

The Power Upstream

12.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 described how investment on a large scale in new technologies began to change the geography of India in the latter part of the nineteenth century; in particular, attention was paid to the development of communications and to large-scale canal irrigation. Of all the areas where such irrigation was developed, one stood out for the extent to which schemes and rivers were interconnected, and settlement patterns radically changed. This was the land of the Five Rivers – the Punjab, India's granary and source of high quality cotton. In Chapter 8 the problems that Sir Cyril Radcliffe faced in drawing up new international frontiers in Punjab and Bengal were discussed, along with his definitive (but unexplained) conclusions – the new lines drawn on the map. Radcliffe's line dividing India from Pakistan in the Punjab had been drawn between Lahore and Amritsar across the canal systems precisely where Coupland had said an international boundary would be wholly inappropriate. Radcliffe hoped that both sides would cooperate in the running of the integrated canals. Since not all arrangements could possibly have been ready by August 15th 1947, several commissions continued to sit for a specified period to sort out any remaining business and any tangles that might arise. The Arbitral Tribunal, which was to arbitrate on operational disputes, had a designated lifespan until March 31st 1948.

At that time India and Pakistan were locked in an undeclared war over Kashmir, the source of so much of Punjab's water, and India also suspected Pakistan of gun-running to Hyderabad. On April 1st 1948 India, alleging Pakistani intransigence over re-signing a standstill agreement, shut off the water flowing from the Ferozpur (Ferozepore) headworks into Pakistan's Dipalpur Canal. 8% of Pakistan's culturable command area (of the country, not just of this scheme) was deprived of water; so too was the city of Lahore. In addition hydro-electric power supplies were cut. Observers flying over the two Punjabs had no doubt where the border lay: to one side the seedlings of the new kharif crops were ready for the monsoon, to the other was a brown and barren land. India claimed that the waters in the rivers originating in her territory were hers, something which had never been suggested in the Radcliffe award; and in any event her action was contrary to the 1921 Barcelona Convention on international resource use. The Indian Government was a signatory to this treaty, which expressly forbade actions to the detriment of the natural conditions of a neighbouring state. Indeed, in India there were also many precedents against the action taken. The principles adopted during the building of canals had conceded that prior users must be duly considered and not disadvantaged by any new developments, and in addition there had been a principle that development should benefit the maximum number of users regardless of territorial boundaries.

The first of these two principles had indeed held up new projects in Punjab for many years in the 1930s and 1940s while Sind pressed its case that it would be deprived of too much water.

Be all that as it may, India was using water as a political weapon.

In Bengal no canal systems of a comparable kind had ever been developed. Nevertheless, water is a key to the economy of the region. In particular the rivers of the delta are used as sources of irrigation water during the low season flow; and they stay fresh and uncontaminated by salt-water bores from the Bay of Bengal only if an adequate flow is maintained. Despite that, and again unilaterally, India built a barrage at Farakka, opened in 1975, upstream of the East Pakistan border to divert some of the low season flow down the Hugli (Hooghly) River, past the port of Calcutta, which was silting up. This barrage and competing schemes for the development of the Ganges-Brahmaputra Basin are a principal bone of contention between Bangladesh and India today.

