FOREIGN POLICY OPTIONS

CHAIRMAN : DR. MADHAV GODBOLE

CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

We had an excellent intellectual feast this morning, talking about India and its neighbours. Unfortunately most of the discussion in India often focuses more on foreign policy of US than that of India. We are more worried about US, Iran, Iraq, UK, whether Tony Blair was right or wrong, but hardly ever whether the NDA Government was right, whether other government is right. This is particularly true where our neighbours are concerned. We were particularly keen that this seminar should concentrate for a change on this area, which is largely known for default in public debate. That really brings me to a few questions which came to my mind as a result of the excellent discussions this morning. I request the panelists to offer their comments on these.

First is that we have looked at the security issues in a somewhat limited sense. Often we talk about comprehensive security when it comes to the discussion of such matters. Today we have talked about security in a limited sense about raising walls around us, we have talked about fencing around India and the Pakistan and Bangladesh border. Is this really an answer to the problem of security which India is going to face? Are there issues which we need to discuss, to reflect, or are we going to discuss creating a force, bettering the intelligence and taking care of border management. Yes that is an important one aspect of the problem but that is not the total aspect of the problem. Therefore with the experts we have today from a very rich background in external affairs and foreign policies I would like to raise the questions. What are the options that we have in a country for our foreign policy? This is the first question. Then I come to the

next question which really bothered me in this presentation. We are talking about preemptive strikes, we are talking about fault lines and taking advantage of fault lines of neighbour countries, we are talking about influencing elections in the neighbouring country, we are talking about making use of Indus Water Treaty to have a leverage over our neighbour. If this is the direction in which we are going, how are we different from United States ? We often fault US for its aggressive policy. People are looking at India as a Regional Power. Is this the kind of emerging Regional Power that we are going to be ? What is going to be the image of India ? If India takes recourse to any of this kind of policy, that leads me to the next question which is related to this, Is it in our interest to destabilize our neighbours, again a very very important subject from the point of India's security. Is it in our interest that we talked about, Ambassador Mukherjee talked about Pakistanisation of Bangladesh. At the time of the Bangladesh war he said we may as well have two Pakistans on our border. How many more Pakistans do we need to have on our border, by taking advantage of fault lines ? Are we prepared for it and can any country survive in this kind of environment creating that kind of international situations around it ?

That brings me to the question, in larger number of countries there is a lot of difference in youth within the country on addressing internal domestic issues but there is a large measure of agreement so far as external policies are concerned. India is a very peculiar case. There is a tremendous dissonance both in respect of how to handle internal policies and how to handle external policies. This is a Hindu country whether you realize it or not but from the point of view of Bangladesh or Pakistan this is a Hindu country which is being surrounded all around by muslim countries. That is their perception. Mr.Khosla talked about obsessions about Pakistan in India. Now whether it is a question of Nepal or Pakistan or Bangladesh, here is a huge vote bank of muslims to be taken care of and there is no agreement amongst the political parties about how to handle these issues. That is why this huge question of illegal migration from

Bangladesh which is now 20 million, no political party including the NDA, the BJP, wanted to take any action because it would have gone against the interest of the vote bank.

So far as the Maoists in Nepal are concerned we have a situation. Whole apologist group in India including some of the elements in the Congress is opposed to take any strong action against them. So how do we build up a consensus within the country on how to deal with the neighbour, or what could be the policies so far as the neighbouring countries are concerned. It is a challenge for the external ministry to be addressed and to be taken for political debate in terms of arriving at a consensus within the political parties. In all my working in Delhi I have never come across either formal or informal briefings of the political parties to sensitise them on these issues.

We did not talk about nuclearisation of Pakistan or we do not talk about muslim islamic bombs which are talked all over the world.

One element again in this whole debate, perhaps the most important factor, I say, China is making inroads in terms of its prestige position in the whole region, it wants to be the member of the SAARC. It has come as the observer in the APEC and is indirectly putting pressure on all our neighbours to draw the Chinese line as compared to what they, and India would like them to do how to deal with China on these matters.

Finally in all the discussion on handling the neighbours, what is the final answer to the problem, is there a track two, three, four diplomacy which needs to be developed in this matter? Do all common people in all these neighbouring countries need to be sensitized to these problems? Therefore it is the common people who have to be involved. I would like to ask them finally a last question. Do you visualize in near future any possibility of a common market coming up in this country without any border, will there be any common citizenship? We often say, there are artificial borders, that

geographically this Indian subcontinent is really one continent and these borders are artificial borders. So can we at a time gap of 15 years/20 years, can we expect that there will be a common citizenship, a common passport, no borders? What kind of a political arrangement you see ? Or shall we keep only discussing how to increase the fencing along the borders to take care of these problems?

Thank you.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

The discussion which followed the presentation by the main speakers in each session and the general discussion at the end of the last session were lively and animated. To do adequate justice to the seminar subject particularly for deliberating on India's foreign policy options, it was generally felt that a 2-3 days seminar was necessary. A general consensus emerged on the following lines :-

- Many of India's neighbours are failing states and have serious unresolved internal contradictions. They have severe governance deficit. This often results in undesirable transborder spillover effects.
- Pakistan and China pose a security threat. Pakistan's military establishment has a vested interest in an adversarial relationship with India. China views India as a competitor in the future world power equations and would try to keep it embroiled in its internal and sub-regional affairs. Further, it is slowly and gradually encroaching upon India's strategic space in the region. India therefore cannot afford to lower its guard.
- Pakistan is the epicentre of global terrorism with its ISI and Al Qaeda network. India has been facing the music for over two decades. The ISI has developed a close nexus with elements in Bangladesh, and also in Nepal. This is

seriously affecting India's north-east.

