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ISSN 1994-2052

Subscription Rates (including air mail charge)

Single Copy: Tk. 400.00 / US\$ 35.00

Annual: Tk. 1600.00 / US\$ 140.00

Published by the Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS).

Produced by Abarton and printed at the Akota Offset Press, 119 Fakirapool

Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh.

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Editor's Note

This edition of the Peace and Security Review (PSR) appears at an intriguing moment in terms of international security dynamics. The coincidental convergence of several significant events and trends makes this an especially fascinating point in an era of transitional fluidity at the systemic level.

For many among the denizens and observers of the South Asian sub-system, an unmistakable, even unprecedented, rise in the rhetorical temperature between the ruling elites in Islamabad and Washington must be a source of bemused anxiety. US-Pakistani relations have never charted a uniform course of untroubled amity; in fact, the reverse is true. However, ever since two young US military officials arrived in Karachi bearing a classified missive for Pakistan's founder-Governor-General, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, shortly after Pakistan emerged as a distinct dominion as a successor-state to the evanescent British empire, US-Pakistani relations have been defined by strategic concerns and shared security interests. The anti-Communist focused alliances of the 1950s led to virtually unstinted US support to the Pakistani military, skewing the evolution of political forces and institutions in that country, and contributing to the eventual break-up of the original Pakistan. Following an interregnum lasting half a decade, the Nixon Administration found in General Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan a reliable conduit for strategic signaling and building bridges to Beijing which transformed the systemic core from a bipolar US-Soviet confrontation into a face-off between a Sino-US tacit alliance and the Soviet Union.

Another brief interregnum later, Moscow's eventually foolhardy invasion of Afghanistan precipitated another US-Pakistani strategic partnership at the spearhead of a pan-Islamist *Jihad* against the Soviet occupation forces run as a covert campaign funded by US and Saudi intelligence services and UAE cash, equipped with Chinese, Egyptian, Turkish, British and French *materiel* and waged with the lives and limbs of young combatants from across the Muslim world. This campaign led to the establishment of hundreds of seminaries along western Pakistan, training thousands of devout combatants willing to die for

their Islamist cause, initially in Afghanistan and, once the occupiers had left, in other Muslim lands under questionable occupation. With the strategic goals of the *Jihad* met, a US withdrawal triggered yet another interregnum. Then, on 11 September 2001, al-Qaeda's aerial attacks on US targets forced the most recent 'strategic partnership' on Pakistan as US forces mounted *Operation Enduring Freedom*.

Over the past decade, as Pakistani forces have become increasingly involved in parallel operations against militant forces on the eastern flank of the disputed Durand Line boundary dividing Pashtuns between Afghanistan and Pakistan, casualties have mounted on all sides. Despite the investment of significant blood and treasure by both the USA and its NATO allies (as well as other international partners in the International Security assistance Force-ISAF) on the one hand and Pakistan on the other, there is no indication that either Pakistan or Afghanistan is able to break out of the tyranny of their home-grown militant malaise any time soon. With Washington's politically sensitive timetable to withdraw the bulk of foreign combat forces and hand over security responsibilities to Afghan national units and formations by the end of 2014 drawing close, and signs of a militant resurgence all too clear, the dynamics are changing once again. The US not only no longer sees Pakistan as a strategic partner; it has formally accused Islamabad of manipulating the much-feared "Haqqani Network" of pro-Taliban militia against US and allied objectives.

As mistrust and suspicion deepened in the wake of the SEAL Team-6 raid on Osama bin-Laden's house in Abbottabad in early May 2011, exchanges between military and intelligence leaders failed to arrest the downward spiral. Mutual recrimination embittered by often unctuous and partially informed media in both countries confounded efforts to restore amity. A series of lethal militant attacks in Afghanistan during the summer may have forced Washington's hands. In the second half of September, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and the outgoing Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Admiral Michael Mullen, made clear Washington's determination to bring Pakistan to heel. Clinton spent three-and-a-half hours telling her Pakistani counterpart Hina Khar that Pakistan not only must stop using the Haqqani Network as a strategic instrument but also must work with the USA in destroying it. Mullen told a Congressional committee that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate handled the Network as its client. The US envoy to Islamabad made a similar allegation in an interview broadcast around the same time. As US press reports noted, "the gloves were off." Both Khar and her boss, the Pakistani Prime Minister, responded with equal vigour. The scene was set for what could become a painful and potentially catastrophic confrontation between the world's top cop, i.e., the system-managing sole super-power, and its nuclear-armed

junior partner. This was an unprecedented development with consequences which could only be conjectured.

However, Pakistan's national security managers, participants in the Corps Commanders' Conference, chaired by the Chief of Army Staff, General Ashfaq Kayani, and atypically convened on a Sunday in late September, determined that escalating such a confrontation was unhelpful and decided to defuse tensions with the USA. Whether that would be enough to de-escalate the war of words swishing back and forth between Washington and Islamabad remained unclear as the PSR went to press. However, the fact that a relatively modestly-endowed subsidiary power, Pakistan, had considered it necessary and possible to challenge its long-term, if frequently unreliable, mentor-power, the USA, at a delicate moment of transition — and not just in Afghanistan — suggested that the systemic hegemon's primacy had been significantly eroded since the then Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage had persuasively threatened General Pervez Musharraf that his country would "bomb Pakistan back to the Middle Ages" unless the latter joined Washington's "coalition of the willing."

This brings us to the other significant development in the strategic security arena. The recent display of confusing footwork by US legislators in first addressing the national debt and then, authorising the continuation of government expenditure through mid-November so that the US government did not shut down, suggested to many that the giant was finally showing its domestic and fiscal feet of clay.

The USA clearly faces a period of political-economic difficulty at home and its diplomatic consequences abroad. While Washington's executive and legislative leaders grapple with a polarised polity and contrary approaches to structural problems, its attention to and ability to resolve systemic discontinuities would remain circumscribed. In that cusp-like transition, secondary challenges could well flower like a springtime garden in malevolent bloom. This edition of the PSR offers a selection of such subsidiary concerns which will likely draw the attention of regional elites across South Asia.

Salma Malik examines how developing states respond to complex emergencies which can test even the most sophisticated of societies. Exploring the societal impact of human insecurity as the contextual canvas, she examines Pakistan's response to the October 2005 Kashmir earthquake. Nusrat Zahan paints a grim picture of the consequences of climate change confronting Bangladesh, and asks if the government and non-governmental organisations active there have done anything other than pay superficial attention to the fundamental threats climate change likely poses to society. ANM Muniruzzaman analyses the strategic significance of the Indian Ocean and summarises the challenges and opportunities before both littoral states and user states, urging

both to design and activate a collective and collaborative framework for responding to these. Taj Hashmi identifies a gap in the counter-terrorism discourse and points out an absence of focus on a key element — the crime-terror nexus. He examines the degree of convergence, or lack of it, in two specific CT “hot spots”, the subcontinent’s north-western and north-eastern quadrants, and reveals the similarities and differences between the two. S. Mahmud Ali, responding to a published commentary by a serving military official on the role Bangladesh’s military ought to play, challenges the revisionist notion that the army is primarily a civil-services-provider in uniform.

Should any of these commentaries arouse intellectual passion or indignation, the Editor would welcome succinct and precisely framed responses.

Major General ANM Muniruzzaman, ndc, psc (Retd.)
Editor

Transnational Security Dynamics and Exigencies: Crime-Terror-Drug Nexus in South Asia and Beyond

*Taj Hashmi**

Abstract

Bad governance and lack of intra- and inter-state trust and understanding have turned the Subcontinent into one of the most turbulent and unpredictable regions in the world, infested with transnational crime, drug trafficking, ethno-national separatist movements and last but not least, the growing state-sponsored terrorism and proxy wars to bleed the rival state. Of late, narco-Islamist terror nexus ("Narco-Jihad" to some analysts) has emerged as the new threat to transnational security within and beyond the region in West, Central and Southeast Asia. This is an appraisal of the transnational crime-terror nexus and the understanding between state and non-state actors across Afghanistan and Pakistan, Pakistan and India, India and Bangladesh and Bangladesh and Myanmar. Although this study highlights the short- and long-term implications of transnational drug, terror, Islamist and separatist movements and their links with transnational mafias in the northwestern and southeastern sub-regions of the Subcontinent, it is not an attempt to portray the disparate and diverse transnational crimes, terrorist acts and insurgencies in the various sub-regions with a broad brush. The nature, extent and implications of the transnational crime-terror nexus across Afghanistan and Pakistan are different from similar developments across Pakistan and India, India and Bangladesh and Bangladesh and Myanmar. While the transnational drug-terror-Islamist nexuses in the northwest are parts of the new Great Game, Indo-Pakistan conflict and the quest for a utopian Caliphahte, similar nexuses in

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the southeast are mostly by-products of bad governance and ethno-national separatism, not always linked with the drug-terror-Islamist networks in the northwest transcending Afghanistan, Pakistan and northwestern India.

I. INTRODUCTION

Transnational security is contingent upon good governance at national levels and better understanding between neighbouring countries. Discriminatory policies against minorities and bad “transnational relations” between neighbours contribute to the rise of transnational “social-revolutionary” conflicts [Skocpol, 1979, p.19]. Disputed borders further aggravate the situation. The major countries in South Asia have more inter-state competition and rivalry than cooperation. Inflicted with mass poverty, bad governance, terrorism and organized crime, they are least friendly to their immediate neighbours. This is an attempt to understand: (a) the transnational security problems between Pakistan and its two immediate neighbours, Afghanistan and India on the one hand; and between Bangladesh and its two immediate neighbours, India and Myanmar, on the other; and (b) how transnational organized crime and terrorism/insurgencies have turned the Subcontinent into one of the most turbulent and volatile regions in the world. Much of the prospect of the 21st century will depend on our ability to address the challenges posed by religious extremism, drug trafficking and ethno-national separatism in South Asia.

We need an understanding of the following besides what transnational crimes and insurgencies are all about: (a) if alienated, disempowered and marginalized minorities or majorities in one or more countries are capable of going beyond committing crime to organizing transnational rebellions/insurgencies; (b) if “someone’s terrorist” is not necessarily someone else’s “freedom fighter”; (c) if religious solidarity and/or ethnic identities are more important than class consciousness in mobilizing mass support for transnational crime and terrorism; and finally; and (d) if Pakistan and Bangladesh, despite their differences, have certain common transnational security problems and exigencies.

According to the UN’s Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch transnational crime is organized crime committed transcending the national boundaries of two or more countries in a region or beyond. The UN has classified eighteen criminal activities as transnational crimes, including money laundering, illicit drug trafficking, terrorist acts, hijacking and trafficking persons [Mueller, 2001, pp.13-14]. Terrorism and insurgencies are not that different from crime. Sometimes, where crime stops, insurgency begins; and unsuccessful insurgencies give birth to organized crime. Maoist groups in Bangladesh and Islamist Abu Sayyaf Group in the Philippines have morphed into organized crime. However, what governments often deliberately ignore

as problems of “law and order” is often precursor to rebellions by local or transnational ethno-religious groups.

Since the end of the Cold War, non-state actors have been posing the biggest transnational security threats to South Asia. They often exploit international law and get state-sponsorship and sanctuary; and states use them to bleed rival states without waging wars against them. One of the problems in containing transnational crime is that while it is “transnational in scope” government responses remain “predominantly national” [Williams, 2001, p.59]. Organized transnational criminals not only fight each other but also collaborate with each other. Drug-arms-human trafficking are “criminal enterprises”, often linked with terrorists as per “Mafia Solidarity” [Paoli, 2001, pp. 88-101]. Mafias are more than a criminal gangs; they terrorize their victims and collaborate with terrorist groups. So, it is time that we “securitize” transnational organized crime for comprehensive counterterrorism (CT) and counterinsurgency (COIN) operations [Serrano, 2002, pp.13-24]. Various studies since Nine-Eleven have revealed that “the identities of terrorists, guerrilla movements, drug traffickers, and arms smugglers are becoming more slippery;” there has been an identity mutation of terrorists and criminals. Terrorists often forge ties with transnational criminals, “where with the right connections easy money is to be had in significant quantities” [Berdal & Serrano, 2002, “Introduction”, p.7]. What is even more disturbing is the nexus between “licit business”, organized crime and terrorist networks. South African company DeBeers’s cooperating with the KGB in the 1980s to manage the supply of diamonds on the world market may be cited in this regard. In sum, terrorism is the business of the terrorists; “business through violence” is the business of transnational organized criminals [Williams, 2002, pp. 67-72 & 201].

Small insurgents groups not only evade state repressions through transnational cooperation, but they can also frustrate superpowers like the US. Poor countries with inadequate security forces simply cannot sustain a long-drawn transnational insurgency, while the rebels are in a safe haven in a neighbouring country. Sometimes transnational rebels intimidate “host countries” to let them have sanctuaries to fight the “target country”. However, there is always some understanding between rebels and the “host country” [Ibid, pp.222-29 & 242]. Nevertheless, contrary to Huntington’s assumption, transnational rebels do not always operate with the approval of the “host country” [Huntington, 1973, p.355]. Another problematic assumption is that all terrorists are in any case someone’s “freedom fighters”. Berdal and Serrano aptly address the problem: “Historically the Freedom Fighter’s cause has been understood to require clean hands. Dirty hands have compromised any agenda claiming political purity and moral superiority ... the terrorist as freedom fighter — is

the paradigm that needs replacing" [Berdal & Serrano, 2002, pp.7-8]. Salehyan's word of warning to CT and COIN operators is also an eye-opener, notwithstanding the inherent pessimism in it: "Traditional counterinsurgency strategies can only go so far in containing the threat as foreign soil is off limits to security forces The problem of cross-border militancy has the potential to raise tensions in the region, and even lead to a full-blown war between governments" [Salehyan, 2010, "Summary"].

In South Asia, Islamist outfits, drug and arms syndicates pose the main transnational threat to countries within and beyond the region. Various global, regional and local factors contribute to the rise of Islamist extremism and drug mafias in South Asia. Bad governance and leaders' opportunistic championing of political Islam in Pakistan and Bangladesh for the sake of legitimacy from time to time have culturally Islamised the politics and legitimized Islamism as an alternative political ideology [Hashmi 2003, pp108-23; Shaikh 2009, pp.147-57; Milam 2009, pp. 10-11, 42-3, 231-35]. The two most significant events in the Muslim World in the second half of the 20th century, the Islamic Revolution of Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, further legitimized transnational Islamism among Muslims around the world. Muslims' sense of belonging to the global *Ummah* is at the root of their extra-territoriality. Muslim solidarity with fellow Muslims, transcending the boundaries of race, language, class and nationality, have played important roles in moulding some major events in history. As it is difficult to explain this solidarity, so is it too important to ignore in appraising transnational Islamic/Islamist movements, uprising and crime committed in the name of Islam. Thus, the rise in transnational crime, terror and insurgency in South Asia is not always attributable to internal factors only, such as bad governance, marginalization of minorities and lack of job opportunities, they have global, extra-territorial roots and dimensions. Hence the presence of ethno-nationally diverse Muslim extremists in Taliban, al Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Taiba, HUJI and similar Islamist outfits in South Asia. The transnational Muslim/Islamist solidarity is also due to their perception of having a common enemy in the West and its allies.

Since 9/11, Western governments, analysts and laymen consider Islamist extremists as the biggest security threat to Western civilization. The so-called "War on Terror" or "War on Extremism" has not only widened the gap between the Muslim and Western worlds but has also heightened transnational crime and insurgencies across the Afghan borders. The Western promotion of Tajik and Uzbek warlords and criminals against the Taliban and al Qaeda elements, mainly manned by Pashtun tribesmen [Ali] has not only kept the decades-old ethno-national conflicts alive but has also forced the Taliban (if not al-Qaeda)

to forge ties with transnational drug-lords and Mafias. NATO and ISAF troops' controversial support and even promotion of opium cultivation and drug trafficking along Afghan borders have also promoted transnational drug trafficking, and paradoxically strengthened the "narco-jihadist" networks in the sub-region. British troops and officers stationed in the Helmand Province (the "drug-capital of the world") are said to have links with opium producers and traffickers in Afghanistan [Maitra, "Mumbai Massacre ..."; Author's interviews with Afghan officials (one Pashtun and one Tajik) who worked for the Karzai Government, October 10, 2010]. The US government's so-called "longer alternative livelihoods efforts" have simply failed to generate sufficient and sustainable income for poppy farmers in Afghanistan. These efforts have actually helped transnational drug traffickers, Taliban and Islamists in Central and South Asia.

Ever since the emergence of the nexus between drug mafia and Islamist terror outfits at the core of transnational security problem in South Asia, analysts and experts have coined the expressions, "Narco-Islamism" and "Narco-Jihad" to denote a new type of transnational crime and insurgency. Ehsan Ahrari believes that a "narco-jihad" is being funded by the opium-related system of trade in Afghanistan and Pakistan and that in Pakistan "the strength of the narco-jihad is still growing". He also reveals that while Afghanistan has been the predominant supplier of opium, Pakistan has been an "important processor of the drug". He imputes the sustained growth in "narco-jihad" activities to the "iron triangle" of warlords; corrupt government officials and the Taliban-al-Qaeda nexus in Afghanistan. The Taliban in Pakistan are said to have relied on drug money in their bid to overthrow the Government [Ahrari]. Hence the necessity of paying attention to the growing "narco-jihad" menace by CT and COIN operators within and beyond the Pak-Afghan sub-region. Unilateral US drone attacks and military action in the sub-region (without the knowledge and approval of Pakistan and Afghanistan) will not prevent the region from becoming a safehouse for transnational terrorists. The only way to defeat the terrorists is to starve them of the opium cash that helps them proliferate. American troops withdrawal from Afghanistan will be as disastrous as American unilateral military action in the sub-region. However, America has already decided on ending its longest war (in Afghanistan) and is keen on "engaging" the Taliban. These acts will neither help America gain some respect in the region nor will they neutralise the transnational crime-terror nexus in the sub-region. Meanwhile, Pakistan has emerged as the "most important country" for the wrong reasons — extensive terror attacks on Pakistani military, law-enforcers and civilians, ISI's promotion of Kashmiri and Pashtun insurgents, sectarian killings and insurgency in

the northwest — posing security challenges to itself, the region and the world at large.

Bangladesh also went through a turbulent phase of terror attacks, including and suicide bombing, during 1999 and 2007. Despite the Bangladeshi government's successful operations against Islamist HUJI-B and JMB militants in 2006-07 and its signing the Peace-Accord with the *Shanti Bahini* (ethno-nationalist Chakma rebel outfit) in 1997, Bangladesh's porous borders with India and Myanmar and lukewarm support for political Islam among sections of the population do not guarantee any durable peace within and across its borders. There is no reason to believe that the widening gulf between the Awami League and the BNP-JI alliance, "secular-nationalist" and "Islam-loving" respectively, is going to stabilize Bangladesh in the coming years. Since the politically motivated arrests and trial of some leaders of the "Islam-loving" group as "war criminals" for their alleged war crimes in 1971 by the Awami League Government in 2010, Bangladesh is further polarized between "secular" and "Islam-loving" groups. The ongoing controversy over the 15th Amendment of the Constitution, which has scrapped the provision of the Caretaker Government to monitor national elections, is another bone of contention between the Awami and BNP-JI camps. Transnational clandestine Islamist outfits and drug mafias across the Indo-Bangladesh and Myanmar-Bangladesh borders might take advantage of the politically volatile situation in Bangladesh. In sum, despite some similarities between the northwestern and southeastern sub-regions of South Asia vis-à-vis transnational Islamist terrorism and drug mafia nexuses, unlike the northwestern sub-region, transnational drug-lords in the southeast are not linked with the so-called "narco-jihad". Again, transnational Islamist outfits in the southeast are not necessarily linked with the Taliban and al Qaeda networks in the northwest.

In view of the volatilities in the northwestern and southeastern sub-regions of South Asia, I have appraised some transnational security problems in the region, particularly Pakistan and Bangladesh, in the following sections: (a) The India Factor and Indophobia; (b) The Afghan Factor; (c) The TTP, LeT and Mumbai 2008; (d) The Indo-Bangla-Myanmar Triangle; (e) HUJI-B, JMB and Transnational "Jihad" from Bangladesh; and (f) Conclusions.

II. THE "INDIA FACTOR" AND INDOPHOBIA: PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH

Having unresolved issues with India, both Pakistan and Bangladesh blame India for promoting and/or accentuating some of their internal and external problems, including ethno-national separatism, terrorism and other destabilizing factors. India has similar allegations against the two. Kashmir since 1947;

India's direct involvement in the creation of Bangladesh in 1971; and of late, India's alleged promotion of the Pakistani Taliban (TTP) and Baloch separatists may be considered the main factors behind Pakistan's perennial Indophobia. Due to several unresolved issues with India, including India's promoting two-decade-long ethno-national insurgents against Bangladesh up to 1996; and its erecting dams across common rivers to the detriment of Bangladesh. Incidentally, due to various factors, India has not-so-good to very bad relationship with all its immediate neighbours. This may be considered the "India Factor", an important catalyst in the not-so-friendly relationship between India and its immediate neighbours; and is very relevant to the discourse of transnational security dynamics in South Asia. As Pakistani and Bangladeshi Indophobia is behind the Islamization of the polities, so are their perceptions of India as the "bully" impact transnational security in South Asia [State Dept Papers, Aug 16, 2009]. India's disillusion with Bangladesh began not long after the creation of the state. Bangladeshis fast turned anti-Indian due to the unfulfilled promises of the independence attained with Indian help and thanks to the proliferation of anti-Indian conspiracy theories in the country [Chatterjee 1973, pp. 68-70; Hashmi 2003, pp.106-14 & Jan 2010].

One is not sure if an "acceptable" resolution of the Kashmir problem can neutralize trans-border terrorism between India and Pakistan. The average Kashmiri Muslim under Indian occupation is not willing to accept nothing short of total independence or *azadi* as a solution to the Kashmir problem. Yoginder Sikand's recent first-hand experience in Kashmir is self-explanatory: "Even if India were to pave the streets of Kashmir with gold, we would still refuse to identify ourselves as Indians," insisted a Kashmiri Muslim friend of mine ... is no fervent Islamist or fiery Kashmiri nationalist [Sikand 2010]." Not only Kashmiri Muslims but also Islamists from various parts of the world have been swelling the ranks of Kashmiri "freedom fighters". While some Kashmiri militants espouse the cause of a transnational Islamic caliphate in South Asia, the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), which came into being in Afghanistan with Osama bin Laden's patronage in 1990 to liberate Kashmir, is linked to drug-baron Dawood Ibrahim's "D-Company" [*Dawn*, 3 Dec 2008; BBC News, 4 Dec 2008].

Analysts attribute the Mumbai Massacre of 2008 and other terrorist attacks — Mumbai (2006); Jaipur (2008); New Delhi (2008) and Pune (2010) — to the narco-Islamist terror nexus in the region. Narco-Islamists killed more than 500 Indians between 2005 and 2010 at the behest of the so-called "Karachi-Project" run by Indian fugitive drug-lord Dawood Ibrahim from Karachi. He is said to be in "deadly alliance" with the ISI and various "jihadi" groups based in Pakistan, India and Bangladesh [Unnithan]. As Shelley and Hussain

elucidate, the growing understanding between drug lords and “jihadists” within and beyond the Pak-Afghan sub-region has threatened the NATO supply routes and jeopardized the ongoing military operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan’s tribal areas. With a cautionary note to security practitioners and law-enforcers they point out that Afghanistan produces around ninety per cent of the world’s opium supply and a third of which is transported through Pakistan. The other routes are via Iran, Central Asia and Russia. It also appears from the study that not only the Taliban and al Qaeda activists but also the least reliable northern warlords are engaged in drug trafficking across the Afghan borders; and that it is no longer a “peripheral problem” of law and order but a grave security threat in the entire region [Shelley and Hussain].

