PAPERS

3

India's Policy Fundamentals, Neighbours and Post-Indira Developments

IMTIAZ AHMED
ABDUR ROB KHAN

biiss papers

Number Three July 1985

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies
Dhaka

biiss papers
Number 3, July 1985

Published by :
Bangladesh Institute of International
and Strategic Studies, Dhaka

Price :
Taka 25.00/US $ 4.00 (including surface postage)

For Correspondence please contact
Publication Officer
Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies
1/46 Elephant Road, Dhaka-2, Tele : 406234

Printed by :
Asiatic Press
C/o Civil & Military Press
4, Zindabahar 3rd Lane
Dhaka, Bangladesh

BIISS PAPERS
Number 3, July 1985

INDIA'S POLICY FUNDAMENTALS, NEIGHBOURS AND POST-INDIRA DEVELOPMENTS

Imtiaz Ahmed
Abdur Rob Khan

BANGLADESH INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AND STRATEGIC STUDIES

1/46 Elephant Road, Dhaka

The Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies is an autonomous centre for research and deliberation on international affairs, foreign policy, strategy and related matters.

It is a Research Institute established in 1978 with the objective of **undertaking, encouraging and promoting independent research for** advancing analytical understanding of major aspects of international and strategic affairs.

Objectivity and independent thinking as the greatest need for research work are the motive force behind the origin of the Institute and its functionning.

The Institute's activities are aimed at conducting and promoting independent research, deliberation and dissemination of objective **knowledge in the field of political, socio-economic and other relations between nations in regional and international perspectives.**

The Institute pursues **institutional linkage and exchange programmes** with similiar institutes at home and abroad for mutual sharing of benefits of research. Queries may be addressed to the Director General.

CONTENTS

Notes :

* The articles of this issue are revised version of papers presented at a Seminar on **India's Policy Fundamentals, Neighbours and Post-Indira Developments**, jointly organized by the BIISS and the Department of International Relations, Dhaka University on 19 May 1985.

* Imtiaz Ahmed is Lecturer, Department of International Relations University of Dhaka and Abdur Rob Khan is Deputy Director, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, Dhaka.

Imtiaz Ahmed

CLASS, UNDERLYING VALUES AND INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY: ROLE IN SOUTH ASIA[1]

The present study seeks to analyse foreign policy as an outcome of the development of the material basis. The starting point is therefore man. Not only the man-milieu struggle is taken into account but its transformation into a struggle between man and man becomes the focal point of this approach. It is well known that at one stage of the development of social man *classes* based on productive force and production relations began to emerge. That dialectical process has a long history. Whatever may be the form in its stage of development, the ruling class has its own ways of doing things and of attaining objectives. At times the policy frameworks may serve the given geographical unit[2] but to be sure they are primarily patterned to serve the interest of the ruling class. Hence, much of the complexities are removed if one takes a class approach to the issues at hand—what is required is an awareness of the class configuration within the respective geographical unit. In our analysis of Indian foreign policy we shall take this approach.

One of the tasks will be to project the underlying values in Indian foreign policy. Needless to say that values have an effective role in any foreign policy formulations. The decision-makers per se become

1. In this paper we shall take up India's role vis-a-vis Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The other two countries of South Asia, Bhutan and the Maldives, have been left out largely due to the paucity of materials and informations.
2. In modern times, the nation-state.

almost mystified by the varied values that constantly surround their socio-economic milieu. I somehow find Myrdal[3] relevant here : "The valuations are with us, even when they are driven underground, and they guide our work. When kept implicit and unconscious, they allow biases to enter. The only way in which we can strive for objectivity in theoretical anlaysis is to lift up the valuations into the full light, make them conscious and explicit, and permit them to determine the viewpoints, the approaches, and the concepts used". Indeed, part of our objective will be that. But then again one must view them from the class perspective, particularly, when dealing with the values that influence the foreign policy decision-making process. After all, it is the ruling class, the decision-makers, that actually puts policy goals into operation. In this paper an attempt is made to show that the underlying values guiding Indian foreign policy are more rooted in Indian tradition. But first the class configuration in India.

CLASS COMPOSITION IN INDIA

It is from a two-fold level that the class composition of India must be viewed : one, the national bourgeoisie—working class level ; and two, the national—sub—national level. The first is an obvious result of the development of capitalism in India and the second is an obvious reminder of the lack (or failure !) of the integration process in India. We shall make a quick historico-critical rundown of both these levels :

Level I : The second half of the nineteenth century saw the rise of the Indian national bourgeoisie. That rise was symbolised by the first conference of the National Congress in 1885 in Bombay. Although at first the Indian bourgeoisie was patronised by the British colonialists for the obvious reason of creating an efficient socio-economic apparatus of exploitation but within a very short time that goal backfired. The Indian national bourgeoisie began to think and

3. Gunnar Myrdal, *Asian Drama : An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations*, Vol. I (New York : Pantheon, 1968), p. 33.

practise what could be termed as the natural laws of the rising bourgeoisie—to drive out the alien power structure and take over the home market. That drive received a momentum in the beginning of the twentieth century with the consolidation of the Indian national bourgeoisie.[4] Stage was ready where the latter could easily field the working class support. The projection was national and simple : 'the current Indian hell was the creation of the Britishers'. Protests soon turned bloody. At this stage communal politics received official guidelines and encouragement. The national bourgeoisie was obviously not happy with this development. But then they had no choice. Capitalism was not an all-embracing socio-economic category in India as to overcome communal differences. 1947 partition could not be avoided. The weak foundation of the Indian bourgeoisie was clear and this becomes evident when one views India's economy from a macro perspective. The society was then essentially agrarian and the mode of production feudal.[5] The transfer of power was made at a time when the Indian bourgeoisie was gaining grounds (particularly at urban micro centers) and not when it had firmly established itself throughout India (urban and rural). The latter would be undialectical given the fact that it was the Britishers who posed an obstacle to the

4. "In the period 1900-1914 the number of registered jointstock companies rose from 1,360 to 2,552 and their paid-up capital rose from 362 million to 721 million rupees....Indian capital was starting to penetrate the plantations and mines ; the vast majority of cotton-ginning mills, wheat and rice mills, oil-mills and printing works were also in Indian hands....In 1911 Tata built in Jamshedpur (Bihar) the first Indian-owned metallurgical works, supported in this venture by powerful circles of the Indian bourgeoisie. In 1915 the Tata firm opened a hydroelectric power station also....In 1913 there were 18 large Indian joint-stock banks ; there also existed 23 medium banks belonging to Indian capitalists....The development of Indian capitalist enterprise and the intensification of India's exploitation at the hands of the British imperialists served to exacerbate the contradictions between the emergent Indian bourgeoisie and the foreign monopolies." Vide, K. Antonova, et. al. *A History of India*, Book 2 (Moscow : Progress Publishers, 1978). pp. 118-120.

5. *ibid.* p. 121.

rapid and extensive development of the Indian bourgeoisie. That obstacle could be removed only if the Britishers were made to go for good. That was achieved. But then the contradiction remained unresolved. Mode of production was not even partially capitalistic. A weak bourgeoisie had to forge an alliance with the feudal counterparts[6] not only for the sake of its own survival (keeping in mind the factor of radicalism in Indan nationalist movement) but also to lessen the fear that had come up due to politico-geographical environment in which India was placed following the approval of the partition plan, i.e. the question of territorial unity of the Radcliffe award-based India. Such an unholy alliance made the ruling class domestically ruthless, regionally expansionist, and externally dependent. The first type has been characterized by a working class-cum-sub-national exploitation (the case of urban and rural proletariat on the one hand and of Assam, West Bengal, Tripura, etc. on the other), the second by territorial expansion (from Kashmir, Hyderabad, Goa to Sikkim) and the third by the so-called Green Revolution agrarian dependency. One must therefore view India from three varied directions : (i) that India is a developing capitalist state with a highly developed manufacturing sector, 8th in technology advancement ; (ii) that India is an agrarian country where the feudal patterns still continue ; and (iii) that India constitutes a periphery of the global metropolitan economies. Dropping any of these categories would make analytical projection of India chaotic. And with the post-British class composition still continuing, chances of the contradictions being resolved remain uncertain. It is therefore natural that the policy frameworks of the post-independence period will continue to persist. There is however an added dimension to the existing state of industrial relations : does India have the necessary market[7] for its industrial

6. Vide, Prabhat Patnaik, "Imperialism and the Growth of Indian Capitalism," in Robin Blackburn, ed., *Explosion in a Subcontinent* (London: Penguin, 1975) p. 57.

7. We are not talking about space but buying capability and profit capacity.

goods ? This dimension is the result of the increasing strength of the industrial base particularly with the growth of the heavy industry in the 60s and 70s. Given the fact that India continue to have a large intact feudal sector and with an increasing pauperization of the peasantry the market in question is definitely not a healthy one. But this does not worry the ruling class at all. With a passive home market and a very difficult one to change under the present class coalition, the ruling class finds it all the more risk-free and profitable to expand market outside its territory, from South East Asia, to Middle East to Africa. The drive is on and it is maturing day by day. The circumstances provide for a closer interest in the foreign policy frameworks by the ruling class.

Level II : A necessary off-shoot of the nature of capitalist development and the state of mode of production in India. An uneven development of capitalism was evident from the beginning. It was more so in India where capitalism began to take root in varied urban micro-centers not contiguous geographically but managed essentially by the same Indo—Aryan entrepreneurs of the so-called 'pure stock'. Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, Jamshedpur, Ahmadabad, and some more had the opportunity to have such experience of industrialism. A vast piece of land and its people mostly of 'lower stock' and non-Aryan remained oblivious to this development. But not for long. While the rising national bourgeoisie combined their forces to weed out the Britishers, the predominant Indo-Aryan stock of the industrial class forced upon the undeveloped areas of India a form of sub-national exploitation. Southern and eastern India were mostly affected. Soon Delhi symbolically came to represent the 'interest of the exploiters'. India was faced with a case of centre-state animosity. Post-independence phase of political development saw violent and often extra-constitutional moves by the peripheral Indian states for greater autonomy. Those moves met with little success. The failure was largely due to the lack of coordination among the peripheral Indian states in their struggle against Delhi. Only recently do we see dialo-

gues for coordination.[8] India, however, has remained united by the interplay of two 'mystified' elements : (i) Hinduism, historically more of the post-Buddhism variant;[9] and : (ii) familiocracy. To take one instance of the first element, the words of Rajagopalachari :

> "Vedanta is the tap-root of Indian culture in the past as well as now. Whatever courage, heroism, self-sacrifice or greatness was shown by men and women in India, was all derived from Vedanta, the philosophy of the Vedas. Even now Vedanta is the living spirit and genius of the people of India. However, much foreign civilisation or new aspirations may affect us, the main source has not decayed. The lives of the rich and the poor, of the leisured classes and the peasants and labourers, of Hindus, Mussalmans and Christians, of the illiterate and the learned, of the honest and the dishonest, are sweetened alike by the pervasive fragrance of Indian philosophy. Vedanta is the basic culture of India".[10]

In sum, the voice speaks for Hinduism. Even Mahatma Gandhi did not fail to appreciate its importance. His 'emphatic support of cow protection and idol worship' projected his faith in the Hindu tradition and, indeed, held the masses of India, predominantly the Hindus, united. It is worth pointing out here that it was the policy of the Hindu legislators of the pre-partitioned Bengal Assembly

8. The move engineered by N.T. Rama Rao. He already had discussions with the leaders of West Bengal and Kashmir.

9. The Aryans began to compromise with the non-Aryans in the field of metaphysics following the rise of Buddhism. The caste-based Aryan Hinduism not only switched over to 'material objects' of worship but also recognised some non-Aryan Gods and Goddesses, like, the Siva, Krishna, Kali (Durga of the Aryans) etc. Post-Buddhistic Hinduism was therefore essentially a mixture of the beliefs of the Aryans and the non-Aryans. Both the Mahabharata and the Ramayana are the product of this compromise. And, of course, the Vedanta.

10. From C. Rajagopalachari, *Vedanta the Basic Culture of India*. Ct. from Gunnar Myrdal, op. cit., p. 94, fn. 1. It may be mentioned here that the Vedanta is the dominant religious thought of India developed on the basis of the Upanishads and systematized by Shankara about 800 A. D.

that finally resulted in the division of Bengal on communal lines ; they preferred the 'Indo-Aryan' centre to that of becoming a communal minority in the Muslim majority Bengal. The case needs no added justification. Today, it is still more a powerful element. The demand of the Sikhs on a communal line, the crack-down on the Golden Temple, the killing of Indira Gandhi by *Sikh* bodyguards (and not once did the public media say *Indian* bodyguards), the victory of Rajiv Gandhi on an apparent 'Hindu-revival' platform, all boils down to a communal basis of the unity of India. To a large extent this has prevented the ill-treated sub-national Indian states to take up a more reactive stand. But that is not all. A fascination for the Nehru family (notwithstanding the fact that Indira Gandhi was voted out of power in 1977 for a brief period) remains all-pervasive in India. This is however linked to a value cultured by the Hindus. The value was well stated by Vivekananda before an American audience in California in February 1900: "Why, the Hindus, they are dying to worship somebody. You will find, if you live long enough, I will be worshipped by our people. If you go there to teach them something before you die you will be worshipped. Always trying to worship somebody".[11] With the Nehru family wholly devoted to the 'well-being of the people' the case of fascination turns out to be no exception. When Indira died, the party in power used it without much delay. Rajiv, the great-grandson of Motilal, the grandson of Jawaharlal, the son of Indira, thus became the symbol of the Indian unity. The peripheral Indian states only had to share the wisdom of Vivekananda. In sum, the 'mystified' elements made the conflictual pattern of the national-sub-national level less reactive, less unpleasant. Needless to say, the 'mystified' elements are deliberately kept alive by the ruling class for serving its interests in the required circumstances. A natural product of such a situation is that in the case of any centre-directed foreign policy process, the sub-national states

11. Vide, Swami Vivekananda, "Buddhistic India", in R.C. Majumdar, ed., *Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Volume* (Calcutta : Sree Saraswaty Press, 1963), P. XXXV.

become 'active' participants in it. They are carried away by the ipso facto glory of the 'mystified' elements ; the objective being an all-powerful India. In this light the *centre* often makes use of the foreign policy process as and when required by it.

In simple, the mode of foreign policy in India is one of 'class-based centre' oriented. It is this class composition that is being constantly fed by the underlying values that surround the socio-economic milieu of India. We shall concentrate only on those values that have relevance in the foreign policy decision-making process of India.

