

SOUTH ASIA'S STRATEGIC SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract

South Asia is home to nearly one-fourth of humanity. It also has one of the largest arrays of territorial and non-territorial disputes in the world. The region has witnessed several interstate wars and warlike situations besides a number of intrastate insurgencies, ethnic discords and confrontations in the last about seven decades. As a consequence, the strategic security environment of the region is overshadowed by traditional military security of the state. Human security of virtually 1.57 billion people remains hostage to the security perceptions based on the nature of conflicts rather than human sufferings based on shared realities. This paper analyzes key expressions and manifestations of the security paradigm so as to recommend practicable measures for a comprehensive, cooperative and holistic security framework.

Introduction

History, geography, demography, and political opportunity structure intermix to formulate national purpose, interests and inspirations of a state. National interests stipulate economic, social and political priorities. These, in turn, shape a strategic construct – strategic mindset and security paradigm – consistent with the power potential of the nation. The string goes down to the lowest rung in a manner that it receives light from the national purpose to the extent it must. While economic, social and political concerns are debated openly by the policymakers and strategic planners, they often downplay the imprints of religion on decision making and policy formulation process. At any rate, religious beliefs play a consequential role in evolution of strategic culture and concerns of a country or region.

All this is as much true in case of South Asian countries as it is for any other state, whether big or small, developed or developing, and overtly theological or ostensibly secular. However, South Asia's strategic culture is quite different from other major regions of the world because of its peculiar security issues and atypical security calculus. Geo-historic, geo-political, geo-strategic and geo-economic and geo-cultural dimensions together play their part in making and maintaining the security construct of the region. Besides, security interests of major powers of the world create an unbreakable interface thereby leaving irremovable imprints on the regional security landscape.

South Asia is one of the most militarized zones in the world and home to inter-state and intra-state wars. Having remained in a state of conflict for centuries, and especially since 1947, it has turned into a "Corridor of Instability" on the globe. Security problems of the region range from traditional to non-traditional and state security to human security. State security overshadows human security in a number of ways, and people remain to be the ultimate sufferers. Thus, the region is hostage to a security web of its own, and would seemingly remain so in the decades to come.

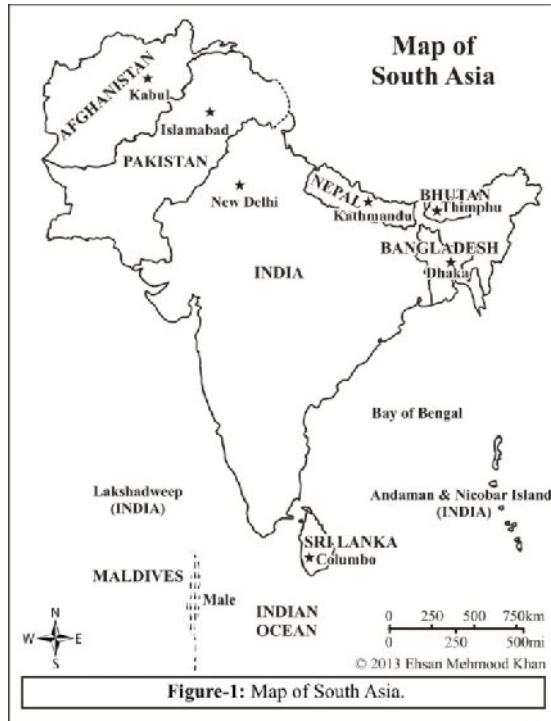
Location and Makeup

Located in the heart of Asia, the South Asian region physically stretches from the Hindu Kush to the Malay Peninsula and from the Indian Ocean to the Himalayas,¹ and is bordered by the Middle East, Central Asia, China and South East Asia. This way, it is a meeting point for various important regions on the globe. Thus, events and activities in South Asia directly affect the contiguous regions and indirectly affect remaining parts of the world. Likewise, any sort of developments in the adjacent regions, too, reflect on the South Asian affairs.

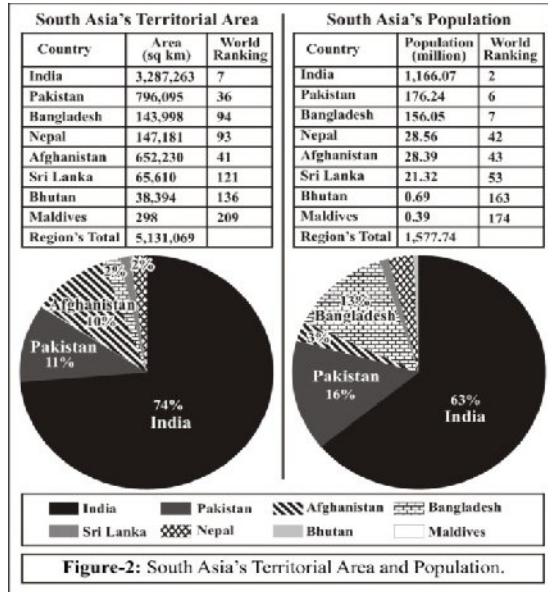
Traditionally, South Asia has been understood as a region comprising seven countries namely Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives.

However, an extended definition of the area in keeping with the archives of the UN shows Afghanistan too as part of South Asia. Figure-1 illustrates.² It is of note that the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) initially consisted of seven countries. Later, Afghanistan, too, became a member. The composition of South Asia in this paper is, hence, based on the UN definition of South Asia as well as present membership of SAARC.

There is a unique mismatch between the population and landmass of the region (Figure-2).³ For instance, South Asia's population (1,577,744,692) when combined with that of China (1,338,612,968) comes to 2,677,225,936 and is thus 54% of this total (Figure-3).⁴ On the other hand, the region has nearly 35% of the territorial area when combined with that of China (9,596,961 square kilometre). Similarly, compared with the European Union, the region has virtually thrice more population (1,577,744,692 vis-à-vis 491,582,852). To put it in global comparison, South Asia has 23.23% of world population (6,790,062,216) dwelling on 1% of the globe (510.072 million square kilometre).⁵ These comparisons have been given herein for the reason that demographic and territorial composition of South Asia has a concrete linkage with makeup of its security paradigm.

