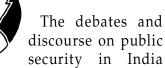# Rethinking Security in South Asia

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The basic concept of security is undergoing a profound change all over the world. The security of people is moving to centre stage, with more emphasis on income and job security, environmental security, security against crime, security of both individuals and of communities. National security is still paramount, but its attainment is linked more and more with human security. It is widely recognised that national security cannot be achieved in a situation when people starve but arms accumulate; where social expenditure falls and military expenditure rises.

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Mahbub ul Haque[1]

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Introduction

The debates and discourse on public security in India invariably gets focused on incidents of terrorism and insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), the north east, emerging threats to coastal security after 26/11, left wing extremism and cross border incidents of firing from Pakistan. We can add to these threat perceptions from cross border migrations from Bangladesh and demographic changes they have introduced in some of the north eastern states. The above quotation from Mahbub ul Haque, the pioneer of human development, brings in an entirely fresh perspective and a paradigm shift in perceiving security. However, even as we ponder over and consider a paradigm shift in perceiving and strategizing on security, more particularly in the context of South Asia, signals arising from the region are mixed, if not pessimistic. Physical and boundary related concerns dominate discussions on security in South Asia, where both internal and international (largely regional) security issues have bogged down the nations largely in eyeball-to-

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eyeball contacts with each other rather than seeing eye to eye on a large number of socio-economic issues of collective nature. Let us begin by considering the following at the outset:

(i) An attack by seven Taliban gunmen on December 16, 2014 on the Army Public School in Peshawar brutally killed 132 children. According to security analysts Pakistan has no less than five categories of terrorist groups, many of which have state support. 2014 has witnessed a dozen major terrorist incidents in Pakistan. Obviously, many of the security concerns in Pakistan are homegrown and home based with regional implications, more particularly for India in the context of the Kashmir dispute and Afghanistan, which too casts its shadow on relations with India.

(ii) Two days later a Pakistan court granted bail to Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi, a UN declared terrorist accused of being among the main conspirators of 26/11 terror attack in Mumbai. Pakistan acted fast to detain him for three more months before it moved a writ before the High Court against his release, but the Islamabad High Court bailed him out on 29 December 2014. Following India's protest, he was detained in an abduction case on

30 December 2014 soon before his release, and the Interior Ministry of Pakistan moved Supreme Court the next day against the bail. However, several observers have found the resolve of the Pakistani rulers weak in this regard.

(iii) In a decade between 2005 and 2014, South Asia has witnessed 112,894 fatalities in terrorist violence. India lost 19,043 lives in different conflict theatres of the country during this period. Between 1994 and 2014, 63,896 lives were lost in terror incidents in India. The figures do not include Maoist violence, which witnessed 6,630 people killed during 2005-14. Pakistan has lost 55,516 persons in terrorist violence during 2003-14. In 2014 alone there have been 5,000 killings. Bangladesh has seen 703 lives lost in left wing extremism and 504 in terrorism in 2005-14. In Sri Lanka 41,341 people have been killed since the dawn of the millennium to terrorist violence. Indeed there is a reduction since the taming of the LTTE. Nepal witnessed 13,301 killings in Maoist insurgency. Despite tensions, the killings have come down since its quest for democracy. Terrorism in Afghanistan took 14,728 lives during 2006-11. Of the 17,958 deaths in terrorist attacks in 2013, 82 percent were in one of five countries: Iraq, Afghanistan,

Pakistan, Nigeria, and Syria; there are two South Asian states Afghanistan and Pakistan in the list of five. Al-Qa'ida and Taliban, the two South Asia based terrorist outfits, have been instrumental in killing over 17,000 and injuring over 22,000 persons during 2000-13.

(iv) As we glance at politics, the Union Home Minister of India Rajnath Singh stated unambiguously on 22 November 2014 that 'Terrorism in India is completely Pakistan sponsored'. Rejecting Pakistan's argument that 'non-state actors' alone indulged in terrorism against India, he asked 'Is ISI a non-state actor?' and linked the ISI to the Al Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Toiba, Dawood Ibrahim and the perpetrators of the 26/11 Mumbai attack. He went on stating several terror linkages and put the onus of resumption of suspended dialogue between the two countries on Pakistan.

(v) In the same gathering, India's National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval said, 'India has two neighbours, both nuclear powers (which) share a strategic relationship and shared adversarial view of India.' He further said 'Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence can bleed India but it cannot degrade a civilizational nation like us.

(vi) Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Nawaz Sharif met during the SAARC summit in Kathmandu (November 26-28, 2014) with cold vibes between them. Though host Nepal salvaged the situation when Prime Minister Sushil Koirala persuaded them to a warm handshake on the final day, Indian External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson, Syed Akbaruddin said 'Let's not read too many things into courtesies that are being extended'.

(vii) Pakistan's NSA Sartaj Aziz recently talked of good and bad Taliban. Arguing that Pakistan needn't target militants who do not pose a threat to Pakistan's national security, he said, 'Why should America's enemies unnecessarily become our enemies?' 'When the United States attacked Afghanistan, all those that were trained and armed were pushed towards us', Aziz said, adding that whilst some militants posed a threat to Pakistan, others did not. 'Why must we make enemies of them all?'