UNDERLYING VALUES

Two important components include :

1. *The Traditional Values*: They are the product of the wisdom of ancient India. Broadly three general lines of value premises may be recognised :

a. *The Vedic Tradition*: In certain dialogues of the *Bhagavada Gita*[12] war is sanctioned in terms of normative judgement. A close

12. *The Bhagavada Gita*, the greatest devotional book of Hinduism, was composed later than the Vedas and the Upanishads probably between the fifth and second centuries before Christ. It is a fragment, part of the sixth book of the epic poem *The Mahabharata*. *The Mahabharata* tells of the Pandavas, Prince Arjuna and his four brothers, growing up in north India at the court of their uncle, the blind King Dhritarashtra, after the death of their father, the previous ruler. There is always great rivalry between the Pandavas or sons of Pandu and the Kauravas, the one hundred sons of Dhritarashtra. Eventually the old king gives his nephews some land of their own but his eldest son, Duryodhana, defeats Yudhisthira, the eldest Pandava, by cheating at dice, and forces him and his brothers to surrender their land and go into exile for thirteen years. On their return the old king is unable to persuade his son Duryadhana to restore their heritage and, in spite of efforts at reconciliation by Lord Krishna war cannot be averted. The rival hosts face eaeh other on the field of Kurukshetra. It is at this point that *The Bhagavada Gita* begins. When Prince Arjuna surveys the battlefield, he is overwhelmed with sorrow at the futility of war. The teachings of *The Bhagavada Gita* are spoken by the divine Lord Krishna, who is acting as the prince's charioteer. They are overheard by Sanjaya (Dhritarashtra's charioteer) and reported back to Dhritarashtra. When Krishna has finished speaking to Arjuna, the two armies engage. The battle lasts eighteen days and by the end of it nearly all the warriors on both sides are dead save Krishna and the five sons of Pandu. Vide, Shri Purohit Swami, tr., *The Gospel of the Lord Krishna* : *The Bhagavada Gita* (London : Faber, and Faber, 1978) pp. vii-viii.

look at the dialogues will make this clear. Briefly, the circumstances of the Gita dialogue can be described as follows:[13]

> Two factions, closely bound to each other by ties of blood and friendship, are about to engage in a civil war. Arjuna, one of the leading generals, has Krishna for his charioteer. Krishna has told Arjuna that he will not fight, but has promised to accompany him throughout the battle. Just before it begins, Arjuna asks Krishna to drive his chariot into the no-man's-land between the two armies. Krishna does so. Arjuna looks at the opposing army, and realizes that he is about to kill those whom he loves better than life itself. In his despair, he exclaims : 'I will not fight' !
>
> Krishna's reply to Arjuna occupies the rest of the book. It deals not only with Arjuna's immediate personal problem, but with the whole nature of action, the meaning of life, and the aims for which man must struggle here on earth. At the end of their conversation, Arjuna has changed his mind. He is ready to fight. And the battle begins.

The dialogues provide the basis for : (i) 'just war' ; and (ii) the obligatory service of the military. Arjuna's battle against the Dhritarashtra-Duryadhana clique in defence of his family and property is held to be a 'righteous' one. This is indeed one of the earliest interpretations in favour of 'just war'. The modern concept may have changed in its form of projection but not much in substance. The scope of utilizing it for one's own purpose remains open as before. It is however worth pointing out here that the Bhagavada Gita (more precisely the mythic Krishna) did not remain satisfied with

13. The piece has been taken from Christopher Isherwood, ed., *Vedanta for the Western World* (London : Unwin Books, 1975), pp. 246-247.

mere ethical nuances in favour of war. Krishna argued in favour of the obligatory service of the military :

> "O Arjuna ! The duties of the spiritual teachers, *the soldiers*, the traders and the servants have all been fixed according to the dominant quality in their nature" (emphasis mine).[14]

Here, in order to understand Krishna's arguments we must first consider the setting in which it was made. To begin with, Krishna and Arjuna are on a battlefield. Arjuna is a warrior by birth and profession, that is, Krishna is not talking to a monk or a tradesman but to a soldier. And as such mindful of the norms of a soldier Krishna is quick to provide reasons to Arjuna to begin the battle :

> "Even it you consider this from the standpoint of your own caste-duty, you ought not to hesitate ; for, to a warrior, there is nothing nobler than a righteous war...But if you refuse to fight this righteous war, you will be turning aside from your duty. You will be a sinner, and disgraced. People will speak ill of you throughout the ages....."[15]

As a member of the warrior caste Arjuna's duty is to fight in the battle. Even if the war is not justified on the grounds of its consequence (the cost could be high : Arjuna did remind Krishna of the eventual 'bloodshed and horror') and even if it is counter-productive not conducive to the interest of the party, Arjuna has no choice but to act with his 'bow and the flag of Hanuman'. In short, his action must flow from the norms he is supposed to uphold. Such a rationale has now entered the service rules of the modern military of many

14. Shri Purohit Swami, tr., *op. cit.*, p. 169. "Aurobindo supports 'justifiable violence on justifiable occasions's as for instance, the ancient battle of *Kuruksetra* and the modern war against Hitler. The moral justification is, therefore, always a question of whether 'this particular type of violence on this occasion' is right or wrong." Vide, Un to Tahtinen, *Ahimsa : Non-violence in Indian Tradition* (London : Rider and Company, 1976), p. 115.

15. Qt.in Christopher Isherwood, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 249. Classical literature of other nations also are replete with similar inspirational messages.

nation-states. Both 'just war' and the obligatory service of the military that are currently in vogue, are therefore rooted in the Indian tradition. It is more natural that such values would continue to impress upon the decision-makers of India. Indeed, the tradition was put into practice on different pretext and under varied circumstances by India. From anticolonial fervour (the case of Goa) to a communal solution (the case of Junagadh and Kashmir) to the role of a 'supporting force' (the case of Bangladesh). In each case the ensuing war was viewed to be 'righteous'. There was no alternative but to 'fight'. The case has been well stated by Nehru in a Lok Sabha debate on Goa on July 26, 1955 :

> "We now turn to the question of what are the methods to be employed. Acharya Kripalani put a straight question: whether our government was pledged to non-violence. The answer to that is no, the government is not...If we were pledged to non-violence, surely we would not keep any Army, Navy or Air Force-and possibly not even a police force. One may have an ideal. One may adhere to a policy leading in a certain direction and yet, because of existing circumstances, one cannot give effect to that ideal...Also Gandhiji defended—not only defended but in fact encouraged—the Indian Army going to Kashmir to defend Kashmir against the raiders. It is surprising that a man like Gandhiji, who was absolutely committed to non-violence, should do that kind of thing. So that even he, in certain circumstances, admitted the right of the State, as it is constituted, to commit violence in defence".[15a]

The statement is well understood. There was nothing new in it. The values were only restated from a given perspective.

15a. Jawaharlal Nehru, *India's Foreign Policy : Selected Speeches September 1946-April 1961* (New Delhi : Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, 1971) p. 115.

b. *The Kautilyan Tradition* : It follows from Kautilya's *Arthasastra*.[16] Kautilya provides for the necessity of the king to be an all-powerful *vijigisu*[17] (one desirous of fresh conquests), for only an empire of considerable size and power and free from all internal instability could deter alien invasions. To materialize this the *vijigisu* ought to be guided by diplomacy.[18] The latter has to be understood in the light of Kautilya's concept of *mandala*, commonly translated as the 'circle of state'.[19] The *mandala* is based on the geo-political assumption that the immediate neighbour-state of the *vijigisu* is most likaly to be an "Ari" (enemy, real or potential) and a state next to the immediate neighbour is likely to be one's friend, "mitra." After the friendly ("mitra") state comes an unfriendly state ("ari-mitra" or friend of the enemy state) and next to that a friendly state ("mitra-mitra" or friend of a friendly state) and so on.[20] In this system of *mandala* it is natural that each state assumes its neighbour to be 'unfriendly, jealous, and aggressive' and in turn always prepares for his own 'time of surprise and trea-

16. Shamasastry, tr., *Kautilya's Arthasastra* (Bangalore : Government Press 1956). For a closer look on the Kautilyan tradition vide, Imtiaz Ahmed, "Kautilya Concept of Diplomacy", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh* Vol. xxix, No. 2 (December 1984) pp. 47-60.

17. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *History of Philosophy : Eastern and Western* (London : George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1952), pp. 111-112.

18. By 'diplomacy' here we shall understand the Indian word : *Kutaniti*, the law of trickery. Vide, Imtiaz Ahmed, *op. cit*, pp. 47-48.

19. A graphical account of the *mandala* is found in Bozeman, *Politics and Culture in International History* (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1960), pp, 122-123.

20. However, Kautilya in his system of *mandala* also recognised the special position of two types of non-aligned powers : (i) the *Madhyama* (literally the 'middle', but referred to as 'mediatory king'). This state is one which is situated on the borders of both the *vijigisu* and his imediate enemy and is capable of helping or favouring or both; and (ii) the *Udasina* i. e. the neutral or the detached state. This state is one which is situated beyond the territory of any of the above states, and which is very powerful and capable of helping the *vijigisu*, the *ari* and the *madhyama* state together or individually or of resisting any of them individually.

cherous attack'.[21] Kautilya however argues that in this complex pattern of inter-state relations "an Indian king could hope for success only if he knew how to choose tactfully among the different classic manners of approaching neighbouring states".[22] It is in this context that Kautilya presents the doctrine of *Shadgunya* or six-fold policy[23]. These include:[24] accommodation (sandhi) ; war (vigraha) ; neutrality (asana) ; march (yana) ; alliance (samshraya) ; and double-policy (dvaidhibhava).[25] The ruler among all these will choose the one which seems to suit his purpose best. As Kautilya puts it that the six forms are set forth "as their respective conditions differ."[26] The utility of undertaking one of the forms will depend on the understanding of one's physical strength and of the need to make use of it. The *manner* in which these would be undertaken will however depend on the diplomatic feat of the concerned ruler. Kautilya however records five 'instruments' of diplomacy :[27]

one, conciliation (sama) : The ruler must attempt at conciliation (also referred to as negotiations) when success in dangerous situations is minimally likely;

two, gift and bribery (*dana*) : The policy of *dana* is to be applied to inferior kings and discontented people with the avowed purpose of winning them without 'bloodshed' ;[28]

21. Bozeman, *op cit.*, p. 123.
22. *ibid.*
23. Mehta & Thakkar, *Kautilya and his Arthasastra* (Bombay : Asia Publishing House, 1980), p. 64.
24. For details vide, Imtiaz Ahmed, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-52.
25. There is a remarkable similarity between Kautilya's *Dvaidhibhava* and Bismarck's system of diplomacy. Their approach of countering neighbours seems to follow the same principle : not to have hostile relations both in the rear and in the front.
26. Shamasastry tr., *op cit.*, p. 293.
27. In some translations there are seven. *Maya* and *Indrajala* are viewed separately, and *Upeksha* (indifference) is also viewed as an instrument. The latter has a close link with the *Udasina* state already cited, and the line between *Maya and Indrajala* is very thin to recognise. This prompts the present author to divide and state only five.
28. Mehta & Thakkar, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

three, causing dissensions (*bheda*) : If 'gifts' do not satisfy them the policy of 'sowing the seeds of dissension' should be taken. The primary purpose is to create 'chaos and confusion' amongst the enemies so as to reduce their threat ;

four, deceit and pretense (*maya and indrajala*) : The ruler could undertake certain 'tactical' maneuverings to outsmart the enemy. This could range from *Shapuri* (snake charmer) type where the enemy is lulled into passivity 'by a non-aggression pact or a definition of spheres of influence',[29] to the use of magic in order to terrorize the enemy, to the point of devising illusions (probably 'yellow journalism' in the contemporary sense), and masking oneself (for example, to appear very 'democratic' or 'religious') ; and

five, open attack (*danda*). And if all these fail to contain the neighbours (the "Ari") then the policy of coercion or open attack should be implemented. When writing about the most advantageous situation for an attack Kautilya advised that account be taken of the financial positions of the potential enemy and the ruler's relations with his subjects. Attack be made precisely against that ruler whose subjects are hostile to him.[30]

By using all these means, one or in combination and in accordance with the need, Kautilya argues that "a king can recover his diminished power and a weak king can gain power and energy to fight a strong enemy".[31] Their relevance in the modern age can hardly be exaggerated. It is evident that the Kautilyan tradition projects a *realist* approach in the analysis of inter-state relations. Today such realism or realpolitik has become the common mode in international relations. India's case is more obvious. It is curious to observe here that India's campaign of Hyderabad and Sikkim meets much of the policy framework of the *vijigisu*. But more important has been India's conflictual relationship (of various types and degree) with its neighbours.

29. Bozeman, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
30. Shamasastry, tr., *op. cit.*, pp. 411-412.
31. Mehta & Thakkar, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

Indeed, the Kautilyan observation that 'the immediate neighbour' is an 'Ari' is nowhere more deeply felt than in the case of India : with Bangladesh (Farakka, Talpatty, barbed wire, etc.), with China (counter territorial claims), with Nepal (water and trade), with Pakistan (Kashmir and arms race), with Sri Lanka (the Tamil issue)-all somehow seems to reflect the 'first circle' of the system of *mandala*. To meet such a state of relationship India so far has nurtured the six-fold policy with a combination of the instruments of diplomacy quite successfully. Its approach of bilateralism and *predominance* stands as a testimony.

c. *The Asokan Tradition* : The philosophy of Buddha and its execution by Emperor Asoka (of the third century BC) provides the basis of this tradition. In opposition to the Vedic dogma, Buddha proclaims that there is no proof of anything being permanent : "It is all a mere mass of change; a mass of thought in a continuous change is what you call a mind...It is a continuous river passing on ; every moment a fresh mass of water passing on. So is this life : So is all body, so is all minds."[32] Reflecting much of what is now modern physics, Buddha's primary objective was to put man at the centre of his philosophy. Man's fate is not preordained, on the contrary, man is free to carve out his future. He can change his destiny, his present pitiful condition. But for the change to occur man must work and work selflessly.[33] Needless to say, such a doctrine helped revolutionize the society from all forms of sterility, mental and physical. But how will the man perform his work? His answer to this was simple, by non-violent means. Following the path of Mahavira, of the *Jaina darsana*, Buddha's idea was to create a world-unity through non-violent means. It is recorded that Buddha took forty of his disciples and sent them all over the world, saying, "Go ye; mix with all races and nations and preach the execellent gospel for the good of all, for the benefit of all".[34] In this mission no sword was to be used, only 'brain power'.

32. Vide, R.C. Majumdar, ed., *op. cit.*, p. xxxvi.
33. *ibid.*, p. xxxvii.
34. *ibid.*, p. xxxiv.

This philosophy was put into practice by the great Indian emperor Asoka. We are best informed about him through the rock edicts that was spread all over India during his time. After the horrors of the Kalinga War[35] Asoka renounced *War* as a method of conquest and adopted the creed of non-violence both as a national and an international policy. The chiefest conquest in Asoka's opinion was the conquest by the Law of Piety (*Dhammavijaya*). In Edict IV he says : "The reverberation of the war drums has become the reverberation of the Law".[36] Thus we have a complete renunciation of the old policy of *Digvijava* (conquest by war) and the enunciation of a new policy viz., that of the conquest by the Law of Piety. It is therefore quite evident that in place of the traditional policy of conquest by war, Asoka only substituted conquest through *peaceful means*. And through this Asoka succeeded in establishing one of the largest empires in ancient India. Today, India's national flag (which bears the symbol of "Asoka's Wheel") and her advocacy of "peaceful coexistence" reminds us of the profound influence of the Asokan tradition on India. The case in favour of 'peaceful coexistence' has been well-stated by Nehru himself :

> "Peaceful co-existence is not a new idea for us in India. It has been our way of life and is as old as our thought and culture. About 2,200 years ago, a great son of India, Asoka, proclaimed it and inscribed it on rock and stone, which exist today and give us his message. Asoka told us that we should respect the faith of others, and that a person who extols his own faith and decries another faith injures his own faith. This is the lesson of tolerance and peaceful co-existence and cooperation which India has believed in through the ages. In the old days, we

35. We learn from the Rock Edict XIII that Asoka made war on the Kalinga country annexed it to his empire. In the war 'One handred and fifty thousand persons were carried away captive, one hundred thousand were slain, and many times that number died.'