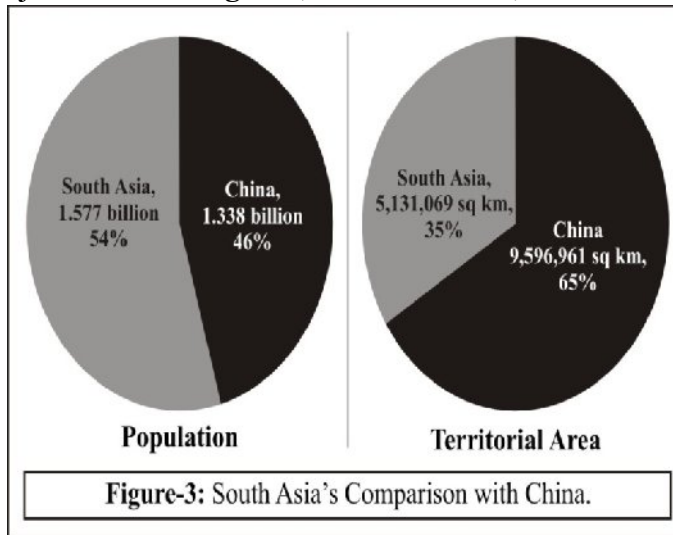


South Asia has a diverse territory ranging from fertile plains to vast desert stretches and the highest mountain ranges in the world. To note, top thirteen mountain peaks of the world are located in the Karakoram and Himalaya mountain ranges of South Asia.⁶ The region has tremendous tapped and untapped



natural resources. Throughout the recorded history of the region, it attracted traders and invaders especially from the Central Asia and the Middle East. Intermarriages, immigration and settlements changed the demography of the region to a great extent. Likewise, it paved a way for new religions and languages. Today, South Asia is home to a number of major world religions, ethnic tribes, races and languages.

All these are inalienable features of security outlook in the region. There are numerous other expressions e.g. sects within Islam and Christianity, and castes within Hinduism. Thus, South Asia has



tremendous heterogeneity, which adds complexity to the already intricate security atmosphere.

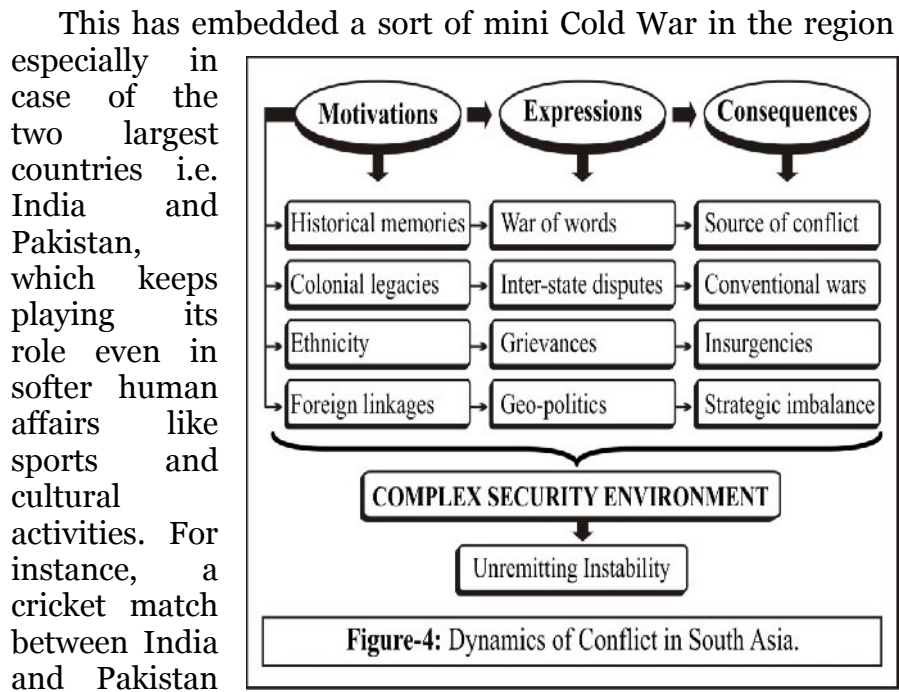
Inter-state conflicts involve huge unsettled territory; indeed, unparalleled with territorial disputes elsewhere in the world. This, source of conflict, is the most dangerous dimension of security in the region. This needs dexterity and statesmanship on part of the South Asian leadership so as to manage security and maintain stability in the region. With unsettled inter-state disputes and unmediated intra-state ethnic interests, human security atmosphere of the region remains clothed in despair and desolation. This calls for a regional approach to interconnection, interdependence, integration and unity within the diversity, which is supported by the UN Charter, too.⁷

Dynamics and Manifestations of Security Paradigm

South Asia is at war with itself. This densely populated chunk of territory on the globe is heavily militarized too. The region is carrying the burden of history. Historical memories of the partition of India in 1947, the colonial legacies and more so, the Muslim rule in India before the British colonized it, have left strong imprints on the hearts and minds of the people, which are acting as psychological determinant in virtually all human affairs including the statecraft. It is here that the religion interacts with security. These are, thus, a major impediment on the way to concord and conciliation, and a stumbling block for regional security and stability. The state policies are influenced by political concerns and security perceptions from top to bottom. Due to the same reasons, even the most technical issues pending solution, often, transform into geo-political moorings and politico-military disputes. This has given birth to an intricate security template and conflict landscape.

South Asia's dynamics of conflict that shape up the regional security environment have four principal motivations namely the historical memories, colonial legacies, ethnicity and foreign linkages. These motivations transform into

dangerous expressions leading to drastic consequences for the individual states and societies as well the region as a whole, as shown in Figure-4.⁸ The ultimate product of this complex nature of security environment is an unremitting instability, which leads to primacy of militarism rather than humanism. Key manifestations of security paradigm are (Figure-5):⁹ inter-state wars; intra-state insurgencies; conflict management rather than resolution; an unending conventional arms race; nuclearization (of India and Pakistan); interventional politics i.e. regional intervention; extra-regional intervention (e.g. presence of foreign forces in form of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan);¹⁰ and human insecurity, which is a by-product of some of these and a cogent reason for others.