(viii) The Pakistan Foreign Office contradicted him by immediately issuing a counter. 'The advisor made the statement in a historical context', Foreign Office

spokesperson Tasneem Aslam said in a statement. 'As for [the] present, Pakistan has launched operation Zarb-i-Azb and taking action against all groups without any distinction or discrimination'. He added that Pakistan's commitment to militancy needs to be seen in the context of Zarb-i-Azb concentrated in North Waziristan.

(ix) The Af-Pak conundrum has emerged as a major security concern and debate in the region. Pakistan shares a 2,640 kilometer border (Durand Line) with Afghanisan and has been impacted by the developments there since the USSR invaded the country in 1979. It has remained central to the US moves in the region and has perceived a major role since the fall of the Taliban. Since 9/11 it became part of the US 'war against terror'. It is also sensitive to the role of India in the region.

These are some of the examples that tell us that though sovereignty and territory based concerns of national security are alive and predominant in South Asia and the world, efforts aimed at achieving security are increasingly causing larger insecurity to the people. The rhetoric and quest for security based on *raison d'état* are increasingly militarizing and securitizing states

and imperiling lives of people. This necessitates pursuit for an alternative paradigm. That leads us to the question as to 'whose security are we talking about in a region with the most diverse population anywhere in the world, afflicted with inner conflicts and regional tensions – that of a people or of a state?' In case it is people's security, who is this security against and who is going to ensure it and how? In case it is state's security, does it contradict people's security? Can a state be secured if its citizens are not secure? How to maintain a balance between the two and ensure that one does not imperil the other?

Conceptualizing Security

Four concepts, viz; internal security, national security, public security and human security are presently in discourse in this context. Internal security referring to keeping peace within the borders of a sovereign state brings in issues relating to the police powers of the state and division of this power within various units, whether the state is federal or unitary. Though primarily located with the police, the internal security responsibilities are now increasingly shared with paramilitary and the military forces in cases of exceptionally violent situations. For, threats to the peace and public order in any polity range from low-level civil disorders through large scale violence to armed insurgencies. In

the Indian context Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) is being debated between the state and Human Rights groups.

'National security', on the other hand, has emerged as a philosophy for maintaining a stable nation state from the Peace of Westphalia that institutionalised a new international order of sovereign nation states. The National Security Act signed on July 26, 1947 by U.S. President Harry S. Truman made national security not only an official guiding principle of the US foreign policy, but across the world. It is now understood as a requirement to maintain the survival of a nation-state through the use of economic, military and political power and the exercise of diplomacy, encompassing a broad range of issues impinging on the military or economic security of a nation. Security threat perception in the contemporary world involves nation-states as well as non-state actors such as terrorist organizations, narcotic cartels and multi-national organisations; even natural disasters and events causing severe environmental damages.

Lately, public security has shifted the discourse and focus to responsibility of governments to a people-centered paradigm. With shrinking geography of the globalizing world open access to technologies of speed, lethal weapons and communication, organised crime and international terrorism are crossing geographical, linguistic or financial barriers. Also, there has been some suggestions in recent years that more than security, people need safety and a more comprehensive framework of public safety is called for.

The United Nations Development Programme's 1994 Human Development Report proved a milestone in situating security in human realm, arguing that insuring 'freedom from want' and 'freedom from fear' for all persons is the best path to tackle the problem of global insecurity. 'Human security' seeking a new qualitative paradigm that enjoins governments, developmental agencies in public and voluntary arena and multilateral agencies to secure well-being of the peoples of the world against global vulnerabilities; making the citizen, not the state, as the proper referent for security. Consequently, seven areas – economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security have become a part of international discourse.

We need to focus on the region (i.e. South Asia) and its characteristics – political, social, cultural and economic – to consider how to visualize security

for the peoples, societies, countries and the region as a whole.

The Region

While speaking about national security in the context of South Asia, home to one-fifth of the humanity, and covering nearly 3.3 percent of the world's land area, we should remember that differences over national boundaries that emerged largely during the last century, they share history and cultural roots as well as most of their problems – social, political and economic, ecological and security related. In fact, their national boundaries have not divided the ecological systems, which continue to be an integral whole.

The South Asian nations with $1,482 Gross National Income (2013) still have about 571 million people surviving on less than $1.25 a day and they make up more than 44 percent of the developing world's poor according to the World Bank's most recent poverty estimates.[2] Even though regional GDP was projected to grow by 6.4 percent in the 2014 calendar year and 6.7 percent in 2015, driven by improvement in export demand, policy reforms in India, stronger investment activity, and normal agricultural production,[3] the South Asian nations have huge external debt[4] and except for Maldives described as upper middle income country the rest are characterized either as lower middle income or lower income countries, their defence expenditure is substantial.[5] They have at the same time been rated low on sustainability. The Fund for Peace and Foreign Policy (Journal) project on 'Promoting Sustainable Security' has been rating 178 states for their sustainability since 2005 on twelve social, economic and political indicators. The 2010 index has rated five South Asian states – Afghanistan (7), Pakistan (10), Bangladesh (19), Sri Lanka (22) and Nepal (25) – among 38 states in the alert category. Bhutan (48), Maldives (81) and India (87) are in the warning category along with 90 other countries.[6] Changes in ranking aside, each one since 2005 has been in the same zone.