36. H. Raychaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India* (New Delhi : APH, 1973), p. 171.

talked of religion and philosophy; now we talk more of the economic and social system. But the approach is the same now as before".[37]

The principle, as part of the *Panchsheel*, has become one of the major instruments through which India advocates peace in international affairs. One of the classic case of its operation was on the issue regarding the 'reunion' of the Pondicherry. Nehru's statement on the issue is an interesting one : "...in dealing with this question of Pondicherry we have achieved a settlement in friendship and cooperation with the French Government, leaving no problem behind, not even bitterness. That is the civilized way of dealing with problems. *The uncivilized way is that of war*, even though the so-called advanced countries may fight" (emphasis mine).[37a] Is this the same Nehru who in another 'circumstances' came all-out in favour of 'just war'? The answer is yes. But it merely stands as one of the varied forms influencing the foreign policy process of India.

2. *The Modern Values* : By this we shall understand the values that have gained prominence in the recent past. We shall concentrate only on two :

a. *Nationalism* : When nationalism became the code-word in the movement against the Britishers, many prominent Indians sought refuge in the ancient wisdom to make the common mass understand what they were really struggling for. There is an interesting piece by Nehru in his *Discovery of India* (1944) :

> "I tried to make them (the masses) think of India as a whole, and even, to some little extent, of this wide world of which we were a part. The task was not so difficult as I had imagined, *for our ancient epics and myths and legends*, which they know so well, had made them familiar with the conception of their

37. Jawaharlal Nehru (1971), *op. cit.*, pp. 101-102.
37a. *ibid.*, p. 107.

country...Bharata Mata, Mother India, was essentially these millions of people, and victory to her meant victory to these people. *You are parts of this Bharata Mata.* As this idea slowly soaked into their brains, their eyes would light up" (emphasis mine).[38]

Sri Aurobindo (1908) was more poignant on this issue, to him 'nationalism is a religion that has come from God'. Hence, the philosophy that stands behind it is the philosophy of the Absolute, the philosophy of Brahman. It becomes 'an act of Brahman' to work for Bharata Mata for "she is both our *Pithrbhu* (Fatherland) and *Punyabhu* (Holyland)".[39] The lattar case (i.e. of India being a *Punyabhu* to the Hindus) is often neglected or omitted even as a point of reference by many analysts totally unsympathetic to the Hindu-perception of Indian nationalism. That the sentiment of religion, in particular of Hinduism, has become intermingled with the projection of nationalism requires no further evidence. The impact however was not wholly positive. The Muslims became alienated. Myrdal's account, particularly in connection with Gandhi's role would suffice to make the point clear :

"Despite its broad-minded leaders and secularist resolutions, the Congress was basically Hindu in outlook. To win the popular backing necessary, as he thought, to bring pressure on the British to quit India, Gandhi had to appeal to the masses in an idiom they could understand, which meant in religious terms..... (His) religious appeal was heavily spiced with Hindu symbolism ..... Therefore, the more successful the Congress was in appealing to the masses, the more it became, in Moslem eyes, an essential Hindu organization."[40]

---

38. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Discovery of India* (New Delhi : Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund, 1983), pp. 60-61. *Bharata* is the old Sanskrit name derived from the mythical founder of the race.
39. Vide, Savarkar, *Hindu Rashtra Darshan*, vol. vi, (Calcutta : Dez Publishing, 1964), pp. 350-352.
40. Gunnar Myrdal, vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

As a reaction, the creation of the State of Pakistan on a communal basis was viewed favourably by the Muslims. Even with the *partition* nothing changed in India. In this light, Nehru's message to the Press on August 15, 1947 is significant :

> "On this day our first thoughts go to the architect of this freedom, the Father of our Nation, who embodying *the old spirit of India*, held aloft the torch of freedom and lighted up the darkness that surrounded us..... And to India, our much-loved motherland, *the ancient, the eternal and the ever-new*, we pay our reverent homage and we bind ourselves afresh to her service" (emphasis mine).[41]

That from of tradition-based nationalism is still continuing. Indian nationalism is therefore unique. Though its impact on the domestic scene is total and primary, it also has an important external dimension. The level of flexibility that we see in the Indian foreign policy is partly a product of this nationalism. That flexibility is reflected in the well-known concept of 'non-alignment'. I take the liberty of quoting Nehru once again : "Essentially, *non-alignment* is freedom of action which is a part of independence".[42] By pursuing such a policy India, on the one hand, was able to increase her role (and correspondingly her prestige) in the world affairs, and, on the other (and more important), was able to woo the power-blocs according to its need. India's "Soviet-tilt" ought to be viewed in that context. And if in the future Rajiv Gandhi makes an effort towards an "American-tilt" (or more diplomatically "no Soviet-tilt") the case would be the same, this time, Indian nationalism would demand a favourable attitude towards the Americans (or their multi-national corporations) for the purpose of making India a *modern, technologically-developed state.*

---

41. Jawaharlal Nehru (1971), op. cit.. pp. 15-16.

42. Jawaharlal Nehru, "Changing India", *Foreign Affairs* (April 1963), p. 457.

b. *Secularism* : In India's case the word is a misnomer. Whereas, literally and in the occidental tradition, secularism means primarily the separation of religion from all worldly matters, in India it has come to mean the 'equal rights' of all the religious groups to practice their beliefs, both spiritually and politically. The religion-based political parties in India, like the Jan Sangh, the Jamaat-e-Islam, the Akali Dal, and many others, remind us of the Indian content in the meaning of secularism. In fact, in India the word secularism is tied up with the Gandhian philosophy. It was Gandhi's belief that the goal of human life should be the search for truth. But since no one could know the ultimate truth and could only search for it, it is natural that people would differ in their methods of searching the truth.[42a] Gandhi's view here is that the people should not be in conflict with each other, or, "should never attack another's integrity or prevent another's search for truth."[43] Any recourse to that form of 'conflictual relationship' would hamper the objective itself. Here Gandhi advocated the principle of non-violence as a method that ought to be practised by the different parties : Only non-violence and suffering willingly in the search for truth could guarantee the integrity of both parties in a relationship and their right to seek truth according to their own lights without hindrance.[44] That is, "equal rights" of practising the beliefs without any violence. History however has been very

42a. Vide, Judith M. Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power* : *Indian Politics 1915-1922* (Cambridge : University Press, 1972), p.7.

43. *ibid.* Gandhian philosophy is a product of Hinduism in general. It reminds us of Vivekananda's address at the World's Parliament of Religions on September 19, 1893 : "To the Hindu the whole world of religions is only a travelling, a coming up, of different men and women, through various conditions and circumstances, to the same goal. Every religion is only evolving a God out of the material man, and the same God is the inspirer of all of them. Why, then, are there so many contradictions? They are only apparent, says the Hindu. The contradictions come from the same truth adapting itself to the varying circumstances of different natures". Vide, Swami Vivekananda, *Chicago Addresses* (Calcutta : Advaita Ashrama, 1978), p. 34.

44. Judith M. Brown, *op. cit.*, p.7.

cruel to such philosophies. In India, in particular, the Gandhian philosophy could neither contain nor control the eruption of religious violence. The patterns involved both inter-religion and intra-religion conflicts. While the latter climaxed into a caste-based violence, the Harijans being the primary target, the former got complicated more recently by being a Hindu-Muslim-cum-Hindu-Sikh-based violence. The events are all familiar to everyone. It is indeed a tragedy that in India two Gandhis, both of whom who upheld the doctrine of secularism in public, were assassinated by two forms of extremism. Mahatma Gandhi by a Hindu extremist and Indira Gandhi by a Sikh extremist. Its external dimension, particularly in connection with India's relations with the neighbours, is equally important. India is cautious, be it in Buddhist-dominated Sri Lanka or Muslim-dominated Bangladesh, that religious practice face no hindrance. Here too the Indians encourage the neighbours to follow the path of 'secularism' but not always as defined and practised by them. It is interesting to note here that it was in this context that Indira Gandhi, during the Bangadesh Crisis, welcomed the support given by the 'communalist' Jan Sangh to the Bangladesh movement : "It is good to see that the Parties here have expressed certain views..... The Jan Sangh has supported his (Mujib's) secular policy and have also said that the people of East Bengal are their brothers".[45] There is therefore no doubt that secularism permeates the foreign policy process of India.

So much for the values. A complex set of values that surround the socio-economic milieu in which the decision-makers operate have been presented here in an abstract form so that the analyst can acknowledge them, of course, by taking into view both their concrete basis and their concrete mode of operationalization. But what do the values in essence indicate? If one views them in total, the projection is simple : a pre-eminent/powerful India. The mechanism by which it ought to be realized could take varied forms—it could be by the

45. *Bangladesh Documents*, vol, I (New Delhi ; Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, 1972), p. 670.

compulsion of 'just war, as in the Bhagavada Gita, or by 'diplomatic feat' as put by Kautilya, or by 'peaceful means' as in the Asokan tradition, or by applying the modes of nationalism and secularism. The goal appears to be the same. One, however, has to be careful here in the understanding of the nature in which values influence the dicision-makers. Not at all times can the values be compartmentalized in their mode of influencing a particular dicision-making process. Often, more than one value premises bear upon the process ; the decision-makers project only those which serve their interests. Needless to say, the values meet the objectives of the 'class-based centre' oriented foreign policy of India. Such a class composition finds it convenient to use the values for the sake of pursuing its own goals, of expansion and profit. It is worth pointing out here that most of the values, the traditional values in particular, have been originally carved out by the then ruling classes. That the present ruling class would be inspired to nurture them to its benefit remains all the more natural. But what are the factors that contribute to the existence of these values ? That ideas, values, or even philosophy reflect the socio-economic basis is a theoretical assertion hardly denied by modern social science. Earlier we have discussed that India's socio-economic basis is not wholly capitalistic ; on the contrary, the rising national bourgeoisie, for the sake of maintaining its power, has made a coalition with its feudal counterparts. In other words, remnants of feudalism exists not only in the socio-economic basis but also, and more importantly, in the super-structure (in man's social ideas, social organisations and institutions, and ideological relations). The latter provides the necessary ground for a strong appeal of traditionalism, a lot of which has been documented already. Also important is the fact that Indian capitalism is neither English nor Japanese but essentially Indian. And as such the dialectics of the interaction between the socio-economic basis and the superstructure tends only to remould the values found in tradition and adjust itself to the new environment. A thorough erasing of the values is neither dialectically sound nor historically justifiable. Any 'concrete analysis of the concrete situation' would show that Indian

capitalism has evolved from Indian feudalism (even with the British colonialism) and hence the evolving pattern of the values that are essentially Indian in content and form. The values, therefore, continue to exist, and moreover, are nurtured by the ruling class for its own sake. Basing on the above contention, one must analyse both the *class component* and the *underlying values* of India in order to understand the foreign policymaking process of India. Approaches other than this would fall short of scientificity. It is against this background that we shall now proceed to discuss the role of India in the South Asian region.

ROLE IN SOUTH ASIA

We shall take a historico-critical viewpoint of the development of the relationship between India and four of its major neighbours in South Asia, the period stretching from post-independence to the death of Indira Gandhi. We shall, however, be brief in our survey :

1. *Relationship with Pakistan* : India's foreign policy began, so to say, with the *creation* of the state of Pakistan. Earlier we have mentioned that the rising national bourgeoisie of India was not happy with the communal division of the sub-continent. But the state of condition was such that no drive on the contrary could check the momentum. That India could not reconcile to the Partition of 1947 found expression in various offlcial policy statements. The All-India Congress Committee in its June 14, 1947 resolution, while accepting the June 3 plan, stated: "When the present passions have subsided Indian's problem will be viewed in its proper perspective and the false doctrine of two nations will be discredited and discarded by all"[46]. Nehru also spoke on the same line, on November 28, 1947 he stated : "ultimately both the dominions will unite into one country".[47] Ironically, the

46. Qt. in V.P. Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India*, (Princeton, N. J. : Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 384.

47. *Dawn* (Karachi) November 30, 1947. Ct. from Sharif al-Mujahid, "India-Pakistan Relations : An Analysis", in Latif Ahmcd Sherwani, et. al., (ed.) *Foreign Policy of Pakistan : An Analysis* (Karachi : The Allies Book Corporation, 1964), p. 33.

statement was made at a reception at Sikh Sevak Dal to celebrate Guru Nanak's birthday. Post-Indira India would find this very much hollow ! A conflictual relationship immediately developed on two fronts : (i) on the question of the sharing of assets. India refused to part with the military stores, cash balances, and other items that fell to the share of Pakistan.[48] But sharing of assets in total is an ideal situation hardly acceptable in the milieu of realpolitik. And on that account India can hardly be blamed, although it did provide grounds for contention between the two countries. And (ii), on the fate of some princely states, Junagadh, Hyderabad and Kashmir. India resorted to force to settle the question of Junagadh by sending troops there on October 5, 1947 despite the Nawab of Junagadh's desire to accede to Pakistan. Later a plebiscite was held to legalize the action. The Nizam of Hyderabad's desire to maintain a separate dominion status also met with a 'police action' by India. On both accounts the actions were viewed to be 'righteous' on the plea that the majority of the population there were Hindus ; indeed, a pro-people communal projection of the 'just war'. The case of Kashmir, on the other hand, was one of anti-people communal projection of the 'just war'. Here, the majority of the population were Muslims, but the Maharaja was a Hindu. India was quick to come to the Maharaja's rescue when the latter decided to affiliate with India. Aided by the Radcliffe Award,[49] the Indian troops swiftly moved to Srinagar to take control of Kash-

48. Out of 165,000 tons of defence stores Pakistan received only 23,000 tons. India also refused to part with Pakistan's share of cash balances. The cash balance of undivided India on August 14, 1947 stood at Rs. 4000 million, of which India agreed to pay Rs. 750 million. However, after providing only Rs. 200 million the payment was terminated.

49. "In the Punjab, of the Muslim majority district of Gurdaspur, Radcliffe transferred to India not only the one non-Muslim majority tehsil (sub-district) of Pathankot, but also its two Muslim majority tehsils, Gurdaspur (Muslim majority 52.1%) and Batala (Muslim majority 55.1%). The Award in this district also made it possible for the Muslim majority princely State of Kashmir, whose ruler was a non-Muslim, to accede to India." Vide, Latif Ahmed Sherwani, ed., *Pakistan Resolution to Pakistan 1940-1947* (Karachi : National Publishing House, 1969), p. 258.

mir in the last week of October, 1947. Nehru's classic statement on the issue has already been recorded earlier. Indian and Pakistani troops from then on were at logger heads. The 'hard line' approach and the territorial expansion, however, gave the Pakistanis the opportunity to project home and abroad the basis of their Indophobia and the concurrent need of an 'external' support to balance India. As seen by India and some analysts such a projection was deliberately fanned and kept alive by the Pakistani ruling class to serve its own intersts. So when Washington, after its initial failure in wooing Nehru, invited Liaquat in 1950, the latter was quick to reject an earlier Soviet invitation and fly hastily to the United States. Their he belched out his and his colleagues' Russophobia with the hope that the trick would serve a dual purpose: (i) aid in the name of anti-communism to enrich the fellow-compradors; and (ii) aid in the name of anti-communism, but alleged by India, to be used against her in the future. The policy framework reached its climax in 1954-1955 with Pakistan and the United States signing the Mutual Defence Assistance agreement and the former joining the U.S.-sponsored military alliances, the SEATO and the CENTO.[50] India in the face of this massive military posture by its immediate neighbour quickly decided to workout a viable relationship with the Soviet Union.[51] India at the same time took the initiative of grouping the Third World countries under the banner of *Panchsheel* in the like of the Asokan tradition (one is reminded here of Nehru's role at the Bandung in 1955). The move, on the one hand, isolated Pakistan from a vital public forum and on the other, increased its trade and cultural relationship with the 'underdeveloped' areas of the world. But the relationship with the Soviet Union was more important. It brought home the much required aid for the develop-

50. For the raison detre, vide, Imtiaz Ahmed, "The Superpowers Strategy in the Third World : The 1971 South Asian Crisis" in Emajuddin Ahamed, ed. *Foreign Policy of Bangladesh : a small state's imperative* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1984) pp. 113-114.