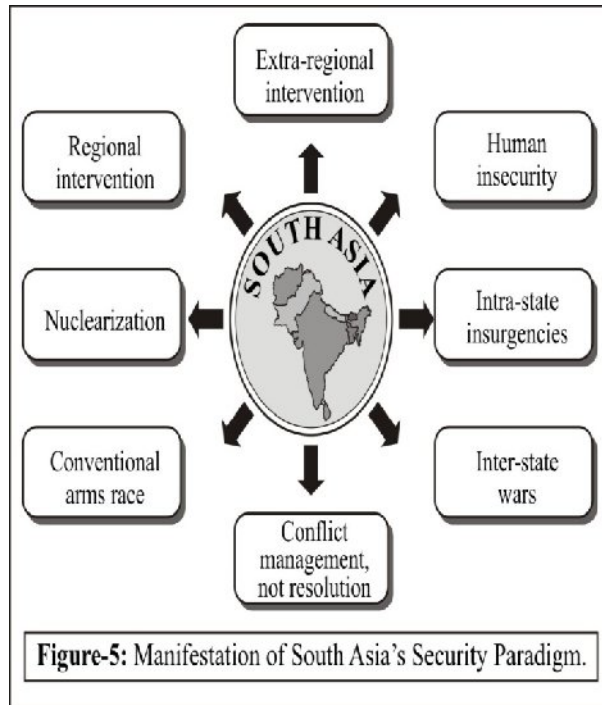
It is of note that South Asia is home to the world's oldest surviving UN mission, United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). The UNMOGIP

dates back to January 1949 and operates on either side of the Ceasefire Line (now the Line of Control) between the two parts of Kashmir; Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Indian-Occupied Kashmir.¹²

India-Centric Regional Disputes

The region is home to the world's largest territorial disputes. Important to note is that most of them involve India,

thereby instituting an India-centric security paradigm in South Asia. Key ones to name are: India-China Aksai Chin dispute; India-China South Tibet/ Arunachal Pradesh dispute;¹³ India-Pakistan Kashmir dispute; India-Pakistan Sir Creek dispute; India-Pakistan



dispute over construction of dams by India in violation of the Indus Water Treaty; Pak-Afghan argument over cross border movement of militants; India-Bangladesh border dispute over 51 Bangladeshi enclaves and 111 Indian enclaves; India-Bangladesh sea boundary dispute over New Moore/ South Talpatty/Purbasha Island in the Bay of Bengal;¹⁴ India-Bangladesh Farraka Dam dispute; India-Nepal Boundary dispute including 400 squares kilometres on the source of Kalapani River; and India's argument over militants' crossing with Bangladesh, Nepal, Burma and Bhutan. Figure-6 illustrates.¹⁵

Kashmir, nevertheless, remains the site of the world's largest and most militarized territorial dispute.¹⁶ It is often referred to as a nuclear flash point on the globe. Kashmir is not only an unfinished agenda of the partition but also an unresolved dispute of the UN. The UNSC adopted various resolutions in 1948, 1949, 1950 and 1951 to resolve the issue democratically but it has yet to succeed. For instance, in

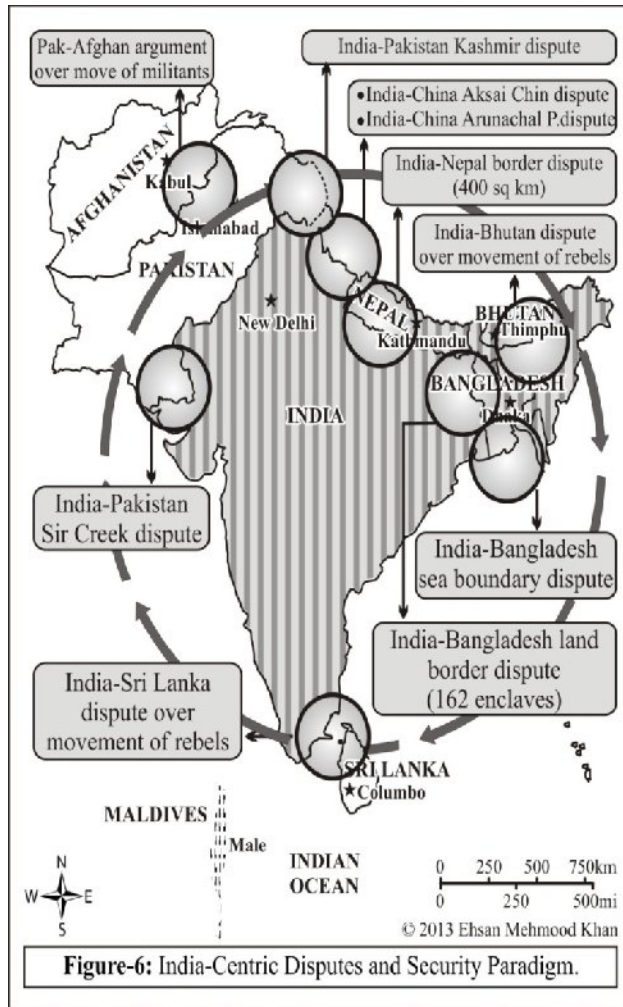


Figure-6: India-Centric Disputes and Security Paradigm.

1951 the UNSC, through a resolution endorsed, “Reminding the governments and authorities concerned of the principle embodied in its resolutions 47 (1948) of 21 April 1948, 51 (1948) of 3 June 1948 and 80 (1950) of 14 March 1950 and the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan resolutions of 13 August 1948 and 5 January 1949, that the final disposition of the State of Jammu and Kashmir will be made in accordance with the will of the people expressed through democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations...”¹⁷

To this end, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had articulated: “I should like to make it clear that [the] question of aiding Kashmir in this emergency is not designed in any way to influence the State to accede to India. Our view, which we have repeatedly made public, is that [the] question of accession in any disputed territory or State must be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people and we adhere to this view.”¹⁸ He further pronounced, “We have declared that the fate of Kashmir is ultimately to be decided by the people. That pledge we have given, and the Maharaja has supported it, not only to the people of Kashmir but to the world. We will not, and cannot back out of it. We are prepared when peace and law and order have been established to have a referendum held under international auspices like the United Nations. We want it to be a fair and just reference to the people, and we shall accept their verdict. I can imagine no fairer and juster [sic] offer.”¹⁹

The plebiscite could never be held. The issue not only remains unresolved but is even more complicated today. More than the territorial area or geo-strategic interests of the nations, Kashmir is a human security issue for millions of people, some of whom are living in a split family status and many of them as refugee for the last about seven decades. The territorial area of Kashmir is 222,236 square kilometres (total on both sides of the Line of Control). It is only a little less than the United Kingdom’s 243,610 square kilometres and more than the territorial areas of Bangladesh (143,998 square kilometres) and North Korea (120,538 square kilometres), and virtually double the area of Bulgaria (110,879 square kilometres). It is nearly five times larger than the territorial areas of Denmark (43,094 square kilometres) and Netherlands (41,543 square kilometres). These figures have been given to put it in comparative perspective. The South Asian nations also have hosts of non-territorial arguments.