The situation in Balochistan — the least developed, thinly populated and largest Pakistani province in area — is least promising. Sections of Balochis have been fighting for independence. Alleged “Indian interference” through its numerous consulates in Afghanistan and Iran, in close proximity to the Pakistani border, is said to have aggravated the situation:

Having visited the Indian mission in Zahedan, Iran, I can assure you they are not issuing visas as the main activity! Moreover, India has run operations from its mission in Mazar (through which it supported the Northern Alliance) and is likely doing so from the other consulates it has reopened in Jalalabad and Qandahar along the border. Indian officials have told me privately that they are pumping money into Baluchistan Even if by some act of miraculous diplomacy the territorial issues were to be resolved, Pakistan would remain an insecure state This suggests that without some means of compelling Pakistan to abandon its reliance upon militancy, it will become ever more interested in using it—and the militants will likely continue to proliferate beyond Pakistan's control [Fair].

The Baloch separatist movement has the potentials to turn the region into another Kurdistan; safe havens for transnational insurgents there could destabilize the entire region. Indian non-interference in Balochistan is not the only solution to the problem; but Indian cooperation in this regard would substantially stabilize this strategically important province of Pakistan. Most Balochis, excepting a handful of rebels under Brahamdagh Bugti, despise Indian interference in Balochistan [Mir; Qadir, August 2009].

Many Pakistanis believe that TTP (Pakistani Taliban) fighters killed by Pakistani troops in Waziristan and Swat in 2008 were uncircumcised, hence assumed to be non-Muslim infiltrators from India [BBC News, 6 June 2009; Interviews, Pakistani military officers]. Indian leaders, media and analysts are unwilling to accept that their country has anything to do with the TTP.

“Circumcision no longer acid test to identify Indian spies”, so goes the caption of an Indian daily [*Times of India*, April 11, 2009]. A Pakistani Government report reveals: “The arrested commanders of TTP have confessed that secret departments of India, including RAW, and Afghanistan have been providing them weapons and funds to fight against the Pakistan Army [*Dawn*, 19 September 2009].”

What appeared to be the “emerging changes” in US’s Pakistan Policy since Pakistan’s success in tackling the Islamists in the FATA and Swat and “saving Islamabad” from the “impending Taliban takeover” in May 2009 [Hashmi, 2009] seems to have dissipated in the wake of the growing misunderstanding and mistrust between the two countries after the killing of Bin Laden by American troops near Islamabad in May 2011, apparently without the knowledge and consent of Islamabad. Meanwhile, what US Under-Secretary of State William Burns’s had told the Indian government in New Delhi on June 11, 2009 was significant. He publicly advised India to settle the Kashmir problem “in line with the aspirations of Kashmiris”; and he stated this the day after his meeting with Kashmiri separatist leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq. Quite embarrassing for India was Burns’s advice to “close or prune down” its consulates in Afghanistan, which Pakistan insists have been “fomenting trouble” in the NWFP and Balochistan [Hashmi 2009]. General McChrystal in his report to the Defense Secretary in August 2009 also pointed out how “increasing Indian influence in Afghanistan” was likely to “exacerbate regional tensions and encourage Pakistani countermeasures in Afghanistan or India” [McChrystal]. The US on the one hand is asking India to resolve the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the wish of the Kashmiris; and on the other it has strong civil and military ties with India. Despite US reservations about Pakistan’s dubious role in Afghanistan, it cannot abandon its “major non-NATO ally”, which a retired Indian general considers to be the “linchpin of its exit strategy” from Afghanistan [Mehta]. While Parthasarathy sounds alarmingly pessimistic about the future of Indo-US relations [Parthasarathy], we find Ganguly more balanced in this regard. He highlights how America’s coming closer to Pakistan is annoying India, which the US can ill afford [Ganguly].

However, America’s retaliatory withholding of \$800 million aid money to Pakistan (nearly one-third of its annual grant to the country) in June 2011, for the latter’s alleged promotion of Taliban fighters through the ISI signalled a big departure from its so-called soft approach to Pakistan. The *Washington Post*’s publishing a letter in June 2011, allegedly written by a North Korean official to A.Q. Khan, the “father of Pakistan’s nuclear bomb” in 2004, implicating two Pakistani retired generals as receivers of a \$3 million bribe from North Korea for passing vital nuclear technology to the latter, has further embittered

the Pak-US relationship. Consequently the apparently “pro-Pakistan” shift in US policy, which might have accelerated the CBM between the two countries, has become irrelevant. The growing rift between Pakistan and America, and the latter’s avowed policy of withdrawing all troops from Afghanistan by 2014, are going to destabilize the entire region transcending Afghanistan and Pakistan. As one analyst predicts, in the wake of America’s (and the NATO’s) total troops withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2014 the country will become the battlefield of the ongoing proxy war between archrival India and Pakistan, which promote different ethnic groups against each other. One cannot agree more with the estimate that: “ ... Afghanistan looks like a failure beside the dream of 2001, when NATO invaded. It will continue to be plagued by violence and insurgency Poppies will flourish and corruption will eat away at daily life” [*Economist*].

Bangladesh has not remained that friendly and grateful to India for its help in its liberation war against Pakistan. Bangladesh has been suspicious of the “Indian Design” and most governments since 1975 even sheltered ULFA rebels in Bangladesh, allegedly in collaboration with the ISI. Bangladeshi Indophobia has both historical and political-economic explanations: India’s big brotherly and meddlesome attitude towards Bangladesh is problematic. Ever since the 1975 military takeover in Bangladesh, the government and people in India have serious misgivings about their Muslim-majority neighbour in the east. India not only considers the country a source of illegal immigrants but also as one in league with Pakistan, a promoter of Islamist terror and a sanctuary for ethno-national separatists in the Northeast. After the overthrow of the Mujib government (often stigmatized as pro-Indian) anti-Indian movement got further momentum. India’s harbouring, arming and training pro-Mujib militants under Kader Siddiki who continued attacking Bangladeshi border outposts in 1975-1976 and the Chakma insurgents (*Shanti Bahini*) for two decades up to 1996; and Bangladesh’s providing sanctuary to ULFA rebels for years, allegedly in collaboration with the ISI, may be mentioned in this regard.

Last but not least, India’s unilateral decision to activate the Farakka Barrage across the Ganges — to the detriment of Bangladesh — has been the last straw. Then again, contrary to what Manmohan Singh believes [*Daily Star*, July 3, 2011] that around twenty-five per cent of Bangladeshis who are anti-Indian belongs to the Islamist Jamaat-i-Islami party, actually many more than twenty-five per cent of the Muslim population in the country are avowedly anti-Indian and they do not necessarily belong to any Islamist party. The widening gulf between the “Islam loving” and “secular-nationalist” political parties in the country, also known as “Pro-Pakistani” and “Pro-Indian” respectively, due to arrests and trial of some BNP-Jamaat leaders since 2010

on charges of committing “war crimes” in 1971, might foment Islamist-cum-anti-Indian militancy in the country and across the Indo-Bangladesh border. America’s promoting India as a bulwark against China — and against Pakistan in the long run — might further aggravate the situation by turning Bangladesh into another battlefield for the proxy-war between India and Pakistan.

In addition to the prevalent tension between the two neighbours, transnational criminals, smugglers, drug and arms traffickers, India’s ethnonational separatists and Islamist proponents of “Greater Bangladesh” have further destabilized the sub-region. According to a report by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), “The widespread abuse of pharmaceutical preparations containing narcotic drugs such as codeine is an ongoing problem in Bangladesh. Such preparations are smuggled into that country from India.” India is the “primary source” of injectible drugs, Pethidine and Morphine; and Myanmar is a major source of methamphetamine tablets, known as Yaba, in Bangladesh [INCB Report]. Bangladesh border guards are also responsible for the unimpeded flow of Indian drugs into the country. The INCB feels that “multifaceted programmes”, such as “supply reduction, harm reduction and demand reduction”, are essential to contain the problem [INCB Report].

Irrespective of one’s position about India’s alleged expansionist design which could be very discomfoting for its neighbours, one may impute some major transnational issues destabilizing the region to India’s failure to emerge as a soft power for all its South Asian neighbours. Kuldip Nayar is quite instructive in this regard:

India needs to reflect on why all the neighbouring countries have distanced themselves from it. No doubt its size deters them. But more than that, their feeling is that New Delhi is becoming increasingly conscious of itself as an emerging world power. It tends to throw its weight about in such a manner that the neighbours are having doubts about its bona fides [Nayar].

III. THE AFGHAN FACTOR: OPIUM, GUN AND THE MULLAH

An important catalyst for transnational security issues in South Asia is the “Afghan Factor” or whatever has happened to the country in security perspective since 1947. Islamist transnational insurgencies and narco-terrorism on both sides of Afghan border may be attributed to the phenomenon of “failing state” in Afghanistan. This land-locked conglomerate of diverse ethno-national entities experimented with monarchy, guided democracy, socialism and Islamism in one generation since the 1970s. Pashtun nationalism on both sides of the Pak-Afghan border is another catalyst in the transnational security threat across the border. Numerically dominant and politically feeble/subjugated

since late 2001, Afghan Pashtuns under the aegis of Taliban-al-Qaeda and narco-terror network are determined to turn the table to their favour. Their Pakistani counterparts share the same vision: a Taliban-led Islamic caliphate transcending Pakistan and Afghanistan and their unhindered control of the drug production and trafficking across the world.

The Afghan “jihad” of the 1980s impacted Muslims in far-flung lands from Chechnya to Dagestan and Bangladesh to southern Thailand and Philippines. The ongoing transnational violence across the Pak-Afghan boundary is a direct by-product of the large-scale possession of unaccountable weapons by thousands of unaccountable and unemployed Afghans. Intriguingly enough, what the Pakistani government through its military intelligence (ISI) and its Western and Arab allies had installed in Afghanistan in 1996 backfired. The surrogate Taliban regime to fight Pakistan’s proxy wars against pro-Indian and pro-Iranian Tajik-Uzbek war lords collapsed soon after Nine-Eleven. Within months of its installation to power, the Taliban regime started distancing from its Pakistani patrons “as multiple rivalries along ethnic, sectarian, and party lines spilled over into active and very deadly conflict in and around Kabul” [Rais, 2008, p. 43].

By early 2000s the Taliban had become too powerful to be controlled by its former sponsors any longer. As clients of Afghan drug barons, anti-Iranian Arab regimes, Chechens and other Islamist outfits, Pashtun Taliban in alliance with Chechens, Tajiks, Uzbeks and possibly Uyghur separatists from Xinjiang are engaged in a war of attrition against the Karzai regime and its allies [Rashid, 2008, Chs. 7, 12, 15-17]. Analysts and top US officials including Richard Holbrooke believed that seventy per cent Pashtun insurgents were “fighting merely for pay or strictly local aims” and therefore could be alienated from the “hard-core believers”. However, a first-hand report from Afghanistan reveals a somewhat different situation. Taliban fighters in general assert that they are not fighting for jobs or money and are dead against signing any deal with the “enemy” — foreign troops and Afghan government. One of them said: “If you’re committed to jihad, you won’t leave for a mountain of money”. Another young, 18-year-old fighter declared: “I want to die in the jihad, not as a sick old man under a blanket at home.” The same report reveals that the Taliban are fighting for (a) driving out the invaders; (b) establishing an Islamic Emirate under Mullah Omar; and (c) avenging the deaths of fellow Pashtuns killed by their enemies [*Newsweek*, Feb 22, 2010].” Some Taliban are also involved in manufacturing and marketing narcotics [Rashid, 317-32]. They are fast emerging as transnational narco-terrorists [Whitaker; France24]. Besides Pashtuns, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Arabs, Chechens and others swell the ranks of the Taliban [Gopal]. Interestingly, former military officers of the pro-Soviet Afghan

government are running its military wing. So long as al Qaeda network is intact across the Pak-Afghan border and Afghan Taliban are in possession of one-third of the country; and the Pakistan-based Taliban movement, or the Tahrir-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan (TTP) is not contained, peace will remain elusive throughout the region. The Afghan Taliban and the TTP is no longer rag-tag band of soldiers but very well trained, well-armed and motivated battle-hardened fighters. Military experts liken their fighting skill with that of US Marines [author's interviews of Pakistani military officers].

In short, we need to understand the various facets of the Taliban movement. It is partly an insurgency by ideologically motivated Islamist Pashtun tribesmen and their foreign supporters in league with al-Qaeda on both sides of the Pak-Afghan border; and it is also a movement by unemployed Pashtun youths and gangsters, who have never been *madrassah* or Islamic seminary students or *taliban* (plural of *talib*) and are primarily motivated by drug trafficking and other criminal activities. They are partially al-Qaeda associates and partially producers and traffickers of opium. Hence the expression "Narco-Jihadist" to classify these organized criminals-cum-insurgents in the sub-region. Then again, US officials believe that al-Qaeda is "on the brink of collapse" across the Pak-Afghan border. They, however, seem to be right that "al-Qaeda might yet rally and that even its demise would not end the terrorist threat, which is increasingly driven by radicalized individuals as well as aggressive affiliates" [Miller].

Although soon after they captured Kabul in 1996, the Taliban prohibited opium production and destroyed stacks of opium, yet later they did not totally prohibit its production and trafficking to a limited extent. Afghanistan under the Taliban produced around 100 tons of opium per year, but within six years of US and NATO occupation, the country produced more than 8,000 tons in 2007. Presently, there are no signs of any decisive victory for the US and ISAF troops against the Taliban, let alone any signs of a concerted war against drugs and drug-traffickers in Afghanistan. What we hear from the US administration since early 2011 is about the proposed dialogue between America and Afghan Taliban and the total withdrawal of Western troops from Afghanistan by 2014. Conversely, as credible evidences suggest, American civil and military authorities have had close ties with Afghan warlords and drug-lords, including the slain Ahmed Wali Karzai, half-brother of Hamid Karzai, was in the payroll of the CIA for ten years till his death in June 2011 [Risen; Ali; Scott; *Economist*, "Barack Obama ..."]. In this backdrop, it seems America has "lost" Afghanistan both militarily and diplomatically to the Taliban and drug mafia. One analyst has cynically raised the question if America really went to Afghanistan to "jack up opium production" or "to get rid of the

terrorists". He imputes Bernie Madoff's and some other corrupt American businessmen's "unaccounted for sources" of wealth to illicit drug money from Afghanistan [Maitra, "Get Rid of Opium"]. "Meanwhile" as Tariq Ali puts it, "the number of Afghan civilians killed has exceeded many tens of times over the 2,746 who died in Manhattan. Unemployment is around 60 per cent and maternal, infant and child mortality levels are now among the highest in the world. Opium harvests have soared, and the 'Neo-Taliban' is growing stronger year by year" [Ali].

In view of this, we cannot ignore the intense competition for the control of the four billion dollar opium trade in Afghan market (a conservative estimate) — which the UN estimates to be worth \$65 billion in the global market — as an important factor behind the transnational instability in the sub-region. There are conflicting assumptions and speculations about the total worth of Afghan opium in the international market and the Taliban's share in it; some plausible and some very far-fetched. While some analysts believe the Taliban make around \$50 billion or twenty-five to fifty per cent of the total worth of Afghan opium in the world market annually, others think they do not make more than a \$100 million per year. According to the UN Under-Secretary General Antonio Maria the Afghan opium (heroin) is worth about \$65 billion, although he does not indicate how much the Taliban make out of it annually [CNN, Oct 25, 2009]. Another source reveals that annually the Taliban and Afghan warlords make around \$400 million from poppy. The same report reveals the helplessness of Afghan anti-narcotics officials in containing poppy cultivation and transnational drug trafficking. Pinpointing President Karzai's duplicity and his government's links with drug traffickers and warlords, the report reveals that drug has virtually become the "alternative currency" for Taliban, warlords and drug mafias. According to one UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) official, "the value of the drugs multiplies by a factor of 10 every time they cross a border"; and an average farmer makes ten times more from opium than from wheat [Zabriskie].

As it is true that inadequate foreign troops will not be able to stop opium production, processing and trafficking in territories under their "control" in the Helmand province of Afghanistan, which produces around ninety per cent of opium in the world, it is also true that Afghan farmers do not prefer opium to other crops for money, as local warlords and drug mafia coerce them into growing opium at gunpoint. The media wrongly portray drug-barons' AK-47-totting gunmen as "Taliban" [Maitra, Feb. 2009]. We have reasons to believe *Time* reporter McGirk that driving the Taliban out of certain pockets was the easy part, but "to keep them out, U.S. and Afghan officials must wean the region from its drug dependency" as thousands of hectares of poppy

fields not only benefit “drug czars” and Taliban but also some 70,000 farmers of Marjah in Helmand. The reporter cites Grelchen Peters, an expert on Taliban drug ties with traffickers, who believes that: “Counter-narcotics, just like counterinsurgency, is like playing whack a mole. You knock it out in one place, and it pops up somewhere else” [McGirk]. Last but not least, as one US military-led investigation concludes, corrupt US officials and contractors have been jeopardizing the US war-efforts in Afghanistan by funneling more than \$2 billion of US taxpayer money to the Taliban through transportation contracts [DeYong]. In this backdrop, one has reasons to be sceptic about the success of American war-efforts in Afghanistan and the end of the “narco-jihad” across the Pak-Afghan borders and beyond in the near future.

Despite the growing support among Afghans for US military presence in Afghanistan, sixty-eight per cent in late 2009 [*Newsweek*, March 8, 2010], people in general are sceptic about the prospect of peace in the country, and this “scepticism makes sense” [Ghosh]. In the wake of the proposed withdrawal of all Western troops by 2014, the Taliban are most likely to control Kabul eventually. Meanwhile, despite American willingness to talk to the Taliban leadership since 2009 [Ware], hardcore Taliban are less enthused to share power through any deal with America or Pakistan. They do not consider Pakistan an ally despite having safe havens in Balochistan; and have no qualms about killing more American troops or terrorizing Pakistan [Moreau, 2009, 39-43]. However, since Baradar’s arrest [BBC News, 16 Feb 2010] it is least likely that the US and the Taliban are going to sign a peace-deal in the near future, unless the former take Pakistan into confidence. Despite the bleak prospects of US-Taliban talks, some analysts believe that “patience” and “concessions” on part of the US would eventually pay off.

This might be conciliatory to some “Taliban” fighters, who are primarily fighting for sustenance not Islam; as, to quote one analyst, “the definition of Taliban ... is young man without a job” [Baker, p. 39]. However, as discussed earlier, the core of the Taliban is motivated by the ideology of “jihad” and Pashtun nationalism. Afghan government’s annual revenue of around \$750 million is considered too meagre to rebuild the war-ravaged country, let alone defeat the insurgents militarily. On the other hand, while the Western allies are likely to raise not more than three billion dollars annually to meet the challenge, the Taliban-al-Qaeda drug-barons earn scores of billion dollars globally [Qantara]. In view of the continuing support for the Taliban in southeastern Afghanistan, and Karzai government’s declining mass support and inability to hold the ground without NATO troops, some analysts neither foresee a solution to the crisis nor a “victory for Obama” in Afghanistan [Chaudhry]. In sum, the US and its allies seem to have lost their war in

Afghanistan both militarily and diplomatically. While the Obama administration is trying to extricate itself from Afghanistan by withdrawing all troops by 2014, its major allies, including Canada and France have already withdrawn their troops from the country, which is fast turning into another unwinnable territory for the West. The upshot will be the preponderance of a pro-Pakistani regime and the continuation of the ethno-national conflicts between the Northern “warlords” and Pashtun Taliban and the proxy war between archrival India and Pakistan across the Pak-Afghan borders.

IV. THE TTP, LET AND MUMBAI 2008: STATE SPONSORED OR SPONTANEOUS?

Since 2007, Pakistan is confronting the Pakistani Taliban outfit (TTP) formed by an almost illiterate 33-year-old former waiter of a restaurant, Baitullah Mehsud of the Mehsud tribe in the NWFP [Interview Qazi; Qadir, Aug 2009]. However, Baitullah’s death in a US drone attack in August 2009 has disorganized the TTP. Rival TTP factions are fighting each other and the group is fast losing support among locals in the FATA and Swat valley. However, it is too early to write off the outfit. Its transnational links with al-Qaeda can destabilize the region quite for some time. The TTP has been a shadowy organization manned by Pakistanis and foreigners: Pashtuns, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Chechens, Arabs and Indians. Its transnational connections and avowed goal to establish an Islamist caliphate from Pakistan to Chechnya signal more terrorist attacks and insurgencies beyond Pakistan and Afghanistan. Both Afghan and Pakistani Taliban have al-Qaeda connections. The Jordanian suicide bomber al-Balawi who killed seven CIA officials in Afghanistan in January 2010 — a double agent working for both the Americans and al-Qaeda — had been in league with the Taliban as well [CNN & BBC, Jan 5, 2010].

The LeT — since its proscription by Pakistan in early 2002 is known as the Jamaat ud Dawa (Party of the Calling) — is the most active transnational terror outfit in South Asia. The liberation of Kashmir to the Islamists is not about liberating the territory from India’s occupation but to liberate a “Muslim land” from non-Muslim occupation. The LeT is a champion of a Wahhabi Islamic State in South Asia. It is no longer a purely Kashmiri jihadist outfit. Having its headquarters near Lahore, the LeT “still runs its training practically in the open”; and this several thousand-strong organization in the past twenty years is estimated to have trained around 200,000 militants, hundreds from Europe and North America. Despite its ideological commitment to South Asian “Wahhabism”, nourished by the ultra-orthodox Ahl-e-Hadis sect, the bulk of LeT gunmen are from rural Punjab and NWFP, overwhelmingly from the Hanafi sect of Sunni Islam [Kahn, p.41; www.fas.org, “Lashkar-e Taiba”];

Dawn, 03 Dec 2008]. It is noteworthy that the main leaders of the militant Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen of Bangladesh (JMB) also belong to the Ahl-e-Hadis sect of Sunni Islam. The JMB came to the limelight after exploding hundreds of bombs and resorting to suicide attacks for the first time in Bangladesh in 2005.

Since Nine Eleven, the LeT seems to be the actual face of the elusive and shadowy al-Qaeda. This Pakistan-based terrorist group seems to be the most well-organized and well-connected transnational terror outfit in the world. It has cells in Europe, throughout the Persian Gulf, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Southeast Asia and North America. On the one hand, we see LeT fingerprints in terror attacks in India, on the other hand we see Lashkar men terrorizing Afghanistan, Iraq, Dhaka and Copenhagen. We have reports about Chicago-based Pakistani-American David Headley's involvement in the 2008 Mumbai attacks and about another LeT plot to kill the officials of the Danish newspaper which published Prophet Muhammad's cartoon in 2005. The recent arrests of people in Dhaka (February 2010) reveal the latest LeT plot to attack the US and British embassies in Bangladesh [Kahn, pp.40-41]. The reason why the LeT may be considered the most well-connected transnational terror outfit is its maintaining long relationship with al-Qaeda affiliates in Afghanistan, such as the Jamaat-i-Islami, Hizb-e-Islami and Hizb-ut-Mujahideen since early 1990s [globalsecurity]. It has very good coordination with another Pakistan-based Islamist group, the Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) or Soldiers of Muhammad. Having tentacles in Europe and North America, the JeM was responsible for the killing of American journalist Daniel Pearl in 2002. It was involved in a plot to bomb a New York synagogue and shoot stinger missile at US military aircraft in the US last year. In December 2001, it jointly attacked the Indian Parliament along with LeT gunmen. The LeT and JeM get money from rich donors from Saudi Arabia, Gulf countries, Europe and Pakistan [English Aljazeera, 05/2009; *NY Times*, Dec 9, 2009].

LeT's latest venture was the Mumbai Massacre in November 2008. Some observers trace both Islamist and narcoterrorist fingerprints in the Mumbai attacks; they believe LeT has been in league with Dawood Ibrahim. A US War College research paper has convincingly explains the LeT- D-Company involvement in the Mumbai massacre [Clarke, pp. 28-51]. Having commitment to bleed India, mainly for its occupation of "Muslim Kashmir", the LeT had no problem in killing Indians, including Dawood Ibrahim's rivals in the name of jihad. One must not lose sight of Ibrahim's track record. He was instrumental in the indiscriminate bombing and killing of Hindus in Mumbai in 1993, to avenge the demolition of the Babri Mosque and killing of Muslims by Hindu fanatics in Mumbai and elsewhere in India. According to one Indian

“investigative” report, the “Let- HUJI-Dawood-al-Qaeda nexus” came into being in 2003, allegedly with ISI support. Pakistani army personnel allegedly bring fugitives from India and other countries to Karachi via Bangladesh and Nepal where they are indoctrinated by videos of Babri Mosque and Gujarat rioting which led to the killing of Muslims by Hindu fanatics in India [Unnithan].