The region where the BPL population ranges from 13 percent in Maldives to 53 percent in Afghanistan, giving an average of 30 percent to the region, huge sums of money are spent on arms and ammunition and security infrastructure that could be made available for better human development. Except for India, that has a threat perception from China, most countries in the region currently have either internal or mutual security threats. Out of 187 nations surveyed for 2014 Human Development Report, Sri Lanka is placed at 73, Maldives at 103, India

at 135, Bhutan 136, Bangladesh at 142, Nepal at 145, Pakistan at 146 and Afghanistan 169.[7] Public investment in South Asia in social sectors such as health, education and nutrition remain among the lowest in the world and this limits the productive capacity of its people. No wonder, 1,555.3 million strong population still has 37.6 percent adult illiterates, 44.9 people without access to sanitation and infant mortality stands at 59.6. Life expectancy in South Asia is still among the lowest in the world, second only to sub-Saharan Africa. By the year 2000, 95 out of 1000 children on average still died before reaching the age of five. The region is host to the highest proportion of underweight, stunted and wasted children in the world. Overall, nearly half of the children under the age of five are chronically malnourished. 79 million children suffered from malnutrition. Daily calorie supply of 2379 still remains below the average for developing countries at 2663. The total number of illiterates increased from 366 million in 1990 to 388 million in 1997, 39 million children lack even primary education and 365 million women are still illiterate in the region. South Asia is home to 515 million poor people, which is the largest in the world. South Asia also has stark inequality. According to the World Bank, 'While South Asia is doing better in upward mobility in adulthood, particularly through increasing employment oppo- rtunities and urbanization trends, the region is falling behind in terms of opportunities during childhood support through life.'[8] World Bank has also pointed out that government revenue is low in South Asia compared to rest of the world and there is large scale tax evasion and the tax revenue is spent on 'regressive subsidies'. The World Bank, however, is optimistic about the economic growth scenario of the region and has projected that 'the region's economy will expand by a real 6 percent in 2015 and 6.4 percent in 2016… potentially making it the second fastest growing region in the world after East Asia and the Pacific. The Indian economy, 80 percent of the region's output, is set to grow by 6.4 percent in fiscal year (FY) 2015/16 after 5.6 percent in FY 2014/15.[9] However, along with tax evasion, corruption remains one of the major causes of concern that could derail any prediction and projection. Ranking in the Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (2014) for 175 countries ranks Bhutan 65, India and Sri Lanka 85, Pakistan and Nepal 126, Bangladesh 145, and Afghanistan 172,[10] clearly showing the countries of the region as among the most corrupt in the world, which has over the years corroded their economies. Obviously much would depend upon how the South Asian governments are able to

check this menace.

The Washington DC based World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index covers only India and Pakistan in South Asia. In the 2010 index, India completely outperforms Pakistan, but has an average performance compared to countries with similar income levels. India ranks at the top among lower-middle income countries in terms of government accountability, clear and stable laws, and open government, yet due to deficiencies in access to justice, in court congestion and delays in processing cases, the country ranks at the very bottom in this area. Pakistan shows weaknesses in most areas, where low levels of government accountability are compounded by the prevalence of corruption, a weak justice system, and high levels of crime and violence.[11]

Governance in South Asia continues to be a critical issue in any assessment of the region. Most international socio-economic indicators and the World Bank Reports put each country of South Asia in critical category, variance in performance amongst them notwithstanding. The Table below for the South Asian countries indicators culled out from Worldwide Governance Indicators that has indexed countries of the world on six indices (see the Table below that has data for 2013). Maximum score (out of 100) is for Bhutan on control of corruption (78) and minimum for Pakistan on political stability and absence of violence (0.9) by Pakistan. India, which scores a decent 61.1 on voice and accountability, scores only 12.3 on political stability and absence of violence; perhaps political and civic violence in some parts of the country brings it down on stability too. Bhutan is best on government effectiveness, where India, Sri Lanka and Maldives are just below 50 and others are very low. All are low on regulatory quality, while Bhutan and India stick their heads above 50. Bhutan alone stands out in control of corruption. Indeed, while in the competitive regional politics a country can fault the other considered as a rival, but objectively each of them needs to introspect on its own state of affairs and whether it figures internationally. Weaknesses on each of the six do not ensure ideal conditions for security of the people and the state.

Discoursing and Situating Security

A discussion on security entails presence, creation, persistence and escalation of insecurity(ies). Who is likely to cause security threat, why, how and under what circumstances are the questions that are normally posed? Consequently and subsequently preparations against

South Asia Governance indicators 2013

Country			Ranking			
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Voice & Account-ability	Political Stability	Gover-nment Effecti-veness	Regul-atory Quality	Rule of Law	Control of Corrupt-ion
Afghanistan	13.3	1.4	7.2	11.0	1.4	1.9
Bangladesh	35.1	7.6	22.5	20.6	22.7	20.6
Bhutan	42.7	70.1	64.6	13.9	59.2	78.0
India	61.1	12.3	47.4	34.0	52.6	35.9
Maldives	34.6	51.7	45.0	36.4	28.9	37.8
Nepal	29.9	14.2	18.2	22.0	26.1	29.2
Pakistan	24.6	0.9	23.4	24.9	20.9	17.7
Sri Lanka	28.9	26.1	45.9	47.8	46.4	51.7

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Worldwide_Governance_Indicators (Accessed on 15 November 2014).

security threat(s) from the *raison d'état* is on the age-old principle *Si vis pacem, para bellum* ('If you want peace, prepare for war'). However, despite security being looked at mostly from the perspective of territorial sovereignty, experts have recognised during the past couple of decades that the approach not only ignores people, whose security ought to take primacy over security of the state, but many states engaged in conflict(s) are not in a position to provide security of life and livelihood to their own people. We would focus here how security has been discoursed in South Asia, with what consequence and how and where we move from there.