Interstate Conventional Wars

The territorial and non-territorial issues have, in the past led to wars between India and Pakistan in 1948, 1965 and

1971, and India and China in 1962. Skirmishes between India and Bangladesh border security forces are also a routine bulletin in the region. Besides, the Line of Control (formerly the Ceasefire Line) in Kashmir is in a virtual state of war since 1947.

Intrastate Arguments and Insurgencies

All the eight South Asian nations are home to different types of ethnic arguments, confrontation, insurgencies, violence and militancy. The key ones to note are: Taliban Movement in Afghanistan and Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan;²⁰ Maoist insurgency in seven out of total 28 states of India (aptly termed as the seven sisters); Naxilite insurgency in India, which Dr Manmohan Singh, the Indian Prime Minister, termed as the single biggest internal security threat²¹ (the area affected by Naxilism is popularly termed as the Red Corridor);²² LTTE in Sri Lanka;²³ the Maoists insurgency in Nepal, which lasted till 2006 and is passing through post-culmination settlement phase; and insurgency in Chittagong Hill Tracts region of Bangladesh.²⁴

As a matter of fact, there are hundreds of militant organizations operating in South Asia.²⁵ Take the case of India; there are virtually 200 armed terrorist organizations / groups – most of them from the majority Hindu community – that have picked up arms against the state and minority communities with one motive or the other.²⁶ Recently, India's Union Home Minister Sushil Kumar Shinde stated, "We have got an investigation report that be it the RSS or BJP, their training camps are promoting Hindu terrorism. We are keeping a strict vigil on all this. We will have to think about it seriously and will have to remain alert."²⁷ This is too late a confession, indeed. A lot of damage has already been done.

South Asia has now become home to transnational terrorism with streaks of global terrorism, too. Pakistan and Afghanistan are facing the worst kind of terrorism on the globe with international and regional terrorist organizations

operating in the mountainous border region receiving support from other countries.

Regional Interventions

Interventional politics is part of the security paradigm in South Asia. While it is true in some other cases too, India, the largest country both in terms of territory and population and with hegemonic desires and designs, has never missed an exploitable opportunity in any country of the region. Indian intervention in Sri Lanka in form of Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in 1987 was a militaristic expression, still fresh to the memories of the Sri Lankan people.²⁸ India has always been interfering in Balochistan province of Pakistan during various rounds of militancy there. It is also using its presence in Afghanistan to nurture trouble in Pakistan. To this end, Charles Timothy Chuck Hagel, the 24th US Secretary of Defense, in a speech at Oklahoma's Cameron University in 2011, articulated without mincing a word: "India for some time has always used Afghanistan as a second front ... India has over the years financed problems for Pakistan on that side of the border."²⁹ Earlier, Dr Christine Fair, a senior political scientist at the RAND Corporation, said in 2009: "I think it is unfair to dismiss the notion that Pakistan's apprehensions about Afghanistan stem in part from its security competition with India. Having visited the Indian mission in Zahedan, Iran, I can assure you they are not issuing visas as the main activity. Moreover, India has run operations from its mission in Mazar and is likely doing so from the other consulates it has reopened in Jalalabad and Kandahar along the (Pak-Afghan) border."³⁰

India has expanded and extended its military presence in the region. It is particularly expanding westward. For instance, it has declared diplomatic presence in eight cities of Iran and Afghanistan to include: Iran – Embassy in Tehran and consulates in Bandar Abbas and Zahedan; Afghanistan – Embassy in Kabul and consulates in Mazar-e-Sharif, Herat, Jalalabad and Kandahar. Besides, it has declared non-diplomatic presence both in Iran and Afghanistan. Its largest

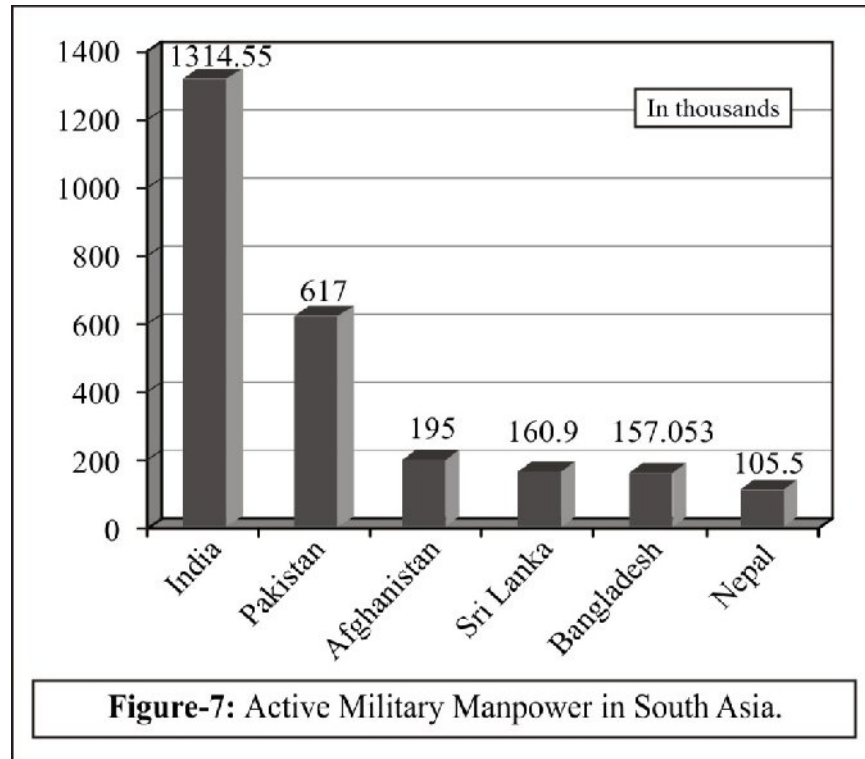
project in Iran is revamping of Chahbahar port. India is running 84 different projects in Afghanistan especially in the provinces of Kandahar, Zaranj, Herat, Mazare-e-Sharif, Pul-e-Khumri and Kunar.³¹ There is strong evidence that the Indian intelligence agencies are working as part of all these projects. India has extended its outreach beyond Afghanistan. An Indian Air Force (IAF) fighter squadron of MiG 29 is stationed at Farkhor Airbase, some 130 kilometres southeast of Tajikistan's capital Dushanbe since 2004-05. Earlier, India had renovated Ayni airbase located 15 kilometres west of Dushanbe at a cost of \$70 million.³² Later, they changed the plan and stationed the IAF squadron at Farkhor. Certainly, India has stationed these to pursue strategic military objectives and not to carry out humanitarian activities. India has also established a naval listening post in northern Madagascar, off Africa's east coast, to gather intelligence on foreign navies.³³ Indian naval presence is also reported around Jaffna and Trincomalee Harbour in Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Strait of Malacca. This is, indeed, a brief picture of India's military activities beyond its borders aimed at strangulating the countries of the region.