51. Nehru' visit to Moseow in June 1955, and Khrushchev's and Bulganins' stopover in New Delhi in November-December, 1955 reflected the new relationship.

ment of heavy industry against the shyness and often negative stand on the part of U.S. capital investment.[52] The Soviet friendship also brought home advanced military hardware, -- a process accelerated following India's rupture with China over countet-border claims in 1962 and Soviet-China border conflicts in 1969. By that time the Kautilyan system of *mandala* became the modus operandi: India's two immediate neighbours, Pakistan and China, became its *ari* and in turn, their common enemy, the Soviet Union, its *mitra*. In simple then, the choice of the Soviet Union by the Indian ruling class was an act of prudence. It provided the class both with heavy industry and military hardware, a combination that proved to be of immense importance in giving effect to the foieign policy framework of India. By 1970 India's military strength far outnumbered and outweighed the Pakistani buildup, the consequence being, while in 1965 the war ended with practically no victors, in 1971, of course aided principally by the fierce nationalism in Bangladesh, the war ended with a total disaster for Pakistan. India emerged as the regional power, thus, fulfilling to a large extent the goal so vigorously cherished by the values that shape the class-based centre-oriented foreign policy of India. But the matter did not end there. The 1971 victory saw the initiation of the policy of Indocentrism. India projected this as a matter of fait accompli vis-a-vis its South Asian neighbours. Immediately Pakistan was made to accept by implication the status quo in Kashmir (Simla 1972). Two additional factors, moreover, helped India to promote further the Indocentric standpoint: (i) India going nuclear in 1974; and (ii) the recent demand of India's industrial sector for high technology and the concurrent role of the multinational corporations in the economic development of India. In view of such developments India came to be looked favourably by the United States. Post-Nixon era has publicly proclaimed India as the central figure of the South Asian security system[53] despite U.S. assurance of

52. The Bokaro Steel Mill affair for instance.

53. Vide, Ramen H. Myres, ed., *AU.S. Foreign Policy for Asia : The 1980s and Beyond* (Stanford : Hoover Press, 1982), P. xix.

coming to the assistance of Pakistan in the event of an external attack. In this context, it is worth pointing out here that with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan the U.S. has been 'cautious' in providing military and economic aid to Pakistan lest it be used against India. The US is also opposed to Pakistan going nuclear. Pakistan's imbroglio is certain. Pakistan, however, has continued harping on the traditional Indophobic perception, but that is again largely for the purpose of domestic consumptson to balance the politico-economic instability. Indeed, Pakistan at this juncture hardly has any option but to recognise the Indocentric version of the security dimension of South Asia.

2. *Relationship with Sri Lanka* : Sri Lanka's Indo-phobia is the result of two elements, geographical and ethno-communal. The formar is characterized by Sri Lanka's 'smallness' (only 25, 332 sq. miles)-cum-'nearness' to India. To some extent Nehru was responsible in giving shape to this geography-based Indo-phobia. In his *Discovery of India*, Nehru unwittingly stated : "..the small national state is doomed. It may survive as a culturally autonomous area but not as an independent political unit".[54] And in this context he envisaged that Sri Lanka would inevitably be drawn into a closer union with India "presumably as an autonomous unit of the Indian Federation".[54a] The logic of apprehension was thus established. The modern version of Nehru's 'discovery' only became somewhat sophisticated ; in a book published in 1974, a former commander of the Indian Navy wrote :

> "Sri Lanka is as important strategically to India as Eire is to the United Kingdom or Taiwan to China...As long as Sri Lanka is friendly or neutral, India has nothing to worry about but if there be any danger of the island falling under the domination of a power hostile to India, India cannot tolerate such a situation endangering her territorial integrity".[55]

---

54. Nehru (1983), *op. cit.*, p. 536.
54a. Ct. from Shelton Kodikara, "Strategic Factors in Interstate Relations in South Asia" in *Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No. 19* (Canberra 1969), p. 17.
55. Ravi Kaul, "The Indian Ocean : A Strategic Posture for India" in T.T. Poulouse, *Indian Ocean Power Rivalry* (New Delhi, 1974), p.66. Ct. in Shelton Kodikara, *op. cit*, p. 70, fn. 60.

Such pronouncement would not have mattered much had the second element, ethno-communal, not existed. The latter, in fact, is the immediate cause of the 'tension' prevailing in the Indo-Sri Lanka relationship. The element is characterised by the conflict between the majority Sinhalese Buddhists and the minority Tamil-Hindus. The conflict, however, has a deep-rooted economic basis. During the British period the Tamils were placed in governmental and business services, but following independence the Sinhalese, as the majority, formed the government and began replacing the Tamils in every possible sector. Post-independence Sinhalese dominance also saw the disenfranchisement of some 700,000 Tamil-Hindu plantation workers of Indian origin. The move practically made them 'stateless', as India refused to recognise them as 'Indian nationals'.[56] But Sinhalese nationalism, spearheaded by the rising petty bourgeoisie in the 60s and the 70s, further undermined the Tamil interests, from language to landholdings to commercial enterprises to military services. The consequence saw the Tamil agitation, followed by Sinhalese repression, followed by Tamil terrorism for a separate independent state, or Eelam. It is curious to observe that throughout Sri Lanka's internal dynamism, India vocally projected its interests on the Tamil-Hindu issue, as Nehru in Rajya Sabha once pointed out : "It is a problem of the people of Indian descent, who never were citizens of India, but in whose fate we are interested, for historical, cultural and other reasons".[57] Needless to say that Nehru's statement is understandable only from an ethnic and communal standpoint. In this light India's foreign policy framework vis-a-vis Sri Lanka not only saw a combination of the spirit of nationalism and secularism but also, and to a large extent, the practice of the Kautilyan diplomacy of *bheda*. The latter got complexed more recently, following the July 1983 riots. Today "there is little doubt that the top leaders among the terrorists use Tamil Nadu and Kerala as a sanctuary".[58] Jayewardene also

56. Nehru, (1971), *op. cit.*, p. 296.
57. *ibid.*, p. 299.
58. Vide, *Sunday* (Calcutta). 24-30 March, 1985, p. 18.

pointed out : "India cooperate with the terrorists. I am positive about this".[59] At this point it is natural for Sri Lanka to fear India's option of 'open attack'. To quote Kuldip Nayar : "If things are allowed to deteriorate, as is happening... it may turn into a Cyprus, which Turkey invaded to save Cypriots of Turkish origin"[60]. It is this state of affair that makes Sri Lanka look for 'powerful' external support. The latter has a deterrent value but compared to India's proximity, pressure, and diplomacy its effectiveness is uncertain and shaky. As it stands, the future course is wide open where India has *less* to lose but *all* to gain.

3. *Relationship with Nepal* : From the beginning India was quite explicit about the kind of relationship it ought to have with Nepal. Nehru's statement in Parliament on the issue for instance :

> "From time immemorial, the Himalayas have provided us with a magnificent frontier. Of course, they are no longer as impassable as they used to be but they are still fairly effective. We cannot allow that barrier to be penetrated, for it is also the principal barrier to India. Much as we stand for the independence of Nepal, we cannot allow anything to go wrong in Nepal or permit that barrier to be crossed or weakened, because that would be a risk to our own security".[61]

To give effect to this policy projection a number of security-based treaties were concluded and some measures were undertaken by the two parties:[62] (i) By the treaty of 1947 India could recruit Gorkhas from Nepal for the Indian Army; (ii) By the treaty of 1950 and the letter of exchange which accompanied the treaty, provisions were made for 'mutual consultation' in the event of a third party attack;

59. *ibid*,, p. 21.
60. *ibid*., p. 18.
61. Nehru, (1971), *op. cit*., p. 436.
62. Vide, R.S. Chauhan, "Smaller Powers and Neutrality : Nepal a case study", and Leo E. Rose, "Regional Developments in South Asia : Nepal's Role and Attitude" in Varma and Misra, eds., *Foreign Policies in South Asia* (Bombay : Orient Longmans, 1969), pp. 272 aud 358.

(iii) Although Nepal maintains check-posts on its northern border, no check-posts are visible on its southern border. Moreover, until 1958 the cheek-posts were *totally* manned by the Indian Army and now only to be replaced by a joint Indo-Nepali surveillance force; (iv) The presence of the Indian Military Mission in Nepal to train and equip the Nepali Army; (v) The officers of the Nepali Army are sent on a regular basis to various Indian military institution for training ; and (vi) The almost monopoly of India in the supply of military equipment to Nepal. The latter can go for other specified sources (USA or U.K.) only when India is unable to provide a 'certain category of arms'. For fear of Indian reprisal Nepal so far has made no attempts to alter such security dependence. The present ruling elite of Nepal is well aware of India's conspicuous role in the overthrow of the Rana autocracy in 1951 and the anti-King activities of the 'democratic' Nepalese from India following Mahendra's constitutional coup in 1960. Interestingly enough, the latter dimension was to change only with the Sino-Indian border conflict in 1962 that saw Nepal offering India to raise two additional Gorkha battalions.[63] Attempts were, however, made to reduce the economic dependence on India. It must be pointed out here that, except Bhutan, Nepal is the only other South Asian country whose economy at independence was totally under the dominance of the Indian bougeoisie.[64] Not only Nepal's finance and limited industry was controlled by Indian capital but as late as the 60s 90% of its trade was with India.[65] It was this dependence that Nepal wanted to reduce, first, by allowing the Chinese to construct a 100 km highway linking Kathmandu with Lhasa and second, by inviting foreign capitial. But India, apprehending the possible consequence, was soon to demonstrate its influence on limiting the scope of the Nepali measures. On the Chinese connection, the demonstration was made "when Mahendra was constrained to turn down a Chinese offer

63. Vide, R.S. Chauhan, *ibid*,, p. 272.
64. Rehman Sobhan, *Public Enterprise And the Nature of the State* (Dhaka : Centre for Social Studies, 1983), p. 39.
65. R.S. Chauhan, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

to build yet another east-west road in the *terai* region in Nepal".[66] And on the second measure the treaty of 1950 was enacted literally. India put a ban on Nepali exports of synthetic fabrics and stainless steel utensils on the ground that these goods were being produced in Nepal out of foreign raw materials.[67] It may be mentioned here that the treaty of 1950 holds that only goods of *Nepali origin* could compete on favourable terms in India.[68] Such pressures are not wanting. Recently, India came out against the Nepali-Bangladesh desire of a three-party solution to the Ganges problem and also on the Nepali's proposal of 'zone of peace'. On the latter issue K. Subrahmanyam's statement is classic:

> "It must be made clear to our neighbours what kind of concessions they can legitimately expect from their big neighbour and what they cannot. Any proposal which jeopardises India's security should be clearly ruled out and Nepal's zone of peace and neutrality is one such proposal".[69]

It is therefore certain that given the security dimension and the economic link, India has in its hand more than one card to play against Nepal if the situation demands.

4. *Relationship with Bangladesh*: Obviously, it all began in 1971. At the outset one thing must be cleared—the emergence of Bangladesh is NOT an outcome of a conspiracy by India. The movement towards an independent Bangladesh was a product of the cumulation of the contradictions inherent in the formation of the State of Pakistan. The *genocide* was but the climax of the overtly national oppression by the Pakistani military-bureaucratic clique. It was otherwise historically

66. Shelton Kodikara, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
67. Vide, *Times of India*, 26 and 31 December, 1969. *Cf.* from Shelton Kodikara, *op. cit.*, p. 72, fn. 82.
68. Shelton Kodikara, *ibid.*, p. 24.
69. K. Subrahmanyam, "Subcontinental Security" in *Strategic Analysis*, Vol, V. No. 5&6 (New Delhi : Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, August-September 1981), 253.

inevitable that Bangladesh would emerge. Time was the only factor. And it is on this 'time-issue' that India comes to play its role in the liberation struggle of Bangladesh. Indeed, so determining was the 'time-issue' that India had to use its Armed Forces to directly intervene in the liberation struggle of Bangladesh in the name of yet another 'just war'. The opportunity, however, was provided by the Pakistani military-bureaucratic clique-engineered genocide in Bangladesh and the consequent flow of refugees. With the latter multiplying everyday and within nine months figuring ten million,[70] India was placed to a position by which it could 'control and conclude' the liberation struggle of Bangladesh. Put differently, the large flow of refugees provided India the opportunity to project at home and abroad the viewpoint that India had a rightful role to play in the dynamics of the Bangladesh Crisis. The case was eventually established as one of 'just war': "It is in our national interest to save the 75 million people of Bangladesh from being decimated. It is certainly in the interest of Bangladesh also".[71] Indeed, India's role here was partly to utilise, for its own sake, the opportunity provided by the inevitable break-up of 1947 Pakistan. There is no question that India would aspire to end the 'strategic nuisance' created in 1947 by the creation of a hostile country with two wings at the two extremes of its borders. In fact, any Kautilya would aspire to do that. In the eventual break-up of Pakistan, India would definitely fulfil to a large extent the objectives of its class component and the underlying values by which the class is being constantly influenced. And thus, at the end of the war India comes out as a regional power. An additional role, however, was involved on the part of India at this point and that was to install a 'dependent' ruling elite in Bangladesh. Efforts were directed from the beginning towards that goal. It is no secret that India's support to the national liberation movement of Bangladesh was made conditional

70. The cost of keeping the refugees was tremendous. The Indian Government was spending two and half million dollars per day.

71. Dhiren Mullick, *Indira Speaks: On Genocide War and Bangladesh* (Calcutta: Academic Publishers, 1972), p. 72.

on its being led by the Awami League.[72] The official Indian position was that such a leadership would create a favourable public opinion both at home and abroad given the fact that the Awami League had just been elected by the people to run the affairs of the state. But the motive belied the official position. Infact, it was to serve two things from India's side, one, to begin a relationship in which India will be the 'influencing' power; and two, a follow-up, to keep-out other potential national (presumably anti-Indian) forces from the game of power politics. As for the Awami League, almost panicked by the absence of its leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and the socio-political dynamism created by the 'unexpected' March 25 crackdown, the move was a favourable one destined to keep them in power. In essence, however, the power was very much illusive. It only signalled the beginning of the end of the Awami League's role and the beginning of India's role in the Bangladesh Crisis. Needless to say, the partisanship *weakened* the apparatus of the national liberation movement, paving the way for the Indians to act decisively when the time was ripe. And that came in December 1971. Taking advantage of the spadework already done by the Mukti Bahini, the Indian Armed Forces swiftly moved in when Pakistan, to materialize its intended goal, declared war on India. Unfortunately, the Mukti Bahini, after doing all the spadework, was reduced to the position of a 'secondary force' at the crucial period.[73]

---

72. Talukder Maniruzzaman, *The Bangladesh Revolution and Its Aftermath* (Dacca : Books International Ltd., 1980), p. 112.