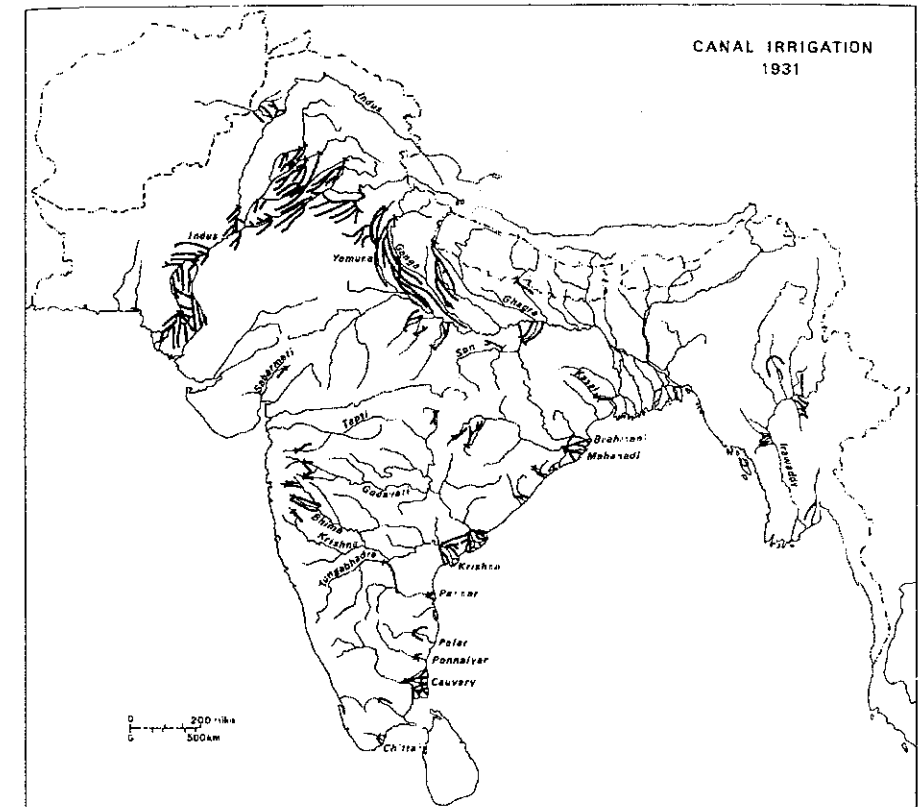


Figure 12.1 Canal Irrigation, British India 1931

Source: Schwartzberg (1992)

This chapter looks at the water disputes brought about or accentuated by Partition

12.2 Hydro-politics in the Indus Basin

The water flow of the rivers of the Indus basin is curious, in that the flow of the western rivers in the more arid part is so much greater than the flow in the eastern rivers. This is a reflection of the size and nature of the catchments in the Himalayas, for, once the rivers reach the plains, they are essentially exotic, that is, not receiving contributions to their flow from the plains themselves (This statement has to be qualified, in that during the wet season there is a contribution from the Punjab plains and from lower Sind.)

In 1850 plans were laid to construct the Upper Bari Doab Canal (3,000 cusecs) – the UBDC – to irrigate the doab between the Ravi and the Beas. Despite some problems with the scheme, such as its over-steep gradient and consequent erosion, the Sirhind Canal was sanctioned on the Sutlej in 1869 and opened in 1882, and with its gradient arbitrarily fixed at 30% of that of the UBDC, it began to clog with silt. However, concerned with the protection of the food supply against drought, the Government accepted the learning process the engineers and administrators were passing through, and sanctioned ever more investment. In 1891 the Chenab Canal for the lower Rechna Doab was sanctioned, at 8,000 cusecs irrigating 1m acres. All these developments were characterised by the fact that they were run-of-the river schemes; that is to say that though they had diversionary barrages at their headworks, they did not involve water storage. Large dams in high mountains were to be a development of some distant future.

Table 12.1 Water Availability and Use in the Indus Basin, 1947

<i>Discharges in Millions of Acre-feet (m.a.f.)</i>		
Indus and Kabul	110	
Jhelum	23	
Chenab	26	
Ravi	7	
Beas	13	
Sutlej	14	
Total	193	
 <i>Use m.a.f. Irrigated acres</i>		
India	9	5m
Pakistan	66	21m

Source Michel, 1967:33

The most important function of the canals to begin with was provision of water during the low-water season, the 'winter', when, on the plains, wheat is grown. (Nowadays the canals have to provide supplementary irrigation during the wet season too.) Thus, to begin with the total amount of water used from the available year-round flow was in fact small, but could be no bigger given the technology of the period. Therefore, at a comparatively early date (the late nineteenth century), the schemes in the East Punjab were already running short of water. But there remained the rivers in the west, with their much greater flow. The Triple Canals Project of 1905 sought to solve a host of problems, by linking the rivers together and effecting a new transfer of water from West to East. The Upper Jhelum Canal fed Jhelum water into the Chenab, thereby releasing water in the higher Chenab for transfer via the Upper Chenab Canal to the Ravi. This in turn meant that the Ravi now had sufficient water for a Lower Bari Doab Canal. Now there was truly an interdependent system. No part could operate without affecting other parts. In the 1920s work began on the Sutlej Valley project, including the Ferozpur headworks of which we have already heard, which further increased demands on the eastern rivers.