Institutional structure, legal framework and larger concerns of

security in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, the three South Asian states emerging from decolonization of British India, are legacies of the colonial regime as well as those thrown up by the colonial state. Sri Lanka too has similar legacies. A large number of national security concerns in the region have emanated from these four countries. While Nepal has added to concerns due to its location and recent politics, Afghanistan has added to the regional security concerns since its Talibanization and international efforts to bring political stability in the beleaguered country.

The rivalry and animosity between India and Pakistan since their independence, more particularly over Jammu and Kashmir, that has resulted in three major wars (1948, 1965 and 1971), two serious skirmishes (Siachen since 1984 and Kargil in 1999), of which Siachen glacier[12] continues to be a major bone of contention, and nuclearization of India and Pakistan that casts shadow over security not only of the region but also of the entire world.[13] Along with nuclearization, both countries have been spending on conventional weapons too. According to SIPRI, India (#1 with 14% imports during 2009-13) and Pakistan (#3 with 5% imports during 2009-13) have been among the five topmost importers of weapons in the world.[14] India

increased its major arms imports by 111 percent between 2004-2008 and 2009-13, becoming the world's largest importer, with 14 percent of the global total; almost three times larger than those of China or Pakistan. Russia supplied 75 percent of Indian arms imports, the USA 7 percent and Israel 6 percent. Not to be left behind, Pakistan increased its arms imports by 119 percent between 2004-2008 and 2009-13. China provided 54 percent of Pakistan's imports and the USA 27 percent. During 2009-13, India and Pakistan both invested heavily in air-strike capabilities.[15]

The politics of Sri Lanka slided from being turbulent to violent between 1960s and 1980s with regional, even global, implications till 2009. The problem was rooted in the British policy of communal representation in the Ceylon (colonial Sri Lanka) National Legislative Council since the 1920s; the division increased since independence of Ceylon in 1948. The Sri Lankan imbroglio rooted in the differences over power sharing and redistributive politics between majority Sinhala and minority Tamil ethnicities inhabiting the island nation, gradually escalated with competitive politics that witnessed efforts to isolate and marginalize the minority Tamils, leading to the emergence of militant groups since 1960s, which intensified

during the 1970s and 1980s. The rise of the Liberation Tiger of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the 1980s (1983 to be more precise) and its eventual fall in May 2009 not only pushed the politics of Sri Lanka and the region beyond all limits of violence, it witnessed India and the international community peculiarly involved. The Sri Lankan Tamil leaders earned sympathies of the Indian Tamil politicians and some of them took refuge in India. The emerging Indian involvement, leading to the deployment of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in the island (1987-90), complicated the issue further and the LTTE, which earlier received arms and training from the Indians, received support from the Sri Lankan government against the IPKF. The LTTE story and the Tamil demands for a political space and political autonomy, that unfortunately got soaked in violence, ended with its defeat in 2009, but the political issue of an autonomous space for the Sri Lankan Tamils within the country's sovereignty is and would continue to be alive, whether or not it becomes a regional issue once again.[16]

Though the politics of Bangladesh has relatively stabilized since the first coup on 15 August 1975, in which Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his entire family was assassinated, internal turmoil has not ended. The country's general election in January 2014 was boycotted by Khaleda Zia led Bangladesh Nationalist Party, which is now raising questions on legitimacy of the election and has begun agitation against the government. The resulting cantankerous politics has implications for the politics as well as security discourse in the region.[17] Also, the trials and convictions for war crimes during 1971 war have kept its politics tumultuous. Bangladesh's 4,096 kilometer long porous border with India, the fifth longest in the world, running across five states – West Bengal, Meghalaya, Assam, Tripura and Mizoram – has had many disputes, humanitarian and other issues.[18] The border issue is further complicated by 162 officially recognized enclaves, i.e. territory encircled by villages of the other country, 111 Indian enclaves (17,158 acres) in western Bangladesh and 51 Bangladeshi enclaves (7,110 acres) in India's West Bengal. Land and Border Agreement prepared by the Manmohan Singh government in India in 2011 was not supported by the opposition, but the Bharatiya Janata Party now in power has declared its intent to go through it. The agreement may well be signed soon, but the issues of illegal migration, human trafficking, smuggling of cattle, illegal arms and drugs continue to dog the security establishments of the two countries. There have been serious skirmishes

between Indian Border Security Force and Bangladesh Rifles/Border Guard Bangladesh and both have been accused of human rights violations.