73. There was no room for becoming pessimistic in the final operation of the Mukti Bahini ; two important reasons being : (i) Pakistan was spending Rs. one crore a day on its military machinery in Bangladesh. The expenditure was beyond Pakistan's economic capability, particularly in the face of 'complete stoppage of export of jute, tea and other commodities' from Bangladesh, and thus the machinery was destined to fall apart sooner or later. And (ii) by October the Mukti Bahini was 100,000 strong and another 100,000 were being trained. Sheer 'trained' human weight coupled with the complete support of the masses and the disadvantage geographic distance for back-up sources faced by the enemy ensured the eventual victory of the Mukti Bahini (and that *without* any direct intervention by the Indian forces). The case however was different.

Both the *ultimatum call* and the *surrender document* became an Indo-Pakistan affair, essentially upholding India's interests. Following Pakistan's surrender, India, after ensuring the necessary security measures, was quick to fly home the all-Awami League Bangladesh Government-in-exile from Calcutta. The process saw the Awami League as the new ruling elite in Bangladesh. The Awami League soon busied itself in making concessions to India out of gratitude.[73a] And India lost no time in sending its efficient emissaries (like D.P.Dhar and P.N. Haksar) to 'dictate' things to its benefit. A relationship of political dependence began to take roots. The conspicuous outcome of all was the signing of the twenty-five year 'friendship' treaty on March 19 and the border trade agreement on March 28 in 1972. While certain themes of the 'friendship' treaty have undergone changes, the dropping of 'secularism' for instance, the central feature of 'security concern' however remains valid. The border trade agreement, on the other hand, largely sponsored trade by smuggling.[74] Although it was soon withdrawn to placate public protests, the illegal trade continued. An official estimate put the loss of wealth due to smuggling during the first three and half years of independence at Tk. 1500 crore annually.[75] It is, however, interesting to note here that even while Mujib was in office the relationship between Bangladesh and India began to deteriorate. Mujib felt India's 'politics of pressure' in the fields of bilateral trade, maritime boundary, and above all in the sharing of the Ganges water. On the latter an agreement was 'hastily' signed in April 1975,

73a. Talukder Maniruzzaman, *op. cit*,, pp. 163-64, Also Moudud Ahmed, *Bangladesh Constitutional Quest for Autonomy* (Dhaka : UPL, 1979), p. 276, fn. 4. And also, Mohiuddin Alamgir, *Bangladesh : A case of below poverty level Equilibrium Trap* (Dhaka : BIDS, 1978), p. 81.

74. "....the Indian Government imposed a trade agreement on Bangladesh providing for free trade within ten miles of the borders. Through this border agreement..India siphoned off from Bangladesh a large part of the foreign grants in kind and huge quantities of jute, rice and other essential commodities. The Indian Government also slackenedt he anti-smuggling operation along the Indian borders, as such smuggling went in favour of India." Vide, Talukder Maniruzzaman, *ibid.*, p, 163.

75. The Bangladesh Times (Dhaka), 16 December 1976.

but that was largely to legalize the functioning of the feeder canal.[76] With Mushtaque and subsequently Ziaur Rahman in power India's attitude towards Bangladesh hardened even further. India not only began to 'aid' the so-called pro-Mujib guerrillas, led by Kader Siddique, but also began to unilaterally withdraw water from the Ganges. The disastrous consequence of the latter on Bangladesh is known to everyone. Today the situation is even worse. To quote B.M. Abbas: "We have already lost the Ganges, try to save the Brahmaputra".[77] But that is not all. India's 'pressure tactics', infact, haunt Bangladesh--claims over Talpatty, the Assam immigration issue, the construction of 'barbed wire' fences, the Muhirir Char affair, the Teesta Barrage issue, the non-implementation of the 1974 and 1982 'boundary' agreements,[78] all boil down to that. Needless to say, such politics of pressure helps India in the bargaining process. It bargains for concessions in one field or another, the ultimate goal being to transform the Bangladesh market into one of its own. The 'aggressive' posture reflects the dialectics of India's socio-economic development and the class-based centre-oriented foreign policy of India.

76. B.M. Abbas A.T. has already established this point.
77. He made this statement at the Seminar on "The Ganges Problem" held at the International Relations Research Centre (IRRC), Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka, on February 6, 1985.
78. Vide, Professor Muhammad Shamsul Huq, paper presented in the Inaugural Session : "Address of the Chief Guest" at the *Seminar on Foreign Policy Objectives of Bangladesh*, organised by the Centre for Development Research, Bangladesh, Dhaka, 1 December 1984, p. 7.

Abdur Rob Khan

POST-INDIRA INDIA AND HER NEIGHBOURS

There are certain realities in national and international societies which condition foreign policy of nations to such an extent that the basic tenets and approaches hardly undergo major changes. National identity and national core values, the imperatives of geography, resource endowment, strategic relations/understanding with other nations and more importantly, the prevailing international political and security atmosphere, are some of these realities that define the broad parameters of foreign policy of any country. In foreign policy analysis then what interests us is not so much the question of continuity or change as it is the question of the dynamics of relations between interacting governments, societies, groups and individuals. Thus when foreign policy appears to change, it is because world realities and more importantly, foreign policy actors' perception of world realities changed.[1] The changed realities and perception of realities are mainly reflected in change in the thrust and operational means of achieving the national foreign policy goals. Understanding and predicting foreign policy behaviour of nations within this multiple-actor framework of analysis in a given context of the primacy of national goals parameter needs qualification in three related aspects. First, the units of analysis should not be treated as homogeneous; their strength and size differentials are to be taken into consideration. Secondly, the perspective of the actor that perceives, understands, and then reacts to the perception

1. See Bhabani Sen Gupta, "Towards Good-neighbourliness" in Bimal Prasad (ed.) *India's Foreign Policy : Studies in Continuity and Change*, (New Delhi : Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.), 1979, p. 86.

and behaviour of another actor also needs to be taken into consideration. Thirdly, the action-reaction pattern to a great extent, is shaped by geopolitical realities facing the actors within a geographical area.

In the context of continuity and change in foreign policy, these qualifications have significant implications for perception, action and reaction of actors of heterogeneous size and strength in a geopolitical setting. Because of divergence in perception, absorptive capacity and domestic compulsions, even a slight shift in bias, approach, or articulation of foreign policy of a bigger actor is perceived in a magnified fashion by the smaller actors and appears to be a major shift. The reaction of the smaller actors is framed accordingly. Similar disproportionate response also occurs on the part of the bigger actor. Incongruous perception, mutual mistrust and suspicion are commonplaces in such a setting and historial memories can only accentuate these. The foreign policy behaviour of India vis-a-vis her smaller neighbours in the South Asian context is a case in point. Many scholars have pointed out that there has been little change in the essence of Indian foreign policy objectives over time, despite projection of different postures, namely Nehru's moralistic overtone of foreign policy, Shastri's brief but down-to-earth approach, Indira's power politics and Janata Government's toning down of power politics and redefinition of non-alignment.[2] Yet each of these regimes and its foreign policy measures did have significant implications for India's neighbours because of the big-small perception and interest gap. Now that Rajiv Gandhi, late prime minister Indira Gandhi's son has taken over following his mother's assassination, the question of change and continuity has come up again, not only because this was the first time that succession took

2. See Arthur Lall, "Change and Continuity in India's Foreign Policy" and Warner Levi, "Foreign Policy : the Shastri Era" in K.P. Misra (ed.), *Foreign Policy of India : A Book of Readings* (New Delhi : Thompson Press India Ltd.), 1977. For an excellent deliberation on specific change and continuity aspects, see S. D. Muni, "India and Regionalism in South Asia : A Political Perspective" in Bimal Prasad (ed.), *op. cit.* pp. 115-120.

place directly within the Nehru family[3] but also because a young prime minister of the post-independence generation with little political experience has assumed the leadership of the world's largest democracy which is characterised by a curious mixture of advancement and impoverishment. An air of optimism and change all around in domestic politics, administration and development, and external policy was observed. What the neighbours of India can look forward to in the coming days remains a question of more than academic interest.

The present paper basically aims at understanding where do India's neighbours fit in the overall foreign policy of India. Then taking the elements of changes in personality, role perception, security environment etc., into consideration, an attempt has been made to project what changes are likely to take place in India's relations with neighbours in the post-Indira period. The question that has been asked in understanding India's relations with neighbours on a case by case basis is : what does India expects of its neighbours and how the neighbours perceive and react to that expectation ? Obviously

3. A few things may be noted here. Firstly, there was no doubt in anybody's mind that by making Rajiv Gandhi the first General Secretary of Congress (I), Mrs. Gandhi wanted him to succeed her.Secondly, the way Rajiv was selected prime minister by the so-called Congress Parliamentary Board of which only 2 members were present in New Delhi when the decision was made and the events of the three and half hours following the assassination raise many questions that Indians are not perhaps disposed to answer excepting that under the impact of the tragedy, Rajiv was the best choice. No one would question that. But this was without any precedence. Take the case of Nehru's death on 27 May 1964 and Shastri's death on 11 May 1966. On both occasions, President S. Radhakrishnan had chosen the senior most cabinet minister, Guljarilal Nanda, with the proviso that the Parliamentary Board will choose a prime minister. The board did not choose Nanda who occupied the chair for 4 days in the first instance and 8 days in the second. Two senior most ministers, this time, were Pranab Mukharjee and A. B. A Ghani Khan Chowdhury. But none of them was probably considered. It may also be mentioned that Charan Sing met the President the very next day and registered his protest for this "dynastic succession". See *India Today*, 30 November 1984.

China has been excluded from the purview of the analysis (excepting where it impinges on the discussion), because we have in mind a sub-continential frame with big India flanked by her smaller neighbours.

Neighbours in India's Foreign Policy Frame

First, the pattern of Big Actor behaviour toward smaller neighbours. Historically the smaller nieghbours have suffered most from violation by their big neighbours of both independence and territory. A classic statement on this has been made by Sir Eyre Crowe while propounding the theory of balance of power :

> History shows that the danger of threatening the independence of this or that nation has generally arisen, at least in part, out of the momentary predominance of neighbouring state at once militarily powerful, economically efficient and ambitious to extend its frontiers or spread its influence, the danger being directly proportionate to the degree of its power and efficiency and to spontaneity or "inevitableness" of its ambitions.[4]

Much of the literature on security and foreign policy is full of evidences of the dilemma faced by rim-states vis-a-vis the super/great powers. How do the relatively big states in the Third World behave with the smaller states ? Maniruzzaman draws a parallelism of behaviour between the Third World big states and the non-Third World super/great powers.[5] According to Maniruzzaman, the contiguity of territory is frequently a crucial variable in the behaviour of a big power towards small states.[6] In the context of India, the

4. Quoted in A. Appadorai, "On Understanding India's Foreign Policy" in K. P. Misra (ed.), *op. cit.*

5. See Talukder Maniruzzaman, *The Security of Small States in the Third World* (Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No. 25, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU, Canberra), 1982, pp. 54-59.

6. *Ibid*, p. 55

specific nature of this contiguity is important : every one is India's neighbours but none of them are one another's.

What, however, is of interest to us is the pattern of behaviour and more importantly the motivations operating behind such behaviour of the big power toward the smaller neighbours. In the above definiton, expressions like 'extension of frontiers', 'spread of influence' provide the objective or motive force while 'spontaneity' or inevitableness provide justification of such behaviour. The most realistic description is perhaps a combination of 'big brother syndrome' and benign negligence emanating from a tendency of taking many things for granted with respect to neighbours and look beyond for realising the national goals. In the Indian context, this is manifest in Kautilya's *mandala* doctrine of diplomacy.[7] One Indian scholar puts :

> India's foreign and security policy has tended to operate in three concentric circles, namely, the Super Powers, the Third World and the Neighbours. The outermost circle received the most attention while the closest ones received the least. This state of affairs, more than any other, has been responsible for the nation's difficulties and is an indication of misplaced priorities.[8]

In accordance with the *mandala* doctrine, South Asia content in India's foreign policy is the least unless one impinged on her security or had/has some trouble making value. Nehru did spouse the concept of pan-Asianism but that had broader political context than what was required for fostering good-neighbourliness. The Nehruvian model of Indian foreign policy emphasised so much on Asia and Africa in general that the Sub-continent, a small-region got lost on the wider and larger canvas of the policy.[9] It would, however, not be correct to say that India assigns low priority to South Asian neigh-

7. See Somnath Dhar, *Kautilya and Arthasasra* (New Delhi : Marwah Publications) 1981.
8. See Baljit Singh, *Indian Foreign Policy*: *An Analysis*, p. 82 as cited in Noor A. Hossain, "Indian Regional Foreign Policy : Strategic and Security Dimensions", *Strategic Studies*, Vol. VIII No. 1 (Autumn) 1981, p. 35.
9. See S.D. Muni, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

bours and at the same time it would also not correct to say that India believes in what has come to be zealously known among intellectuals as "South Asia destiny"[10]. The fact is that good neighbourliness as such is not an Indian foreign policy goal. Guided by the desire to be reckoned as a power in global politics, the tendency is to take things for granted with the neighbours so that it can pursue the broader foreign policy goals. Thus India's neighbours attract only her negative attentions. This is likely to continue in the near future, the SARC process notwithstanding. And paradoxically enough, the ones who have less trouble making value or capacity are likely to obtain even less attention, benign negligence, if one likes it.

Going back to the question of motivation, Indian foreign policy aspirations have been dominated by a desire for strong India, originating from certain sets of forces : (a) her vast size, population and resources and inherent desire for a commensurate international role; (b) legacy of the British strategic view and a self-image of an 'inheritor' state; and (c) a crisis perception, originating mainly from the strategic and security environment of India related to its non-aligned posture of the 1950s. India perceived and to a great extent still perceives, that the external world including her neighbour Pakistan is out to 'get' her and smaller neighbours are also willing to play the game of the great powers just for trouble making.[11] Consequently, India's domestic and external policies are fused into a set of strong-India goals : (a) a strong centre, (b) a strong defence (c) a strong unified economy, (d) precise borders and (e) one national language. All these are security-biased, and India's perception about neighbours is framed through this security optics.

Secondly, India's largeness imposes certain propensities of foreign policy behaviour which have also some parallels in other big states like the USSR and China in their early stages of development.

10. See Pran Chopra, "South Asia, A Region of Mistrust : An Indian Perspective", paper presented at a workshop on *Regional Cooperation and Development* organized by Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi, 8-13 April 1985.