Conventional Forces

South Asian nations are maintaining large-size conventional military forces to clothe the idea of traditional state security. The active duty manpower in the armed forces of six countries is 2,548,000 soldiers. Country-wise manpower is shown in Figure-7.³⁴ This does not include the manpower of civil armed forces (CAF), other second line forces and task-specific security forces. The figures of remaining two countries i.e. Bhutan and Maldives have not been included being insignificant. Even the active armed forces manpower of the six countries mentioned herein is more than the individual population of 195 countries and semi-independent entities of the world. It is more than the total population of Australia, New Zealand, Yemen and Ghana (individually). Also, it is more than the population of three South Asian countries to include Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Maldives (individually), a little more than the combined

population of Sri Lanka and Maldives, and more than double the combined population of Bhutan and Maldives.³⁵ On the average, South Asia has nearly one active duty soldier to each square kilometre of territory, whether inhabited or uninhabited.

The security environment has led to a unique kind of arms



race in the region. Domestic arms production and acquisition of military equipment from abroad continues. Indigenously, India and Pakistan are producing, assembling or overhauling fighter jets, helicopters, tanks, armoured vehicles, warships, submarines, frigates, artillery guns, small arms, mines, grenades and a lot more. On the whole, South Asia's military expenditures have seen an increase of 41% from 1999 to 2008.³⁶ India became the 10th largest defence spender in the world in 2009³⁷ and the 8th largest in 2012. South Asia's military spending are given in Table 1.1.³⁸

Table 1.1: Military Spending in South Asia 2012 (previous years in some cases)

Country	Military Spending (US\$ billions)	World Ranking
India	46.219	7
Pakistan	5.16	33
Sri Lanka	1.280	65
Bangladesh	1.137	68
Afghanistan	0.250	97
Nepal	0.207	104

Source: SIPRI Yearbook 2013.³⁹

It may be seen that India is spending at least 7 to 8 times more than the total defence budget of remaining South Asian countries. It is also of note that these are the expenditures declared through annual budgets. Actual outlay is certainly more than that as several military activities remain discreet and unannounced. Such activities include impromptu defence purchases from abroad, expenditures on intelligence agencies/ activities, and the expenditures on unconventional forces e.g. nuclear and missile programmes. This consequently eats into the public taxes and national capital which could otherwise be spent on the well-being of the hapless populace.

Nuclearization

This is yet another thread of South Asia's security paradigm. The Small Nuclear Forces predicted in South Asia in mid-1980s are not as small now.⁴⁰ As of today, located in the Eastern Nuclear Cauldron (Figure-8),⁴¹ India and Pakistan have sizeable arsenals of ballistic missiles and nuclear warheads – enough to wage a wide-ranging war even though nukes are being used as weapons of foreign rather than defence policy, and war prevention rather than war fighting. Albeit one nuclear bomb is sufficient to destroy a city of the size of Hiroshima or Nagasaki, or even Delhi or Lahore in case the circumstances lead to nuclear war fighting, however,

reports indicate India and Pakistan to be possessing dozens of warheads. One of the sources puts it at 60 to 80 nuclear warheads in case of India and 70 to 90 possessed by Pakistan.⁴²

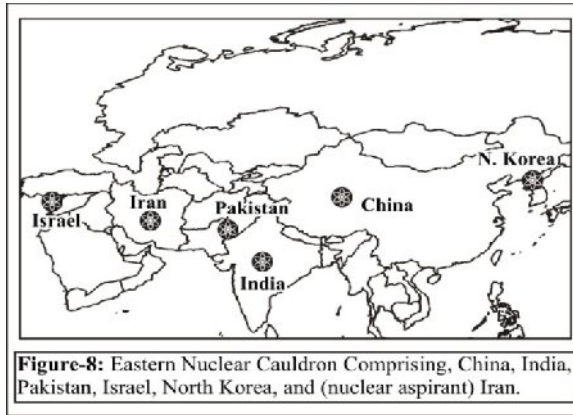


Figure-8: Eastern Nuclear Cauldron Comprising, China, India, Pakistan, Israel, North Korea, and (nuclear aspirant) Iran.

India-China Rivalry

South Asia's security environment has numerous extra-regional linkages too. India-China border dispute has the biggest shadow on the security environment of South Asia. India-China rivalry, indeed, goes beyond the disputes over Aksai Chin and South Tibet (Arunachal Pradesh). Both are vying for regional dominance and a pronounced role in global affairs. Consequently, both are pursuing to extend their strategic security parameter. India-China maritime rivalry in the Indian Ocean in order to control the strategic sea routes is a real time issue. They do not share maritime border; yet, they are emerging as rivals to dominate the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific Ocean. The littoral areas are coming up as the new combat zone. For instance, China has built naval facilities, radars and signal-intelligence (SIGINT) posts all along the Myanmar coast and in Coco Islands. On the other hand, India and Myanmar signed Kaladan River transportation agreement in April 2008 that involves India's upgradation of Myanmar's Sittwe Port. Likewise both have a competition to control the Strait of Malacca, a choke point between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, which is extremely important for China for its strategic supply lines. In 2005, India started conducting naval patrolling with Thailand in the Andaman Sea. Although the patrols were primarily directed against maritime crimes, these also served to restrict Chinese activities in the area.⁴³

Extra-Regional Linkages and Interests of Major Powers

Extra-regional linkages and interest of major powers in the region is yet another and very important dimension of South Asia's security paradigm. India-US and India-Russia nuclear deals have further exacerbated the security environment of the region and paved the way for arms race at the expense of socio-economic development of over 1.57 billion people of the region. Presence of foreign forces in Afghanistan, in Central Asia, over Arabian Peninsula and in the Indian Ocean is but one such manifestation of the issue. Extra-regional intervention like ISAF/NATO in Afghanistan has overshadowed the entire gamut of regional security. Drone attacks in Afghanistan and FATA of Pakistan have added a new dimension to the security landscape of the region. The drone issue has generated an extended debate across the globe, which is likely to lead to some logical end.