Nepal's politics is in turmoil since the 1970s. However, the armed uprising by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) since 1996 has resulted in the death of thousands of people. Though the monarchy is abolished in Nepal, its nascent democratic experience continues to be unstable. The party system is still in embryonic stage and the process of constitution making has been in process for over four years without any agreement on basics of its structure. And, as the constitution is about to be enacted, analysts see undue hurry that may not be good for the Himalayan state.[19] These developments have not only created socio-economic instability within the country, but the security concerns as well have been raised at the regional level. At the height of the Maoist insurgency, concerns were raised regarding their linkages with the Indian Maoists, more particularly when the Indian Maoists talked of creating a red corridor from Pashupati (Kathmandu) to Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh, India). For India, Nepal continues to be critical given its hostility with China.

The discourse on security in South Asia would not be complete without mentioning public security concerns within each country. A major security issue that India is confronting is the Maoist movement, a multi-faceted test which has endured for close to seven decades now and has thrown up new challenges from time to time, that is clearly rooted in deficits in human development due to structural and policy anomalies – both formulation and implementation.[20] India also has had a history of insurgency and terrorism with cross border implications. However, the domestic political and public security (including the 'rule of law' dimension) dimensions in insurgency in the north east of the country since 1949, terrorism in Punjab in the 1980s and terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir since mid-1980s cannot be overlooked.[21] However, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir and several terrorist incidents in India, the most glaring of which in the recent past was 26/11 (2008) attack in Mumbai, have exposed the soft underbelly of the security question in South Asia.[22] The countries involved have to turn inwards and audit social, political and economic costs of inflicting damages at each other. The Peshawar attack on a school on 16 December 2014 killing 132 innocent children and 13 others is a grim reminder to the costs of terror. Pakistan's honeymoon with Taliban and Al Quaida is well-

known. Osama bin Laden, hunted by the US since 9/11, was found holed up and killed on Pakistan soil. That both military and political establishments have used 'terror' to their political convenience is a topic of debate in Pakistan too.[23] According to a data base there are more than 200 terror groups in South Asia.[24] The threat and challenges to the rule of law regime, as also its security architecture, of any country or society claiming to be democratic in such a situation comes from within as analyses indicate that both perceived internal and external prejudices and compulsions lead to covert or overt support to extremism, militancy and/or terrorism.[25] While the public security architecture as well as the criminal justice system deserves modernization and democratization across the region, the countries in the region must introspect and desist from inflicting injuries on others realizing that they lead to more severe injuries to self. Indeed, the South Asian countries also have to be alert against home grown terror, even if the causal factors are beyond their borders. Aside from terrorism, political differences leading to undemocratic isolating of rivals within supposedly democratic process too is not conducive to national security.[26]

The compulsions of the domestic politics of each South Asian nation willy nilly cast a shadow on national security discourse in the region. The most recent instance is interception of a boat by the Indian Coast Guard in the Arabian Sea on 31 December 2014, which 'blew itself up' when warned. The result has been claims of another 26/11 type of attack by the Indian security establishment. The Coast Guard report stated that there were terrorists on the boat that was stacked with arms and ammunition and they had wireless intercepts indicating that the occupants of the boat were in touch with their handlers. This was questioned by reports in *The Indian Express*, a prominent Indian daily. The report anchored by Praveen Swami, a leading security affairs scribe, claimed that those in the boat could be petty liquor and diesel smugglers, 'ferrying bootleg cargo from Gwadr port to other fishing boats which were to have carried it into Karachi's Keti Bandar harbour'. The report suggested possibility of disproportionate use of force by the Coast Guard.[27] The Government of India expectedly stood by its security establishment.[28] However, the political reactions on both sides of the border reflected difficulties in the regional security scenario. While Pakistan Maritime Security Agency captured two boats with 12 Indian fishermen on 4 January 2015, Praveen Swami was severely criticized and demonstrations were

organised against the newspaper by the self-proclaimed 'nationalists'. Ajai Sahni, a security expert, argued: 'By recasting what was likely a petty criminal enterprise as another "26/11", and then launching a bitter and personalized attack on journalists who highlighted the obvious and glaring inconsistencies in the official narrative – accusing the journalists who highlighted the obvious and glaring inconsistencies in the official narrative – accusing the journalists of being "anti-national", of supporting Pakistan, and of denigrating the country's Armed Forces – the government and its supporters have undermined their own credibility.'[29] Amit Shah, President of Bharatiya Janata Party and a close associate and advisor of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, gave a 'nationalist' hue to the criticism of the Congress Party of this incident, which was driven by its own political compulsions, by asking whether the party was fighting polls in India or Pakistan.[30] Such jingoistic reactions, which are essentially playing to the gallery for electoral and political gains, are as much part of other South Asian countries, Pakistan is giving this incident its own twist and any such incident with Bangladesh and Sri Lanka get similar twists in these countries as well, which do not augur well for a consensus on security.