Downstream in Sind there were major new schemes developing too, and, in particular the very large Sukkur Project which coincided with the Sutlej Valley Project. This meant that conflict over low-season water availability in particular was increasing, and in 1941 an Indus Commission was instituted to report on disputed plans by the two Provinces. From the 1920's onwards the plans began to involve the projected construction of large storage dams in the Himalayan foothills on the Ravi, Beas and Sutlej at Thein, Pong and Bhakra respectively. (Some of the water thus stored was earmarked for use in the arid lands of Rajasthan (Rajputana).) The report found that both parties could have much if not most of what they wanted, provided there were sufficient expenditure on the storage dams, and that Punjab should pay a contribution to those works downstream in Sind, which would be necessary to maintain the existing system there. (This came about because of the large number of inundation canals in Sind which relied upon the water level of the Indus maintaining a particular height. Thus, although there would be sufficient flow to satisfy the quantity requirements of these canals, the actual level of the river would have to be raised by new barrages.) Political disputes and the Second World War served between them to delay implementation of any settlement until it had become an international one of a different kind, in which one Punjab was at odds with the other Punjab and Sind, provoked by India's act of April 1st 1948.

India's attitude was that the proposals of the 1942 Commission had never been ratified; nor had a subsequent agreement in 1945 between the engineers (but not the politicians) of Punjab and Sind. She could therefore proceed without delay in implementing Bhakra, and by building a new barrage at Harike upstream of Ferozepur, divert the waters south into Rajasthan. She could even with tunnels divert water within Kashmir from the western rivers to the eastern ones, affecting a transfer before the water even reached Pakistan or the fringe of Kashmir under Pakistani control (Azad Kashmir). It meant therefore that Pakistan was forced to the negotiating table holding virtually no cards. One month later in Delhi an