Interestingly, while eight of the ten gunmen randomly killed people in Mumbai, two of them allegedly “executed” Dawood’s rivals, “Russian and Israeli members of the drug mafia” at Oberoi Hotel and Nariman House, in “a typically gangland execution method” [MacDonald; Madson; Mafia Today; Maitra, Jan. 2009; Guerrilla News Network, Dec. 2008]. This has been further substantiated by several TV documentaries. One comes across the cell phone conversation between a gunman at Nariman House and his mentor, presumably in Pakistan, recorded by Indian authorities. Their mentor ordered the two gunmen in charge of hostages: “Seat them upright and shoot at the back of their heads before you take care of yourselves. God bless you!” [GPS, CNN, Nov 15, 2009]. The particular “gangland execution method”, as one comes across at Nariman House and Oberoi Hotel, is typical drug mafia way of eliminating rivals, not typical to the “jihadist” way of killing.

According to Maitra, British, Russian, Indian, Pakistani and Israeli drug-barons have been busy transporting Afghan drug through Mumbai and Dubai and clandestine Sikh separatists and Hindu militant Shiv Sena are also involved in drug trafficking. He considers Dawood Ibrahim the linchpin of the mafia [Maitra Dec.2008]. Drug barons from the region and Europe — the so-called “Dope, Inc.” — and terror groups, including the London-based Hizbut Tahrir and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, are engaged in narco-terrorism and Islamism from Chechnya to Pakistan, India and beyond. Analysts believe in Osama bin Laden’s personal involvement in drug trafficking to finance al-Qaeda’s transnational network [Maitra, Dec.2008]. Similar groups are active in Bangladesh and Southeast Asia. In short, the LeT story does not begin with attacks on India and Kashmir, nor ends with the Mumbai attacks in November 2008. Since its inception it has engaged both Pakistani and Indian troops [Dawn 3 Dec 2008]. The emergence of the LeT and JeM as transnational terrorist organizations highlights how government-sponsored terrorism to bleed external enemies backfires. Unlike the Bangladeshi transnational Islamist terrorist groups, the Pakistani ones were mostly state-sponsored. One is not sure, if Pakistanis who once promoted Islamist terrorists are now “afraid to do anything about it”; and that “It’s a delicate dance with a Frankenstein of their own making” [Kahn, p.41].

V. THE INDO-BANGLA-MYANMAR TRIANGLE: NARCO-ISLAMIST AND ETHNO-NATIONALIST TERROR

Although the Pak-Afghan “Golden Crescent” has eclipsed the “Golden Triangle” of Southeast Asia as the largest drug and gun outlet in the world; another “triangle” of drugs, guns, rebels has emerged where Bangladesh meets Myanmar and Northeast India. Since India’s Northeast, southeastern Bangladesh and parts of Myanmar are crucial in the distribution of the contrabands and stirring up most rebels in the sub-region, we may ascribe this disorder to the “Indo-Bangla-Myanmar Triangle” factor. Myanmar is the second largest producer of opium (just behind Afghanistan) and the largest producer of methamphetamine in the world. Around eighty per cent of heroin consumed in Southeast Asia comes from Myanmar [Escobedo; Chouvy & Meissonnier, *passim*]. What is most worrisome is Myanmar’s military regime’s alleged promotion of drug trafficking in the region [www.fas.org]. One wonders in the event of NATO’s successful eradication of poppy cultivation in Afghanistan, if Myanmar is going to emerge as the “opium-heroin capital” of the world.

Bangladesh-Myanmar-India-based Islamist groups have been organizing transnational “jihad” to create a greater (Islamic) Bangladesh by carving out parts of Assam and West Bengal from India and the Rohingya Muslim-majority Arakan sub-region from Myanmar [Saikia, Chs 1-3; Das]. Their tentacles have gone beyond the region into Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines. Myanmar Government’s discriminatory policy against its Muslim minorities has been a contributory factor in this regard. Among Myanmar’s oppressed minorities, “Muslims are the worst off under the military junta”; about a million Rohingya Muslims are living as refugees, around 200,000 in Bangladesh alone and more than 300,000 in Pakistan [Selth]. Thanks to the exploitation of the protracted statelessness of the Rohingya refugees by al-Qaeda, HUJI-B, JMB and other Islamist groups by 1990s several transnational militant Rohingya groups came into being to destabilize the region [Ahmed, 2004, pp.169-94]. The Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front (ARIF), Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO), Rohingya National Alliance (RNA) and Arakan Rohingya National Organization (ARNO) have been the leading ones among these groups. Many Rohingyas fought along the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. Some RSO members joined the separatist Muslim Liberation Tigers of Assam and forged ties with Bangladesh Islamic Association. Soon after the US invasion of Afghanistan in November 2001, several hundred Taliban/al-Qaeda fighters secretly sailed to Chittagong from Karachi and joined hands with HUJI-B and RSO fighters [Selth; Lintner, Dec 2002 & Sept 2002; Perry; Gunaratna, 2002, 204].

Even though the Bangladesh army has almost totally disarmed the RSO by 2005, other Islamist, ethno-nationalist and narco-terrorist groups, such as the ARNO, RNA, the separatist Democratic Party of Arakan (DPA) and the narco-terrorist Arakan Liberation Party (ALP) are still around. The ALP sometimes coerces Bangladeshi tribesmen into growing poppy in the interior of Chittagong Hill Tracts. The RSO and RNA are in league with the DPA and beyond the control of any government anywhere [Interview BDR Lt.Col. 2009]. Myanmar's 20,000-strong rebel United Wa State Army (UWSA), a major drug-trafficking network in Southeast Asia (and South Asia since early 2000s), is at peace with China and the Burmese military junta, and has been instrumental in producing and trafficking methamphetamine Yaba (Yaabaa) in and around Bangladesh. One analyst imputes the BDR Massacre of February 2009 — unruly troops killed 57 of their own officers — to drug trafficking [Interview, Ahmed].

Bangladesh Government's recent crackdown on "undocumented" Rohingya refugees and the continuous influx of Muslim refugees into Bangladesh due to Myanmar Government's pushback of Rohingyas into Bangladesh have created a grave emergency [Reports, Irinnews and MSF]. Having conflicting interests, ethnic and ideological differences, the stateless Rohingyas and persecuted Hill-Tribes across the Bangladesh-India-Myanmar borders have all the potentials to further destabilize the entire region. Bengali and Rohingya Islamist support for greater *Muslim Bengal* and Hill-Tribes' hidden desire for a free *Jhumland* — both to be carved out of Bangladesh, Myanmar and India — may be mentioned in this regard. Separatist Hill-Tribesmen often fight with various transnational Islamist groups, including the HUJI-B and various Rohingya Muslim separatist groups from Myanmar for controlling the narcotics trafficking across the Bangladesh-Myanmar-India borders [Interviews BDR officers; *Daily Star*, Dec 3, 2005]. We may cite a 2007 Stratfor report to underscore the vulnerability of transnational security in the Indo-Bangla-Myanmar "triangle":

Pakistan's ISI, in cooperation with Bangladesh's Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), appears to be investing a considerable amount of resources in solidifying India's militant corridor. There are growing indications that these two agencies are working clandestinely in Bangladesh to bring all the northeast-based insurgent outfits and jihadist elements under one umbrella ULFA's growing links with Bangladeshi Islamists and jihadist elements in the area are increasingly coming to light.

Bengali settlers' recent highhandedness — including loot, arson, rape and abduction, often in presence of law-enforcers — and consequential retaliation by Hill-Tribesmen have been very unsettling [*Daily Star*, Feb 21, 2010]. Recently

the High Court of Bangladesh has circumscribed certain privileges granted to the Hill-Tribes through the Regional Council Act formulated in the wake of the 1997 Peace-Accord between the Government and the PCJSS [*Daily Star*, April 14, 2010]. This judgment might alienate the Tribesmen and further accentuate transnational disorder in the sub-region. Meanwhile, Bangladesh Government's refusal to concede to the Hill-Tribes' demand that they be classified as "Adibashis" or "indigenous people", instead of "Upajatis" or "tribes", has already turned sections of the Hill-Tribes restive. The dissidents have formed their own Mass Solidarity Organizations or PCJSS challenging Shantu Larma's leadership [*New Age*, April 13, 2010]. The division of the PCJSS might further destabilize the sub-region in future.

VI. HUJI-B, JMB AND TRANSNATIONAL "JIHAD" FROM BANGLADESH

Within less than a decade after the end of the US-led Afghan Jihad, by 1999 Islamist terror networks made their presence felt in and around Bangladesh. What started as sporadic bombing that killed innocent people at public places in Bangladesh in 1999 under the aegis of the Harkat ul-Jihad ul-Islami of Bangladesh (HUJI-B) or the Movement for Islamic Jihad (a Pakistani prototype having links with al-Qaeda); by 2004 this emerged as a serious threat to the stability of the region. The HUJI-B resorted to terrorizing people by indiscriminate bombing and grenade attacks. In 2004 it killed several Awami League leaders at a public rally in Dhaka. This shadowy Islamist outfit is potentially much more powerful than similar Islamist groups in and around Bangladesh. Al-Qaeda sponsored HUJI (B) seems to be a go-between other Indo-Pakistan-based Islamist outfits and their Southeast Asian counterparts from Myanmar to the Philippines. Muslim insurgents in southern Thailand are said to have received more arms and training from the HUJI-B than from the Jemaah Islamiyah of Indonesia; and is in league with the MILF and Abu Sayyaf groups in the Philippines [Raman, 2004 and 2005]. The HUJI-B came into being in 1992, not as a clandestine but as an open organization with a view to converting Bangladesh into an Islamic state. Mufti Abdul Hannan, the founder, a Bangladeshi Afghan veteran of the 1980-90s, arrested in 2006, confessed having bombed and killed scores of people in the country during 1999 and 2005. He also confessed of having links with Arab, Pakistani, Burmese and Bangladeshi Islamists; and having supported Islamist militants outside Bangladesh, including the Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO) of Myanmar [BDNews, Nov. 22, 2006].

HUJI-B's sponsors included the ISI and Pakistani Islamist outfits like the LeT and the Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM). It is believed to have trained Rohingya

and Thai Islamist separatists; and is also implicated in the January 22, 2002 bombing of the American Center in Kolkata and the October 12, 2005 suicide bombing in Hyderabad, southern India. The outfit is said to have close ties with Kashmiri, Afghan, Islamist separatists in Assam, the proscribed Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) and other Islamist groups in India [Routray]. The arrests of several Indian Islamist clerics in Bangladesh in July 2009, who had been illegally hiding and working in several madrassahs are very revealing. HUJI clerics and "home-grown" Islamist groups in Bangladesh had connections with D-Company's associates, Abdul Rouf Daud Merchant, Zahid Sheikh and Arif, arrested in May 2009. The HUJI-B has international donors as well as spontaneous local support from poor taxicab drivers, rickshaw-pullers and garment workers. Another report reveals that "at least 50 Indian gangsters" having links to the D-Company, HUJI-B and LeT, frequently visit Bangladesh. Dawood's "second-in-command", Chhota Shakeel who operates from Pakistan and Dubai, has been sending large sums of money to finance the narco-Islamist terror network in and beyond Bangladesh. Pakistani Sunni extremist Sipah-e-Sahaba and Ahle Hadis JeM collaborate with HUJI-B and JMB [Prothom Alo, August 5, 2009]. Bangladeshi police since 2007 have arrested two Bangladesh-born British citizens, believed to have HUJI connections, with guns, explosives and books on explosives and "jihad" [Daily Star, Dec 3-5, 2007 & April 17, 2010]. Several Pakistani nationals, believed to have LeT connections, were arrested in early 2010. They were mainly involved in money-laundering and plotting attacks on Indian and US missions in Dhaka [Daily Star, April 9, 2010].

Another terrorist outfit, the Jamaat-ul-Mujahedeen Bangladesh (JMB), founded by Afghan veteran Sheikh Abdul Rahman, follows the footsteps of the HUJI-B. While the HUJI-B is an offshoot of al-Qaeda, the JMB is "home-grown". As some JMB activists had links to the Jamaat-i-Islami in the past, many Bangladeshis, especially those having a soft corner for the Awami League, love to portray the JMB as pro-BNP and pro-Jamaat. In view of the sharp polarization of the polity between the AL and BNP-Jamaat supporters, one should not give any credence to any unsubstantiated reports about JMB's alleged connections with the BNP-Jamaat alliance. Various JMB cadres in police custody admitted that they had snapped ties with the Jamaat for its stand against violence and terrorism [Interviews with police officers]. In short, the JMB has very little transnational connections; it has links to some ultra-orthodox Ahl-e-Hadis sect members from India. It came to the limelight by organizing its "jihad" against Maoist insurgents and criminals in northwestern Bangladesh, in collaboration with some local BNP leaders and police. With a view to drawing attention to its demands for "immediate introduction" of

the Shariah code, on August 17, 2005 the JMB blasted a few hundred bombs throughout the country. Soon after these synchronized bombings, which killed several innocent people, JMB suicide bombers randomly killed several judges, police officers and civilians in Bangladesh. The JMB affirms the continuation of the 19th century “jihad” waged in northwestern India and Bengal by the Indian “Wahhabis” [International Crisis Group]. After the execution of its top leaders and mass arrests of cadres since 2006, it is too early to assume that the JMB is unlikely to re-emerge as a terror threat in future.

Analysts believe that elements in Bangladesh’s armed forces have links with Islamists in Pakistan, and that whenever Bangladeshi journalists expose the military’s links with Islamabad, they face assassination attempts; the “most notorious case” being that of CNN correspondent Tasneem Khalil. The military tortured him in solitary confinement and forced him to leave Bangladesh in 2007 [Human Rights Watch, Feb 13, 2008]. The BNP government and the military regime are said to have hurriedly executed the top leaders of the JMB after they had contacted the media to expose their links with the BNP and military intelligence [Harrison; AFP, May 29, 2006].

Due to the “subaltern” or plebeian background of the bulk of the Islamists in the region, one cannot rule out the possibilities of Islamist-Maoist understanding in the future. We also know that transnational terrorists and criminals collaborate with each other against their common enemy. Pashtuns, Rohingyas and other marginalized Muslims in South Asia and Myanmar have not been pacified; and are still in league with transnational Islamists and drug-lords. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has already singled out the rapid escalation of Maoist insurgency in twenty of India’s twenty-eight states as the “gravest” security threat to India [Jane’s]. Thanks to the porous Indo-Bangladesh border, Maoist insurgents from West Bengal and southwestern Bangladesh have literally established a reign of terror in the remote villages on both sides of the border [Balachandran, 126]. Meanwhile, Bangladesh has already demonstrated its potential to re-emerge as an “exporter of foot soldiers for Islamic radicalism” in the region [Samad].

What analysts and scholars hitherto considered totally apolitical and peaceful [Sikand, 2002, *passim*], the transnational Islamic missionary Tablighi Jamaat (TJ) is now under surveillance for some *Tablighis’* alleged links to terrorist networks [Shaikh, 2009, 155-7; Alexiev 2005]. The vast network of this born-again Muslim evangelical movement, which hold international rallies near Lahore and Dhaka attended by several million adherents from various countries; with terrorist infiltration can wreak havoc across the world. Despite the dearth of any credible evidence to link the organization with any terrorist network, its open-arm policy of letting any Muslim to join the organization is worrisome.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

At the outset we argued that no single country could contain transnational crime, terrorism and insurgencies without active support from its neighbours; and that only concerted efforts by neighbouring countries can resolve them. Due to the prevalent lack of understanding and trust among countries, the region needs honest brokers to bring them closer to each other. One wonders if the United States and China are willing to play pro-active roles in this regard. While the US can play a vital role in bringing India and Pakistan closer by: (a) allaying Pakistan's fear of getting "encircled" by India and Afghanistan with "tacit support" from the US; (b) convincing Pakistan to withdraw support from all anti-Indian militant groups, including the LeT; and (c) influencing India to be more accommodating to Bangladesh's grievances. Ideally, China can play a decisive role in bringing Myanmar and Bangladesh closer to each other. However, due to its unresolved border issues with India, its own geopolitical aspirations and exigencies; and above all, the growing Indo-American and US-Bangladesh understanding, China has reasons to play the Pakistan and Myanmar cards to its advantage. Pakistan and Myanmar also need Chinese support and patronage to endure Indian pressure. Meanwhile, Pakistani and Bangladeshi leaders should stop the promotion of political Islam as it eventually leads to transnational Islamist extremism.

The first major step towards establishing transnational order in South Asia has to be taken in Afghanistan and adjoining northwestern Pakistan. Despite having more NATO troops in Helmand province, neither the Taliban are dislodged nor has poppy cultivation come to an end. In view of the growing drug-terror nexus, and some insurgents' (such as the Taliban's) direct links with drug cartels, abandoning war against drug cartels "to contain" terrorists/insurgents will not give rich dividends. This is what happened in Latin America; and one is afraid is going to happen in Afghanistan. We need answers to the questions raised by Williams: (a) if allowing drug cartels to carry on their business is a good idea; (b) if drugs, arms and human trafficking are on the rise as the "free flow of goods" due to Globalization has turned smuggling of consumer goods less profitable; and (c) if drug, arms, money laundering and terrorism are different types of transnational threats or they represent the undifferentiated one. We do not know the right answer yet; and are not sure if "the diagnosis must itself, as a matter of urgency, be diagnosed" [Williams, 2002, p. 203].

Again, the signs of these countries getting engaged to resolve mutual differences are least promising. China has problems not only with India but with the US as well. In view of this Myanmar is least likely to cooperate with anybody without getting a nod from Beijing. Similarly, the prospect of engaging

Iran in South Asian affairs is least likely in the foreseeable future. Iran's having stakes in both South and Central Asia makes the situation more complicated. Newer sanctions and threats of "impending" attacks on Iran for its alleged nuclear programme will further aggravate the situation. As Pakistan is not prepared to accept Indian hegemony; Nepal and Bangladesh are also suspicious of the Indian "design". So, while the prospect of getting international cooperation in resolving Pakistan's and Bangladesh's transnational security problems is uncertain; these countries can take certain bi-lateral measures with their immediate neighbours in resolving the long-drawn problems. As India's quest for emerging as the new hegemon in South and Southeast Asia by alienating its immediate neighbours will be detrimental to transnational security cooperation, so is Pakistan's pursuit for the elusive "strategic depth" in Afghanistan against India. In sum, "non-state actors" or criminals, terrorists and insurgents in South Asia hold the ground not by dint of their own strength but due to the prevalence of bad governance and most importantly, due to their promotion by some of the state actors to bleed the rival state, from within and beyond South Asia.

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Bangladesh's National Defence: A Debatable Dialectic

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Abstract

The profession of arms is very different to other professions. Although soldiers themselves talk up the 'nobility' of their selfless devotion to the national cause, there are more substantive socio-psychological differences separating the civil and the military. This has to do with the evolution of the liberal-democratic state, and the institutionalisation of the social contract between the politician and the polity. The liberal democratic state defends the citizens' lives, limbs and property — considered a sacred trust — and provides the framework necessary for the citizens' self-actualisation. It does this partly by monopolising violence in the hands of constabular, paramilitary and military organs so that citizens do not have to violently defend themselves. Soldiers, on the other hand, are recruited, trained, armed and led so as to be able

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efficiently to kill designated enemy personnel and destroy their assets. They are the only citizens who are required, and take a solemn oath to that effect, to sacrifice their lives in the performance of their duties, that of defending fellow-citizens and the state. The ethos, mindsets and approaches to life of the two segments are necessarily different although each is symbiotically related to and dependent on the other.

Bangladesh should not have to wage war with any state to secure its national interests, but it needs to demonstrate the national resolve and capacity to stand up for its core interests when states with greater power wish to impose their will. It is possible that despite their seniority, rank, service and experience, some Bangladeshi flag-rank officers may not fully appreciate the dangers lurking in diverting the military from its core purpose and proficiency to tasks which the constitution assigns to the civil administration. If the Army has to take on the government's non-military 'constitutional obligations' — in the author's words — towards the citizenry, then would that not raise questions about the need for having a civilian government at all?

I. A 'SOCIO-ECONOMIC' PERSPECTIVE

The armed services of democratically administered states, in which the military forces comprise a segment of the republic's permanent bureaucratic structure, usually leave politics to politicians, concentrating instead on purely professional concerns. These include consideration of aspects of the national strategy, defence doctrine, threat perceptions, and military preparations for fulfilling their constitutionally ordained responsibilities, i.e., defending the terrestrial, aerial and maritime spaces falling under national jurisdiction, thereby defending the state's territorial integrity from external aggression, and safeguarding the state's sovereign control over its internal affairs from encroachment or interference by challengers. While this is a familiar statement of the objectives of the national military, the terms of reference represented by this statement have often been breached in Bangladesh. A conflation of what military commanders have done with what they are constitutionally required to do appears to have confounded what may somewhat simplistically be described as 'normal.'

As a corollary to the opening statement, it is also understood that armed forces in democratically administered states remain taciturn on matters of high state politics, since their involvement in such affairs is often considered unwarranted, unacceptable and, in some instances, unconstitutional. This is why a recent commentary authored by a brigadier-general serving as a Director at the Army Headquarters, and serialised in a daily newspaper widely considered favourable to the incumbents, is intriguing at best and confusing as to its purpose and import.¹ The Brigadier-General noted in his commentary that

¹ Brigadier-General Md. Nasimul Gani, "The social face of the Bangladesh Army — 2", concluding section of a two-part commentary, *The Independent*, Dhaka, 20 April 2011.

given its role in 'relief distribution, repatriation, rehabilitation, demobilization of guerrillas and military components' at the end of the war of independence, the army's engagement in 'the prolonged counter-insurgency operation in CHT (Chittagong Hill Tracts)', the military's provision of 'medical support' and other civic amenities to locals during military training exercises, 'the employment of the Army during floods, cyclones, cleaning collapsed buildings' and other disasters, the military is amply qualified to act as a national developmental institution.² Brigadier-General Gani posits that the Army's record in "the preparation of voter list and National ID card, machine readable passport, construction of different roads in CHT, Dhaka flood protection embankment," and the implementation of various housing schemes as well as 'the participation of the Army in UN peacekeeping' operations conclusively demonstrate that the military is fully capable of delivering developmental services at home and abroad. For reasons that are not entirely transparent, he describes these experiences and exercises as aspects of the Army's corporate social responsibility.

The Brigadier-General goes on to state that while "a professionally competent and effective Army will provide deterrent effect in peace time against any adversary and internal threat," "cumulative deterrent effect is demonstrated through national socio-economic development, improvement of HRD index, peace in the society, cultural development and intellectual practices and so on." He extends this argument to suggest that 'In Bangladesh, the Army's social face is working for the extreme benefit (sic) of the nation and the government. More expansion of the social face of the Army will demonstrate the capability and capacity of the government to achieve its constitutional obligations. Bangladesh will not then require the help of present corporate CSR to elevate itself as a social welfare state to a western standard. (sic)' It is difficult to fault the apparent logic posited by the Brigadier-General from a socio-economic perspective: the government has to fulfil its constitutional obligations which it is finding it difficult to do; corporate social responsibility 'of a corporate body sometimes reduces the effectiveness of the government and its organizations'³; the armed forces have demonstrated their skills in socio-economic developmental activities; enhancing these capacities will enable the government to meet its constitutional obligations without relying on potentially damaging (for the government, that is) CSR functions of Bangladesh's commercial houses; so, the military should be engaged in delivering services which are traditionally in the Administration's realm.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

II. THE PROFUNDITY OF PUNCH-LINES

Using the above line of argumentation as the context, Brigadier-General Gani concludes, "the patronization of the government to improve and increase the social face of the Army will depend entirely on political decisions," but his key recommendation is clear: "Constitutional guidelines may be included in any future constitutional amendment/revision on the role of the Army in peacetime socio-economic development. Till that constitutional inclusion is done, a law may be enacted amending the role in aid of civil administration or ministerial directive through inter-ministerial meetings." In short, the Defence Minister, who is concurrently the country's Prime Minister, should issue an order to the army to engage in socio-economic developmental activities similar to the ones listed by the Brigadier-General in his fairly comprehensive account of what the Bangladeshi Army has had to do in peacetime. According to the line postulated by the Brigadier-general, this, then, should be the primary focus of the national military's endeavours.