Human Insecurity

Human security in South Asia is overshadowed by the primacy of traditional state security.⁴⁴ National exchequers, which could otherwise be spent on well-being of over 1.57 billion South Asian people, are rather a source of sustenance for state security mechanism. Human security is not a priority in regional security arena due to longstanding disputes and shared threat perceptions, which instead work towards reinforcing the state security system. The region is home to largest number of adult illiterates, largest number of out-of-school children, largest number of unemployed adults, largest number of households without electricity and tap water, largest number of malnourished individuals and largest number of people suffering from lack of access to basic health facilities in the world. The list goes on and needs an independent study to deal with the subject. In sum, human security is held hostage to the traditional security and cannot be improved till such time that the security paradigm is balanced between traditional and non-traditional security needs.

Conflict Resolution: the Limiting Factors

Conflict prevention, conflict management, conflict settlement and conflict resolution are different facets of statecraft. In case of South Asia, these are neither being desirably debated in academic circles, nor being implemented at policy level in a desired fashion. More often than not, the political leadership of South Asia is found boasting about their efforts on the way of peace. However, “peace” to them often means conflict prevention or management, and certainly not conflict settlement or resolution.

Conflict resolution takes place through political process. Media, intelligentsia, think tanks and civil society facilitate the process by providing platforms for discussions and negotiations, and cultivating the environment for political initiatives. In case of South Asia, the entire process is corroded and complete procedure is flawed. The most critical element in conflict resolution is for the parties to seek resolution. If policy-makers do not believe that they can achieve by unilateral action what they want, they look for alternatives. This is the stage where there is some scope for conflict resolution.⁴⁵ Harold Hal Saunders, the United States Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs between 1978 and 1981, noted: “In many cases, developing the commitment to negotiate is the most complex part of the peace process because it involves a series of interrelated judgments. Before leaders will negotiate, they have to judge: (1) whether or not a negotiated solution would be better than continuing the present situation; (2) whether a fair settlement could be fashioned that would be politically manageable; (3) whether leaders on the other side could accept the settlement and survive politically; and, (4) whether the balance of forces would permit an agreement on such a settlement. In more colloquial language, leaders ask themselves: How much longer can this present situation go on? Is there another way and could I live with it politically?”⁴⁶

Certainly, the states are the key parties to the conflicts such as those faced by South Asia. States are represented by their

institutions like the governments and political parties, etc. South Asian leadership does not show political will to settle or resolve the contending issues. Dispute, both territorial and non-territorial are used as political slogans and election cards. In case a given political party shows some leaning to move a mile forward on the way of peacemaking and conflict resolution, the contending political parties pull the process back by a myriad mile by demonizing the political party showing resolve as “being involved” in national “sell-out.” India has a worst history in this regard. Indian think tanks often reverse the political process. They are mostly found involved in research and reflection on conflict rather than peace, terrorism rather than counterterrorism, and state security rather than human security. One cannot name a single research institute or think tank in India, which would go against popular content or conventional wisdom apropos conflict resolution in South Asia albeit India itself is the centre of conflict in the region due to various types of disputes with all countries bordering it.

Recommended Regional Security Framework

International experience shows that the regional security paradigm can best grow and sustain under a cooperative, comprehensive and holistic framework facilitated by meaningful conflict-resolution endeavours. The formats of European Union (EU), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and African Union (AU) etc bear testimony to the fact. South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), on the other hand, has rather reduced to a *meet, greet and depart* forum. South Asia must also embrace the notion of a comprehensive, cooperative, collaborative, integrative and all-inclusive security paradigm. Recommended framework is as follows:

Resuscitation and Revitalization of SAARC: For the purpose of regional approach to conflict-resolution, SAARC should be both resuscitated and revitalized. The SAARC

Charter needs to be expanded and redefined with the regional security as an imperative and the foremost article.

South Asia Security Dialogue (SASD): In line with OSCE and ARF, South Asia should institute SASD from the platform of SAARC. SASD should involve all SAARC states as members and US, EU and China as facilitators. SASD should primarily work to resolve the impending territorial and non-territorial disputes in the region. This institution should consist of various working groups (WGs) for each dispute in the region. All issues should be discussed, debated and dialogued at working groups level involving officials, civil society representatives and global enablers. WGs should formulate their recommendations for the policy level. In case of crosscurrents between two or more issues, joint working groups may be formed. The progress is dependent on the political will of the leadership. Hence, if one issue is not resolved, it should not cast back on resolution of the other issues. If SASD functions in line with the spirit of this proposal, it would help resolve the regional disputes in a graduated manner.

South Asia Nuclear Dialogue (SAND): SAND should be established as a corollary to the SAARC in line with SASD with same membership and facilitation level. SAND should first help India and Pakistan to work on nuclear risk reduction and nuclear-cum-missile restraint measures. Then, it should work to persuade the two nations on maintenance of *minimum credible deterrence* rather than *maximum possible deterrence*. If SASD succeeds in resolving major disputes in South Asia, especially between India and Pakistan, SAND should work on de-nuclearization of the region.

Conventional Arms Reduction Dialogue (CARD): Conventional arsenals of all South Asian countries are swelling with each tick-of-the-click. Likewise, against the global winds of reduction in the size of standing armies, South Asians are moving uphill. Major share of the defence budget is consumed either on manpower related administrative aspects or production and purchase of military hardware. Certainly,

India shares greater burden due to the India-centric disputes and security paradigm in the region. CARD, which should be composed and organized in line with SASD and SAND, should work with the states of the region on reduction of conventional arms as well as manpower. The states would, thus, be able to divert the capital spared by reduction in defence budgets to address the human security issues.

South Asian Parliament (SAP): The case of a South Asian Parliament (SAP) may be considered as an organ of SAARC. It may comprise equal number of members from all eight countries of the region. Ten members from each state is a respectable figure. The membership may be based on ex parliamentarians, intellectuals, media persons, lawyers and experts in different fields. Speakership of SAP should revolve between the member states on biannual basis. This means that the turn of each country would come after four years. The purpose and mandate of SAP should be to provide an interactive forum, serve as a regional forum for exchange of ideas and proffer recommendations to the member states on important issues of mutual interest.

Confidence Building Measures (CBMs): CBMs at the level of state are of utmost importance for the purpose of creating a dialogue-supportive environment based on mutual-trust. CBMs are to be initiated alongside the proceedings of SAARC, SASD, SAND and CARD. A number of measures may be initiated by the states. Key ones are: relaxation of visa requirements for movement of people within the region; visa-free movement of the people of Kashmir on either side; setting free each other's prisoners as a good will; issuance of friendly rather than inflammatory statements by national leaders; tangible cessation of interference in each other's affairs and reduction of forces on borders. In case of India-Pakistan relations, India has always talked of CBMs, which would consequently cultivate environment for dialogue on major issues including the core issue of Kashmir. It is considered that talks on the territorial disputes are the biggest leap on the way to confidence building and mere "people-to-people" gestures as often advocated by India can be of no use.