11. Giri Dashingkar, "Civilizational Concerns (of foreign policy alternatives), *Seminar* December 1980.

The propensities have been reflected in what has come to be known as three-stage foreign policy: frontier settling, acquisition of world mission and active involvement in world affairs. At the initial stage, the imperative is one of ensuring a desired and precise borders through extending political, economic and military control. Also the concept of frontier could be used in a broader sense to include ethnic and cultural frontier. India's occupation of the major portion of Kashmir in 1947-49, her forceful annexation of Hyderabad, Junagad, 'liberation' of Goa, her approach to the McMohan line, unilateral decision to put Nepal in her security orbit after Chinese 'liberation' of Tibet—all are reflection of India's preoccupation with the border settling issues at this stage. Such preoccupations at the homefront act as a disincentive to get involved in world affairs or power conflicts. For India Non-alignment was the foreign policy expression of this desire. This security frontier settling process however proved to be quite long and as late as in 1975 she ended the protectorate status of Sikkim and annexed it as one of her component states. The question that could be raised pertinently, if this interpretation of Non-alignment is accepted, is : what would be the fate of Indian Non-alignment once the frontier issues are resolved and India enters into the next phase of logical development of a big state, that is, acquisition of a world mission. The question is also important because what her world missions are have never been clearly mentioned although a global role remains in the vision of the Indians. What in Nehru's time appeared to be leadership of the Third World countries has over time been transformed into the traditional 'balance of power' game, balancing neighbouring China being the most handy objective. The third logical phase of development is getting actively involved in world affairs and that remains an interesting object of observation for future.

Consistent with world mission, as we have indicated earlier, India's South Asia view is guided by two considerations : strategic unity, a goal that remains as elusive as ever, and her autonomous and central role in the region. The former consideration may be viewed as inoccuous and need not be viewed as a source of tension and conflict

unless complicated by the second, that creates some sort of hierarchical power structure in the region with India in the top position. Comments an Indian scholar : "This is a natural hierarchy and there is nothing that can or should be done about it."[12] The same scholar goes on to argue that period of India's unchallenged primacy (early 1950s and post-1971 years) had been one of peace and when this natural hierarchy was challenged (1958-1969), centrifugal tendencies become operative and peace and stability of the region was disturbed.[13] Guided by these considerations, Indian elites expect that the neighbours should recognise India's security needs and should not do anything that jeopardises her perceived security. Whether the strategic unity and India's central and autonomous role are justified goals is not the point here. The point is : what has been the outcome of these goals over these thirty five years? Strategic schism, divergent paths of socio-economic and political development, and more importantly a threat perception of India of varying dimensions and magnitude among the neighbours are some of the major elements of the security and political environment that India finds itself in. Any analysis of this environment and for that matter, a problem-solving approach, will lead to a common set of explanatory variables—mistrust, suspicion and misperception. India-threat to her neighbours, on the other hand, is perceived in the form of (a) hegemonistic design germaine in her security concept, (b) unwillingness to accommodate and resolve outstanding problems lest it is perceived to be weakness of India, and (c) interference and threat of destabilisation of the systems originating from a desire to have compatible regimes all around. In sum, neighbours find in India's behaviour great deal of anti-neighbourism. India, on the other hand, perceives anti-Indianism in her neighbours' behaviour. Centrifugal tendency or looking outward for security, intransigence and interference are the characterisation of anti-Indianism.

---

12. S.D, Muni, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

13. *Ibid.*

It may be argued that it is not merely threat or violation of political and territorial independence as is the dilemma of the rim states, but also other low intensity threats like partial territorial problem along unresolved borders, resource conflict, ethnic problems, destabilisation role are perceived to be other major manifestation of the 'big state' behavior of India toward neighbours. The paradox of these low intensity conflicts is that they appear to be minor problems to the big actor and have little projection value. But for smaller neighbours with low bearing capacities, burden of population and fragile socio-economic base, the problems are vital and substantive, at times putting their socio-economic survival at stake.

Will things be any different in the Rajiv era? When Mrs. Gandhi left the South Asian scene, the domestic scenario of India was as unstable as ever. Relations with neighbours were at best correct. Things have worsened in the meantime on many counts in both domestic and external fronts. It is in this context that the foreign policy steps and statements of the new prime minister, his priorities and preoccupation over these months, as well as some of his personality traits may be assessed.

Priorities, Postures and Preoccupation of the New Prime Minister

Very few had expected that Rajiv would so dramatically rise to political power to fill the place which, by all indications, was reserved for this politician brother Sanjoy, and would take up the commanding responsibility of the huge air-craft like India, an analogy the erst-while pilot made some time back.[14] Yet in the initial months, Rajiv's policy statements and postures have raised high hopes for the future within the country and drew commendations from foreign heads of governments including those from the neighbouring countires. His landslide victory that surpassed the records of Nehru and Mrs. Gandhi is an indicator of that. Alongside the domestic optimism the neighbours also expected that a new era of good neighbourliness

14. Interview with *Newsweek* quoted in *India Today*, 15 February 1985.

might usher in. A Sri Lankan scholar assessed this massive mandate in the South Asian context in the following way :

> The present time seems more propitious than ever before, for India has at its helm at present a leader not only unconstrained by the trammels of the past, but also very firmly and sincerely committed to improving relations with neighbouring countries. The Rajiv factor must be recognized as one of the important variables in the entire direction which the SARC exercise will take in the coming months. And indications are that we are in fact witnessing a 'new course' in Indian foreign policy devoted to the twin objectives of reducing, if not eliminating superpower presence in the region and finding acceptable paths of accommodation with neighbours.
>
> Moreover, Rajiv Gandhi's massive electoral victory at the Lok Sabha polls in December 1984 has made him a political force in his own right not only in India but outside it as well.[15]

This assessment, however, reflects mainly the general mood obtaining in the immediate post-election period. But there is little reason to expect a major break-through in India's foreign policy postures in general and relations with neighbours in particular in the immediate future. The developments of the first half of 1985, specially during March-May bear ample testimony to to that. Rajiv also in his first press conference after taking over, said that India's foreign policy would "very substantially be the same" as Mrs. Gandhi's. Rajiv also said :

> The mandate is not just for change. I think it's both a continuity of certain ideologies of certain policies but a change in implementation.[16]

15. See Shelton U. Kodikara, "Regional Roles and Behaviour in South Asia : A Theoretical Framework of Regional Cooperation" paper presented at a workshop on *Regional Cooperation and Development*, *op. cit.*
16. *India Today*, 15 February 1985.

What the implementation approach will be depends on many things as we have indicated earlier. To begin with Rajiv as a man. What transcends the polite and polished outfit of the former Indian Airlines pilot is a very practical and down-to-earth personality who tries to understand his work. A foreign reporter assesses him :

> Surprisingly, in a face imprinted with mildness is the intense look of the mother—smacking implacable under a silken outer layer.[17]

Aroon Purie of *India Today* also writes after an interview :

> There was no grand visions, no spelling out of a Nehruvian world view. Instead, there was a matter-of-fact approach to problems. If he had not decided what precise policy options he would choose in a number of areas, he seemed to have abundant confidence in his own ability to choose the right one once the options were placed before him.....despite all the evidence of a young prime minister in a hurry, he was relaxed, the basic personality trait of caution surfacing every once in a while.[18]

Rajiv himself explains his approach :

> I am the sort of a chap who takes things as they come without much bother either way. If I get a setback or something it does not bother me.[19]

To date his approach has been cautious and technocratic reflecting perhaps his background of professional training and experience. As such there are misgivings if he will take any bold initiatives in promoting closer cooperation with neighbours. Romesh Bhandari's recent visit to South Asian capitals including Kabul in March-April' 85 may be viewed basically as a fact-finding mission undertaken with much fan-fare to give the impression that the new prime minister runs a

17. *Tribune de Geneve* during his September 1984 visit to Switzerland. Quoted in *India Today*, 31 October 1984.
18. *India Today*, 15 February 1985.
19. Interview with M. J. Akbar, See *Sunday*, I0-16 March 1985.

government that works not only in the home front but also in the external front, specially with respect to the neighbours. Bhandari's agenda-less trip in the midst of the prevailing deadlocked situation of failed to generate any optimism. This also brought to the fore an Indian dilemma with its neighbours, very succinctiy and anecdotically put by a just-retired Indian diplomat.[20] He said that each time a new Indian government takes over, India "discovers that she has neighbours", a good number at that, and that she has to deal with them. This confirms the earlier argument that India's neighbours figure less prominently in her foreign policy calculations excepting of course, where they impinge on her security and other interests.

Rajiv's home front then. In assessing Rajiv's domestic policies, a few factors should be taken into consideration. Firstly, whatever his visions and aspirations might be, their materialisation would very much depend on the domestic socio-economic and political realities of which he is a product. For example, it is an open question whether Rajiv can change politics before politics changes him.[21] Secondly, some of the domestic problems are really complicated so that a quick resolution is difficult to expect. Rajiv has accorded to priority to the solution of the Punjab crisis in view of the fact that his mother's assassination and the Delhi carnage that followed were related to this deep rooted crisis. The formation of three-member ministerial commission, and the subsequent steps, in retrospect, have not however, paid off. His initial attitude toward instituting an inquiry into the Delhi riot was viewed by the Sikhs as condoning, maybe also encouraging, these activities by the Hindus, more precisely, his Congress fellows. Even when he decided to form enquiry committee, uncertainty hung over it because its functioning was contingent on many things. Partial release of Akali leaders also led to the

20. M.K. Rashgotra, the former Foreign Secretary of India in an informal talk on "Perspective of South Asian Regional Cooperation", during a workshop on *Regional Cooperation and Development* organized by the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi, 8-3 April 1985.

21. *The Economist*, 5 January 1985.

belief on the part of the Sikhs that the government was trying to divide and decimate the Sikh leadership. The response was the re-emergence of the Sikh extremists in the leadership of the Akali Dal. While the present internal squabbles within the Sikh leadership perhaps serves what New Delhi wanted to achieve, the crisis becomes simply intractable. Violence is on the increase even in New Delhi and the situation is deteriorating fast. Overseas secessionist activities are also on the increase. After a long lull, the Assam front is also heating up with reported violence of new dimensions by some new elements. What the foreign policy implications of these crises are will be indicated in a shortwhile. Before that, Rajiv's other priorities.

Rajiv's other priorities reflect the complex interaction among his orientation and training as a technical man, the vision of the young generation and his political constituency. Passing of the anti-defection bill, sacking and transfer, in the top echelon of bureaucracy, promises of free economy and globally competitive scales of production, modernising and computerising to take India to the 21st century, other programmes like delinking degrees from job, educational reforms, formation of Central Ganga Authority, all these are reflection of the young modernising and middle class aspirations. It is also interesting to note that the Indian intellectual community has extended its support to the young prime minister.[22] Rajiv himself says that his constituency consists of the 40 and below 40 young Indians who constitute more than 40 percent of Indian population. But by the kind of programmes he envisages and the vision he has for India, it may be said that the true constituency of Rajiv Gandhi at the moment would not be more than the 7-10 million middle class elites of India. Here lies the gaping chasm between aspirations and actual delivery of the

22. Kuldip Nayar writes rather cynically, "My colleagues in the media, liberals in the economic fields and professionals who represent the elite and create public opinion are on the PM's side because they are the true beneficiaries of the system. They are only interested in their security and any leader who can give them such security is their saviour." See *Sunday*, 17-23 March 1985, p. 11.

goods. Romesh Thapper writes under the caption "Our Continuous Revolution".

> The editors of expanding media, and even the terrified and servile controllers of Akasvani and Doordorshon, are wondering what will happen when this continuous revolution promised by youth power exhausts itself. After all, there is a limit to any kind of rhetoric.[23]

And the limit will be put by some of the stark realities like massive poverty and backwardness of the people. Rajiv himself is also aware of the level of aspirations raised by his becoming prime minister, and the programmes he announced. What would be the implications of any likely frustration of the people on the external front, specially for the neighbours? Even till recently Rajiv was having his honeymoon of victory with the people. Kodikara also assessed that because of this massive victory, Rajiv will not have to raise foreign boggey as his mother had to do.[24] But that's for the moment. The Punjab crisis is worsening, Assam is simmering, Kashmir warming up and Gujrat is burning amidst persistent riots. To ensure regime's survival, the foreign boggey would again be raised. Sri Lanka is getting the bruise now. Other neighbours are not sure who would be implicated when.

What other foreign policy implications can be drawn from the above? One possible scenario that may be foreseen is closer links with the West, specially the USA in view of the imperative of economic liberalisation and introduction of modern technology including computers. A sufficently closer relations with the US may be presumed to have a soothing impact on Indo-Pakistan relations and also to some extent on Indo-Sri Lanka and Indo-Bangladesh relations. Opening up to US is not improbable because of Rajiv's own preference for sophisticated technology available mainly with the USA. Rajiv's susceptibility to his aides who are said to belong to a new

23. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 2 March 1985, 339.
24. See Kodikara, *op. cit.*

mangement culture and support base, his exposure to such manipulative lobby on the one hand and favourable US overtures on the other are also contributing factors.[25] But then it has also to be admited that the greatest constraint to the scenario of becoming too close to the West is the Indo-Soviet relation which is time-tested and no Indian leader, however West-leaning he/she may be, will put that into stake. On the contrary, US connection historically has been used by India to serve her purpose to the detriment of interest of the neighbours. India's persuading the US not to meet the defence requirement of Sri Lanka in 1984 is one such instance.[26]

Case Studies of India's Relations with Neighbours

Indo-Pak Relations :

The issues that affect Indo-Pak relations at the moment are (a) Pakistan's arms build-up with US assistance (including alleged povision of base facilities to the US), (b) Pakistan's nuclear intentions, (c) alleged Pakistani helping of the Sikh extremists in the Indian Punjab, (d) Kashmir problem and (e) India's stand on the Afghan problem. These are on the problem side. There are a few issues on the problem-solving side as well, some already existing, others in proposed state. The level of mistrust and misperception between these two countries, however, is so high that not only there are formidable problems in making these problem-solving mechanisms operative but those mechanisms also themselves have become subject of the controversy and misperception. While each of these issues has its own dynamics, much of Indo-Pakistan relations will depend, as also in the past, on the parametric inputs from external world.

The parameters within which Indo-Pakistan relations are likely to operate in the near future are Indo-Soviet Treaty, the Sino-American

25. Signing of Indo-US technological cooperation agreement in early 1985 and Under Secretary of Defence. Mr. Fred Ikle's visit are indications.
26. See Bhabani Sen Gupta, "Regionalism in South Asia : Regional Roles and Behaviour", paper presented at a workshop, *op. cit.*

rapprochement and the China-Pakistan axis.[27] There is a tendency, perhaps not without reason to down-play the strategic significance of Pak-US relations, provision of sophisticated arms including F-16 and reported harpoon missiles notwithstanding. The arguments are that the relations have not stood the test of time, that the US has a lot of misgivings about Pakistan's nuclear programmes and that, strengthening of Indo-US relations may dampen the warmth of US-Pakistan relations unless both agree otherwise. However, given a Soviet entrenched position in Afghanistan, and a Sino-Soviet and for that matter, a Sino-Indian rapprochement not in sight, it may be presumed that US-Pakistan relations will also remain a force in Indo-Pakistan relations.

Coming to the issues themselves, Pakistan's arguments behind the recent arms build-up including acquisition of sophisticated aircrafts and missiles are two-fold :

a. To defend Pakistan's territorries in view of Soviet invasion in Afghanistan and Pakistan's turning into a front-line state;

b. To modernise Pakistan's obsoloscent arms and equipments.