Brigadier-General Gani's recommendations call forth several observations: firstly, as a Director at the Army Headquarters, he is unlikely to have written this commentary on his own and sent it off to the civilian print-medium without seeking and obtaining appropriate clearance from his superiors, i.e., the Army's higher command structure. His views, thus published in a non-military newspaper may, therefore, be taken to reflect the consensus view of the Army's leadership. Secondly, this is not the first time that an officer holding senior rank and appointment has underscored a perceived need for the Army to engage in "national developmental activities" rather than focus on its core professional obligations and competencies. Thirty years ago, in January 1981, the then Chief of the Army Staff (CAS), Lt. General H.M. Ershad, wrote in the inaugural edition of the *Bangladesh Army Journal*, "The role of the military, especially in the context of a national army, should very much be that of a participant in the collective effort of the nation."⁴ General Ershad was not the first soldier to express this view either; war-hero-turned renegades such as the then fugitive Colonel M Ziauddin, the late Colonel Abu Taher, and the late Major General Abul Manzoor — with the latter two lives lost in the wake of abortive mutinies for which they assumed leadership — had aired similar views, although outlined in different ideological frameworks and framed in different political contexts.⁵ However, these three former war-heroes had failed to realise their visions of the military's role in Bangladesh's national development.

⁴ Lt. General H.M. Ershad, "Role of the Military in Underdeveloped Countries," *Bangladesh Army Journal*, Dhaka, Army Education Directorate, January 1981, p.12.

⁵ See, for instance, S. Mahmud Ali, *Understanding Bangladesh*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2010, p.163.

Unlike his three illustrious predecessors, two of them dead and the third politically inactive, General Ershad was at the time in command of the Army and his demand that the national military be involved in non-military nation-building decision-making processes and activities in peacetime carried the institutional weight of the army with him. However, whether the military high command supported this view or if his immediate superior officer, the “Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces,” the Defence Minister and President, General Ziaur Rahman, appreciated this tacit challenge to his authority and the authority of the constitutionally legitimised administration or not, is not clear from the publicly available record. General Ershad did, however, explain and elaborate on his “military as a national developmental institution” concept in a series of interviews he gave to the national and international press in October and November of 1981.⁶ The record shows he did not tarry for very long, deposing as he did the elected government, declaring martial law, and assuming the office of the Chief Martial Law Administrator the following spring.

Whether Brigadier-General Gani’s newspaper commentary is an indication of similar thinking among the army’s present set of commanders is not explicitly or immediately clear from the writing, but the precedent set by General Ershad, his own commentaries on the subject, and his subsequent action might prompt serious consideration of the issues the Brigadier-General raises. There also are other implications implicit in the Brigadier-General’s opinion piece. If the government does exercise control over the military high command and the Army leadership’s views are in consonance with those of its political masters, as the customary approach to civil-military relations (CMR) in a democratic regime would suggest, then it would be logical to surmise that the basic thrust of the Brigadier-General’s recommendations not only has the endorsement of the government but may, in fact, reflect the thinking current among the present political establishment with regard to the Army’s peacetime role. Should this analysis is proved to be correct, then it would be logical to infer that the government wishes the national military to focus on constructing roads, bridges and housing schemes, delivering essential supplies to citizens, expanding the electronic informational and communications networks across the country, and helping the civil administration to overcome its myriad failings in meeting the government’s “constitutional obligations” — in Brigadier-General Gani’s words — in short, many tasks, all of them to do with the government’s civil administrative functions but with no relationship to the primary purpose

⁶ See General H.M. Ershad’s comments published in *The Guardian*, London, 7 October 1981; *The New York Times*, 14 October 1981; *The Bangladesh Observer*, Dhaka, 29 November 1981; and *The Holiday*, Dhaka, 6 December 1981.

for which the military was established in the first place, i.e., to deter aggression and, if deterrence failed, to defend Bangladesh in battle.

This last formulation, if correct, would suggest the government's acknowledgement of a failure to deliver appropriate services to the citizenry, and acceptance of an overarching civil-military role for the armed forces. If the Brigadier-General's recommended constitutional amendment and his proposed statute were enacted, Bangladesh's national military would be effectively transformed into a veritable uniformed version of the Roads & Highways Department, Water & Sewerage Authority, Public Works Department, and such essential organs of the civil administration. This may not be what the Brigadier-General desires as the outcome of his proposed changes to the military's fundamental purpose, but it is difficult to avoid reaching that conclusion from the piece.

III. THE FUNDAMENTAL PURPOSE OF MILITARY ORGANISATIONS

Long-established states with considerable global and regional influence, including in Bangladesh, provide case-studies of the role played by armed forces in and for their respective societies. Three prominent instances are provided by Japan, traditionally Bangladesh's single largest bilateral donor country and, reputedly, the most "pacifist" among major powers; the People's Republic of China, the key "rising" or re-emerging great power whose steady ascent in the global strategic firmament is altering the planet's power relations; and India, Bangladesh's major neighbour and periodic ally, also a great power in the making with increasing economic, diplomatic and military prowess. While all three are "great powers" on the bases of different combinations of criteria and power components, their military policies and practices vary widely. As states, their ego-perceptions, ideational cores, constitutional frameworks and external profiles diverge. Within each polity, differences of view manifest themselves on many major issues, but on certain basic planks of the national interest, each of these actors demonstrates substantial coherence. All have large armed forces but while India has engaged in conflict with its neighbours, post-1945 Japan has not, and China has done so very rarely since its 1979 war with Vietnam. Because of this mix of diversity and similarities, a brief examination of how these influential powers have organised their military forces and to what end, offers useful indicators for smaller developing countries reliant on the help and advice of these major actors.

Case Study: Japan

A chain of islands in the East China Sea off the shores of continental Asia, Japan's national defence perspectives and policies have been shaped by, among

other factors, its insular geography and maritime environment. Its August 1945 surrender terms prohibited post-War Japan from building armed forces to prevent any further aggressive activities. This proscription was formalised in the US-imposed constitution which authorised the establishment of “self-defence” forces which, however, have grown to be some of the largest and most sophisticated in the world. Japan’s military alliance with the USA, revised and refined several times since 1960, forms the “cornerstone” of Japan’s defence strategy; however, successive Japanese governments have devoted significant resources to ensure that Japanese “self-defence” ground, maritime and air forces retain their substantive and qualitative edge over potential regional rivals. Until 2010, Tokyo based its very sophisticated military forces on its “Basic Defence Force Concept.” In more recent months, the Japanese government’s assessment of its security milieu noted that, “A global shift in the balance of power has been brought about by the rise of emerging powers and the relative change of the US influence. North Korea’s nuclear and missile issues are immediate and grave destabilizing factors to regional security. Military modernization by China and its insufficient transparency are of concern for the regional and global community. Russia’s military activities are increasingly robust. A full-scale invasion against Japan is unlikely to occur today, but the security challenges and destabilizing factors Japan faces are diverse, complex and intertwined.”⁷ In response to this threat perception with regard to the Japanese national security interests, the government undertook several measures. The crucial ones related to Japan’s military forces. The government announced that, “Japan will build a ‘Dynamic Defence Force’ which supersedes ‘the Basic Defence Force Concept’, the latter being a concept that places priority on ensuring deterrence through the existence of defence forces per se. ‘Dynamic Defence Force’ will increase the credibility of Japan’s deterrent capability through raising levels of equipment use and increasing operations tempo. It will also enable Japan to play active roles in various occasions such as international peace cooperation activities.”⁸ To this end, the Japanese government proclaimed that the Roles of its Defence Forces were:

- Effective deterrence and response, e.g., ensuring security in the sea and air space surrounding Japan, responding to attacks on Japan’s offshore islands.
- Efforts to further stabilize the security environment of Asia-Pacific region.

⁷ Ministry of Defence (MOD), *Summary of National Defence Program Guidelines for FY 2011 and Beyond*, Tokyo, Approved by the Security Council and the Cabinet on 17 December 2010, pp.2-3.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.3-4.

- Efforts to improve the global security environment.⁹

Flowing from the above, Tokyo ordered reviews and enhancement of its military capabilities:

- Budget allocations among each service of the Self-Defence Forces will be subjected to drastic review.
- As regards preparations against full-scale invasion, relevant knowledge and expertise will be maintained at a minimum necessary level.
- Priority will be placed on, among others, *enhancing basis for joint operations, improving capabilities to respond to attacks on off-shore islands, strengthening capabilities for international peace cooperation activities.*¹⁰

To attain these objectives, despite being the most pacifist among great powers, Japan authorised its self-defence forces to build up a personnel strength of 154,000 combatants with a substantial arsenal of sophisticated military hardware. Despite being an island with no land frontiers with any potential adversary, Japan is to field an army comprising 8 Divisions and 6 independent Brigades along with a Central Readiness Force and an Armoured Division, the ground force being armed with 400 tanks, 400 howitzers and rockets, and 7 anti-aircraft artillery groups/regiments.¹¹ The navy is to operate 48 Destroyers, 22 submarines, 150 combat aircraft, and other vessels and aircraft, organised into 12 Destroyer Divisions, 6 Submarine Divisions, 1 Minesweeper Flotilla and 9 squadrons of patrol aircraft. Six Destroyers are equipped with the ballistic missile defence-capable *Aegis* system armed with SM-3 interceptor missiles.¹² The Japanese Air Force has 374 combat aircraft designed for various operational missions although, officially, the authorised strength is 340 combat aircraft including 260 fighters.¹³

Case Study: China

China's rapid re-emergence as a great power is injecting a measure of systemic level transitional fluidity and strategic volatility unprecedented in recent decades.¹⁴ Rooted in rapid economic growth over the past three decades, China's

⁹ Ibid., p.5.

¹⁰ Ibid. Emphasis added.

¹¹ Ibid., p.7.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.; James Hackett, ed., *The Military Balance 2011*, London, International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), March 2011, p.247.

¹⁴ See S. Mahmud Ali, *Asia-Pacific Security Dynamics in the Obama Era: A New World Emerging*, New York, Routledge, 2011, pp.3-8.

capacity to shape its security environment has been partly expressed in its capacity to generate fungible instruments of coercion in the form of its armed forces — the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). Faced with the need to secure territorial integration with Taiwan and resolve major terrestrial and maritime territorial disputes with several neighbours, China also confronts subsystemic challenges from forward-deployed US forces designed to ensure US systemic primacy with its military dominance. Unable or unwilling to engage in a direct platform-for-platform arms race with the systemic hegemon, China pursued military modernisation to afford it an ability to deploy “anti-access/area-denial (A2AD)” capabilities which threaten to rob the USA of its qualitative and quantitative advantages. In early 2011, Beijing proclaimed its vision for the 2nd decade of the 21st century when “China will continue to take advantage of this important period of strategic opportunities for national development, apply the Scientific Outlook on Development in depth, persevere on the path of peaceful development, pursue an independent foreign policy of peace and a national defence policy that is defensive in nature, map out both economic development and national defence in a unified manner and, in the process of building a society that is moderately affluent on a general basis, realize *the unified goal of building a prosperous country and a strong military.*”¹⁵

China’s assessment of its security milieu is mixed: “The international security situation has become more complex. International strategic competition centering on international order, comprehensive national strength and geopolitics has intensified. Contradictions continue to surface between developed and developing countries and between traditional and emerging powers, while local conflicts and regional flashpoints are a recurrent theme International military competition remains fierce. Major powers are stepping up the realignment of their security and military strategies, accelerating military reform, and vigorously developing new and more sophisticated military technologies. Some powers have worked out strategies for outer space, cyber space and the polar regions, developed means for prompt global strikes, accelerated development of missile defence systems, enhanced cyber operations capabilities to occupy new strategic commanding heights.”¹⁶ Against this backdrop of growing US efforts to extend its primacy in perpetuity, Beijing noted the “more intricate and volatile” atmosphere permeating the Asia-Pacific region: “Regional pressure points drag on and without solution in sight. There is intermittent tension on the Korean Peninsula. The security situation in Afghanistan remains serious. Political turbulence persists in some countries. Ethnic and religious discords are evident.

¹⁵Central Military Commission, *China’s National Defence in 2010*, Beijing, 31 March 2011, p.2. Emphasis added.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p.3.

Disputes over territorial and maritime rights and interests flare up occasionally. And terrorist, separatist and extremist activities run amok. Profound changes are taking shape in the Asia-Pacific strategic landscape. Relevant major powers are increasing their strategic investment. The United States is reinforcing its regional military alliances, and increasing involvement in regional security affairs.¹⁷

Against that backdrop, "Taiwan independence separatist forces," and "separatist forces working for 'East Turkistan independence' and 'Tibet independence' have inflicted serious damage on national security and social stability. Pressure builds up in preserving China's territorial integrity and maritime rights and interests."¹⁸ Confronted with these and other challenges, compounded by US action vis-a-vis Taiwan and other Chinese interests, Beijing has continued to modernise its military forces and capabilities while pursuing active diplomatic engagement with all major players. Beijing has assigned the following "goals and tasks" to its armed forces: *Safeguarding national sovereignty, security and interests of national development* —

China's national defence is tasked to guard against and resist aggression, defend the security of China's lands, inland waters, territorial waters and airspace, safeguard its maritime rights and interests, and maintain its security interests in space, electromagnetic space and cyber space.¹⁹

These goals have generated "the strategic requirements of mobile operations and tri-dimensional offense and defence, the PLA Army (PLAA) has invested additional efforts in reform, innovation and development, and advanced the overall transformation of the service. The PLAA has emphasized the development of new types of combat forces, optimized its organization and structure, strengthened military training in conditions of informationization, accelerated the digitized upgrading and retrofitting of main battle weaponry, organically deployed new types of weapon platforms, and significantly boosted its capabilities in long-distance maneuvers and integrated assaults." The PLAA's mobile operational units include 18 combined corps and additional independent combined operational divisions and brigades. These forces are deployed under the operational command of seven Military Area Commands spread across China's land territory.²⁰ China has similarly expanded and modernised its navy, Air Force and Strategic Rocket Force, also called the

¹⁷ Ibid., p.4.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.5.

²⁰ Ibid., p.8.

Second Artillery Command. Its recently demonstrated capabilities to identify the vulnerabilities of the large forward deployed US forces under the US Pacific Command (PACOM), and strike at these so as to render major offensive operations by these forces more difficult than was the case in earlier years, have been recognised in the US government's annual reports to the Congress on China's military power. The US Department of Defence recently reported that "China is developing and fielding large numbers of advanced medium-range ballistic and cruise missiles, new attack submarines equipped with advanced weapons, increasingly capable long-range air defense systems, electronic warfare and computer network attack capabilities, advanced fighter aircraft, and counter-space systems."²¹ China is now believed to deploy the largest armed forces in the world with combat capability only second to the US military's.²²

Case Study: India

Asia's other rising great power and Bangladesh's closest neighbour sharing common borders stretching over 4,000 kilometres, too, has built up massive armed forces, mainly to deter or defeat Chinese and Pakistani forces, but also to secure its dominance across South Asia and the Indian Ocean, and reach out across the maritime space stretching from Africa's east coast through the Indian Ocean, the South China Sea and the East China Sea to Russia's Sakhalin Island where Indian energy interests have led to an extension of Delhi's strategic footprint. As a regional power demonstrating the will and the ability to acquire the status of a global player, India needs, first of all, to exercise unquestioned sovereignty over the Republic's territory. As decades of military and para-military deployments in counter-insurgency operations in North-Eastern Indian states around Bangladesh, in the Jammu and Kashmir state disputed with Pakistan and China, in Punjab, and several other states afflicted with radical insurrections demonstrate, India's national consolidation remains work in progress. Next, India also wishes to exercise its primacy across the South Asian regional subsystem without which it could not hope to extend its force projecting abilities farther afield. It is in this realm of regional dominance that India has devoted significant military and intelligence resources.

India's ego-perception lends itself to expansive aspirational drives to self-actualisation. Its Ministry of Defence (MOD) states: "India's size, strategic location, trade links and exclusive economic zone (EEZ) links (sic) its security

²¹Secretary of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China: Annual Report to Congress*, Washington, DOD, 2010, p.1.

²²The PLA's order of battle is examined in *Hackett*, ed., 2011, pp.230-36.

environment directly with the extended neighbourhood, particularly neighbouring countries and the regions of Central Asia, South-East Asia, the Gulf and the Indian Ocean. In a globalised world, these strategic-economic factors impose an increasingly larger responsibility on India.²³ Parallel to this extra-regional extension of Indian strategic interests, Delhi also posited, "A secure, stable peaceful and prosperous neighbourhood is an integral part of India's security construct."²⁴ Deconstructed, this would translate into a *Pax Indica* designed, devised and enforced with India's capacity to persuade, dissuade and coerce its regional interlocutors such as Bangladesh. Long before transitional fluidity affecting the international system caused strategic uncertainty, Indian commentators urged "political will" on their leaders to give expression to India's regional primacy. They claimed that India's innate capacities to innovate were far superior to those of China or the West, and urged Delhi to establish an Indian peace in its neighbourhood: "It is true that *Pax Romana* or something similar does impose a certain discipline. India therefore should bid to be one of the new poles of power: *Pax Indica*, certainly in the Indian Ocean and its littorals. However, this can only happen if India becomes a military and economic power, one that is confident of its own strengths. The good news is that this dream is within our grasp."²⁵ Perhaps in gradual realisation of these aspirations, Indian policy has shifted to a high gear in production and consumption, with significant shares of the accumulated surplus being devoted to the expansion of military forces. India's defence budget rose from \$34.4bn in 2009 to \$38.4bn in 2010.²⁶ In 2011, while the rest of the government tightened its fiscal belt, India's defence allocation rose by 11.59 percent.²⁷ Although India produces a lot of weapons and support systems at home, between 2006 and 2010, it bought 9 percent of all arms traded globally, becoming the world's largest weapon importer.²⁸ The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute says India will remain the world's leading arms importer in the coming years. Current plans are for Delhi to import weapons worth more than \$50bn over the next five years.²⁹

²³MOD, *Annual Report 2009-2010*, New Delhi, 2010, pp. 2-3.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁵Rajeev Srinivasan, "Pax Indica and a multipolar world," *rediff.com News*, 12 July 2004.

²⁶Hackett, ed., 2011, p.237.

²⁷Laxman Behera, "India's Defence Budget 2011-12," *IDSA Comment*, New Delhi, Institute for Defence Studies & Analyses, 7 March 2011.

²⁸BBC News South Asia, India is world's "largest importer" of arms, says study, London, 14 March 2011.

²⁹*Ibid.*

India has one of the world's largest military forces, with 1.32 million servicemen in their ranks. The Indian army boasts 1.12 million troops, the Indian navy, 58,350 sailors, and the Indian Air Force, 127,200 airmen. The Coast Guard is 9,550-strong while another 1.3 million soldiers serve in various paramilitary forces. Delhi can mobilise 1.15 million reservists for the armed services and another 987,821 for paramilitary forces.³⁰ The Eastern Command, headquartered in Calcutta and comprising the III, IV, and XXXIII Corps, covers India's north-eastern quadrant including the semi-active borders with China, insurgent-infested north-eastern states, and India's borders with Bangladesh and Myanmar. In recent years, leaving aside artillery and other combat support units, the III Corps comprised the 23rd Infantry Division and the 57th Mountain Division; the IV Corps consisted of the 2nd, 5th, and the 21st Mountain Divisions; and the XXXIII Corps included the 17th, 20th, and 27th Mountain Divisions.³¹ In 2009, Delhi confirmed raising two new mountain divisions for this sector.

The Eastern Command waged major combat operations during the war with China in 1962 and the war with Pakistan over Bangladesh in 1971. This would be the Command which would launch any operations in or against Bangladesh should Delhi take a political decision to do so. In the air, the Eastern Air Command, headquartered in Shillong, operates aircraft from bases in Agartala, Bagdogra, Barrackpore, Calcutta, Chabua, Guahati, Hashimara, Jorhat, Kalaikunda, Panagarh, Shillong and Tezpur.³² IAF aircraft from these bases flew in the Bangladesh operations in November-December 1971. The IAF is replacing its MiG-21 fighters with more powerful MiG-27 and other later models, having deployed two squadrons of the Su-30 MKI fighters more recently. These two commands are supported by the Eastern Naval Command headquartered at Visakhapatnam. Established in June 1971 for operations in the Bangladesh theatre, the Command's "primary role is to safeguard against aggression on the eastern front and provide security to Indian territory, ports, harbours, oil platforms and other maritime assets and resources in India's EEZ."³³

If the above cases offer any lessons, these must include the following –

- All states, including those with a committed pacifist ideational outlook and constitutional framework, must defend their citizens, their territorial

³⁰Hackett, 2011, p.237.

³¹"Military-World-India-Army-Commands," *GlobalSecurity.org*, Online, at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/india/eastcom.htm> accessed 28 April 2011.

³²"Military-World-India-Air Force," *GlobalSecurity.org*, Online, at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/india/eac.htm> accessed 29 April 2011.

³³The Indian Navy, *Eastern Command: Visakhapatnam*, Online, at <http://indiannavy.nic.in/NewPfr06/ENC3.htm> accessed 29 April 2011.

integrity, national independence and sovereignty. This does not require any country to be in a state of constant war — no state could survive the strains of such an existence. However, in a highly competitive environment, states must be able to count among their resources armed forces capable of inflicting far greater costs on any adversary than the adversary would gain by attacking it.

- States which have no expansionist goals and are purely defensive in their aspirations, must have effective deterrent capabilities, not just to combat aggressors, but to backstop diplomacy in securing the national interest. To be credible, deterrence must inhere in professionally proficient combat forces which secure the most optimised value for the resources taxpayers place at their disposal.
- Armed forces have the potential capacity to engage in operations other than war — in aid of civil power, in providing succour to victims and survivors of disasters, in delivering essential supplies and services when the civilian administration has failed to meet emergencies. The Japanese, Chinese, Indian, and indeed Bangladeshi armed forces have demonstrated this prized capacity repeatedly and no doubt will do so when the need arises in the future. But they can offer this service *only if* they retain organisational coherence and professional proficiency in the first instance. The reverse is not necessarily true.

IV. BANGLADESH'S NATIONAL DEFENCE

Bangladesh's national defence has been a controversial subject since the birth of the state as the outcome of a nine-month-long war of independence triggered by violent suppression of a national autonomist campaign by Bengali activists against a repressive military-bureaucratic-industrial elite based in what then was Pakistan's western province. Indian military involvement and subsequent intervention in the war on the side of the Freedom Fighters, tensions among combatant guerrillas and their nominal political masters housed in Kolkata reflected in the subsequent sacking of several war-heroes, the crystallisation of differing views of objectives of the national struggle during the war, and a violent struggle among major factions from the left, right, and centre of the Bangladeshi political spectrum during the first decade of independence shaped popular views not especially favourable of the military. The armed forces, predominantly the army, sought repeatedly to "save" Bangladesh from itself, i.e., its frequently corrupt and incompetent political elite, but in the end, not only failed to meet this initially popular goal of establishing an effective and public-minded administration, but was itself severely corrupted in its exercise

of almost absolute power over the populace in whose name all Bangladesh's rulers have ruled.

All of Bangladesh's rulers, irrespective of their party-political or military antecedents, have, against the backdrop of weak or non-existent national institutions or operative principles, identified the national military as both a powerful instrument essential to their survival and a potential threat to that survival. All of them have sought to bring the military command on side, either by promoting officers considered "safe" to command, irrespective of their professional competence or the respect they commanded among the rank-and-file, or by subverting the chain of command by bypassing it using "favoured" subordinates to transmit political instructions to the supposedly apolitical institutions of national defence. As polarised political leaderships have succeeded one another, they have effectively damaged the force's combat capacity by promoting those considered loyal to themselves. The armed forces have, therefore, begun to appear as divided, and operationally ineffective, as many other organs of the polarised polity. And yet, there has been no acknowledgement of the danger this poses.