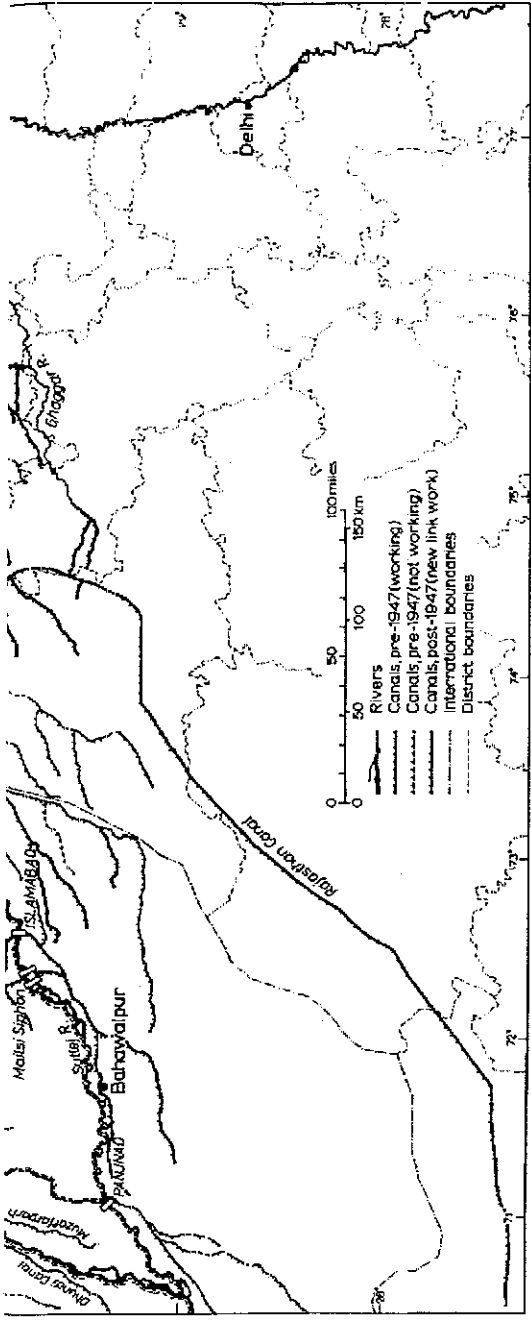
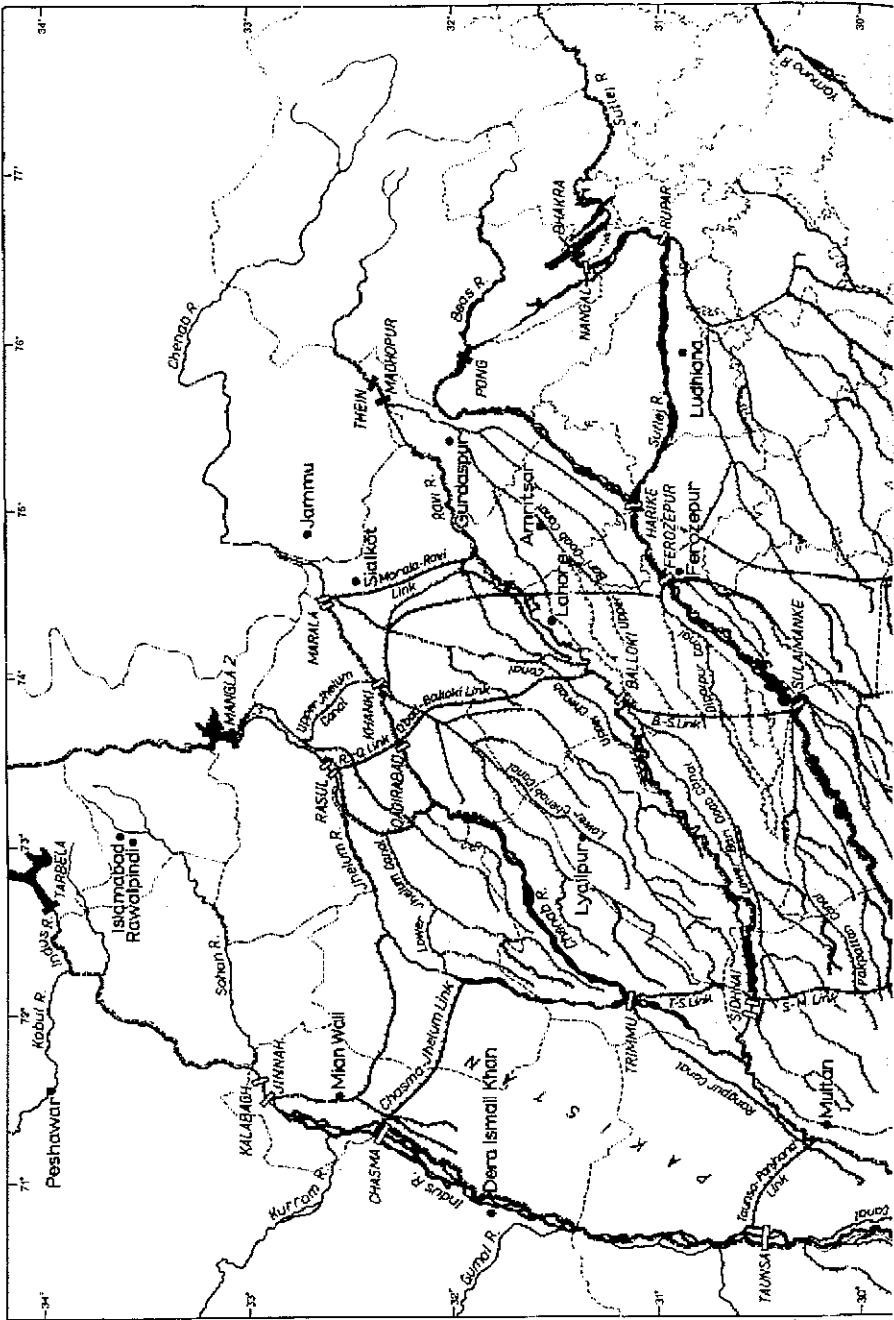