Larger regional geopolitics and the region's economy too impact a South Asian vision and relations between and amongst the neighbours. The dynamics naturally casts a shadow on the security question plays out regionally and internationally. The size of India, its population, economy et al gives it a big brotherly demeanour, not relished by the neighbours, who attempt to counter balance it with other alliances. China emerges as the most prominent player in this dynamics. It became clear when in the SAARC summit in Kathmandu on 26-17 November 2014, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka pushed for China's upgrading from observer status to full membership. While Pakistan's ambivalence on a proactive role to realise the full potential of the SAARC, especially because it considers India its primary adversary and would like to prevent it from getting a predominant role in the group, other members too would not like dominance of India to grow beyond a point. China too would be wary of an India-led SAARC emerge as a strong group in the region. It thus works out well for China and other SAARC members to create this counter balance. Not surprisingly, 'at the end of December, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi arrived in Kathmandu for a three-day visit to deliver help to Nepal, especial assistance in generating electricity. Beijing will increase official annual aid more than five-fold, from $24

million to $128 million. Moreover, China will spend additional money to build a police academy for Nepal. Obviously, Indian diplomacy would be on test to take up the challenge of forging the SAARC as a viable regional forum and make it a counter weight by neutralising the Chinese diplomacy.[31] However, since Af-Pak has emerged as a major area of global security concern, the regional powers, particularly India and Pakistan need to resolve their differences to cooperate on the issue beyond perceived national security that is secured by harming the other. Foreign Policy magazine has listed Af-Pak among the ten wars to watch out for in 2015. It opines that 'Exclusion is a major driver in many of today's wars – all main groups need a seat at the table to protect their interests.'[32]

Extremism in each of the affected South Asian states – Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal – creates peculiar situation for their armies and other security forces created to fight external enemies, ends up fighting its own people, which has negative implications for the rule of law regime, so significant to democratic governance, as well as functioning and institutional morale of the defence and public security architecture. We only have to follow the debate on the Armed Forces Special Powers Act in India to

comprehend the gravity of this issue.[33] The situation of cross border support to extremism and violence, rather than to developmental initiatives that could have positive crossflows or spill-overs, has socio-economic and political costs that are unproductive, even counter-productive. The use of non-state actors in proxy wars in the region has heavy costs as it recoils, as Pakistan is experiencing. The driver used in employing non-state actors in extremist politics (and terrorism) is religion that creates a bigoted community, which is uninhibited by any formal boundaries of the rule of law, thus like the Frankensteinian monster, they are inimical to the creator. Religion, as demonstrated by umpteen horrific incidents, the latest being the massacre of school children in Peshawar and the killings of four cartoonists and a dozen others in Paris, becomes the most unlikely *raison d' etre* for inhuman violence on innocents, rather than soul force for strengthening a society. The play of religion in the South Asian societies deserves a critical review for promoting human security.

A factor that has seldom been analyzed for costs and benefits is the play of big powers in the region. The regional rivalries have invited big powers to find play grounds for their global politics. If the US (NATO along with it) and the USSR were

there during the Cold War years (1947-91), China has been using its proximity to Pakistan for a space in the region, with an eye on its global engagement with USA and its longstanding tussle with India. While its military establishment is giving primacy to Pakistan, which is keeping an eye on Afghanistan and other neighbours, it is cautious about spill over of terrorism. China's commercial establishment on the other hand keeps the Indian commerce and market in good humour while trying to look for links in the region.[34] Obviously, introspection by the South Asian countries should focus on balancing their own cooperation based on human security and the interplay of other powers.

While conflicts arising out of national security concerns generally settle down, the rehabilitation process for the people caught in the conflict zone could at times prove unending. We have the examples of post cold war conflict settlements in Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor, Afghanistan and Iraq, which continue to simmer despite international interventions. 'Interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan propagate the use of force for regime change with an increasingly violent backlash of insurgencies and terrorism, while preventive measures such as understanding the root causes of

grievances are bypassed in favour of national security concerns.'[35]

Focusing on Human Security

Graham and Poku have stressed that 'rather than viewing security as being concerned with "individuals qua citizens" (i.e, towards their states), [the Human Security approach] views security as being concerned with "individuals qua persons"'.[36] Human security, despite being a nebulous concept that has been aptly advanced by the scholarship that has given the significant concept of human development, has raised the significant question of 'security for whom?' Is it possible to secure a state if its people are not secure? Is physical security limited to securing survival? The paradigm shift in thinking on security begins by saying a big 'NO' as an answer to these questions. Safety of people and communities is what should be aimed at, it argues and takes the logic to 'life worth living' and 'well-being and dignity' of human beings. Beyond this broad definition, there is no agreement on human security as yet; 'from a narrow term for prevention of violence to a broad comprehensive view that proposes development, human rights and traditional security together.'[37] The human security approach seeks to

forge a global alliance to device and strengthen the institutional policies linking individuals and the state; thus it is in tune with the thinking on globalization. Human security thus brings together the human elements of security, of rights, of development. Since the analysis here relates to South Asia, we would therefore focus on the concept as enlarged from Mahbub ul Haque's enunciation and its later development by the UNDP.