Bangladesh's armed forces have been fortunate not to have to engage in major combat operations against foreign aggressors. However, since August 1975, the national forces have often faced military pressures from either or both of the two neighbours with which Bangladesh shares land borders and who alone can mount ground offensives against Bangladesh. In the hypothetical case of a third power taking aggressive steps against Bangladesh, the former's forces would have to cross the national territory of either India or Myanmar, or both. A seaborne invasion of Bangladesh, too, would need to approach if not cross the maritime spaces controlled by Myanmar and India. This is why only these two neighbours could mount military operations against Bangladesh directly. The record of the recent past does not promise an entirely pacific future. In late 1975, former guerrillas loyal to Mr Kader Siddiky crossed over to India's Meghalaya state where Indian state agencies offered sanctuary, arms, ammunition, explosives and other support necessary for mounting attacks against Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Bangladeshi police outposts. In April 1977, Prime Minister Morarji Desai stopped this proxy campaign, and inviting the government of Bangladesh to negotiate the militants' disarmament and safe return, repatriated them. Starting from 1976, the *Chakma-led Shanti Bahini* insurrection commanded by Messers Manabendra Narayan Larma and Jyotirindra Bodhipriyo Larma against Bangladeshi authority in the CHT engaged the national military and paramilitary forces in a two-decade long counter-insurgency campaign causing Bangladesh the haemorrhaging of significant blood and treasure. The guerrillas operated from India's Tripura

state with the support of Indian state agencies. Only when Delhi took the political decision to terminate this particular proxy campaign was Bangladesh able, with direct Indian assistance, to cease fire, although peace remains elusive.

The India-Bangladesh border, sections of which are being fenced off by India, still carries disputes over overlapping claims and continues to see the BDR/Bangladesh Border Guards (BGB) exchange fire with the Indian Border Security Force (BSF). The worst incidents occurred in 1999-2000 when the two forces not only repeatedly exchanged fire, but on occasion, fought virtually pitched battles as each tried to occupy land it claimed on behalf of its respective government. The Padua/Pyrdiwah dispute and the Borobari clashes in 2000 caused the deaths of a number of BSF soldiers who had entered Bangladeshi territory.³⁴ One reflection of Indian-Bangladeshi relations has been mirrored in the continuing deaths of Bangladeshi nationals shot by the BSF. The BSF reportedly shot and killed 907 unarmed Bangladeshi civilians between 1 January 2000 and 31 March 2011,³⁵ although there have been no reports of Indian civilians being shot by the BDR/BGB. Tensions have not been restricted to the land frontiers. The Indian Navy deployed combat platforms close to an islet, *Dakshin Talpatty* (New Moore in Indian lexicon), in early 1981 when Delhi challenged Dhaka's claim to it. Myanmar forces, too, have periodically threatened Bangladeshi citizens and territory. Indian and Myanmar navies deployed naval vessels in waters claimed by Bangladesh in 2008.³⁶ With demand for energy resources rapidly rising, and offshore reserves as well as maritime trade acquiring growing significance, Bangladesh's maritime border disputes with its two neighbours add a new, and potentially debilitating, dimension to its national security challenges. No foreign patrons will defend these on Bangladesh's behalf.

V. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

States seeking to retain sovereign independence of entities with which they share line-crossing ethno-cultural overlaps need to determine what distinguishes them from the wider human canvas, and what the purpose of distinguishing and separating them from the broader backdrop is. Disputes are best resolved with diplomacy. However, even states within a political-economic

³⁴Willem van Schendel, *The Bengal Borderland: Beyond State and Nation in South Asia*, London, Anthem Press, 2005, pp.53-85, 327, fn.71-74.

³⁵Odhikar, *Human Rights Monitoring Report*, Dhaka, 1 April 2011, p.3.

³⁶*Bounday News: Bangladesh-Myanmar naval standoff over disputed maritime area*, International Boundaries Research Unit, Durham, Durham University, 5 November 2008; "Bangladesh to protest India's oil exploration in Bay of Bengal," *Thaindian News*, 27 December 2008.

confederation e.g., the European Union maintain large and combat-ready armed forces, not because they have to fight their neighbours but to present the national leadership with policy options when diplomacy proves insufficient and the defence of the national interest demands the display of more robust intent and capability. Ideally, Bangladesh should not have to wage war with any state to secure its national interests, but it needs to demonstrate the national resolve and capacity to stand up for its core interests when states with greater power wish to impose their will.

It is possible that despite their seniority, rank, service and experience, some Bangladeshi flag-rank officers may not fully appreciate the dangers lurking in diverting the military from its core purpose and proficiency to tasks which the constitution assigns to the civil administration. If the Army has to take on the government's non-military "constitutional obligations" — in the author's words — towards the citizenry, then would that not raise questions about the need for having a civilian government at all? The Brigadier-General does suggest, "A separate dedicated force out of the existing level of the Army may be organized within the existing The National Guard Act, 1950, to improve, increase and demonstrate the social face of the Army without jeopardizing the operational and training capability, because, prolonged deployment of the Army outside the cantonment will reduce its 'biting power'."³⁷ He does not explain whether he seeks the reconstitution of a force like the *Jatiya Rakkhi Bahini* party-political militia which was merged into the army in 1975-76, or under whose command this force would operate, under what set of rules and regulations, and how that might affect the regulatory regimes dictating the armed forces' terms of reference. Nor does he explain why an expansion and specialisation of the Rapid Action Battalions (RAB), Armed Police Battalions, Bangladesh Border Guards, and Ansar and Village Defence Party organisations cannot extend the national developmental assistance to the civilian government without eviscerating the institution and purpose of the national military. If institutions costing the public exchequer \$1.32bn in 2010³⁸ need to drastically revise their very purpose, then a fundamental review of the national defence and the military is warranted.

The fact is, the profession of arms is very different to other professions. Although soldiers themselves talk up the "nobility" of their selfless devotion to the national cause, there are more substantive socio-psychological differences separating the civil and the military. This has to do with the evolution of the

³⁷ Brigadier-General Md. Nasimul Gani, "The social face of the Bangladesh Army — 2", *The Independent*, Dhaka, 20 April 2011.

³⁸ Hackett, 2011, p.226.

liberal-democratic state, and the institutionalisation of the social contract between the politician and the polity. Liberal democracies function on the formal authority of the popular will expressed freely and fairly in periodic elections. Elected representatives frame laws which the executive organs implement and the judiciary adjudicates on. The state defends the citizens' lives, limbs and property — considered a sacred trust — and provides the framework necessary for the citizens' self-actualisation. It does this partly by monopolising violence in the hands of constabular, paramilitary and military organs so that citizens do not have to violently defend themselves. This is a crucial function of all states. Soldiers, on the other hand, are recruited, trained, armed and led so as to be able efficiently to kill designated enemy personnel and destroy their assets. They are the only citizens who are required, and take a solemn oath to that effect, to sacrifice their lives in the performance of their duties, that of defending fellow-citizens and the state. The ethos, mindsets and approaches to life of the two segments are necessarily different although each is symbiotically related to and dependent on the other. Tensions inherent in such a relationship, complex though civil-military relations are, need to be appreciated by both the national leadership and the military high-command so that unease and suspicions are replaced with mutual reinforcement, and a synergy between the citizens and their ultimate defenders contributes to the continual construction of the national edifice. There are no practical alternatives to the development of such a healthy exchange of mutual respect. Against that backdrop, as society develops and the security milieu evolves, military reforms become not just helpful, but necessary. However, change needs to pursue a logical course, with a rational examination of goals, ends and means. In a representative dispensation, an informed citizenry needs to engage with this process and shape the discourse, so that the outcome reflects both reasoned consideration and the popular will, which combination alone grants institutional efficacy, legitimacy and sustainability.

Brigadier-General Gani deserves to be commended for initiating a debate on such a significant issue of national import.

IOR-ARC Successes and Failures: South Asian Perspectives

*ANM Muniruzzaman**

Abstract

The Indian Ocean is the third largest of the world's five oceans. Four critically important access waterways, the Suez Canal (Egypt), Bab el Mandeb (Djibouti-Yemen), Strait of Hormuz (Iran-Oman), and Strait of Malacca (Indonesia-Malaysia), are embraced by this ocean. The Indian Ocean provides major sea routes connecting the Middle East, Africa, and East Asia with Europe and the Americas. It carries a particularly heavy traffic of petroleum and petroleum products from the oilfields of the Persian Gulf and Indonesia. An estimated 40% of the world's offshore oil production comes from the Indian Ocean. The increasing strategic as well as economic importance of this ocean brings

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He is a frequent speaker on international security and policy issues in the international conference and lecture circuit. He has spoken at conferences/events at UN, EU, ARF, NATO, Shangri-La Dialogue, ASPEN World Security Conference, Consultations on the future of Afghanistan, Climate Summit-COP15, IISS, RUSI etc. He is consulted by different governments, international organisations on security issues.

He was commissioned from the Pakistan Military Academy and has received advanced training from USA, India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Austria, former Yugoslavia, Turkey, China etc. He is a graduate of the National University of Bangladesh, National Defence College, Malaysian Armed Forces Staff College and Legal Studies School of the US Naval War College.

it into the fore of competition and cooperation too. This article analyzes the importance of Indian Ocean in the light of greater regional and littoral cooperation, its achievements and drawbacks, most contentious issues those are obstructing cooperation and, finally, concludes with a proposal of multi-layered approach to move forward. It is identified in this article that regionalism with institutional foundation is the most appropriate policy to have strong economic linkages within the Indian Ocean region.

Writing in 1985, Ken Booth and William L. Dowdy argued that because of the plenitude of military, economic, religious and racial insecurities and threats, the Indian Ocean “might be dubbed a kaleidoscope of crisis and not merely an ‘arc’”.¹ On the military level, a plethora of conflicts exist along the all important SLOCs: from the Bab el-Mandeb and the Straits of Hormuz along the coastline of South Asia to the Straits of Malacca and — by way of geographical extension — to the South China Sea. At the Horn of Africa, consisting of Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Djibouti and Kenya, the hapless citizens are virtually living in a Hobbesian environment formed by seemingly endless civil wars and streams of refugees fleeing from here to there and back. In the Gulf area, conflicts are far from being settled: Iran is busily acquiring new military muscles with an emphasis of beefing up its navy. The geopolitical and geoeconomical environment in the Indian Ocean after the end of the superpower conflict is positive and stable. Security problems are posed only by non-state actors like drug traffickers, small arms traffickers and pirates, especially in the Bay of Bengal and the Straits of Malacca. Illicit fishing was also pointed out as a source of conflict, both in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea.



In the ancient Sanskrit literature the Indian Ocean is known as Ratnakara meaning “the maker (creator) of jewels”. The real relevance of this name is

¹ Quoted in Ian W. Porter, “The Indian Ocean Rim”, *African Security Review*, Vol. 6, No. 6, 1997, p. 81.

being understood in this twenty-first century, as the strategic value of this vast ocean is making it a theatre of maritime dominance of the Asian powers. The Indian Ocean Rim defines a distinctive area in international politics consisting of coastal states bordering the Indian Ocean. It is a region of much diversity, in culture, race, religion, economic development, and strategic interests. The countries vary in the size of their populations, economies, trade, and technological development and in the composition of their GDP. The Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) is the grouping of the littoral countries to foster joint cooperation and collaboration with respect to issues related to Indian Ocean Rim. Though often criticized as a 'dead' one, it can certainly contribute to the development and prosperity for the region, if all its drawbacks are taken into due consideration. This article analyses the importance of Indian Ocean from a geopolitical point of view and tries to explore its accomplishments and limitations with particular emphasis on promoting regional collaboration mechanism keeping in mind the prevailing challenges. The article concludes by uttering that regionalism with institutional foundation is the most appropriate policy to have strong economic linkages within the Indian Ocean region.

I. STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF INDIAN OCEAN

"Whoever controls the Indian Ocean dominates Asia. This ocean is the key to the seven seas in the twenty-first century, the destiny of the world will be decided in these waters."

Alfred Thayer Mahan

The Indian Ocean region is the birthplace of maritime civilization. Maritime heritage of many of the Indian Ocean littoral countries, for instance India, can be traced back to the 3rd millennium BC when the inhabitants of the Indus Valley initiated trading with Mesopotamia. Archaeological evidence and the world's oldest dock at Lothal is evidence to these trading links. Later, trade with the Roman Empire flourished and by the time of Augustus, around 7 BC, over a 100 ships were setting sail every year from Myos Hormos (in present day Egypt, at the mouth of the Gulf of Suez, in the Red Sea) to India. In the 1940s, K.M. Pannikar said:

"While to other countries, the Indian Ocean is only one of the important oceanic areas, to India it is a vital sea. Her lifelines are concentrated in that area, her freedom is dependent on the freedom of that water surface. No industrial development, no commercial growth, no stable political structure is possible for her unless her shores are protected ...²

² Quoted in Adm. Nirmal Verma, CNS, "India's role in Indian Ocean: Strategic challenges and opportunities in the decades ahead" speech delivered at the Indian Maritime Foundation on December 19, 2010.

The Indian Ocean is the third largest body of water in the world, covering about 20% of the Earth's water surface. It is nearly 5,400 nm wide and covers an area more than 21 million square nautical miles. With 35 nations, including 6 island nations sharing an Indian Ocean coast line, some of the world's busiest and most important Sea Lines of Communication (or SLOCs) pass through these waters. The Indian Ocean is home to a large number of choke points that literally channel maritime traffic connecting the Middle East, Africa, and East Asia with Europe and the Americas. From West to East, these chock points are Bab el-Mandeb, the Straits of Hormuz, Malacca, Sunda, Lombok, and Ombai. For extra-regional powers, the Indian Ocean has for decades fulfilled the role of an important transit corridor: for Russia as a maritime transit between Europe and Eastern Siberia; for transit of vital oil and gas to the energy hungry East Asian powers, especially China and Japan; as a major maritime trade route between East Asia and Europe; and as a strategic route into the Persian Gulf for the United States. During the Cold War era the two superpowers reinforced their maritime influence directly or indirectly through an impressive array of available port facilities in this region. The post-Cold War era has heralded a socio-politico-strategic shift in thought. Globalization, specifically economics, today dominates strategic considerations. Any disruption in traffic flow through the chock points can have disastrous consequences. The disruption of energy flows in particular is a considerable security concern for littoral states, as a majority of their energy lifelines are sea-based. Since energy is critical in influencing the geo-political strategies of a nation, any turbulence in its supply has serious security consequences. Given the spiraling demand for energy from India, China and Japan, it is inevitable that these countries are sensitive to the security of the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) and choke points of the region.

Indian Ocean carries a particularly heavy traffic of petroleum and petroleum products from the oil field of the Persian Gulf and Indonesia. Large reserves of hydrocarbons are being tapped in the offshore areas of Saudi Arabia, Iran, India, and Western Australia.³ An estimated 70% of the world's offshore oil production passes through the Indian Ocean.⁴ The ocean's importance as a transit route between Asia and Africa has made it a scene of conflict. Because of its size, however, no nation had successfully dominated most of it until the early 1800s when the United Kingdom controlled much of the surrounding land. The global power gravitas is clearly shifting towards Asia, while the

³ Iftekhharul Bashar, "Indian Ocean: New power game in the offing?", *The Daily Star*, August 29, 2009.

⁴ Robert D. Kaplan, "Power plays in the Indian Ocean: The Maritime Commons in the 21st Century" in "Contested Commons: The Future of American Power in a Multipolar World", (Washington: Centre for New American Security, 2010), p. 182.

strategic landscape in the region remains marked diversity of conflict. With phenomenal rise of China and India, the Indian Ocean will matter more as these key players enter into a great-power rivalry in these waters as the whole Indian Ocean seaboard, including Africa's eastern shores, becomes a vast web of energy trade. Triggered by economic growth and strategic perception (shaped by the history and strategic culture), both China and India are investing in extensive military modernization and expansion. These are evidenced by their efforts to build up maritime strength with a view to attain supremacy in the Indian Ocean. Robert Kaplan calls the Indian Ocean, "the world's busiest and most important interstate,"⁵ with 50% of all container traffic and 70% of all petroleum traffic traversing its waters. In his view, the Indian Ocean — the world's third largest body of water — already forms 'centre stage' for the challenges of the twenty-first century. The Indian Ocean, he says, combines the centrality of Islam with global energy politics and the rise of India and China to reveal a multilayered, multi-polar world. It is this region — with China and India jockeying for dominance, the United States trying to maintain its influence, and unstable regimes threatening the flow of resources — that will be the setting for most of the global conflicts in the coming decades.⁶

II. EMERGENCE OF INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION (IOR-ARC)

Post Cold War global systemic trends reinforced 19th century trend towards establishing global organizations for securing economic and physical security of the people. The overhauling of rigid, centralized economic and political systems through introduction of popular participation and liberalization of economies on the part of socialist economies became imperative for achieving comparable speed of economic development to that of the West. This resulted in the end of the Cold War as communist command economies and supportive political structures collapsed under the impact of information, communication and technological revolutions. In this unfolding process of globalization the patterns of cooperation and conflict have been redefined. The increased flow of information, capital, technology and labour-factor flows is taking place across the territories on global and not national terms. This has created new space of exchange and interaction, setting a process of dissolution of national economies and this new spatial dimension has been articulated as the rise of 'Region State'.⁷

⁵ Quoted in Suryakanthi Tripathi, "The Indian Ocean: Rim, Routes and Region- An Overview". Available at http://irgamag.com/?page=indocean_20110209

⁶ Robert Kaplan, "Centre stage for the 21st century: Power plays in the Indian Ocean", *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2009. Available at <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/64832/robert-d-kaplan/center-stage-for-the-21st-century>

⁷ V.S. Sheth, "Indian Ocean in the globalizing world", *Alternatives*, Vol. 1, No. 4, Winter 2002, p. 286.

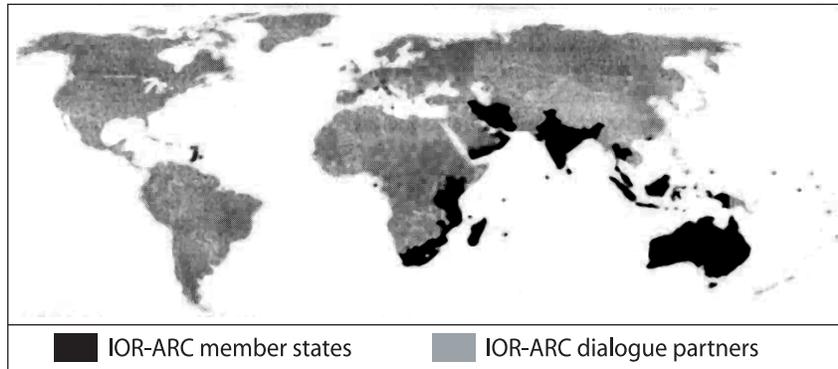
The Indian Ocean region interfaces three politically, economically, socially, culturally diverse continents and the rationale for cooperation in such a large region does not emanate as much from territorial contiguity. As the globalization involves restructuring of organizational patterns beyond national states into new models, it generates new synergy and creates the possibilities of new conflicts. Challenges emanating from changes in Post Cold War period have forced 10 region countries to overlook regional diversity, and cooperate in establishing Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC). End of the Cold War and end of South Africa's international isolation, global trend towards establishment of World Trade Organization, adoption of processes of economic liberalization by India and other countries, the emergence of environmental, terrorists and criminal concerns and fear of further marginalization of IOR economies within the global economy, provided impetus for the setting up of the IOR-ARC. As President Nelson Mandela aptly put it, the natural urge of facts of historical and geographical complementarities should broaden for including conceptual exploration of Indian Ocean rim and socio economic cooperation and other peaceful endeavours.⁸

The IOR-ARC charter signed in March 5, 1997 in Mauritius as a 14 nation⁹ intergovernmental association for economic cooperation in the region. It operates on the principle of sovereign equality; territorial integrity; non interference in the internal affairs of member states; peaceful coexistence; respect for the bilateral, multilateral cooperation; exclusion of divisive issues from IOR-ARC deliberations and adoption of method consensus in decision making process. In order to overcome economic backwardness of 10 Rim countries, IOR-ARC has been designed to set directions for the economic and trade policy in IOR and reaffirm policy of "open regionalism" and inclusion of membership, due to proliferation of regional economic, political groupings.

The charter aims to promote trade liberalization and flow of goods, services, human resource and infrastructural development. It further aims at facilitating trade diversification and foreign direct investment, tourism and scientific and technological exchange in the region. Regional cooperation in IOR aims

⁸ Nelson Mandela's Rajiv Gandhi Foundation Lecture, available at <http://db.nelsonmandela.org/speeches/pub-view.asp?pg=item&ItemID=NMS224&txtstr>

⁹ These 14 members are: Australia, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. It is without any doubt that IOR-ARC is not a preferential trade bloc and the member states are committed to the principle of non-discriminatory treatment to one another on the basis of Most Favored Nation (MFN) status to those who are also WTO members. China, Egypt, France, Japan, and the United Kingdom are dialogue partners of the IOR-ARC and the Indian Ocean Tourism Organisation (IOTO) has an observer status. Turkey has applied for dialogue partner status. The secretariat of the IOR-ARC is based in Mauritius.



Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian-Ocean-Rim-Association-for-Regional-Cooperation>.

at developing common positions and strategies on issues of mutual interest in international forums and forge close links between member states in human resource and training. Another important aspect of this association is to concentrate on areas of economic cooperation which would provide maximum opportunities to develop shared interest and reap mutual gains at the regional as well as at the global level. They have set a goal to remove all barriers for free trade of goods, investment and technology within the Indian Ocean region.

A principal commonality among these countries is that, at one time or the other, they were colonized by the Europeans. Few of them became independent in the late 1940s and most of them in the 1960s and 1970s and are quite young with limited resources to assist them. Another important aspect is the sheer diversity among the member states of the IOR-ARC, making it the most heterogeneous of the major economic groupings. This relates to their size (Australia vis-vis Singapore), population (India's 1,131.43 million vis-vis 1.25 million of Mauritius), and the nature of political systems (The world's largest democracy vis-vis the authoritarian regime), their language, cultures and religion. Keeping aside all these disparities, the member states aim at bolstering greater economic cooperation among themselves. This is considered to be a major task because IOR collectively accords for only 8% of global GDP and just 11% of trade worldwide. Moreover the level of intra-rim trade is only 25% of the total Indian Ocean trade, even though this has been increasing over the past couple of years.¹⁰

III. OBJECTIVES OF IOR-ARC

The IOR-ARC was initiated with an objective to promote sustainable growth and balanced development of the region as a whole, with a special emphasis

¹⁰*World Development Report-2005*, pp.256-57.

on economic cooperation that would dismantle the barriers to intra regional trade flows of goods and services among the countries along the Rim. The objectives of IOR-ARC areas follows:

1. To promote sustainable growth and balanced development of the region and Member States.
2. To focus on those areas of economic cooperation which provide maximum opportunities for development, shared interest and mutual benefits.
3. To promote liberalisation, remove impediments and lower barriers towards a freer and enhanced flow of goods, services, investment, and technology within the Indian Ocean rim.

IV. KEY COMPONENTS OF IOR-ARC

The four key components of the IOR-ARC roadmap include:

1. Trade liberalisation,
2. Trade and investment facilitation,
3. Economic and technical co-operation, and
4. Initiating trade and investment dialogue.

The Charter declares that the IOR-ARC seeks to build and expand understanding and mutually beneficial co-operation through a consensus based, evolutionary and non-intrusive approach. There are no laws and binding contracts. Compliance with consensus based decision remains without any rigid institutional structure to specify any rules and regulations.

V. SUCCESSES OF IOR-ARC

The IOR-ARC was born out of a combination of factors that came together in the 1990's. These included the newly democratic South Africa trying to assert its identity in its regional space, India's "Look East" policy attempting to strengthen its links with East Asia and Australia, and Australia's "Look West" policy at the time where it was looking to increase economic and political links with Asia and Africa. The "open regionalism" format was adopted by the IOR-ARC in order to provide flexibility to ensure compatibility with many regional trading arrangements that the member nations had with their neighbouring countries (some of them were non-members of IOR-ARC) and the global trading system embodied by the WTO.

The second biennial Council of Ministers Meeting was held in Maputo, Mozambique in March 1999. This meeting was critical for the future of the IOR-ARC, and Ministers agreed to a realistic, outcomes focused trade and

investment agenda based on trade facilitation, trade liberalisation, and economic and technical co-operation. It was agreed to establish a Working Group on Trade and Investment (WGTI). An extraordinary meeting of the IOR-ARC Ministerial Council took place in Muscat, Oman, in January 2000, designed to formally welcome the new members and dialogue partners in the IOR-ARC. This was also the first time that the WGTI met. At this meeting, the Ministers adopted a trade and investment plan of action, which included agreement to compile compendia on customs regimes, quarantine and food inspection and investment regimes. The meeting also approved applications for dialogue partner status from China and the UK.

