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# **SOUTH ASIA'S SECURITY**

## **Primacy of Internal Dimension**

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*Edited by*  
**IFTEKHARUZZAMAN**

The countries of the South Asian region draw many shared features and values from historical, ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious ties. The factors that make up the unity of the seven States of the region have also rendered South Asia a region of mutual mistrust, endemic tension and occasional hostilities. Debate on problems of security in South Asia has, therefore, always been complex.

The book on **South Asia's Security: Primacy of Internal Dimension**, containing contributions of experts from Bangladesh, China, India, Japan, Pakistan, Russia, Sri Lanka and United Kingdom, focuses on issues, perspectives and outlook on South Asian security with particular stress on the internal dimension.



*Academic publishers*



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**Iftekhharuzzaman**

**Academic Publishers**

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## INTRODUCTION

Debate on problems of security in South Asia has always been complex. The states of this region draw many shared features and values from historical, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and religious ties. Politically, however, relations between them remain mostly troubled. The factors that make up the unity of the seven states of this Indo-centric region also contribute to the making of it as a region of mutual mistrust, endemic tension and occasional hostilities.

Most of the problems that bedevil inter-state relations in South Asia are created within, by its history, its geo-politics and its economics and ecology. The South Asian sub-system as a component of the international system cannot of course be insulated from the overall global scenario. Intra-regional problems interact with extra-regional politico-strategic matrix which contribute to the involvement of outside powers in regional tensions and insecurities. Thus, confrontation between super powers in the past also influenced regional events. To that extent the post-Cold War relaxation of Washington-Moscow tensions may remove some of the external inputs to South Asian conflicts.

Denying the global trend, however, inter-state relations in South Asia in recent years have shown little significant signs of improvement. Areas and issues of conflict have been on the increase while those of cooperation remain under-explored. Security perceptions of states tend to diverge with each other while threats to territorial integrity and political stability are in most cases perceived to be fuelled by neighbours. Disputable boundaries, peculiar cross-border dispersion of ethno-linguistic and religious groups, conflicting economic interests, problems in distribution and management of shared resources, and above all, problems in the respective processes of nation-state building and economic development are amongst the factors that compose the roots of internal threats to South Asian security and stability. South Asian countries are also critically vulnerable to various environmental threats to the

security which are also largely regional in nature and origin.

In this backdrop, the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) organized an international seminar on "South Asia's Security the 1990s: Primacy of its Internal Dimension" on 05-07 January 1992. This volume presents the collection of papers presented in that seminar. The contribution and patience of the authors of the papers are appreciated with gratitude. I am thankful to my colleagues in the Institute who shared the burdens of organizing the seminar. The generous contribution of the Independent Group on South Asian Cooperation (IGSAC) which made this publication possible is acknowledged with deepest appreciation. Above all, I express most respectful thanks and gratitude to Barrister A.K.H. Morshed, Chairman of the Board of Governors of BIISS and Maj. Gen. Ghulam Quader, Director General of the Institute for their abiding inspiration and support which have been the main incentive behind this work.

Iftekhharuzzaman

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