People-to-People Contacts (PPC): PPC at the level of societies would help cleanse the stains of historical memories and reduce tension. Inter-parliamentary commissions and dialogues, and forums of interaction between the people from various walks of life e.g. investors, traders, students, media persons, academics and intellectuals will be of the essence in this regard. People will certainly seek to concentrate on human security rather than the traditional state security. Eventually, this would work as a complimentary axis of conflict resolution.

Multi-Tracked Diplomacy (MTD): MTD has helped in easing up tension in South Asia in the past. A host of models may be adopted and put into action on the sidelines of other initiatives. It could take the shape as follows: Track-1, state-to-state meets between the diplomats and officials; Track-2, regional diplomatic ventures involving more than one (or all regional) states; Track-3, societal engagement involving the civil society and citizenry; and Track-4, involvement of global enablers in Track-1 or 2 or combination of both.

Intra-Region Trade: Intra-region trade in South Asia is abysmally low. South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA), which could have been the greatest success of SAARC, is held up due to security moorings of the SAARC members. The states have, heretofore, preferred to work on either bilateral/ preferential trade agreements within the region or are depending on extra-regional trade. SAFTA should not only be signed and ratified by all SAARC members but should also be put into action in keeping with the universal definition of free trade. It should be taken as a comprehensive subject. Trade should not only mean the duty-free flow of goods across the borders but should also involve provision of investment opportunities and free movement of labour.

Human Security under all Circumstances: It is imperative for the South Asian leadership to agree to at least one fundamental agenda that the people would remain a priority under all circumstances and that the human security

aspects would not be interfered with even during warlike situations. SAARC should help bring the states and societies closer. The human security spheres in which it can be of use are as follows: inter-state transfer of experience; trade; education and literacy; healthcare including combating epidemics; environmental security and disaster management; food security; river water-sharing treaties and agreements between the states; and resolution of ethnic discords.

South Asia Literacy Commission (SALC): Illiteracy is the worst human security challenge faced by South Asia. To combat illiteracy at regional level so as to complement the efforts of the states, it is recommended to institute SALC under the auspices of SAARC. It should be formed as an independent body and should have its membership based on reputed educationists. The governments should only be interacting with SALC for the purpose of funding and facilitation, and should have no role in its proceedings. SALC should be monetarily supported by South Asia Literacy Fund (SALF), a subsidiary established for the purpose, the management of which should fall in the realm of SALC. The Commission should launch a targeted campaign against illiteracy opening area-specific SALC institutions including at least one world class university in each country with teaching staff from all member states but students from the host country. SALC technical institutes should be established in all member states in keeping with the requirements of host state. It should also establish elementary education institutes in the areas with high illiteracy rate. Later, the spheres of its activities may be expanded by establishing more universities and institutes. SALC should also be utilized as a forum for inter-state movement of students for studying in public and private institutions of any SAARC member country.

South Asia Free Media Association (SAFMA): SAFMA already exists as an institution of SAARC. Nevertheless, there is a dire need to revitalize it. SAFMA can help create and maintain a dialogue-supportive environment. The institution itself needs to work out a code of conduct for being a collaborator rather than contender, and an institution for

regional integration rather than a mouthpiece of any single state.

Conclusion

South Asia is in need of introspection more than ever before. It has remained in a perpetual state of war in traditional and nontraditional forms for the last many decades. Must it reach the mark of a 100-year war? Such a proposition would, certainly, be useless both for South Asian states and societies, and individuals and communities. Hence, there is a need to tilt the mass of regional security paradigm from traditional state security to human security. It is of note that whereas traditional state security is often based on perceptions, human security is a manifestation of shared realities. It must be noted that no state of the region would relegate the traditional state security paradigm due to the nature of conflict. However, the acme of leadership would be to create and maintain balance between state security and human security in a manner that both complement each other.

South Asia has a great potential to progress in the comity of nations on the globe, if it embraces the concept of human security as part of a cooperative and comprehensive security paradigm. Human security of virtually 1.57 billion people would certainly work to complement the state security. For this, the South Asian leadership needs to depart from a tested but failed system of state security and embrace an all-acceptable notion of human security. An adequate level of human security achieved as a consequence would surely ensure the security of states too, thereby re-modeling the security paradigm in a universally accepted fashion.

International community is expected to share some burden by making possible a dialogue for the purpose of conflict-resolution in South Asia. This would have dividends not only for the South Asians but for the entire world. Success of the world community would surely boost up the confidence of the one-fourth of the human race living in South Asia in the global

leadership. This would also help make a concrete case for denuclearization and arms reduction in the region. In sum, dividends are countless but need regional as well as global resolve; the earlier, the better!

Author

The writer is PhD scholar (Peace and Conflict Studies) and author of Human Security in Pakistan (published in 2013).

Notes

¹ Rob Johnson, *A region in turmoil: South Asian conflicts since 1947* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2005), 7.

² Map by the writer. UN Map of South Asia also shows Afghanistan as part of the region. Details may be found at “UN map of South Asia,” www.un.org/depts/Cartographic/map/profile/Souteast-Asia.pdf (accessed June 29, 2013).

³ Illustration by the writer. Data obtained from CIA – the World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2119rank.html> and

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2147rank.html?countryName=United%20States%20Pacific%20Island%20Wildlife%20Refuges&countryCode=um®ionCode=au&rank=237#um> (accessed December 9, 2009).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ “Highest Mountain Peaks of the World,” National Geographic Society, quoted in http://www.abell.org/nal/PDFs/World_Stats/Highest%20Peaks%20in%20the%20World.pdf (accessed December 11, 2009).

⁷ Article 53-54 to Chapter VIII of UN Charter.

⁸ Conceptualized and illustrated by the writer.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ A part of ISAF may withdraw from Afghanistan in 2014, as announced by the US and NATO. However, presence of foreign forces in and around the region is likely to remain a reality during the decades ahead.

¹¹ The word military encounter used metaphorically considering the response of emotionally charged (more than passionate) crowd. In some cases it has led to very untoward incidents in matches between India and Pakistan.

¹² Further details may be found at <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unmogip/facts.html> (accessed July 8, 2013).

¹³ The disputed territory is located south of the famous McMahon Line agreed to between the Britain and Tibet as part of the Simla Accord signed in 1914, which China has never endorsed as the Tibetan government was not sovereign and thus did not have the power to conclude treaties with other countries. Indo-China War of 1962 took place over the same dispute.