IOR-ARC activities include several on-going topical projects and work programs conducted by member countries with shared interests, all of which are under the umbrella of 3 separate working groups. These are the Working Group on Trade and Investment (WGTI), the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF), and the Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORAG). The Association holds a Council of Ministers meeting once every two years. The working groups have business and academic representatives to ensure that different points of view and interests are fully reflected in IOR-ARC's work program. In the third Ministerial Meeting of the IOR-ARC France was admitted as a dialogue partner. During its meeting, the Council of Ministers (COM) decided to endorse the recommendation of the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) to establish a High Level Task Force (HLTF) to study the future direction of the Association, as well as a number of issues that had been hampering the Association in the achievement of its set goals.

In the past few years, many of the countries in the IOR-ARC have made improvements in their economic policies, though they may still differ widely with respect to the policy instruments used and the magnitude of reform. These changes include reductions in tariff rates, removal of exchange controls, implementation of market oriented economic policies, and removal of price controls. These have provided an impetus for intra-regional trade co-operation within the region. The IOR-ARC is based on the principles of open regionalism, which is a flexible arrangement that is more member friendly than other neo-liberal regional arrangements such as preferential trading arrangements, free trade areas, customs unions, common markets, etc. Decisions are made by consensus, and compliance remains without any rigid institutional structure to specify any rules and regulations.

During the past four years the Association has been putting its house in order. It has been dealing with internal issues such as formulating Rules of procedure, an Instrument of Accession for new members, a Headquarters Agreement with the Government of Mauritius, formulating criteria for mem-

bership, Dialogue Partner and Observer Status, establishing a Co-coordinating Secretariat and determining its yearly budget. The decision therefore by the COM to appoint a High level Task Force seems most appropriate and timely. The mandate of the HLTF was broad and inclusive of most of the teething problems being experienced by this youthful Regional Association.

The IOR-ARC provided a forum for the countries mentioned above to come together within the open regionalism framework to pursue increased trade liberalization, trade and investment facilitation and sectoral cooperation projects given that there are some common interests amongst these nations apart from sharing a common ocean. Recent estimates have shown that intra-regional trade amongst the IOR-ARC member countries to be in the region of 18-20 per cent, which is a fairly significant figure to attempt a regional framework for further increasing the level of trade. In order to enhance intra-regional trade and investment, the IOR-ARC has created a tripartite structure whereby the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF), Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORAG) and the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) have a dialogue on the relevant topics and suggestions are made by the CSO to the Council of Ministers to effect policies.

Greater trade and investment facilitation within the members of the association has also been made a top priority issue and in January 2000 a Working Group on Trade and Investment (WGTI) was created in order to help expedite these processes. The WGTI also assists in streamlining projects and gives a sense of direction to the IOR-ARC. Through the WGTI and other fora such as the IORAG and IORBF, a number of projects have been identified and are being carried out by different government agencies and research institutions of the member countries. These include projects on cooperation in standards and accreditation, development, upgrading and management of seaports, tourism promotion and development, technology cooperation in the Indian Ocean Rim, development of a compendium on investment regimes, agricultural trade liberalization, foreign direct investment and bilateral payment arrangements to name but a few.¹¹

The IORNET website (www.iomet.org) was also created in order to provide possible business partners within the IOR-ARC with detailed economic and regulatory information on each IOR member country, covering fiscal and monetary scenarios, trade and investment policies and regulations; opportunities for trade, technology and investment tie-ups and practical guidelines for doing business in IOR countries with addresses of key contacts in the respective governments and business organizations.

¹¹“Indian Ocean Regionalism: Another Non-Starter?” *The Sunday Island*, March 5, 2006.

VI. WEAKNESSES OF IOR-ARC

Despite the potential of this diverse regional grouping, the association has remained latent for a long time now. Part of the reason for the lack of noteworthy progress in the IOR-ARC is the absence of leadership by any of the larger countries like India or South Africa. Although a maritime oceanic thread binds the littorals together, maritime cooperation and maritime issues have not attained the importance they deserve in this region. To begin with, there is considerable debate on the extent of the Indian Ocean Rim itself. Differing definitions have been applied to the region, and the number of states included ranges from 29 to 35.¹² However, the dissimilarities in state capabilities (both economic and military) are also considerable. India, Australia and South Africa each have a blue water naval capability and a booming economy, while the smaller island nations can hardly compare. Hence convergence of interests on security issues has not been readily forthcoming.

The organization has ignored issues of maritime cooperation. The charter of the association does not even mention the issue, and only one of the protects of the works program examines the subject of development, upgrading and management of ports.¹³ Consequently, maritime issues get ignored in the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum (IORBF) and the Indian Ocean Rim Academic Group (IORAG).¹⁴ However, it is essential that the existing Cold War military mindset of 'preparing for war in order to ensure peace' be revised to 'if you want peace prepare to cooperate' as a guideline for both military and non-military maritime interaction. It is only through cooperation that the challenges to the existing maritime order can be addressed. Nonetheless, IOR-ARC has stagnated in recent years due largely to a decline in the interest of its three major protagonists: Australia, India and South Africa. Attempts for promoting cooperation in the IOR foundered for several reasons:

- There were political obstacles that excluded some IOR countries from membership and objected to any involvement of non-littoral countries.
- There was the lack of clear common interests to bring the IOR countries together. While the IOR includes about one-third of the world's population, its peoples are an extraordinarily diverse lot and their

¹²Rahul Roy Chowdhury, "India's Maritime Security" (Knowledge World, New Delhi, 2000) p.30.

¹³Cdr. P.K. Ghosh, "Maritime security challenges in South Asia and the Indian Ocean: Response strategies". Available at [www.southchinasea.org/.../ghosh,%20maritime%20security%20challenges%20in%20Asia%20& ... pdf](http://www.southchinasea.org/.../ghosh,%20maritime%20security%20challenges%20in%20Asia%20&...pdf)

¹⁴Cdr. P. K. Ghosh, "Let Indian Ocean Unite the Rim", *The Financial Express*, December 12, 2000, pp 3335.

countries widely divergent in terms of economic development and national interests.

- Getting around the IOR is difficult and expensive. Great distances are involved. There are few direct air routes and delegates to attend meetings may have to use several airlines and pay premium fares as a consequence. Not surprisingly and unless they were sponsored by a better-off member, most potential participants will decide that the benefits of participation are simply not worth the cost.
- Many IOR countries are quite poor. Participation in IOR activities will be expensive for them and they will require financial assistance if they are to participate.¹⁵ The same goes for participating in any of IONS (Indian Ocean Naval Symposium) activities by IOR countries.
- IOR-ARC has been also sorely lacking far-sighted intellectual leadership, particularly with regard to economics and commerce dimensions.¹⁶ Virtually no research institute has placed the IOR-ARC as a priority research agenda. Part of the reason for this is likely because the IOR-ARC overlaps many geographical locations such as Asia, Mid East and Africa.

These weaknesses have pulled IOR-ARC backward quite sometime now. Some authors even described IOR-ARC “already dead” and it “does not have a future”.¹⁷

VII. SHIFTING HOTSPOTS OF PIRACY

Incidents of piracy and armed robbery have been rising in East African waters (e.g., Gulf of Aden and Red Sea) in recent years as the numbers of incidents in other parts of the globe have generally stabilized. In 2008, acts of piracy that occurred in East African waters were more than double the number from the prior year and comprised 44 percent of incidents worldwide. In the 11-year period from 1998 to 2008, yearly totals in these waters rose from 19 to 134 — an increase of 605 percent. In contrast, in 2000, when global incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea peaked at 471, only 6 percent occurred in

¹⁵Same Bateman, “The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium: Will the navies of the Indian Ocean Region unite?”, RSIS Commentaries, 17 March, 2008, p. 3.

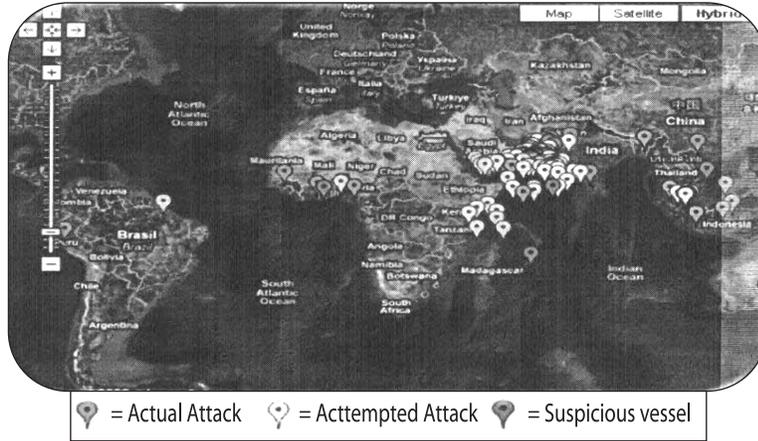
¹⁶S. Gpalan and R. Rajan, “Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC)”. Available at www.freewebs.com/rrajan01/IOR.pdf

¹⁷Peter Lehr, “The Challenge of Security in the Indian Ocean in the 21st Century: Plus ça change...?”, Heidelberg Papers in South Asian and Comparative Politics, Working paper 13, November 2002, p. 21.

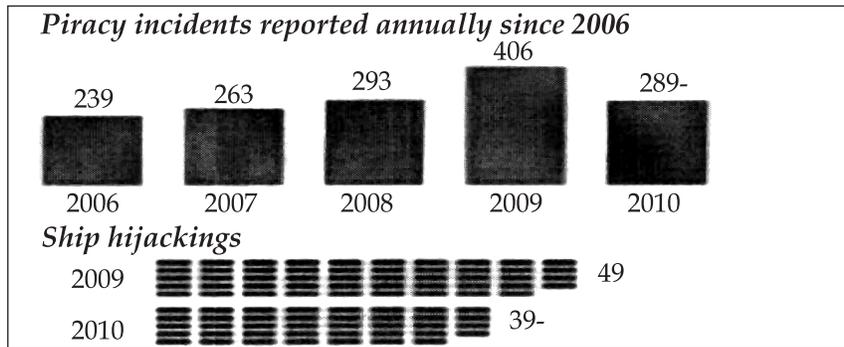
East African waters while acts of piracy in the South China Sea, Malacca Strait, and Indian Ocean accounted for 77 percent of incidents across the globe.

VIII. BENEFITS OF COOPERATION

Prospects and opportunities for greater economic cooperation amongst the IOR-ARC member states are considerable. These countries alone count for as much as 65% of intra-rim trade. Six of them: Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, Indonesia, India and South Africa dominate the total trade accounting for 97% of the total IOR-ARC intra-rim trade. Moreover, both imports and exports have increased at a faster rate with developing countries as compared to the



Source: ICC Commercial Crime Services, IMB Live Piracy Map 2011. Available at <http://www.icc-ccs.org/piracy-reporting-centre/imb-live-piracy-map-2010>. This map shows all the piracy and armed robbery incidents reported to the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre during 2011.



Source: http://www.breitbart.com/image.php?id=iafpCNG.885922972c5196S5a4e5c49fS9f7a47e.451p1&show_article=1

world as a whole. Although the IOR — has shown an adverse balance of trade with the rest of the world, its trade gap is negligible — less than 2% of its trade. Therefore, the focus of the association is clearly and rightly so, on economic issues and not political or military.¹⁸ In this association the participating governments have taken a back seat in its core activities, merely playing the role of facilitators. The other two bodies — business and academic — are to do most of the actual work i.e., implementation of the projects of work program in order to enhance the economic cooperation. It is also important to note that the IOR-ARC is truly an association indigenous to the Indian Ocean rim. It does not permit membership to any non-Indian Ocean state nor should it do so. It is, therefore, far too early to reach a judgment on its efficacy and achievements. The bottom-line, however, is that its future will depend very much on its success in the years to come. But it is beyond doubt that if security issues are kept aside and if IOR-ARC confines itself to trade and other forms of economic cooperation, then there is tremendous potential for creating infra-regional trade opportunities, opening markets, developing entrepreneurial and business links and effective exponential growth in infra and inter-regional investment flows.¹⁹

IX. CHALLENGES OF INDIAN OCEAN REGIONAL COOPERATION

The Indian Ocean Region, particularly the Horn of Africa, faces the most potent threat from piracy, which costs tens of millions of dollars for the shipping fraternity, owing to its importance as the busiest trade route and the key channel for global energy trade. According to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), piracy incidents in 2009 have doubled from the previous year, with Somali waters accounting for more than half of the total of 406 reported incidents.²⁰ As of now various navies are conducting anti-piracy operations either independently or under the multinational mechanism of the European Union-led Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE).²¹ The Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE) provide a working-level opportunity for navies to come together to share information and deconflict counter-piracy efforts off the coast of Somalia.

¹⁸ Ashwani Sharma, "The Indian Ocean: Cold War-Post Cold War scenario", *International Journal of South Asian Studies*, 1 (1), 2008, p. 21.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Joshy M. Paul, "Cooperative security in the Indian Ocean Region: The IONS way", *RSIS Commentaries*, 27 May, 2010, p. 2.

²¹ Ibid.

The economic development of a state is closely linked to its trade and energy supply. Since most of the trade of the Indian Ocean littorals and the South Asian states is seaborne, SLOCs form the lifeline of these countries. According to World Bank estimates, in 1999 the world seaborne trade was pegged at 21,480 billion ton-miles; it is expected to reach 35,000 billion ton-miles in 2010, and 41,800 billion ton-miles in 2014. Thus the prospects for seaborne trade are set to rise dramatically. Unfortunately, along with this rise in traffic, the variety and intensity of threats, including piracy, maritime terrorism, drug trafficking, gun-running, human smuggling, pollution, accidents and inter-state conflicts, are also expected to show a proportional rise.

Maritime security has assumed a new dimension in the post 9-11 era. The importance of container security to maritime terrorism is only now being realized after a U.S. Navy search of a freighter in January 2002 led to the discovery of a group of al-Qaeda terrorists hiding inside a well equipped shipping container. The group escaped from the container shortly before the search commenced. This discovery prompted an increase in surveillance of ships as well as trucks carrying shipping containers leaving Afghanistan for Pakistani ports.²² In another case, a suspected al-Qaeda terrorist smuggled himself halfway around the world inside a shipping container that was equipped with a bed and toilet. He was carrying computers, cameras, mobile phones, airport maps, and airport security passes for Canada, Thailand and Egypt. With a dramatic increase in large and small container transport by sea,²³ the problem has grown, as these sealed containers often pass through ports without undergoing thorough checking²⁴ and are capable of containing anything from human terrorist cargo to arms and ammunition. It has been reported that one of Bin Laden's cargo freighters unloaded supplies in Kenya for the suicide cadres who subsequently bombed the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.²⁵ Lloyds of London lists 11 merchant ships belonging to Asian front companies that are in reality managed by Kumaran Pathmanathan of the LTTE.²⁶

An important adjunct to maritime terrorism is drug trafficking. With profit margins running into hundreds of percent, drug trafficking is by far the most lucrative means of generating funds to fuel ever-growing terrorist activities and insurgencies around the region. Additionally, terrorist groups often work hand-

²²"Inside the Ring", <http://www.gertzfile.com/ring010402.html>.

²³'Containerisation', www.choicegroup.co.in/html/Cntrization.htm.

²⁴According to United States custom authorities, only 2 per cent of the cargo containers that enter seaports each day are inspected as cited in "Port of Entry Now Means Point of Anxiety," *The New York Times*, December 23, 2001.

²⁵"U.S. Ports Represent Weakness in Nation's Defenses, Analyses Shows," http://www.military.com/Content/MoreContent/1,12044,FL_ports_103001,00.html

²⁶"Killing of Sea Bird Not a Big Blow to LTTE Shipping Operations", *The Sunday Times*, February 1996.

in-hand with drug cartels. The well-organized LTTE was deeply involved in drug trafficking through their “phantom fleet”. Besides transporting timber, sugar and other commercial items, these ships also transported drugs from Myanmar (Burma) to Turkey. They also provide protection and courier services to the sea-borne drug shipments from Myanmar (Burma) to various countries around the world, mainly Europe and the U.S. The drug money is then channeled into arms purchases for continuing the Sri Lankan insurgency.²⁷

Gunrunning by sea is by far the safest means for transferring arms and ammunition around the world, while drug trafficking is most lucrative. Insurgent movements around the world, like the United Wa State Army (UWSA) — a splintered faction of the Burmese Communist Party — operating from the northern Shan state in Myanmar — depend extensively on drug money to fuel their movement and equip their forces. There are clear links between the narcotics and illegal light weapons trade that include shared supply and transit routes, the use of weapons for protection amongst drug traffickers themselves, and funding of gunrunning through drug trade and vice versa.²⁸

The high seas form part of the global commons and provide the opportunities to harness their resources. They are also the best medium to carry out trade with other nations and enhance our economic wellbeing. Yet, the very same waters present challenges that are both economic and security related. As such, overcoming these challenges will transcend the successes of IOR-ARC to a long way.

X. RE-ENERGIZING IOR-ARC

Following the recent ministerial meeting of IOR-ARC in Yemen, there has been renewed interest in reenergizing the association, particularly given the renewed interest by the new Indian government. The new Indian minister of state for External Affairs, Mr. Shashi Tharoor has made some promising remarks about the usefulness of this grouping and has also expressed fascination for the sheer diversity that is brought about by a co-operation of this sort. In addition, he underscored the need for this forum to be taken seriously by its own members and that the countries should think beyond water and move on to other domains of co-operation for the benefit of everyone.

In a recent syndicated newspaper column, Mr. Tharoor wrote:

“... IOR-ARC doesn’t have to confine itself to the water: it is the countries that are members, not just their coastlines. So everything from

²⁷ Cdr. P.K. Ghosh, *op cit.* p. 6.

²⁸ Research Report on “Combating Illicit Light Weapons Trafficking: Developments and Opportunities,” British American Security Information Council, London January 1998.

the development of tourism in the 18 countries to the transfer of science and technology is on the table. The poorer developing countries have new partners from which to receive educational scholarships for their young and training courses for their government officers. There is already a talk of new projects in capacity building, agriculture, and the promotion of cultural cooperation Making a success of an association that unites large countries and small ones, island states and continental ones, Islamic republics, monarchies, and liberal democracies, and every race known to mankind, represents both a challenge and an opportunity... The world as a whole stands to benefit if 18 littoral states can find common ground in the churning waters of a mighty ocean."²⁹

X. WAY AHEAD: NEED FOR A MULTI-LAYERED APPROACH

Maritime challenges posed to Indian Ocean Rim states must be addressed on a multi-layered basis. The most desirable format is the multilateral approach toward solving transnational crime and maintaining maritime order. While regional cooperation between navies and coast guards must take center stage in the emerging order, non-military maritime cooperation is equally important. Navies must reorient themselves from tin existing mindset of 'preparing for war in order to ensure peace' to that of 'if you want peace and stability prepare to cooperate.'

Any multinational agency designed to deal with the aforementioned maritime challenges will need to set priorities multinational security organization will have to adapt to different capabilities and perspectives on the pace of operations and the degree of force to be applied to a particular challenge. Money laundering would probably not elicit a military response by most states, whereas biological terrorism would necessitate assistance from naval forces, as may disaster relief, drought assistance etc. Tracking of smugglers and gunrunners would lead to greater military involvement and possibly interdiction and arrest as well. Of the various transnational security threats, maritime piracy and terrorism would most directly and extensively involve nations' naval forces.³⁰

Following measures can be taken to face the challenges in the Indian Ocean region:

- The establishment of Joint Maritime Centers (JMCs) and "Oil Spill Response Centers."³¹ Interlinked joint maritime centers comprising

²⁹Shashi Tharoor, "The Indian Ocean Identity". Available at <http://tharoor.in/articles/indian-ocean-unity/>

³⁰Paul J. Smith and Don Berlin, "Transnational Security Threats in Asia," Conference Report, Asia Pacific Centre.

³¹P.K. Ghosh, "Let Indian Ocean Unite the Rim", *The Financial Express*, December 12, 2000. Also see *ibid* pp 33-35.

regional navies and coast guards should be formed at important ports near strategic choke points to enable rapid and coordinated responses to smuggling, piracy, humanitarian disasters, illegal migration, environmental incidents, and search-and-rescue operations, since these are crucial areas that require cooperation. The centers may also provide a venue for intelligence sharing. These centers can join with “oil spill response centers” to combat the hazards of oil spills. Oil spills are an ever-increasing problem with serious consequences for marine ecological systems. For example, in the Malacca Straits alone there were five oil spills totaling 3.5 million tons of oil in 1994. Hence, regional navies and coast guards need to structure “spill response centers” with mandatory power to inspect oil tankers, as Turkey, Italy, and France implemented in some of their ports. These response centers could be amalgamated with the JMCs for better coordination and management.

- Development of marine technology and a joint strategy to ensure the safety of ports and harbors by the regional states.
- Regional states should also pursue coordinated efforts on utilization and management of marine resources, both animal and mineral, in their respective Exclusive Economic Zones, or EEZs.

The agreement reached between the Malaysian, Indonesian and Singaporean navies on the conduct of joint anti-piracy patrols in the Malacca Straits is an example of progress in increasing maritime cooperation. India has also been asked to help in this task. The establishment of joint maritime centers (JMCs) at important ports and near ocean choke points would prove to be a milestone towards this type of maritime cooperation. The sea may bring together like-minded countries that in turn may influence the region’s strategic perceptions. Indeed, to quote the old saying: “the sea unites while the land divides.”

XI. CONCLUSION

In the post Cold War period, Indian Ocean states with their huge resources underneath, varied level of economic development and vast cultural diversities have shown tremendous potential to mutually cooperate and work with each other for the growth of this region. Indian Ocean during the last about one a half decade has changed its character altogether particularly after the collapse of Soviet Union and, in the light of globalization and liberalization. It is not that ocean which it used to be. Rather the military alliances and competitions of the 1950s and 60s are being translated into economic alliances. The focus, now, is more on regional organizations which can bolster their economies not only at the regional level but also at the global level. The countries of this

region now look more towards each other for mutual help and cooperation in almost all areas of development. They realize that they can, with limited resources — economic as well as scientific — make more progress and development mutually than looking towards outside help. The regional perspective, particularly, with the emergence of IOR-ARC, is meant to compliment, supplement and incorporate without any political intervention.³² It aims at promoting sustained growth and balanced development of the Indian Ocean region and to pave a common ground for regional economic cooperation. Regionalism with institutional foundation is the most appropriate policy to have strong economic linkages within the Indian Ocean region.³³

³²Ashwani Sharma, "The Indian Ocean: Cold War-Post Cold War scenario", *International Journal of South Asian Studies*, 1 (1), 2008, p. 22.

³³Ibid.

Impact of Climate Change and Environmental Security of Bangladesh: The Non-Traditional Security Linkages

*Nusrat Zahan**

Abstract

Environmental security is intended to ensure that environmental considerations are adequately weighted up in all aspects of security of state. These considerations warrant much greater attention due to its interconnectedness with climate change impact. This paper examines climate change impact and the associated linkages of environmental security of Bangladesh by categorizing these into three strands of challenges. These are: (a) rising number of environmental human displacements; (b) threat to food, health and water security; and (c) ecological imbalance and threat to forest dependent communities especially people of ethnic origin. This paper presents the view that environmental security of the country currently appears to be critically threatened and government-non governmental organisation's efforts are found to be very narrow in scope of addressing the security linkages. Efforts are mainly concentrated on response and recovery measures of environmental disasters but least concentrated on long term adaptation strategy. It is therefore, urgently needed to have unequivocal commitment to check existing security linkages of climate change and adopt precise, well integrated, long term policy, plan and programmes in national development strategy.

I. INTRODUCTION

"Few threats to peace and survival of the human community are greater than those posed by the prospects of cumulative and irreversible degradation of the biosphere on which human life depends. True

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security cannot be achieved by mounting build up of weapons (defence in a narrow sense), but only by providing basic conditions for solving non-military problems which threaten them. Our survival depends not only on military balance, but on global cooperation to ensure a sustainable environment.”