While finalising the deal in 1981, Pakistan perhaps preempted India's reaction, and also to assuage Washington's concerns, she offered to sign a No War Pact with India. To some extent India, was caught unprepared diplomatically when Pakistan proposed the Pact but her stand was quite clear that the present level of arms procurement by Pakistan is not warranted on ground of Afghan factor alone and Pakistan will use the No War Pact as a camouflage to build up sufficient strength to attack India, as Pakistan did in the past. India also held that Pakistan's proposal was not a serious one either. But when General Zia persisted, India had to react positively and a better climate was observed to be descending on South Asia. However, soon the diplomatic initiative was taken over by India when

27. See Kodikara, *op. cit.*

Mrs. Gandhi counterproposed the signing of a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation and establishment of a Joint Commission between the two countries. While the Joint Commission was inoccuous enough to get off the ground, the two parallel proposals of No War Pact and Friendship Treaty created formidable problem of reconciliation between the two. While synthesising the two was the logical agreement, Pakistan has been put in a difficult situation by her argeement to Non-alignment (to which she subscribes) as one of the basic principles of the agreement. The implication is that she would be constrained not to allow any base facilities to any external power, obviously the US. While Pakistan has been categorically denying that she has agreed to provide any base facilities to any power, for understandable reasons she wants to keep her options open, as is also perhaps the expectation of the USA. A second problem in the way of reaching an agreement is Pakistan's nuclear intentions. India is all out to prove by whatever evidences and indications available that Pakistan is making the bomb thereby hinting that this issue will be a negative point for signing the proposed agreement. While these are Pakistan's predicaments, India has no less. India's diplomatic support, verging sometimes on inconsistency has been a great help to USSR in her involvement in Afghanistan. Initially the impression was that India was resentful about Soviet invasion in Afghanistan. That impression is no longer obtained despite Rajiv's recent reiteration. And naturally Pakistan is so resentful about India's stand. Pakisian reportedly was in favour of a common stand on Afghanistan when the Soviets came in first. The Pakistanis also tell in private that the Afghan crisis was the most opportune moment for India and Pakistan to bury their hatchet and forge cooperation. But India had not been forthcoming, they argued.

In any case, with no solution on the Afghan problem in sight, Soviet Union perhaps will not like that India reaches a rapprochement with Pakistan. This and US position on the Indo-Pak agreement earlier, point out how the super powers impinge on South Asian good neighbourly relations. However, both sides were saved of embarassment of spelling out these predicaments as the Punjab crisis worsened

with increase in Sikh extremists' activities, Mrs. Gandhi alleged of Pakistan's active complicity in the Sikh problem and snapped the on-going negotiation process. India's allegation against Pakistan on Sikh problem ranged from providing shelter, training and arms supply to unwillingness to try the Sikh hijackers of Indian Airlines planes on two occasions, 1981 and July 1983 India demanded extradition of the hijackers (although there is no extradition treaty between the two countries) and later, early trial of the hijackers (the trial has been started.)

Post-Indira period witnessed virtually little change in respective stand and polemics—India on the offensive, attacking Pakistan's arms build-up, nuclear intentions, questioning Pakistan's sincerity on the proposed agreements, and Pakistan on the defensive, justifying her arms purchase, assuring India of non-aggression and of her peaceful nuclear intentions. Indian leaders and officials have been seizing every opportunity (including George Bush's visit to attend Mrs. Gandhi's funeral, for to example) to express their strong resentment about arms build-up and casually justifying her unwilling and forced defence build-up. Gen. Zia, on the other hand, renewed peace overtures following Mrs. Gandhi's death. He said:

> There is a new leadership which is youthful without any scars of the independence and inherited prejudices. If we can have better relations, Pakistan will be quick to respond.[28]

Only very recently the climate slightly improved following Pakistan initiation of the trial of hijackers which has been received very warmly in India. Bhandari's playing down Pakistan's complicity in Sikh problem has also removed the major barrier over which the talks broke down a year ago.[29] Bhandari's visit was followed by Yakub Khan's trip to Delhi in connection with the NAM meeting. It is quite likely that the talks may be resumed by July 1985. But the question is what outcome can be expected out of the meeting other

28. *The Bangladesh Observer*, 8 March 1985.
29. In response to a query of a reporter as to the status of the Indian allegation in a government White Paper of Pakistan's involvement in Sikh extremist activities, Bhandari said, "That was a report relating to last year. We are in 1985." See *the Bangladesh observer*, 11 April 1985.

than cosmetics like relaxation of travel restrictions, cultural exchanges etc. The problem lies in perception about the intention of each other and the role of the two super-powers. Rajiv's public postures have not been anything different on the basic issues. His objection to Pakistan's arms build-up and nuclear bomb is no less severe than Mrs. Gandhi's. Said Rajiv :

> It will be a point of no return in the subcontinent if some one has nuclear weapons. We will have to review our policy to see how we are going to counter that imbalance.[30]

India's fear is a militarily strong but politically unstable Pakistan, possibly in possession of a nuclear bombs on the one hand and a Washington-Beijing-Islamabad axis encircling India, on the other. The Pakistanis, at their gut level, believe that India is still not reconciled to the existence of Pakistan. Zia's recent stand also indicates a hardline attitude. In an interview with the *Jang*, Zia said :

> We have made clear to the Americans that Pakistan will not tolerate two things. One is we would not allow anybody to throw any challenge to us regarding our nuclear technology and nuclear installations. The other thing is nobody could raise any finger toward us for having any system of government peculiar to our conditions and ideology.[31]

What turns out from allegations and counter-allegation is that both India and Pakistan have attained nuclear capability.[32] A number of

---

30. *India Today*, 25 February 1985.
31. *The Bangladesh Observer*, 18 march 1985.
32. Rajiv Gandi said in an interview : "We have been a very good example to the World. Firstly, we can make a bomb and we have not done so and secondly, because we will not be drawn into a race," Quoted in *Times of India*, 24 February 1985.
    Gen. Zia also said in an interview with the *Observer* (London) : "It (Pakistan) was enriching uranium to run a nuclear power plant. Pakistan has capability but the Government has no intention of either making or exploding a nuclear device." Quoted in *the Bangladesh Observer*. 3 March 1985.

alternatives, excluding of course, the worst possible but least likely scenario of a nuclear war can be drawn : First, since India's public posture is that her making a bomb is contingent on Pakistan's doing so (or even PNE?), an uneasy stability in the region may be established if Pakistan maintains ambivalence while peace talks between the two make timid progress. The second scenario is optimistic but again less likely : both agree to mutual inspection of each others installations. It was Pakistan's proposal and India's reaction was negative, unofficially because India's nuclear programmes have a different goal (having an eye on China perhaps). A third but not unlikely scenario is Osirak type attack on either one's facilities and a conventional war over nuclear weapons. It is unlikely that the new prime minister will or can make significant concession over nuclear issue and if at all, the hitch over US arm to Pakistan subsides, this one will surface as a formidable problem in Indo-Pak relations.

Indo-Bangladesh Relations :

The catalogue of problems existing between India and Bangladesh is relatively large :

a. Dispute over augmentation and sharing of the Ganges water;

b. Sharing of waters of other major rivers including the Teesta, Dharla, Dudkumar, Khowai etc;

c. Implementation of the 1974 Land Border Agreement in general and accord on leasing of *Tin Bigha* corridor to Bangladesh in particular;

d. Problems with boundary demarcation along the border rivers, Muhri being the the main;

e. Demarcation of maritime boundary;

f. Ownership over South Talpatty island;

g. Border fencing along Indo-Bangladesh border to prevent the so-called illegal immigrants;

h. Trade imbalance;

i. Smuggling and illegal cross-border activities.

The problems appear to fall in the following broad categories :

i. Resource *sharing* conflict

ii. *Ownership* of land conflict

iii. Delay in *implementation of accord*

iv. *Violation* of certain principles of an accord

v. Illegal cross-border movement of goods and people.

Excepting one or two occasions in the post-August 1975 period, relations between the two countries did not come to a boiling point. Relations, on the other hand, have not been that warm either excepting the initial period of euphoria. Some qualitative change in the pattern of disputes/sources of tension between the two countries have also been observed. And that is : the politico-security issues that dominated the relations in the post-August 1975 through emergency period in India appear to have subsided while the other types of problems as indicated above have become more prominent.

In the case of the Ganges dispute, India obviously wants resolution on its own terms: in water sharing agreements. The Guarantee clause in favour of Bangladesh was dropped in the memorandum signed during Ershad-Indira summit. That agreement also expired on 31 May 1984. The latest ministerial level talks in early June 1985 (28th in the series) appear to have produced more frustrations. Withdrawal at Farakka by India continues unabated causing severe damage to the Bangladesh economy. Bangladesh's rejection of the link canal proposal is viewed by Indian elites as her obstinacy. Says Defence Minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao :

> Bangladesh Government's attitude of postponing things have been responsible for not resolving the Farakka issue so far.[33]

On the other hand, Bangladesh views India's rejection of her proposal of augmenting lean season Ganges water flow through

33. *Times of India*, 4 March 1985.

constructing storage dams in Nepal with Nepalese cooperation as sheer unwillingness to go beyond her "beneficial bilateralism" on political ground. Arguments that storage dams in Nepal would raise severe land erosion and submergence problem in Nepal are face saving devices because India herself has entered agreements with Nepal for similar storage dams in Nepal. Moreover, in a recent workshop on Regional Cooperation and Development, it was pointed out that :

> For Nepal, the negative costs of submergence, displacement, rehabilitation and ecological imbalances would be compensated by the development that would be unleashed. Apart from extending irrigation facilities, the construction of dams would force the pace of development by employing Nepalese labour and skill to the maximum by necessitating the building of roads and other infrastructure. This, in turn, would give impetus to the growth of related industries.[34]

On Teesta, Bangladesh is heading for a second 'Farakka' at Gazaldoba in Jalpaiguri as India has almost completed a dam which would divert water from the river upstream. The negotiation process on the issue is going in a similar protracted fashion. The official level talks recently finalised a report on the terms of reference for technical study for consideration of the ministerial level meeting. Many other projects of similar nature are being taken up by India without the least concern over their impact on lower riparian Bangladesh economy. She is not ready to entertain Bangladesh's concerns over these projects. On the other hand, India raises objection as and when Bangladesh attempts at harnessing her water resources. The recent JRC meet on the Bangladesh Muhri Project was an example of this though in a slightly different context of border demarcation problem. India earlier implemented far a larger project and constructed several groens on the other side of the river causing severe

34. See Nandita Bhatnagar, "Development of Water Resources in South Asia" paper presented at a workshop, *op. cit.*

erosion on Bangladesh's side shifting the *Thalweg* towards Bangladesh. Moreover, Bangladesh's project is consistent with the 1974 Land Border Agreement that urged both parties to strengthen the respective banks by embankment etc. to check erosion.

The Land Border Agreement of 1974 remains a major irritant between Bangladesh and India because India has not ratified the agreement even in 11 years while Bangladesh ratified and implemented the agreement (handing over of the enclaves to India) immediately. India was to provide the *Tin Bigha* corridor to Bangladesh on lease in perpetuity but she has not done so on this or that grounds (court cases, difficulty in amendment of constitution for example). The terms of the lease agreement were also finalised during Ershad-Indira Summit (October 1982). Yet the agreement remains unimplemented. The Calcutta High Court case has been disposed of. Land marking for the lease began and a monitoring cell was established in Calcutta for this purpose. But press report suggests that fresh snag of another court case was mentioned by Romesh Bhandari during his recent visit to Dhaka.[35] The basic problem lies in the non-ratification of the agreement in the Parliament.

Border fence remains an intense emotive issue between India and Bangladesh. Border fencing has much more domestic content within India than bilateral.[36] Yet the project could not be carried out in the face of Bangladesh's opposition and at long last it appears that the plan has been shelved if not abandoned, for the moment. By this, at least temporarily an irritant has been removed from the bilateral relations of the two countries.

South Talpatty remains another unresolved problem. Bangladesh's stand is quite clear : the problem has to be resolved through joint survey. The recent press report of India's showing Talpatty as part

35. *The New Nation*, 28 April 1985.

36. For details, see Abdur Rob Khan, *The Assam Tangle : Outlook for the Future*, (BIISS Papers No. 1) 1984.

of India in a latest map is, however, disconcerting and a violation of the understanding.[37]

In the post-Indira period there has been a number of meetings, mostly informal, between leaderships of the two countries. How is the new Indian leadership disposed towards Bangladesh? We have no opportunity of direct assessment. The Bangladesh Adviser for Foreign Affairs on return from his New Delhi visit in connection with NAM Bureau meet assessed the Indian leadership in the following way.[38]

—In him (Rajiv) there was a keen desire to improve and strengthen bilateral relations with Bangladesh and also with other countries of the region.

—He was—so it appeared to me acutely aware of the need for removal of the irritants that at times seem to cast unwelcome shadows on the state of our relations.

The Foreign Adviser also observed change of attitude in India and so did the foreign office in Dhaka after Romesh Bhandari's visit. But what would that amount to in solving of the Ganges water problem for instance, so vital for our survival? Rajiv's recent sympathy visit to Bangladesh in the wake of the devastating cyclone and tidal upsurge, and his favourable remarks at the airport raised hope in Bangladesh only to be frustrated soon by the outcome of the JRC talks on 1-2 June 1985. There remain the basic questions of mutual expectation from each other and role perception. In dealing with these questions, it should be borne in mind that the whole eastern flank including North East India and Bangladesh figures relatively low in India's strategic calculation except much trouble making role as such from Bangladesh. The Assam thing has different roots to be traced within Assam as well as in central government's policy towards the region which is again characterised by lower priority. However, Bangladesh's proposal for inclusion of Nepal is not viewed favourably by New Delhi. They smell some politicking on Bangladesh's part and therefore

37. *The Daily Ittefaq*, 10 May 1985.
38. *The Bangladesh Observer*, 25 April 1985.

puts her thump down. To be precise, the Nepal-Bangladesh politicking value may not be of much consequence to India. What perhaps will be disturbing to India is that it would set a precedent to be emoluted by others in the region. Certain amount of ideological (political system) disliking is also perhaps operating to determine India's attitudinal frame. Bangladesh's reaction particularly to India's water diplomacy. Tin Bigha and border fence has been one of injured innocence coupled with a sense of undue deprivation. Her approach from the beginning has been always a rightful share, a just agreement.

Indo-Sri Lanka Relations :

By all indications, Indo-Sri Lanka relations over the ethnic Tamil issue have become almost intractable unlike India's relations with any other neighbours in the post-Indira period. Indo-Sri Lanka relations have taken a nose-dive plunge (slightly lifted by Jayewardene's visit to new Delhi). What is more disconcerting is that the strained Indo-Lankan relations nearly impinged on the SARC process. The Tamil problem in India started after Jayewardene's UNP Government came to power. Basically the problem is one of national integration, regional autonomy, balanced regional socio-economic development and participation in administration and development process—all falling within the domain of internal affairs of Sri Lanka. The political dimension of the problem pertains to threat perception of the Lankan Tamil minority from the dominant Sinhalese Buddhist majority. India began to voice its concern and develop certain stakes in the problem following the July 1983 massive violence in which the Tamils were the victims. Since then the Tamils have been fighting for a separate homeland in northern province of Jaffna across a shallow strait from Indian Southern state of Tamil Nadu.