The Commission on Human Security, co-chaired by Sadako Ogata and Amartya Sen, stated that, 'Human security is concerned with safeguarding and expanding people's vital freedoms. It requires both shielding people from acute threats and empowering people to take charge of their own lives. Needed are integrated policies that focus on people's survival, livelihood and dignity, during downturns as well as in prosperity.'[38] Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General 1997-2006, defined human security thus:

Human security in broadest sense embraces for more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfill his or her own potential. Every step in this direction is also a step towards reducing poverty, achieving economic growth and preventing conflict. Freedom from want, freedom from fear and the freedom of future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment – these are the interrelated blocks of human and, therefore, national security.[39]

Annan has covered a wide canvass to describe human security. Juxtaposing the national security and human security brings out a strong humanitarian complementarity for the former. Since human security focuses on protecting people from a range of threats and menaces, it transforms the nature of security architecture a state should maintain and being humanitarian in nature that would not appear threatening to the neighbours. Since this approach includes protection of citizens also from environmental pollution, transnational terrorism, massive population movements, such infectious diseases as HIV/AIDS and long-term conditions of oppression and deprivation, regional, transnational and global complementarity would bring down aggression and violent intent inherent in the traditional approach to national security. Complementarity also brings in cooperation at each level that would bring in more actors in securing and ensuring security. The enhanced participation at the micro level of community based actors has the potential of empowering people at

each level. As Amartya Sen says: 'The insecurities that threaten human survival or the safety of daily life, or imperil the natural dignity of men and women, or expose human beings to the uncertainty of disease and pestilence, or subject vulnerable people to abrupt penury related to economic downturns demand that special attention be paid to the dangers of sudden deprivation. Human security demands protection from these dangers and the empowerment of people so that they can cope with – and when possible overcome – these hazards.'[40] Considered an obligation of maintaining human rights on the part of the state, the end to be achieved with a human security approach is avoidance of war and conflict and eradication of destitution and disease.

In the context of South Asia, the major insecurities have been described as economic insecurity, health insecurity, insecurity of vulnerable groups and environmental degradation. We have already referred to some major indicators of poverty that are at the root of economic insecurity. Each of these have cross border implications. The dangers of cross border impacts epidemics and environmetal degradations have been underlined by experts. The sources of conflict between nations in South Asia have to be collectively attended. Human

security provides a framework for humanitarian crossflows in the areas that could bring the peoples, communities, societies, countries and their governments together. The focus on economic cooperation and sharing of resources to meet the energy needs, eradicating diseases and preventing epidemics, improving educational standards, meeting gender equity and focusing on children's security would bring the policy community together. Being an integral region in several sense, where rivers and other ecological resources have cross border spread requiring collective optimal sharing, the nations have to work together to meet the challenges of natural disasters – floods, earthquakes, Tsunamis that need disaster management at a scale which could be more effective by working together. A collective approach to environmental security can prevent man-made disasters. Indeed, political and institutional reforms, strengthening weakening and/or failing institutions would improve state of governance in South Asia.

Conclusion

Kishore Mahbubani brings in an interesting perspective in international relations, nudging countries to move beyond blinkered view of nation that the concept of sovereignty emanating from the Treaty of Westphalia gives. He

nudges countries to think like companies where cooperation rather than hostility pays. Talking in the context of India and China, he argues that cooperation can help them uplift their poor, as the cost of 'security' could be diverted to human development.[41] Can we divert this argument in the context of South Asia? Mahbubani had argued earlier that Asians, which indeed include South Asians, who allowed themselves to be colonised by the Europeans, and here refers to the South Asians particularly, lost faith in themselves that they can think, which means think originally. He refers to colonisation of their minds; hence models of development have been borrowed from the West. In cases they thought originally, the results have been amazing. Mahbubani gives the example of post-Meiji restoration Japan (1860) that was accepted as developed by the European standards by 1902. The post-War Japan of course is a different case of revival which is unprecedented. This was emulated, even before China, by four Asian 'tigers' – South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore – followed by Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand in Southeast Asia. While it took the British 58 years (from 1780), America

47 years (from 1839) and Japan 33 years (from the 1880s) to double their economic output, Indonesia (17 years), South Korea (11 years) and China (10 years) took much less to do the same; and the East Asian miracle economies grew more rapidly and more consistently.[42] Though there would be differences and debates on Mahbubani's take on the Asians, there is a lesson here for the South Asia to learn, but the focus has to be shifted from conflict, controversy to development, where they may or may not think like companies and get into corporate warfare, but they certainly could think in terms of development and progress of their peoples in interdependent perspective. What obviously they need is a new paradigm on security that is more holistic and oriented to cooperation, development and peace.

I would like to conclude with a quote from Mahbub ul Haq:

… security for people, not just territory; security for individuals, not just nations; security through development, not through arms; the security of all people everywhere – in the homes, in their jobs, in their streets, in their communities, in their environment.[43] ∎

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3. Ibid.

4. According to World Bank, external debt of the eight South Asian nations in 2013 (in US $) was as follows: Afghanistan 2,576,820,000; Bangladesh 27,804,213,000; Bhutan 1,479,683,000; India 427,561,868,000; Maldives 820,504,000; Nepal 3,832,564,000; Pakistan 56,460,602,000; Sri Lanka 25,167,821,000. http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.DOD.DECT.CD/countries?display=default (accessed on December 28, 2014).

5. According to World Bank, military expenditure as percent of GDP of the South Asian countries in 2013 was as follows: Afghanistan 6.4, Bangladesh 1.2, India 2.4, Nepal 1.4, Pakistan 3.5 and Srilanka 2.7. Bhutan and Maldives do not have military expenditure. http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS (accessed on December 28, 2014).