Brundtland Commission Report, 1987

Security dimension of climate change or its interconnectedness with environmental challenges has been one of the major issues of contemporary world affairs. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) demonstrates that climate change will pose serious security threat if the impacts continue to rise. European Commission Report (EC, 2008) also signifies global security implications of climate change and urges to adopt preventive security policy. It is now widely recognized that the impact of climate change and the increasing trend of sea level rise can no longer be overlooked in national security policy. The impact has correlations with societal fabric and regional stability. Although the precise role of environment in conflict may differ from country to country, and is still being debated in relation to military security and societal variables, there are growing indications that the world is facing increasingly hard choices among consumption (e.g., food), conservation (e.g., ecology) and restoration due to changing pattern of climate and degradation of environment. The fourth assessment report of IPCC (2007), depicts that a 1 metre sea level rise will displace 14.8 million people in Bangladesh by inundating a 29,846 sq. km. area (Akhter, 2009). Bangladesh, having around 160 millions of population, is now world's third most vulnerable country to sea level rise (Pender, 2008) and predominant vulnerable country to the threat of climate change. Currently, the country is under high stress of environmental disaster and degradation like frequent flooding, drought, ground water pollution and loss of biodiversity. As a least developed country with low income capacity, the environmental stresses in turn not only affects the territorial security of Bangladesh but also threatening the societal fabric of the nation.

II. IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE CHALLENGING SCENARIO

The existing challenges of environmental security in Bangladesh are in two folds. Primarily, the land is vulnerable to the climate change threat of sea level rise and secondly, human induced activities are degrading the land at an alarming rate. It is estimated that sea level rise at the southern part of Bangladesh may inundate more than 5,608 million acres of coastal land which covers 15 percent of the total territory. The districts which are under the threat of inundation include 60% of greater Khulna, 90% of Barisal, 44% of Noakhali,

12% of Faridpur and the whole of Patuakhali. It is calculated that the inundation may cause the damage of 13.74% of net cropped area and destruction of 401,600 hectares of mangrove forests along with forest ecosystem (Uddin, 2007).

The impact of sea level rise already increased the frequency of flood and cyclone in recent years. The total number of cyclones hit Bangladesh from 1970 to 2009 is 26 (World Bank in Tahera, 2009). Analysis on macroeconomic impact of floods reveals that the number of non poor house holds in the districts hit by the flood of 2000, were accounted for 4.3 million; whereas, tropical cyclone *Sidr* that hit Bangladesh in 2007 affected the livelihoods of millions of peoples, caused the death of more than 4000 people and loss of nearly 1.6 acres of standing crops, livestock, local flora and fauna (SDN, 2008). Currently, the receiving trends of world's total storm surges in Bangladesh is 40% (WB, 2010) and human exposure of risk, (i.e. probability of event and its loss) for weather related hazards are much more frequent in Bangladesh than any other natural hazard prone region in the world (Table 1).

Table 1 Risk Profile on Bangladesh: Human Exposure

Hazard Type	Population exposed	Country ranking
Cyclone	4, 641,060	6 th out of 89
Drought	642,277	63 ^{ed} out of 184
Flood	19, 279,960	1 st out of 162
Earthquake	1, 330,958	17 th out of 153

Source: UNISDR, (2009).

The impacts of sea level rise are also anticipated to cause dramatic and traumatic socio-economic repercussions over the state in following ways, i.e.,

- it accelerates land price including agricultural land which in turn accelerates landlessness;
- resource accumulation in small elite groups accelerates social disparity which in turn causes social attrition; and
- social attrition causes anarchy and conflict which in turn affects the security fabric of the nation (Nizamuddin, 2001).

Due to the inadequate climate change adaptation safety net in Policy, Plans and Programmes (PPPs) both at national and local level, the pace of economic growth becomes slow and affecting the growth of per capita income of both poor and non poor households in rural and urban areas. Current challenging scenario however, creates three strands of threats, i.e., increasing number of environmental refugee in urban cities; secondly, risings threats to food, health and water security; and finally, challenges to ecological imbalance

and ethnic insecurity. The challenging scenario becomes clearer if available statistics are to be presented for each of the category.

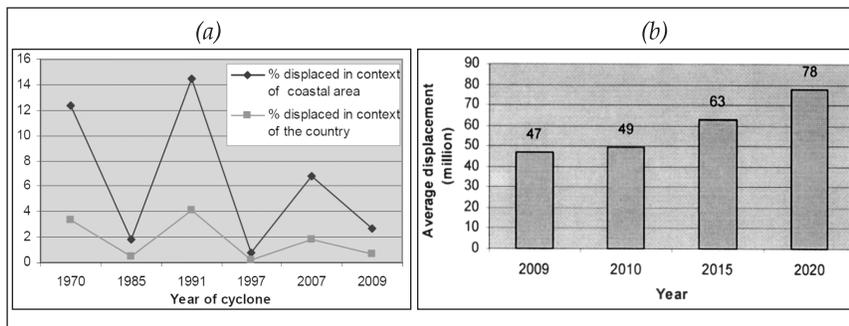
Increasing Number of Environmental Refugee

Increasing rate of environmental displacement of people become in a momentum in three ways:

- firstly, rural peoples move to urban cities to get away deteriorating environment;
- secondly, the migration increases population dislocation and unplanned settlements in urban areas without having any food, sanitation or health security;
- thirdly, the displacement stimulates socio-economic stress and conflicts among environmental refugees and local elite non elite groups.

An estimate reveals that natural calamities like flood, drought and cyclone cause displacement of 25%, 3% and 2% of population respectively every year. In terms of total population, it is anticipated that 63 and 78 million people will be displaced by 2015 and 2020 respectively (Figure 1). Before 80s decade, there were no cities with more than one million population (SDN, 2008). Currently, Dhaka the capital itself has more than 12 million people and nearly a four fold increase in Dhaka's population in the last 25 years (WB, 2010). However, looking only at the capital Dhaka, most of the day labourers, i.e., rickshaw pullers, shoppers or beggars are in the main migrated

Figure 1: Percentage of Displaced People in the Past (a) and Future Projection of Displacement in All Natural Calamities (b)



Source: UNDP in Akhter, 2009.

people. They had previously been involved in other economic activities (e.g., farming, fishing) in their own districts but natural calamities like river erosion,

flood, cyclone, etc. force them to migrate to major cities for meeting the basic needs of life. These environmental displacements make them '*environmental refugees*'. Current figures of environmental refugee in major cities in Bangladesh are not available but are increasing at a rapid pace particularly in the recent years. According to a survey conducted by Asian Development Bank and Planning Commission, population distributions in all major cities in Bangladesh almost half of the population fall below the poverty line (Gian, 2002) and scientists warn that the environmental displacement is likely to increase in future. If the rate of environmental refugees continue to rise at the current pace, the eventual number will be closer to about half of the total population of Bangladesh in 2020 (UNDP, 2008) and will be a serious cause of social upheaval within the state.

Rising Threat to Food, Water and Health Security

Environmental impact of climate change and environmental degradation are adversely affecting nation's food security. In the background of global economic recession, frequent occurrence of natural disaster routinely adding to the destabilization of local food market. Total production of food in the country has increased from 11.8 million metric tons to 39 million metric tons during the period of 1974 and 2003. But still, as World Bank estimates, 30% of the total population consumes less than 1800 kilo calorie per person per day and 33 millions of people in Bangladesh cannot afford an average daily intake of minimum standard for nutrition intake as set by the World Food Programme (FAO, 2005). Currently, about 49% of Bangladeshis live below the poverty line and 50% (FAO, 2005) of population live in natural disaster a prone area which exacerbates food security. From regional perspective, the agricultural land of northern and south western part of Bangladesh bears the highest level of food insecurity. Impact of climate change (e.g., salinity intrusion) and environmental degradation (e.g., arsenic contamination) create acute shortage of fresh water in the region. There are 59 out of 64 districts in Bangladesh are suffering arsenic contamination. 75 million people are now under potential threat of arsenic exposure risk and 24 million are actually exposed to the contamination (Table 2). However, only 7% of population in the rural areas, 31% of the urban areas and 12% of total population are aware of the health problems caused by arsenic contamination. Indeed, among the arsenic affected people, nearly 55% are between the age group of 16 to 40 years and 14.5% are under the age of 15 years (SDN, 2008). People are getting arsenic through the food chain, i.e., cultivation and production of crops. Should this problem become severe nationwide, the insecurity would be catastrophic.

Table 2 Arsenic Calamity in Bangladesh

WHO Arsenic Drinking Water Standard	0.01mg/1
Bangladesh Arsenic Drinking Water Standard	0.05mg/1
Number of Districts surveyed for arsenic contamination	64
Number of districts having arsenic above 0.05mg/1 in groundwater	59
Population at risk	75 million
Potentially exposed population	24 million

Source: Dainichi, 2000.

Ecological Imbalance and Threat to Ethnic Security

Bangladesh is rich with biodiversity resources and wildlife. There are about 650 species of birds, 500 species of fish. 1500 to 2000 species of mammal vertebrate fauna and 10,000 species of plants. The forest lands of the country are also rich in marine biodiversity. Main ones are 22 genera and 66 species of *Corals*; 300 species of *Molluscs*; 22 species of *Crustaceans* (Anisuzzaman, 2002). There are nearly 28 indigenous communities live in these forest areas with total population of 1,205,978 (Gian, 2005). Majority of them are *Chakma*, *Marma*, *Rakhaine*, *Mro*, *Santal*, *Garó* and *Hajong*. Their main economic activity include forest land cultivation, fuel wood collection and grazing. Currently, these resources are degrading at an alarming rate due to salinity intrusion. Important to note, the imbalances are caused not only because of sea level rise. Human activities like unplanned intervention of nature, e.g. monoculture in forestry, salt extraction, unplanned infrastructural development and diversion of fresh-water for irrigation—all require clearing out and felling of natural forests that support wildlife. These disturb the security of ecological resources of forests and life of forest dependent community living in Sylhet, Khulna, Chittagong, and Cox's Bazar (Gian, 2002).

It affects local biodiversity, causes high acidic reaction in soil and force wild animals to leave the forests due to the lack of food. IUCN (1991) report reveals that due to rapid depletion and degradation of forests, 50 wildlife species have been identified as critically endangered, 23 species are declared as endangered, 83 species are already declared as “commercially threatened” and substantial numbers has been extinct over the past decades in Bangladesh. Current scenario of ecological imbalance also affects security of ethnic peoples living in the forests. Frequent development interventions by the government make their forest life uncertain. Development initiatives without environmental impact assessment force forest dependent communities to migrate other areas and search for new economic activities. There are many well documented cases that the displacement of hill peoples created multiple effects on forest and environment, e.g., construction of *Kaptai* dam displaced more than 100,000

forest dependent peoples and 40% of the best rice producing land had been submerged (Gian, 2002). This eventually affects the security of ethnic rights of forest dependent peoples over forest resources and intensifies socio-political anarchy within the state.

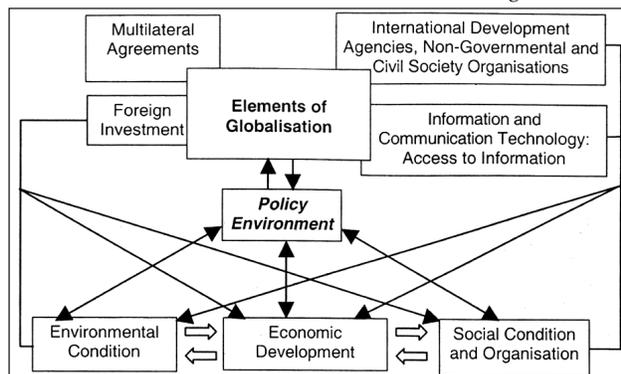
III. SECURITY LINKAGES AND THE WAY OF FUTURE

Existing environmental threats and the strands through which the security linkages are evident within it, reflect the fact that environmental security is difficult to achieve for Bangladesh in its current guise of development. Although present scenario is noticeable in local area context, the challenges are not only faced locally, nationally, but also at international level. In each strand of security linkages, i.e. increasing number of environmental refugee, food and health insecurity, ecological imbalance, etc. all have a common elements of intra boundary causes and affects.

In this respect, the globalisation, environmental crisis and social change (GECSC) model (Figure 2) can be a good reference which identifies four elements that are helpful to identify security linkages. It encompasses four elements, linking among environmental crisis with global process and social conditions, i.e.

1. political economic forces underlying the policy context for foreign and local environment, production relations and social relations;
2. environmental dynamics;
3. livelihood changes;
4. organizational responses (Rahman and Wiest, 2003).

Figure 2: Links among Global Processes and Environmental, Economic and Social Conditions in Bangladesh



Source: Rahman, M. and Wiest, R. (2003).

The notable feature of GECSC model is that it links environmental issues with economic and political factors. Although the environmental security linkages appear with the threat of climate change but the challenging scenario is much diverse and inevitably linked to the policy, plans and programmes of national and global governance. In this globalised era, Bangladesh as a developing country often adopts its own development strategy with the assistance of foreign donor agencies. Climate change adaptation programme and associated PPPs of food, water and health sector is heavily dependant on foreign aid and assistance. From policy formulation to project implementation, interventions of IFIs are endemic. With foreign assistance, Bangladesh has undertaken country study and identified environmentally vulnerable sectors; it has been working for developing climate change adaptation strategy including the formulation of green house gas abatement strategy and portfolio of green house gas abatement projects. National Adaptation Programme for Action (NAPA) has also been prepared in response to its global commitment to climate change (Chowdhury, 2007). Despite all the efforts, there is vast area of linkages that make the environmental security scenario of Bangladesh worsen each day. Hence, these vital linkages include:

- inadequate policy directions, i.e. policies are mostly ambiguous and large in nature rather precise and well integrated;
- the notion of vulnerability assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) are rarely practiced at policy and project levels;
- climate change adaptation measures are predominantly concentrated on response and recovery instead of long term measures.

The linkages, however increasingly threatening the socio-economic fabric of the nation. To control the flow of environmental refugee to urban cities, EIA and SEA at micro level are not normally practiced in urban or rural development plan or programme. Currently, government has no regular updated data bank to record the number of peoples that migrating to urban cities due to environmental calamities. Some data in this regard are available to the IOs (International Organizations) but are project specific only.

It is often argued that Bangladesh achieved mentionable success in promoting disaster management approach at local level and living with natural calamities. But additionally, the country also should focus on establishing effective organizational structure to meet the demand of long term rehabilitation of vulnerable groups in the post disaster period. Research findings, as to how people cope with disaster, reveal that victims of natural calamity in Bangladesh are hardly ensured their basic needs in post disaster period.

Some research findings reveal that victims of natural calamity try to cope with the situation by themselves in the following way in post disaster period (Table 3).

Table 3 Strategies Followed in Coping Crisis

Type of Crisis Coping	Strategies followed by majority	Next best strategy	Least followed strategy
Financial coping	Take loans from neighbour	Loan from relatives or others	Loan from NGOs
Coping with natural disaster	Stay home on ' <i>manchas</i> ', incur debt, cut down food intake	Take shelter on top of embankment; wait for government relief	Move elsewhere
Coping with illness	Try coping with event themselves	Ask help from neighbours / relatives	Seek help of physicians
Coping with insecurity to life and property	Coping situation themselves	Approach neighbours/ relatives	Approach union council chairman/ police

Source: R.M.M. Khuda et al, (2001).

Disaster related PPPs are currently over concentrated on disaster response and recovery measures of immediate aftermath of a disaster. It lacks complete inventory of resources and also clear allocation of roles and responsibilities of government and NGO functionaries (Rahman, 2001). These help the victims in a short term to save their lives and minimize the losses to some extent; but do not provide long term opportunity to adapt as well as economic security. These repeatedly make them vulnerable to natural calamity and lose their meagre resources every year. A careful analysis of this reality actually reveal the fact that although environmental refugees are a victim of natural calamities but actually they are the victims of inappropriate development of local PPP that does not support them to sustainable adaptation of climate change. So, eventually they are forced to migrate urban cities after loosing all meagre resources as a result of long and repeated sufferings from disasters.

Indeed, absence of good quality information to the decision makers is an important linkage of security to food, water and health sector. This mostly happens through lack of effort on the part of the decision makers. Environmental threats to these sectors, in fact, cannot be measured if vulnerability assessment information do not take place regularly at local, regional level and resources are allocated accordingly. The GECSC model includes 'foreign investment' and 'information technology' as elements of 'Policy Environment'. "Information" undoubtedly is a good tool in formulating precautionary steps through which strategy and action can be effective in the vulnerable regions. However, here, the issue of transparency has to come first; to clarify how

actively political actors are playing their role to make the system more effective and resilient. Currently, government organisations in Bangladesh are paying more attention to implement donor support projects. They are still far away to adopt plans that make rural areas more resilient to natural calamities. The other actors, i.e. non governmental organisations, on the other hand, although promoting mass awareness as to how losses can be minimized in natural disasters but fail to implement shaping of long term resilience in environmentally vulnerable areas in respective PPPs. These eventually further accelerates threats to food, water and health sectors in urban and rural areas.

The third strand of security threat, i.e. ecological imbalance and its correlation to ethnic security, predominantly relate to the weaknesses of current forest policy. It is well documented that the ecological resources are decreasing at an alarming rate country wide. The associated consequences affect the life of forest based peoples (especially ethnic communities) as well. Current policy however, is not sufficient to meet these challenges. The policy is distinctive than previous policies in terms of paying more attention on environmental protection but the policy is still underlined by profiteering attitude with commercial utilization of forest. A careful examination reveals that statements of the policy adopt various strategies as to how high economic return of forest lands can be maximized, without stating any definite guidelines as to what extent utilization of forest resources will take place for the sake of environmental protection and biodiversity conservation; these then legitimise and facilitate replacement of natural forests by mono culturing alien exotic species irrespective of their suitability in climate change adaptation. Moreover, there is a lack of precise policy guidelines as to how the policy would be integrated with other development policies, i.e. land, water and soil. Currently, Bangladesh neither has Forest Land Management Plan nor the customary rights of ethnic peoples are recognised. They are struggling to attain their customary rights over forest lands and are still far behind in the inclusion of a sustainable adaptation programme. Should this problem become severe due to the absence of continuous evaluation about the social impact of local development activity the insecurity would be catastrophic.

The notion of security strives to reconcile socio, economic and environmental challenges. Discussion of previous sections led to the conclusion that environmental policies not necessarily specific to any single development issue. It should contain appropriate and precise guidelines as to how climate change challenges are to be integrated with socio-economic development agenda. There should be specific commitment for meeting the security linkages of environmental refugee, for incorporating adequate assessment at project level and adopting sustainable strategy to ensure ethnic security. Government

of Bangladesh recognizes the existence of the 'threat' and therefore should have unequivocal commitment to count the security threats. Government should actively review the relevant policy and strategies time to time so that decision makers may take appropriate actions for the effective measures of climate change adaptation. Current PPPs need to develop in such a way that issue of environmental displacement, threats to food, health, ecology and ethnic interests can gain adequate attention.

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The Nature of Complex Emergencies: Impact of Earthquakes — Pakistan's Case Study

*Salma Malik**

Abstract

Intense climate change and natural disasters have given rise to a new level of security discourse, where such occurrences and their impact on human populations and countries specifically are being focused upon and no longer considered insignificant. These disasters and calamities, given the enormity of their scale, the resultant devastation and respective governments' attempt to deal with the post calamity situation is taken in the realm of complex emergencies. Through this paper an attempt would be made to define, analyze and understand the concept, "complex emergencies", further more the earthquake of 2005 will be taken as a case study and attempt would be made to contextualize this catastrophic event as a complex emergency and how it impacted the overall securitization and governance of the country. Furthermore, what difficulties and strains the government had to face once in the reconstruction and rehabilitation stage.

These problems and challenges have been at various levels, from the impact of a complex emergency such as the earthquake to the immediate rescue and relief of the affected population, accessing and responding to worst hit areas in the remote localities. Who were the early responders, and ran the relief operations and what past experience did the country have in disaster management, the very crucial role played by donor agencies as well as who all contributed and responded to the event, ranging from domestic actors, that included NGOs, volunteers, civil and military administration, political representatives, aid agencies and non-state actors to the external support rendered by state actors, international organizations, donor agencies etc. Another important question to examine is what impact such events have on the civil military relations of the country as well as its governance capacity. What problems were faced in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of affected population and areas, and last but not least what steps were or should have been ensured by the government to face future emergencies more effectively, such as early warning mechanisms, best practices adopted

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and establishing of coordinating bodies tailored to face and handle such emergencies in future.

South Asia is a region much familiar with natural disasters, having faced earthquakes, tsunamis, typhoons, floods and even tornadoes. Being one of the most populous regions of the world, the disaster wreaked by any of such natural calamities, engulf hundreds and thousands of people, leaving an equal if not more displaced, destitute and without any means of sustenance. As Sapir in a study said that,

“South Asia is among the world’s most vulnerable regions to both natural and man-made disasters. A tough mesh of poverty, rampant and unplanned urbanization ... and nightmarish population densities have trapped its people. The impact of such disasters assumes severity especially due to the ineffective prevention, preparedness, mitigation and response mechanisms, in dealing with such situations.”¹

This particular case study focuses on the October 8th, 2005 devastating earthquake² that hit the South Asian region mainly the North Western Pakistan affecting an area spanning 30,000 square kilometers with 73,000 People affected. Unfortunately for Pakistan, within five years of the devastating earthquake, not only had the country to face an intense internal militancy but July 2010 brought massive floods, which hit the areas that traditionally served as the food basket for the entire country, yet again plunging the country in extreme dire situation. Although by the year 2010, Pakistan was much wiser in handling such disaster emergencies, yet there were new lessons learnt and challenges faced which show how much needs to be learnt with regards complex emergencies.

I. DISCOURSE ON COMPLEX EMERGENCY

The term *complex emergency* although introduced in the late 1980s, is still not fully comprehended and understood in its complete context. In the UN parlance, a complex emergency is “a major humanitarian crisis of a multi-causal nature that requires a system-wide response. Commonly, a long-term combination of political, conflict and peacekeeping factors is also involved.”³ Complex

¹ Deborati Guha Sapir, *Disasters in South Asia*, in Parasuraman and Unnikrishnan. India Disasters Report Towards a Policy Initiative, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2000.

² The earthquake measured 7.6 on the Richter scale, had its epicenter in Pakistani North western region of Kashmir and had a fault line 100 km long and 40 km wide and its tremors were felt in Pakistan, India.

³ Mark Duffield, “Complex Emergencies and the Crisis of Developmentalism,” *IDS Bulletin: Linking Relief and Development*, Vol. 25, No 3, October 1994, School of Public Policy, The University of Birmingham, pp.3-4.

emergencies are at best a combination of man-made as well as natural disasters, they could manifest as an internal war, with issues such as mass scale population displacement, targeting of civilians, economic and political repercussions, mobilization of military and para military forces are few of the complicating factors. Or it could be a mono-causal issue such as a natural disaster, which together with a pre-existing protracted crisis makes accommodation and handling of the problem very difficult. As further stated by Duffield in his seminal study, it may entail a reduction in both the quantity as well as quality of aid, as most of the regularly channeled aid then gets diverted to disaster relief operations, also affected are the established patterns of intervention and engagement, and the heightened involvement in humanitarian operations, makes the donor client relations extremely problematic, and politically controversial.

What Duffield and the international donor organizations call complex emergencies tantamount to a combination of long drawn conflicts which gain intractability once peppered with newly emerging dynamics. These ideally would fall in the context of what can be further classified as *complex political emergency*, which is not, an analytical tool but a descriptive category which provides a shorthand expression for many, often dissimilar, conflicts. We use the term to denote conflicts which combine the[se] features. Conflict within and across state boundaries, have political causality. (With) protracted duration, and enduring features. They are seldom temporary crises after which society returns to 'normal' levels of physical violence and contain social cleavages. Emergencies are embedded in, and are expressions of, existing social, political, economic and cultural structures. They are all-encompassing, and involve every dimension of society and the lives of the people who are part of them. The roots of many complex political emergencies are in relations between enduring identity groups, which do not necessarily correspond with existing nation-state boundaries.⁴

Given this scenario, complex (political) emergencies would usually entail enormous violence, massacres of civilian populations, deliberate destruction of the means of production, ethnic cleansing, torture and rape, displacement of population, refugee issues, social and economic collapse, traumatisation and psychosocial problems of whole populations and state collapse. Complex emergencies are dynamic, characterized by uncertainty and by rapid and unpredictable changes affecting all aspects of life.⁵

⁴ Jonathan Goodhand and David Hulme "From Wars to Complex Political Emergencies: Understanding Conflict and Peace-Building in the New World Disorder," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 1, Feb., 1999, p. 16.