- Ethnic turmoil in Sri Lanka defying early solution threatens political destabilization. This could open it up to third party influences with unacceptable consequences for India.
- India is seen by its neighbours as a soft state permitting them to disregard its critical national interests. They need to be deterred by diplomatically conveying to them the threat of exploiting their faultlines and putting into effect available leverages unless they mend their wayward ways. This could simultaneously be sugar-coated with immediate prospects of substantial economic assistance and developing mutual economic inter-dependence.
- Multi-party democracy, monarchy, parliament, bureaucracy, local government media, the constitution itself all institutions have collapsed in Nepal, and so has governance.
- The inroads of Pakistani and Chinese influence in Nepal and India being seen as a soft state these symptoms do not augur well for India's security.
- There is concern that demographic balance in many districts of Indian states bordering Bangladesh has been radically altered through continuous immigration. Political parties in these Indian states turned a blind eye to this issue for electoral ends, absorbing the illegal immigrants as citizens. This has acquired the potential for being a serious destabilizing element in India as also for Indo-Bangladesh relationship.
- Failure to demarcate boundaries with Bangladesh and a few areas with Pakistan and failure to resolve the boundary dispute with Bangladesh on a permanent basis

reveals India's lack of strategic understanding and strategic foresight.

- The illegal immigration from Bangladesh is now over 20 million. No political party including the NDA, the BJP, the Congress, the Communists wanted to take any action because it would have gone against the interest of the vote bank.
- Islamic fundamentalism coupled with terrorism with tentacles and interlinks with Pakistan's ISI has taken deep roots in Bangladesh enveloping almost the entire country. The most striking demonstration of the reach of fundamentalist elements was the 400 simultaneous bomb explosions in August, 2005 in 63 of Bangladesh's 64 districts.
- The trend towards fundamentalism in Bangladesh is a mixture of returning jihadis from Afghanistan and Pakistani ISI influences together with misplaced and short-sighted political calculations.
- It would not be in India's long term interest to have permanent presence of major powers across the border in Bangladesh.
- India's objective in respect of Bangladesh should be development of relations along a broad spectrum of interests with a demonstrable win-win situation for both. It should persuade and prevail upon Bangladesh to give transit facilities to India.
- India as a nation state lacked strategic foresight to adequately guard and secure its geographic frontiers. The present Pak Occupied Kashmir, the Northern Area, the failure to sort out and resolve the Kashmir issue once for all, the failure to find a permanent solution to the festering

Indo-Bangladesh boundary problem are symptoms of strategic blinkers.

- At present the major issues that are being discussed in respect of our neighbours are fencing along the international borders, creating a special force, bettering the intelligence, taking care of border management, pre-emptive strikes, taking advantage of faultlines of neighbours. Socially, politically and economically stable neighbours coupled with people to people contact, economic interdependence with India would substantially contribute to their as well as India's security, progress and prosperity.
- Proper globalization should have borders without fences covering many areas, eg. industrialization, infrastructure, imports, exports, movement of people economic cooperation etc. The European Union focused on these issues, but the nations therein do not want to lose their national identity. The Indian policy in this connection could be to strike a balance so that national interests are secured and the country is not at the receiving end.

The Ministry of External Affairs needs to conduct formal or informal briefings for the political parties from time to time to sensitise them on issues like Maoists, Naxallites, terrorists cross border terrorism etc.

INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURS : A REGIONAL SECURITY PERSPECTIVE

SEMINAR : 04th January, 2006

(Venue Southern Command Cinema Hall adjacent to HQ
Southern Command)

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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4.	Shri M.K. Mangalmurti	-	CASS
5.	Prof. Gautam Sen	-	CASS
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20.	Lt Gen (Retd.) Ashok Chaki	-	CASS
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| 34. Shri N. N. Sathaye | - | CASS |
| 35. Shri Satish Chandra | - | |
| 36. Ambassador IP Khosla | - | |
| 37. Ambassador KV Rajan | - | |
| 38. Ambassador Deb Mukharji | - | |
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| 55. Maj HM Preenja | - | CASS / ACC&S, Ahmadnagar |
| 56. Capt Manir | - | CASS / NDA |
| 57. Lt RT Thusanthan | - | CASS / NDA |
| 58. Lt Ashwath | - | CASS / NDA |
| 59. Sq Ldr Ahluwalia | - | CASS / NDA |
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| 64. Lt Col RVVS Jagati | - | CASS / Ammunition Factory |
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72. Col AS Ralhore	-	
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86. Col K.D. Pendharkar	-	
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89. Shri A.B. Gokhale	-	
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95. Ms. Preeti Mudliar	-	
96. Mr. Kartik Natarajan	-	
97. Mr. Vinay D. Chati	-	
98. Mr. VV Kulkarni	-	
99. Dr. Mrs. Thangamani	-	NDA