¹⁴ Interestingly, some common Indians claim the Indian Ocean to be belonging to India. Likewise, common Bangladeshis too lay a complete claim on the Bay of Bengal.

¹⁵ Illustration by the writer.

¹⁶ CIA – The World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/in.html> (accessed November 29, 2009)

¹⁷ UNSC Resolution 90 (1951) dated 31 January 1951.

¹⁸ J. C. Aggarwal and S. P. Agrawal, *Modern History of Jammu and Kashmir: Volume I - Ancient Times to Shimla Agreement* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1995), 35.

¹⁹ Jawaharlal Nehru, *Independence and After: A Collection of Speeches, 1946-1949* (New York: The John Day Company, Inc., 1950), 59. Originally published by the Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, Delhi. Reprinted by the John Day Company in 1950 and 1971.

²⁰ Taliban are one of the fiercest armed group in South Asia and the biggest security challenge facing the prospects of peace in the region.

²¹ “Rahi Gaikwad: Manmohan: Naxalism the greatest internal threat” *The Hindu*, New Delhi, October 12, 2009.

²² Armed Marxist revolutionaries known as Naxalites – named after the 1967 revolt by farmers in the West Bengal village of Naxalbari, which spreads across the poor Indian states. “Kapil Komireddi: Blood runs India’s Red Corridor” *The Guardian*, April 23, 2009.

²³ Albeit, the LTTE has been overpowered by Sri Lankan Armed Forces in 2009 and the LTTE Chief Vellupillai Prabhakaran was killed, yet, the threat exists in form of the LTTE ideology and many Sri Lankans fear that they might rise head again.

²⁴ The conflict in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) dates back to pre-Bangladesh times, when it was East Pakistan. CHT saw a fierce insurgency from 1977 to 1997 waged against the government by (United People's Party of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and its militant wing named the Shanti Bahini). They demanded autonomy for the indigenous people, the Chakma people, who are mainly Buddhists, Hindus, Christians and Animists. The insurgency has officially receded since 1997 but the conflict continues as the roots of conflict exist.

²⁵ There are so many militant groups in South Asia with so long a list of dreadful acts that it needs a separate and all-inclusive study to cover and conclude.

²⁶ Ehsan Mehmood Khan, *Human Security in Pakistan* (Islamabad: Narratives, 2013), 22.

²⁷ For details see, “BJP, RSS conducting ‘terror training’ camps, says Shinde,” *The Indian Express*, January 21, 2013.

²⁸ Details may be found in a number of topical accounts e.g. Depinder Singh, *The IPKF in Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: Trishul Publications, 1992).

²⁹ Rama Lakshmi, “Chuck Hagel confirmed in Washington, but doubts remain in India,” *The Washington Post*, February 27, 2013.

³⁰ “What is problem with Pakistan?” *Foreign Affairs*, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/discussions/roundtables/whats-the-problem-with-pakistan> (accessed on July 1, 2013).

³¹ Peter Wonacott, “India Befriends Afghanistan, Irking Pakistan,” *The Wall Street Journal*, August 19, 2009.

³² Matthew Stein, “Compendium of Central Asian Military and Security Activity,” *Foreign Military Studies Office (FMSO)*, Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027 (October 3, 2012): 2-6.

³³ Siddharth Srivastava, “India drops anchor in the Maldives,” *World Security Network*, September 2, 1009,

<http://www.worldsecuritynetwork.com/India/siddharth-srivastava/India-drops-anchor-in-the-Maldives> (accessed July 1, 2013).

³⁴ Illustration by the writer. Data obtained from Anthony H. Cordesman, Robert Hammond and Andrew Gagel, “The Military Balance in Asia: 1990-2011, A Quantitative Analysis,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, Washington D.C. (May 16, 2011): 93.

³⁵ List available at “Country Comparison: Population,” CIA – the World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2119rank.html> (accessed July 5, 2013).

³⁶ “Military expenditures by region,” *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)*, <http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2009/05/05A> (accessed December 8, 2009).

³⁷ “The top ten military spenders,” *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)*, <http://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2009/05/05A> (accessed December 8, 2009).

³⁸ SIPRI Yearbook 2013, “Armament, Disarmament and International Security.” *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)*, www.sipriyearbook.org (accessed July 5, 2013).

³⁹ SIPRI Yearbook 2013, “Armament, Disarmament and International Security.” *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)*, www.sipriyearbook.org (accessed July 5, 2013).

⁴⁰ Dr. Thomas Blau and others, “Small Nuclear Forces in South Asia,” in *Small Nuclear Forces and U.S. Security Policy*, ed. Rodney W. Jones (Lexington Books: Lexington: 1984), 89 to 107).

⁴¹ The term being introduced by this writer herein for the first time considering that there are two nuclear cauldrons in the world: Eastern Nuclear Cauldron comprising China, North Korea, India, Pakistan, Israel, and (nuclear aspirant) Iran; and Western Nuclear Cauldron comprising the US, Russia, the UK, and France. The nuclear weapon states have been so categorized bearing in mind their location and areas of nuclear interest. Russia’s case is a bit different. Considering its location, it falls into the Eastern Nuclear Cauldron but from the point of view of its nuclear interests, it is part of the Western Nuclear Cauldron. At any rate, Russia’s nukes have been, and are still, playing a role in the security paradigm of the West more than the East.

⁴² “Status of World Nuclear Forces,” *Federation of American Scientists*, <http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/nukes/nuclearweapons/nukestatus.html> (accessed December 12, 2009).

⁴³ Gurpeet S. Khurana, "China-India Maritime Rivalry," *Indian Defence Review*, April 2009.

⁴⁴ As against state security, in which state is the only security referent, individuals and communities are the key referents in case of human security. The concept of human security, though still evolving, was given a normative paradigm in UNDP's Human Development Report (HDR) – 1994. According to HDR-1994, human security comprises seven subsets to include: political security, economic security, personal security, community security, food security, health security and environmental security. Three more subsets to include women security, children security and education security have been added in the Human Security Framework for Pakistan, which may be applicable to other peer countries, proposed in Ehsan Mehmood Khan, *Human Security in Pakistan* (Islamabad: Narratives, 2013).

⁴⁵ Sundeep Waslekar, *A Handbook for Conflict Resolution in South Asia* (New Delhi: Konark Publishers, 1996), 4.

⁴⁶ Harold H. Saunders, *The Other Walls: the Politics of the Arab-Israeli Peace Process* (American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1985), 24.