⁵ Phil O'Keefe and John Kirkby, "Relief & Rehabilitation in Complex Emergencies," *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 24, No. 74, (Dec., 1997), p. 568.

However, not all complex emergencies are characterized by violent conflict or social strife. In case of natural disasters, the suddenness of the event and its enormity not only affects societal dynamics but much depends on the appropriate and timely response to the emergency. According to Robert Kaplan,

It is time to understand 'the environment' for what it is: the national security issue of the early 21st century. The political and strategic impact of surging populations, spreading disease, deforestation and soil erosion, water depletion, air pollution and possibly, rising sea levels in critical overcrowded regions. ... developments that will prompt mass migrations and in turn, incite group conflicts — will be the core foreign policy challenge from which most others will ultimately eliminate."⁶

The rising cost of disasters and environmental complex emergencies is aptly covered by Roberta Cohen in a Brookings' Study,

Over the past two decades, the number of recorded disasters has doubled from approximately 200 to over 400 per year; and nine out of 10 disasters have been climate-related. The total number of people affected by natural disasters over the past decade has reportedly tripled to two billion people, an average of more than 200 million people directly affected each year. The increase in natural disasters is expected to produce massive displacement that will change the world's perception of forcibly displaced people, currently thought of primarily as refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) uprooted by persecution and conflict. The vast majority will be displaced inside their countries, although significant numbers will cross internationally recognized borders, especially when island States become submerged.⁷

However, like the global North-South divide, rich nations are likely to move to protect themselves from the climatic disruptions, "b/c they have resources and reserves to achieve self sufficiency."⁸ In case of developing or under developed countries, the aftermath of a disaster becomes very difficult to handle, with limited infrastructural capacity to respond, very often, post disaster situation spell enormous socio-economic and political implications for the country in question. What convert such singular calamities into complex emergencies could be the already fragile civil military relations, internal strife, affected populations, protracted conflicts or poor governance indicators as

⁶ Robert D. Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy," *Atlantic Monthly*, 1994, p. 58, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1994/02/the-coming-anarchy/4670/>

⁷ Roberta Cohen, "Disasters and Displacement: Gaps in Protection," *International Humanitarian Legal Studies*, Vol. (2010) pp. 95-142.

⁸ Ibid.

well as an over stressed economy which leaves decision makers with very limited if any resources to handle such problems. As a result, very often than not, the trend of external as well as internal actors taking over the bulk of state's responsibilities is witnessed, which in longer terms may result in social strife and an acute legitimacy crisis.

The responses to the rising complex emergencies are necessarily complex. Resolution depends on a number of factors, ranging from the involvement of international community and donors to local actors which would include the government, state institutions, civil society groups, individual entrepreneurs as well as non state actors. The environment available to these actors under the changed circumstances is much different than in a normal emergency owing to the "level of destruction of infrastructures, the intense psycho-social problems of the affected people and the insecure working conditions for agencies and for local people when government no longer functions."⁹

The lack of access to affected areas, compounds the emergency and becomes a big hurdle for humanitarian assistance, and in case of the collapse or absence of government structure, the reliance on external actors and their perceptions of the local needs and priorities, especially in terms of channeling donor funds, in the short to long term perspective exacerbates the problem. However, the potential to refine and make the rehabilitation as well as reconstruction more inclusive at grass roots level, is possible as well as necessary, but only in the post acute phase. From the donors' perspective, a disaster relief operation and the funding not only break the established chain of development assistance, but is also entails much higher costs, to be borne over an extended timeframe.

II. 2005 EARTHQUAKE AS A COMPLEX EMERGENCY

Internal Challenges and Impediments

The 2005 earthquake not only affected 73,000 people, but covering an area of 30,000 square kilometers, it wreaked a complete havoc in nine out of 120 districts of the country, these being the northern districts and some of them falling in the territory of Azad Kashmir. Not only was the physical trauma to the earthquake very severe, but worst was the immediate impact of the main tremor and its approximate 1300 aftershocks. Although the earthquake impacted both rural and urban city centers equally but amongst the most badly hit areas was the northern city of Balakot, which was totally obliterated, whereas the state capital of Kashmir Muzaffarabad had a large population and

⁹ O'Keefe, op cit.

infrastructural damage. What worsened the impact of the quake was that majority of road links and access routes were blocked or washed away as a result of the massive land sliding that continued even after the main tremors, making rescue and relief operations difficult and risky at the same time. Immediately after the earthquake the weather turned cold and rains set in, which further worsened the situation.

The bulk of the administrative districts affected were open countryside, and 80% of their population was widely spread out, as well as located in the mountainous areas. With Muzaffarabad as one of the worst hit areas, there was no central administration authority left and local government's structures were completely left paralyzed. As the civil administration had neither the means nor the capacity to cater to such a wide scale emergency, the military had to step in and lead the rescue, relief and finally the rehabilitation efforts. The military units deployed alongside the line of control¹⁰ also suffered serious damage.

In a study carried out with regards the damage assessment, following statistical observations were made: "Most of the affected people lived in mountainous regions with access impeded by landslides that blocked the roads, leaving an estimated 3.3 million homeless in Pakistan alone. The total area affected was 30,000 km, included a range of unprecedented damage and destruction, such as: Houses: 500,000 (56%), Medical facilities: 365 (65%), Telecommunications: Exchanges (86 - 34%); Power lines (33,225 - 13%), Schools/colleges: 6083 (50%) and over 1000 hospitals. Due to the earthquake, there was a significant loss to Pakistan's infrastructure. There were collapsed and blocked roads, a total loss of clean water supply, partial loss of telecommunications infrastructure, partial loss of UN VHF system, and in some cases hospitals were non-functional."¹¹

Whereas, a study carried out by Pakistani sources relying primarily on the Pakistan military data, yields more or less the same statistics, but with

¹⁰The *line of control* refers to the military control line between the Indian- and Pakistani-controlled parts of the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir—a line which, to this day, does not constitute a legally recognized international boundary but is the de facto border. Originally known as the "Cease-fire Line", after the September 1965 war between India and Pakistan, it was re-designated as the "Line of Control" following the Simla Agreement, a ceasefire agreement signed on 3 July 1972 signed between India and Pakistan after their third military exchange that also led to the dismemberment of Pakistan and creation of independent country Bangladesh. The part of the former princely state that is under Indian control is known as the State of Jammu and Kashmir and also consists of Ladakh a predominantly Buddhist area. The areas that fall under Pakistani control are known as Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

¹¹Paul Phister, Dave Allen et al, *Pakistan Earthquake Case Study*, www.dodccrp.org/files/case_studies/Pakistan_EQ_case_study.pdf

slight variations, with 73,338 people dead which include 18,095 children of school going age, who died as a result of collapsed school buildings, around 1,28,304 injured, including those with lasting bodily injuries. Houses (600152 - 76%), educational institutions (7669 -67%), health facilities (574 -63%), roads damaged 4,429 km (37%), electricity 60-70%, disruption in water supply 30-40% and lastly telecommunication 35-40% were either totally destroyed or severely damaged. A total of 500,000 families were directly affected.¹² Such statistical assessments of course do not take into account the loss of income and source of livelihood for individuals, commercial enterprises and the total abolishing of income generating assets, which compound the mental stress and trauma suffered by the victims. In a study carried out on the psychological effects of the earthquake in Turkey, it was said, that “survivors show various post-traumatic stress reactions, such as fear, anxiety, sadness, bereavement, anger, memory and concentration problems, irritability, sleep and appetite problems, flashbacks related to the event, unwanted intrusive thoughts and images and avoidance of quake reminders.”¹³

The challenges faced in the rescue and relief operation were manifold. As mentioned above, the enormity and scale of destruction and damage to both humans and infrastructure was of such a nature, that entire administrative machinery of the North belt of the country was rendered virtually ineffective. The immediate challenges faced ranged from an institutional as well information vacuum, rescue and removal of the injured, trapped and dead people, accessing and reaching out to remote localities, and immediate provision of relief operations. The first respondents to observe and assess the damage was the military, as there existed a lack of adequate civilian facilities, and this also brought to focus the question of disaster preparedness as well as early warning. Despite being on major tectonic fault line, and with past experience of major earthquakes causing severe damage to the area concerned, over the years, there had been no adequate safe guards and protective mechanisms. Given the intensity of the quake, the scale of the damage and destruction could not have been prevented, yet public education and sensitization towards facing such calamities is a necessary prerequisite, as witnessed in the recent tsunami resulting from Japanese earthquake, where weekly drills and public awareness programs, helped in preventing a lot of human loss.

Compounded with this was the near absence of early respondents, who ideally should have been from the civic infrastructure and public governing

¹²Tahir Raza Naqvi, *Role of Pakistan Military 8th October 2005 — Earthquake*, Regional Network for Security Studies Center — Non Traditional Security Issues, NESAs conference, Colombo, June 22-23, 2009.

¹³Mehmet Ecevit, Nuray Karancı and İlknur Öner, March 08, 2010 Başyurt-Karakoçan (Elazığ) Earthquake: Psychosocial Evaluation Report, April,12, 2010.

bodies, yet as described earlier, neither did they exist in such an organized and disciplined force, nor after the devastation were they in a position to respond fully. In this capacity the military stepped in, as not only was it, the most well trained, disciplined, well equipped force, but also had a full knowledge and awareness of the affected areas. Given the inaccessibility to some of the worst hit areas, it was the military aviation wing, later helped out by helicopters and rescue teams sent by various countries that proved critical in rescue, relief and evacuation process. The military given their expertise, high discipline and organizational strength was the only well equipped force to take the initiative in rescue and relief, and with the blessings of the government and popular support, the ownership of the entire operation "lifeline" fell into the hands of the military. Any citizen led relief activity would feed into and work at tandem with the military effort, and the international donor community also owing to a pattern established by the military synchronized their efforts accordingly. The impact on civil military relations, although not manifest at the time emerged much later, when during the year 2010 floods, the general population as well as donor communities, both local and international relied on the military's potential to deliver and perform far more than the civil administration, thus indirectly undermining the credibility of the latter.

There is no denying the fact that natural disasters are inevitable, and unavoidable, and entail a high risk inherently. However, risks can be significantly reduced, if there is a better preparedness, which in turn stems from the ability to predict, prevent and lessen the impact of disasters requiring a multi disciplinary and multi sectoral approach to provide protection and relief to the vulnerable people. Amongst the most vulnerable groups were and remain women and children. According to a UNICEF estimate, half of the population killed directly and affected in consequence to the earthquake were children. The disaster has claimed a "lost generation." Stated the UN report "Pakistan Earthquake 2005: Rescue, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction," which was later confirmed by the Pakistan military spokesperson Major Gen. Shaukat Sultan two days after the quake that, "a whole generation has been lost" in Kashmir and the (North West Frontier Province) Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa. The local government gave a figure of around 17,000 students alone died, which is independent of many other young people who were not in school at the time. The UN spokesperson Omar Abidi said, that "they have also been affected emotionally. Those that were going to school now find that there are no schools. They are at risk of diseases. As for the impact on children, it's significant, nearly four-fifths of all schools and public buildings collapsed in the quake."¹⁴

¹⁴AFP, "Half of Quake Dead were Children: UNICEF," *Dawn*, 12 November 2005.

In case of South Asia, in the aftermath of the deadly 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, different remedial as well as early warning systems were implemented throughout the region, along with carrying out disaster assessments. However, once in place, how much they proved effective in disaster warning is an open question, nor as mentioned earlier, were any disaster preparedness education and awareness regime implemented, and at the height of the crisis, there was found lacking a comprehensive disaster management approach, with no institutional coordination available. Not only the Northern regions, but all major cities of the country, including the state and provincial capitals fall in the seismic zone, and face the likelihood of 'very strong' earthquakes in the future. Which gives rise to a very pertinent question, about the capacity of the state to absorb and respond to such crises. Emergency and disaster preparedness cannot be done by relying on the strength of singular institution, such as the military, which as evident during the 2010 floods, was already stretched beyond its capacity to not only counter pockets of insurgency and militancy on the north and south west of the country, but had then to cater for the relief and rehabilitation of the flood victims throughout the country. For this purpose, the need to develop brisk emergency response reflexes at grass root levels, better construction practices and strengthening local communities' ability to respond to disasters is of acute importance.

The absence of local government system during the 2010 floods in comparison to the complete destruction of local government machinery in case of the 2005 earthquake, made the immediate response to disaster management very difficult, which was supplemented by the military's extremely capable and impressive three pronged disaster relief operation in both instances, but the civilian vacuum also provided a space for non state actors such as ideologically driven elements to establish their presence in these far flung localities. Organizations such as Jammāt-u-Dawah, gained a lot of public support and popularity after the earthquake, by proving itself as one of the only groups operating an effective aid and relief service in the affected region.

Groups such as Jammāt-u-Dawah (JuD) have stepped into the vacuum to provide relief aid and social services to those affected by the flooding. JuD has already established 13 relief camps in surrounding districts, providing food to the displaced and running an ambulance service. JuD now says it has 2000 members working in the region. The group claims to be involved solely in charitable work but is widely believed to be a front for the terrorist group Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, responsible for the 2008 Mumbai attack. JuD gained renown after the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, when it was one of the only groups

operating an effective aid and relief service in the affected region, often eclipsing the government's own efforts.¹⁵

A similar trend was witnessed and concerns raised during the floods, where these organizations not only managed to win the proverbial battle of "hearts and minds," but in the absence of means of earning, recruited people from the affected populations, which helped widen their ranks as well as provided them with an opportunity to establish themselves in areas, which previously were not scouted by them. The consequences of such an interface between anti-state groups and vulnerable population groups are enormous both for the civil and military administrators.

With a wide range of actors to deal with both from the affected and vulnerable groups as well as disaster respondents, local and foreign, the additional problem relief operators had to cater to was, the refusal by certain percentage of victims from leaving their households, despite the rains, harsh winters as well as non-existent and very dangerous living conditions. This is an established fact that owing to the rapid, timely and systematic response despite the nature of the emergency, primarily by the military and reinforced by the foreign relief troops and teams, there are no post-disaster casualties or deaths recorded which could occur during rescue or relief operations. In areas such as the Allai valley, people despite warnings of worsening conditions, chose to remain back in their shanty homes and croplands, than shift in to camps, making the relief work much more difficult and spread out. The aid workers alongside evacuation, relief and sustenance provision, now had to develop plans to provide families with roofing material and other supplies that "will allow them to repair damaged homes or build temporary winterized structures that — especially at higher altitudes — are considered preferable to tents, which in any case are in short supply. Provided that such shelters can be built before winter sets in, many relief officials say, the approach is preferable over the long run to housing victims in squalid tent cities where they run the risk of losing touch with communities and livelihoods."¹⁶

As a remedial measure, the government immediately clamped down on any construction activity taking place throughout the country and more so in the traditional seismic zones, to make them compliant to new building codes

¹⁵Reza Jan, "After the Flood, A Stream of Radical Islamists," <http://american.com/archive/2010/august/after-the-flood-a-stream-of-radical-islamists/Tuesday>, August 10, 2010.

¹⁶John Lancaster, "For Pakistani Villagers, A Risky Decision to Stay as Winter Looms, Quake Victims Resist Evacuation to Camps," *Washington Post*, Foreign Service, 1 November 2005, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/31/AR2005103101564.html?referrer=email&referrer=email>

and to be able to withstand strong tremors, as part of a disaster management and preparedness strategy. This was more in response to the collapse of a residential tower complex in the heart of the capital city which claimed many lives and minor to heavy structural damages to other high rise buildings. As stated by Saleem Altaf, chairman of Earthquake reconstruction and rehabilitation authority that sprouted as a result of the quake, "earthquakes don't kill people, poorly constructed buildings do. Construction regulations have to be robust, and they must be strictly implemented."¹⁷

Role of Donors and International Actors

Although the initial and immediate response by the international community was very slow, largely owing to the lack of access and information available, in comparison to other complex emergencies of similar nature. Once the account of devastation and destruction reached the international media, rescue and assistance teams reached Pakistan from the world over. Donations were promised by international community and the UN at a later stage developed a cluster approach through which it provided assistance in key and critical areas identified. Despite all these efforts, the amount of relief aid promised could not be fully met with, however, what was achieved albeit short term was goodwill and approval of the US and its allies helping in the relief operation by the public, media as well as the conservative clergy, who have long been in the vanguard of anti-U.S. feeling in Pakistan. "Obviously, this is the other side of the United States," said Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Shujabadi, a prominent religious scholar from Karachi. "For the first time in so many years I have seen the American planes dropping relief and not bombs on the Muslim population."¹⁸ The earthquake had effected the Indian side of Kashmir as well, yet no wide scale deaths or destruction had taken place, and New Delhi also provided relief and assistance to Pakistan during this time. Yet in terms of monetary assistance, the appeals and pledges fell short of their aim.

Those who were monitoring the quake and resulting emergency feared that with the onset of harsh weather conditions, and lack of sustenance as well as provisions, a second wave of deaths appeared a forbidding scenario. And to counter this trend large scale financial aid was most important. Even after one month's time, "of the \$550 million the United Nations called for in its "flash appeal," only \$119 million, or 22 percent, has been received." Around the same time, the World Bank assessed that Pakistan would need approximately

¹⁷ *Newsweek Pakistan*, October 11, 2010, pp. 30-31.

¹⁸ John Lancaster, "Quake Aid Helps U.S. Alter Image in Pakistan, Afghan and Iraq Wars had built anger."

\$5.2 billion to effectively implement a relief, recovery, and reconstruction plan. Of this, \$3.5 billion will be needed for rebuilding housing, schools, health facilities, roads, and other public infrastructure—an effort that would stretch up to five years, if not more. The donors' conference did provide relief, however much criticism was leveled against the halting response. Some attribute this to the less importance given to a purely local emergency, however high scale it was in comparison to the previous year's tsunami, which had not only affected a number of Indian ocean littoral states, but had tourists from around forty countries, who fell victim in a large number. Secondly, the access and outreach to the affected areas, and last but not least, what has been termed as a donor fatigue.¹⁹ Owing to the increase in the occurrence and lethality of environmental complex emergencies, countries the world over had contributed generously to past events, and yet another calamity proved cumbersome.

The UN approached the disaster relief through adopting for the first time ever, in consultation with local partners, a cluster approach set out in a Humanitarian Response Review (HRR) paper commissioned by the agency. The basic premise of this cluster approach was to ensure, that accountability, predictability and reliability could be improved by identifying organizational leaders for areas in which there was an identified gap in humanitarian response. These organizations would then be responsible for specific areas, or clusters. And for this purpose, "a set of nine clusters, Food and Nutrition, Water and Sanitation, Health, Emergency Shelter, Early Recovery and Reconstruction, IT Telecommunications, Logistics, Camp Management and Protection, modeled on the HRR recommendations, were established in Islamabad, plus a 10th cluster for Education. Field cluster sites were established in each of the main UN field presences and dubbed 'humanitarian hubs'."²⁰ Did this approach work? In certain areas it showed success, however, as the emergency progressed, the number of clusters and sub-clusters grew exponentially, making it difficult for NGOs and aid workers to keep track of the number of clusters that existed.

National Level Efforts and Conduct of Relief Operation

At the domestic level, after taking a damage assessment as well as prioritizing the challenges and issues concerned, a two pronged strategy was adopted. At the national level, two new institutions were established which would plan,

¹⁹David Fabrycky, Karl F. Inderfurth and Stephen P. Cohen, *Save Pakistan* from "Donor Fatigue" The Christian Science Monitor. November 17, 2005.

²⁰"The Evolving UN Cluster Approach in the Aftermath of the Pakistan Earthquake: An NGO Perspective," A Report by Action Aid International, April 2006.

coordinate, supervise, and execute relief, rescue, rehabilitation as well as reconstruction activities. The first of these being the Federal relief commission, and second the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA). Furthermore at the national level, these organizations channelized donors, international relief efforts, non-governmental and civil society organizations, individual donors as well as philanthropists, with media running donation campaigns, being provided access to affected areas and garnering support for the quake victims. The president and prime minister both made personal appeals to the nation as well as international community to provide all types of relief and assistance work.

At the operational level, a large scale employment of army (amounting to three divisions) was carried out, which within twenty four hours, cleared road blocks and landslides through its engineers to provide road link to affected areas. Muzaffarabad the state capital, was not only the second worst hit city after Balakot, but immediately after the earthquake its land access was blocked, which the military restored within the first 24-48 hours, as these were critical road links. The strategy to tackle the emergency was three pronged.

The first phase spanning the initial fifteen days was the immediate rescue and relief phase (October 8-20), the next three months were dedicated to creation of stability (October to December 2005) and thereafter, maintenance of stability which went up to march 2006.²¹ The first phase, dealt with the rescue of survivors, vulnerable people, search and removal of the dead as well as evacuation and treatment of the injured. The army was assisted by not less than sixteen foreign rescue teams. The search and rescue also involved the evacuation of the affected people to safe and secure localities and provision of food, water and shelter.

Owing to the winters, the second phase proved equally tough, as the race against time was to protect and provide shelter to 3.5 million displaced people. Owing to the dedicated, well planned and coordinated efforts by the army and assistance provided by foreign troops, no deaths occurred owing to non availability of relief services. The military and civil administration along with concerned citizens, local and international NGOs and SCOs voluntarily helped out and catered to the provision of food, shelter, medical aid, social and civic facilities, along with compensation money and establishing a system to document the affected people so that they may be able to return to their homes and without much difficulty set up their works. The last stage of maintenance of stability primarily paved the path for an effective and orderly reconstruction and rehabilitation phase, which continued till much longer. The task was

²¹Naqvi, op cit.

extremely daunting, as many victims of the quake refused any provision of help, as against their self respect. The army was not only faced by the problems emerging from the post quake situation, but fighting with militants as well, some of whom were now part of the disaster relief operation as well. When it came to settling the populations back, the challenge proved more daunting, as despite warnings of certain old localities such as Balakot being rendered dangerous to live, was the natural choice of its natives, rather than warming up to the idea of a new balakot city. The displaced citizens fell into many categories, those displaced as the result of counter insurgency operations, a second layer being those who crossed the LoC and after decades remained in makeshift camp cities and adding to this bulk were the new environmentally displaced citizens.

Did the relief activities get hampered by the military operations in Afghanistan and North West regions of Pakistan. Where on one hand it helped build a positive image of the Americans and western countries with the Pakistani public at large, the militants did not create any security problems for the local or foreign aid and assistance workers, including the foreign troops. Though concerns were raised with regards the free access these militants enjoyed, but given the nature of the situation, a "don't ask don't tell" policy was prudently adopted.²² The army had to make large scale employment in the affected areas, and that stretched the organization's capacity beyond limits, but they were successful in their efforts. The success of the relief and rehabilitation process goes as much to the army, as it does to the spirit of magnanimity, volunteerism and resilience of the entire nation which worked together as a single entity in helping the fellow countrymen in distress, and of course to the foreign aid and assistance teams as well as troops, who against all odds remained alive to the needs and concerns of the victims and nation in general.

The lesson learnt by this devastating emergency was to remain alive and prepared for any form of complex emergency. This may not preempt or prevent the occurrence of the problem, but help mitigate the risk, minimize and reduce it to a level where the impact of the disaster is not so intense. For this purpose adequate safe guards, early warning mechanisms, intergovernmental and inter institutional networking, public and general awareness, training and education to deal with such disasters, infrastructural and construction modifications and identifying as well as strengthening vulnerable communities from the grass roots level to encounter and comprehend the consequences of such complex emergencies and be able to self help and cope with them.

²²Andrew Wilder, "Perceptions of the Pakistan Earthquake Response Humanitarian Agenda 2015 Pakistan Country Study," *Feinstein International Center*, February 2008 p. 5.