

REDEFINING SECURITY PUZZLES OF SOUTH ASIA

Jeewaka Saman Kumara

*Department of Political Science, Faculty of Arts
University of Peradeniya*

Introduction

The 'concept of security' is ambiguous and elastic in meaning (Wolfers, 1952). Generally security is taken as to be free from threats. It is a complicated and a contested concept. In this broader context, the traditional military oriented security was seen in world politics in the 1940s till the end of cold war, by the then prevalent 'Realist' scholars, who emphasized the attainment of military power. Its philosophical foundations were laid by Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, E. H. Carr and Hans J. Morgenthau. They believed in *power politics* with states as the main actors, placing stress on attainment of more and more military power (Jackson and Sorensen 1999: 68). But the post-Cold War era has witnessed changing trends in the concept of security. In early 1990s a new approach emerged, namely, the 'Copenhagen School' led by Barry Buzan, which believed in a profound widening of security to *non-military issues* and also made an attempt to include *sub-state groups* into security analysis (Buzan, 1983). Beyond the above mentioned school is the *deepening approach* led by 'Pluralists and Social Constructionists'; these embrace the idea of *human security* arguing that the object of security should be individual people and not the state or sub state groups (Hough 2004: 08). In the 1990s the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) further developed

this concept of human security. Thus, the traditional concept of security is now being replaced by a non traditional security paradigm which stresses a broader view entailing vast concerns of social, political, economic and environmental issues leading to comprehensive security which is becoming a more popular version of security.

Objectives

This paper will analyze the non-traditional security puzzles of the South Asian sub-region, which is largely based on the dramatic increase in their defense spending of both India and Pakistan due to a long term fear and mistrust that began in 1947. Further, the paper will try to extrapolate the reasons why strong interstate norms and cooperation are not developing in the South Asian sub-region and what can be done to transform the South Asian sub-region.

Research Problems

Why a security approach which is dependent on the military is inadequate to deal with the nature of threats to the security of South Asia?

How do state capacity and the absence of strong cooperative norms determine or contribute to the regional insecurity problem?

Methodology

In this work, the research problems have been addressed by using standard research tools including descriptive and analytical methods. The resources of this research have been drawn from a wide range of secondary sources. The secondary sources involve various books, articles, newspapers and the internet.

Discussion

In the wake of the end of the Cold War, the coverage of security has been increasingly broadened from the military-based traditional conception into economic, political, societal, and environmental versions of security dimensions (Buzan et al. 1998). This shift in the security paradigm is being felt in South Asia, which comprises 1/5 of the world's population and consists of eight states of different sizes and capabilities, which remains a deprived and a poor region because of its huge defence spending (Majeed 1995: 117). Since their inception, the two largest but antagonist states of South Asia, India and Pakistan have indulged in hostile relations leading to crisis, and even wars. And also the traditional hostility has led the decision makers of both states to adhere to military security, thus spending large percentage of their resources on militarization (Basrur 2001; Chander 2003). Consequently, an already underdeveloped region has failed to improve the economic and social condition of its people. As a result this region has lagged behind in overall development (Basrur 2001). To upgrade their offensive and defensive capabilities, the managers of both countries have been laying more emphasis on military strength and for

this purpose, huge expenses on defence expenditure have been incurred on both sides. Moreover, huge amounts are being spent on maintenance and research related to the military (Banerjee 1999). An expensive arms race is being witnessed especially of nuclear weapons that require immense resources. Testing of new and more devastating missiles is a regular feature. This is all being done by spending a large amount of their budgets on military capabilities. As a result, both nations possess a large, modern and sophisticated military. Now looking at the other side of the picture, the massive spending on the military has led to bleak socioeconomic prospects for its people who have been neglected, leading to under development in many sectors. The region is poverty-ridden leading to grave social and economic problems.

Conclusion

At the dawn of the 21st century, there is realization that the South Asian sub-region needs to divert its resources from the military towards the economic and social uplift of the people, thus the stress has to shift from high politics to low politics. In this regard, both Pakistan and India need to go for more cooperative relations to bring peace in the region which in turn will bring comprehensive security leading to the betterment of the people of South Asia.

References

Banerjee, Dipankar (1999), *Security in South Asia*, New Delhi: Manas Publications.

- Basrur, Rajesh M. (ed.) (2001), *South Asian Security. Security in the New Millennium: Views from South Asia*, Colombo: Regional Centre for Strategic Studies.
- Buzan, Barry (1983), *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*, Sussex: Wheatsheaf.
- Buzan, Barry et al. (1998), *Security: A Framework for Analysis*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Chander, Parakash (2003), *India and Pakistan Unending Conflict*, New Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing.
- Hough, Peter (2004), *Understanding Global Security*, London: Routledge.
- Jackson, Robert and George Sorensen (1999), *Introduction to International Relations*, New York: Oxford University.
- Majeed, Akhtar (1995), "Internal Security: The Third World Perspective", in Iftekharuzzaman (ed.), *South Asia's Security: Primacy of Internal Dimension*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing
- Ullman, R. H. (1983), "Redefining Security", *International Security*, 8(1): 29-153.
- Wolfers, Arnold (1952) "National Security" as an Ambiguous Symbol", *Political Science Quarterly*, 67(4): 481-502