Sri Lanka alleges :— India has been interfering in Sri Lanka's internal affairs by providing shelter, training, logistics and arms to the Tamil terrorists on Indian soil for (a) disintegrating the island and (b) overthrowing the present elected government.

Sri Lanka produced evidence that G. Parthasarathy who acted as the prime minister's envoy in solving the crisis met the Tamil leaders in Madras on a unity move and some Tamil terrorists came to Delhi to meet Indian leaders.

—India might invade Sri Lanka in aid of the Tamil terrorists under the pretext of solving the Tamil refugee problem in Tamil Nadu ;

—India is strongly opposing Sri Lankan acquisition of arms from UK, USA and Pakistan to deal with terrorism.

—India strongly opposes the presence of Israeli secret service agents who were imparting training to the Lankan Armed force in dealing with terrorism and insurgency.

Sri Lanka demands that :— Terrorism must be stopped before negotiation could open either with India or with the TULF.

—India must step supporting the Tamil terrorists.

—Joint naval patroling and surveillance be undertaken to stop infiltration of Tamil insurgents from Indian coast to Jaffna.

Indian positions vis-a-vis Lanka stand and proposals have been :

—India respects the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka and India will never attack Sri Lanka (both Mrs. Gandhi and Rajiv said this).

—India is not providing training, shelter or any other facilities to the Tamil terrorists.

—Tamil refugees fleeing Sri Lanka in large number are coming to Tamil Nadu and causing severe strain on Indian economy The latest figure of refugees is 90,000.

—Lanka must find out a political solution to the Tamil problem and must create favourable conditions for early return of the Sri Lanka Tamils.

Thus allegation, denial and counter-allegations characterised the Indo-Sri Lanka relations during 1983-84. In the meantime, Tamil

insurgency activities have been stepped up frequently causing casualties to Sri Lanka armed forces and civilian as well as military installations. As Jayewardene's approach to a political solution of the problem failed because of (a) rulings regime's failure at finding a politicál solution, (b) already stepped up military activities by hardliner minister Athulathmudali (c) resistance of the opposition and the armed forces and more importantly (d) intransigence of the TULF representing the moderate viewpoints of the Tamil extremists. Jayewardene seems to be irreversibly set for a military solution of the northern state's insurgency problem. Accordingly he has also been frantically trying for arms purchase from USA, UK (invoking the very old 1947 defence agreement between Lanka and the UK government) Pakistan and even China. Jayewardene, prime minister Premadasa and security minister Athulathmudali put up a hardlinine posture and directly accused the Indian government for the malaise.

In the post-Indira period the developments are quite significant : capture of Lankan vessel allegedly in Indian waters and securing the release of an Indian vessel captured earlier by Sri Lankan navy; Jayewardene's visit to Pakistan, stepped up guerrilla activities and government's stepped up deployment of more security forces, Tamil-Muslim riots, Rajiv's formation of an internal Working Committee to solve the problem. Indian state minister of External Afiairs, Khurshed Alam's statement strongly condemning atrocities on Tamil's and demanding troops withdrawal from Jaffna, and Sri Lanka's equally strong response.

Jayewardene's position is very much clear : "With India, no negotiation until they renounced their support for the Tamil terrorists.[39] He is really in a cornered position : India is putting pressure on him to come to a settlement with the Tamils, the oppoosition, the Bauddha Mohasava, even his own partymen are suspecting that he is going soft and selling out the country's interest. India's position and stakes are however not clear as would be evident

39. *Sunday*, 24-30 March 1985.

from a good number of statements by Rajiv Gandhi himself. But one probably gets a hunch that the stakes are not very insignificant. When Athulathmdali met Rajiv in New Delhi Rajiv told him :

> As long as there is a feeling in India that you are committing atrocities on the civilians—not the terrorists—it is very difficult for us to help you.[40]

On training Tamil tigers based in Tamil Nadu and refugee problem, Rajivs aid :

> We do not have any hard information on this but there is no training to my knowledge. What we want in Sri Lanka is a settlement which will enable the refugees to go back. We cannot have 40,000 people here, may be there are even more now. We feel no military or enforced settlement would be conducive to the refugees going back so they must come to some sort of political settlement.[41]

On his attitude to a new Tamil state, the Prime Minister is ambivalent and non-committal :

> I do not think we have come to that point yet. But it needs statesmanship and I hope that the people of Sri Lanka will rise to it.[42]

Later in April 1985, in an interview with the London-based *Observer*, he ruled out an Indian invasion but he hastened to add :

> At the moment, it is almost a terrorism on the Tamils and as long as this goes on, we will keep getting refugees and we have now 90,000 refugees. *We try to control what they do, they are spread out with all their relatives and we cannot absolutely clamp down.*[43]

40. Interview with *Los Angeles Times, op, cit.*
41. *India Today*, 15 February 1985.
42. *Ibid.*
43. *The Times of India*, 11 April 1985.

Bhandari's visit in March 1985, was a non-starter from any point of view. It rather created confusion over the controversial press statement that says that India accepted cessation of extremist activities as a condition for resumption of talks. This was questioned by the Tamil MPs in India and the state minister for External Affairs Ministry, Mr. Khorshed Alam Khan said that it was a unilateral press statement, not a joint statement.

In late April 1985, Rajiv Gandhi announced the formation of a Working Committee consisting of S. Parthasarathy (Chairman, Policy Planning Committee of the External Affairs Ministry), Khorshed Alam Khan, Romesh Bhandari, P.K. Kaul and S.D. Pradhan. The terms of reference of the Committee includes [44] :

a. investigation into the matter of refugees in South Indian state of Tamil Nadu :

b. protection of fishermen against harrassment of the Sri Lankan Navy.

There is no doubt that Rajiv is attaching great importance to the Tamil issue. But what could be the real objectives of the Working Committee? Specially, this is a unilateral step and the terms of reference relate to Indian perspective only. It is difficult to understand how the committee would fulfil the mandate unless it involves Sri Lanka. Moreover G. Parthasarathy is rather unpopular with the UNP government because of his alleged support for and link with the TULF. The Indo-Sri Lankan relations will most probably witness few more dramatics in the near future.

Indo-Nepalese Relation :

Officially the problems that affect Indo-Nepalese relations are (a) India's unwillingness to accept the concept of Nepal as a Zone of Peace, (b) migration of Indian nationals in Terai area and economic dominance of Indian nationals in Nepal. Among other issues Nepal's

44. *The Bangladesh Observer*, 28 April 1985.

lukewarm attitude toward harnessing water resources in cooperation with India and India's reluctant willingness to provide transit facilities to Nepal for using Bangladesh ports for its external trade.

Much of the difference between India and Nepal originates in divergent security perception, political differences and a backlash to the Indian domination of the 1950s. On the Zone of Peace concept India's position is that Nepal does not appreciate the sensibilities of India as the largest nation in South Asia, nor does it appreciate the threat to India's security from China.[45] A second objection, though not official, is that acceptance of ZOP concept would necessarily dilute the 1950 Indo-Nepalese treaty.

And this is in fact the heart of the problem. Nepal's desire for ensuring territorial inviolability and neutralising the 1950 unequal treaty led her to float the proposal. Also a desire to formalise the type of balancing diplomacy King Mahendra and later King Birendra played between China and India to ensure Nepal's security also operated behind the proposal. It is because of the memories of the past that anti-India feeling is the main source of Nepalese national identity. A former foreign minister of Nepal has written:

> Apart from the staggering difference in size and population between Nepal (and India), India's influence has been so dominant in all spheres of Nepali life that the Nepali people, by way of reaction, feel exercised to appear different from Indians at every possible opportunity. This is seen as almost essential for purpose of national identity.[46]

Also because of close cultural proximity, Nepalese elites are obliged to maitain certain distance from India in order to preserve their distinct identity.

The ruling regime to an extent suffers from a fear psychosis that India is trying to destabilise the present partyless panchayet system.

45. Bhabani Sen Gupta, "Regionalism in South Asia.." *op. cit.*
46. Rishikesh Shah, *Nepal Politics : Retrospects and Prospects*, (New Delhi ; Oxford University Press) 1978, p. 103.

Such a fear psychosis originates from a set of Indian perception about Nepal's lukewarm attitude toward harnessing of river water, specially for hydel power. In India, the perception is that the Nepali ruling regime is not interested in self-development, specially industrialisation, which hydel power may help greatly, for fear of social destabilisation.

There have also been some misgivings between India and Nepal on Nepal's democratisation process, though India has all along been providing support and assistance to the ruling regime. Younger leaders of the banned Nepali Congress feel that India let down the democratic forces in Nepal. The monarch, on the other hand, feels that India is not proving him enough support.

On the whole, however, Indo-Nepalese relations remains correct and cordial without much ups and downs excepting mid-1983 when the question of dominance by Indian businessmen in Nepal come to the forefront and some border irritants also developed.

After Rajiv's taking over, the major development was Indian Foreign Secretary Romesh Bhandari's visit to Kathmandu. Just before Bhandaris visit one Indian official remarked that India has no major problem with Nepal except to reassure the small mountain Kingdom from time to time that India's size need not be a cause of concern for the monarch. On the proposed ZOP concept he said that the ZOP concept is not unwelcome in itself but has to be part of a larger effort to establish peace in the region.

On favourable development, however, is that both India and Nepal have accepted World Bank assistance for feasibility study on the Karnali river project.

Conclusions

The major conclusions from the above discussion may be summarised as follows :

a. India's foreign policy is not oriented to her South Asian neighbours excepting in a negative way to the extent the neighbours

impinge on her security and other interests. A healthy regionalism is conspicuously absent in South Asia despite India's claim that it is the only country that has regional concerns and approach in her foreign policy. One important dilemma of South Asia politics is that India considers her neighbours as integral to the security of India while India's neighbours regard India itself as the source of threat to their security.

b. India's size, population, resources, technology and state of development confer on her some sort of disproportionate expectations from the neighbours in different facets of bilateral relations. That neighbours should come to agreement on her terms, that neighbours should not indulge in arms build-up (applicable not only for Pakistan but also for smaller neighbours), that neighbours should not speak ill of her while she may do so; that neighbours have no right to talk of her internal affairs while she frequently talks of democratic rights in neighbouring countries—these are all reflection of this attitude and expectation.

c. India does not see anything wrong in the patron-like behaviour which it justifies as being necessary assert the undeniable but unaccepted fact of India's primacy in the region. Interestingly, Indians also perceive that anti-Indianism in the neighbouring country is deliberately created for survival of the ruling elites. To some extent perhaps this may be true because the neighbouis need an enemy perception to define their identity. But then this is sort of negative nationalism serving no major purpose of either favourable bargaining position with India or long-term national integration. It may serve only a temporary purpose.

d. Some scholars argue that the patterns of conflict have changed in South Asia ; old ones (Kashmir being an example) have subsided and new ones like interference in domestic conflict (ethnic, political, ideological), arms race etc. have cropped

up.[47] While this is broadly true, it would be simplistic to say that the old territorial conflicts or resource conflics have subsided. May be, these are not in the forefront in the case of Indo-Pakistan or Indo-Sri Lanka relations. But territorial and resource conflicts are very much there in Indo-Bangladesh relation while the arms race or nuclear weapon competition do not exist in their relationship. Perhaps it is safer to say that the emerging conflicts have complicated the old disputes and rendered their solution more difficult.

f. Finally, it is difficult to foresee or expect any dramatic improvement in India's relationship with her neighbours under Rajiv Gandhi; the same type of routine talks or diplomatic commonplaces will continue to mark bilateral relations. If Rajiv is overburdened with his domestic problems which, as we have seen are of border crossing nature the relations will remain strained or even worsen further. If however, Rajiv can maintain a stable home front, this may have a favourable impact on neighbour relations.

Some Policy Options

South Asia has traditionally been characterised as a region of mistrust and a region with hardly any positive regionalism. Neighbours perceive that much of the regional, bilateral, even domestic problems are caused owing to India's unfavourable attitude and behaviour, while India considers neighbours, intransigence and failure to manage their home front as the root of all evils in South Asia. It is in view of this that a few policy options for the South Asian actors and decision makers are made. The policy options are intended to be operable at three levels—regional, bilateral and national.

47. Bhabani Sen Gupta, "Changing Patterns of Conflicts in South Asia" Paper presented at a Workshop. *op, cit.*

Regional :

a. At the regional level, the SARC process has great potentialities in creating an environment conducive to peace and fostering greater understanding and appreciations of each others view points, even if the preoccupations of SARC remain within socio-economic and technical areas. Strengthening and institutionalising SARC will provide forums and channels of communications that often get blocked at bilateral level. Creating so many organs and ancilliary bodies within SARC framework will help a functional and rational distribution of issues many of which at the moment remain emotive. So even in the most tense moments of bilateral relations, the SARC process should go undeterred. All out efforts should be there to reach an understanding that SARC does not suffer any set-back whatsoever.

b. While the SARC process goes on at governmental level greater effectivity in achieving positive regionalism could be obtained by strengthening people to people cooperation at different levels and in different areas. There could be greater understanding of the issues that poison, or have the potentiality of affecting, bilateral relations. Sustained studies, frequent exchanges of views in formal and informal forums contribute to greater public understanding of problems and help find policy alternatives. Establishment of a South Asia Institute at non-governmental level toward this end has been advocated a number of times recently. The paper reiterates that plea to set up a South Asia Institute on urgent basis.

Bilateral :

c. South Asian diplomacy may be characterised by 'statement' diplomacy in the sense the mercury of bilateral relations very often rises and falls with the type of statements made by leaderships at different forums and in different contexts. Of course,

the reason lies in extreme sensitiveness of the neighbours with respect to India and vice versa. Certain statements even have the potentialities of disruping on-going normalisation/negotiation process. Unless unavoidable, maximum restraint should be exercised to avoid such unfortunate situation.

d. At times it appears that the negotiators/bureaucrats/diplomats do not have the sense of urgency as felt by the general people or political leadership. Meetings after meetings go on and people are often confused as to whether the problem is a technical or political one. It is true that most of the problems are really complicated and the negotiators' constraints in taking decision are enormous as well. Yet the fact remains that on each occasion, great public expectations are aroused only to be frustrated after the talks. The impact of protracted negotiation is perhaps worse than a speedy resolution with a sense of accommodation.

National :

e. At national level, the imperative is to build up national consensus on foreign poliey issues so that the government gets the moral and political support of the people in taking up an issue with the neighbours.

f. Very often the common people donot have a proper understanding of the nature and dimension of the problems with India. Misperception about problems often result in undue expectation of the common people from the government. Misperception or ignorance about an issue may also be exploited by interested quarters or even by the ruling regimes in realising their own narrow interest. So greater public understanding should be attained through media, seminar, symposiums etc.

g. Understanding of the problems should be accompanied by adequate projection of national viewpoints and national interests at whatever level the opportunity throws itself to. This is

very important in view of the recent increase in the volume and frequency of interaction among South Asian peopele at non-governmental level. Such opportunities should be positively utilized to project viewpoints from a nationalistic fervour.

h. While non-governmental 'diplomacy' may help opinion making and putting pressure on the ruling regime in decision making, the importance of formal diplomacy can not be over emphasized. The example of successful diplomacy in ensuring security has been provided by Finland. King Mahendra's personal diplomacy is another example. For smaller nations like those of ours in South Asia diplomatic excellence should be the counterforce to the sheer impact of size and other forms of strength that matter in negotiation.