6. http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=99&Itemid=140, (Accessed on January 23, 2011).

7. http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr14-report-en-1.pdf, (Accessed on December 28, 2014).

8. http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2014/10/10/fundamental-reforms-needed-effectively-tackle-inequality (Accessed on December 30, 2014).

9. http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2014/10/06/led-india-south-asia-economic-growth-accelerate (Accessed on 30 December 2014).

10. http://www.transparency.org/cpi2014/results#myAnchor1, (Accessed on December 28, 2014).

11. Mark David Agrast, Juan Carlos Botero and Alejandro Ponce, *Rule of Law Index 2010*, Washington, D.C.: The World Justice Project, 2010.

12. The Siachen glacier has emerged as the highest battleground on earth between India and Pakistan, since 13 April 1984 witnessing intermittently fight between the two. Both have permanent military presence there at a height of over 6,000 metres (20,000 ft). More than 2000 troops and civilians have died in Siachen's inhospitable terrain, largely due to extreme weather than due to continuing skirmishes. Despite talks of demilitarization of the region, there is distrust on both sides that compels them to maintain one of the most expensive battlefields in the world. For a detailed account see Nitin A. Gokhale, *Beyond NJ 9842: The Siachen Saga*, New Delhi: Bloomsbury Publishing India Private Limited, 2014.

13. India's second nuclear test in Pokharan in Rajasthan on 11 May 1998 and Pakistan's response Chagai seventeen days later in Ras Koh officially confirmed the subcontinental rivals as nuclear powers staring eyeball to eyeball at each other. There are contrary views if that would lead to deescalation of conflict in the region or further intensification. However, nuclear weapons are certainly the best way to maintain peace and ensure security. See, Sumit Ganguly and S. Paul Kapur, *India, Pakistan and the Bomb: Debating Nuclear Stability in South Asia*, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 2010.

14. Siemon T. Wezeman and Pieter D. Wezeman, 'Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2013' SIPRI Factsheet 2014, SIPRI, see Table 2, p. 4, http://books.sipri.org/files/FS/SIPRIFS1403.pdf (Accessed on 29 December 2014).

15. Ibid, p. 6.

16. There are several studies on the rise and fall of the LTTE. KM de Silva's two volumes, *Reaping the Whirlwind: Ethnic Politics, Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka* (Penguine Books India, 2000) and *Sri Lanka and the Defeat of the LTTE* (Penguin Books India, 2012) provide a holistic picture of the phenomenon, its politics and the geopolitics involved with it.

17. For a discussion on the emerging contentious politics in Bangladesh see Inder Malhotra, 'Hasina vs Zia', *The Indian Express,* 12 January 2015.

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19. Yubaraj Ghimire, 'Nextdoor Nepal: An Undemocratic Hurry', *The Indian Express*, 12 January 2015.

20. See Ajay K. Mehra, 'India's Experiment with Revolution', Working Paper No. 40, *Heidelberg Papers in South Asian and Comparative Politics*, South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg, September 2008, http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/volltextserver/volltexte/2008/8710/pdf/Heidelberg_Paper_Mehra.pdf (accessed on 5 January 2015); 'Supreme Court, Naxalism And Salwa Judam: The Judgment Beyond The "Neo-Liberal' Rhetoric"', *Mainstream*, XLIX (34), August 13, 2011 (Independence Day Special) and 'The Democracy Question in the Maoist Movement in India', *IIC Quarterly*, 41 (2), Autumn 2014, pp. 78-89.

21. See Ajay K. Mehra and O.P. Sharma *Terrorism and the Rule of Law: An Indian Perspective,* New Delhi: KAS-CPA, 2006, Mono.

22. A recent study of 26/11 terror attack traces its origin in the Afghan War (1979-89), during which the the US and Pakistan created many terrorist groups they have been fighting since 9/11. The study also argues, what came out also in several analyses since 9/11, that the dilemma and tight balancing act by Pervez Musharraf regime between aligning with the US led 'War against terror' and the domestic constituencies of the Inter Services Intelligence Agency (ISI) and supported and sponsored terror groups led to 2001 attacks on J&K Legisative Asembly buiilding (October 1) and Indian Parliament (13 December). The study which traces the advent of terrorism in J&K and other parts of India to political developments in Pakistan and its alliance with the US on 'war on terror', concludes by portending ominous signal for the region, which neither Pakistan, nor the US are factoring in. Saroj Kumar Rath, *Fragile Frontiers: The Secret History of Mumbai Terror Attaks*, New Delhi: Routledge, 2014. Also see, Ram Punyani and Shabnam Hashmi (eds.), *Mumbai Post 26/11: An Alternative Perspective*, New Delhi: Sage, 2010.

23. See for example, Nazish Brohi, 'Footnotes from "War on Terror"', http://www.dawn.com/news/1154725 (accessed on 5 January 2015).

24. See http://www.satp.org/

25. Surinder Kumar Sharma and Anshuman Behera, *Militant Groups in South Asia*, New Delhi: Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses and Pentagon Press, 2014. See 'Introduction'. The book lists and analyzes 39 terror groups in South Asia – two in Bangladesh, eighteen in India and Pakistan each and one in the region. Of these 31 are Islamist groups.

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