Figure 12.2 Irrigation in East and West Punjab, 1947-75

Inter-Dominion Agreement was signed, according to which India (technically East Punjab) agreed to restore the flow to West Punjab until the latter had developed alternative sources of supply; and during the period India would charge Pakistan a proportion of the running costs of the headworks and delivery system and in addition a charge for the water itself (seignorage). The last provision was disputed bitterly, but in practice was paid from a deposit by Pakistan to the Government of India.

Although this represented an agreement of sorts, clearly it was not one which gave Pakistan confidence in the future. Both sides began new works to develop their resources, and, in the case of Pakistan, to extricate itself from the hold in which it was locked. It rushed through the development of a new canal of 5,000 cusecs from the Upper Chenab Canal to cross the Ravi in a siphon just north of Lahore (Figure 12.2). Later (1954-56) a new link between Marala on the Chenab and the Ravi was built (The M-R Link) with 20,000 cusecs, which meant that the Doabs downstream of India were virtually guaranteed protection.

In Sind, no longer a provincial backwater but containing the seat of Pakistan's government, there was an equally rapid development of the Ghulam Muhammad barrage at the head of the Indus delta, and later at Gudu in north Sind, upstream of Sukkur. (The Ghulam Mohammed barrage has been successful in diverting water into 5,000 miles of canals. But drainage of the flat delta is difficult, and the scheme is plagued with the problem of salinisation.)

Nearly all of these schemes had their origins in proposals considered before independence, but delayed for political or financial reasons. The difference post-1947 was the fact that they were no longer being built as part of an overall integrated system within the undivided Indus Basin, and it was particularly the case that the key part of the proposals prior to 1947, Bhakra, was indeed being built, but to reserve water for India alone.

The political dialogue between India and Pakistan had, of course, not stopped. In 1952 the two sides met in Washington under the auspices of the World Bank. It was still assumed even then that there could be a negotiated outcome in which the river basin would be a shared resource. But finally in 1954 the talks collapsed without a resolution. It had become clear that there was not enough water in the basin for both sides to do all that they had planned in their respective territories, and so an integrated plan in which both co-operated to achieve the maximum use of the basin actually became an impossibility. In the vacuum thus created the World Bank tabled a proposal (it had no power to make an award or an adjudication) to do the only thing left that was possible politically: to divide the waters completely and to allow each to do what it felt best with what it received. The entire flow of the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab would go, after a transition period, to Pakistan, and the entire flow of the eastern Ravi, Beas and Sutlej would go to India. By suggesting that the division was of water flow, not of assets such as headworks etc., the proposal side-stepped the thorny issue of divided Kashmir.

Although at face value it would appear that the proposal would give India all that she had wanted, in fact it did not, because it meant that she would have to forego any projects to divert Chenab water within Kashmir, and as a consequence

she could only develop the Bhakra-Rajasthan project fully by building further dams on the Beas and Ravi. Further, India would be asked to contribute to development in Pakistan of new link canals made necessary by the proposals. Pakistan could see the broad advantages of the proposals, but felt it should be given assistance to build storage dams in its territory, not just new link canals. Thus although India accepted the proposal as the basis for detailed negotiation immediately, Pakistan held out until the Bank added an extra clause that allowed for the investigation of such issues in the event that the flows proved deficient.

The new terms showed the extent to which Pakistan's position had improved since 1948. Although there is no suggestion of any direct linkage and causality, the changed circumstances reflected Pakistan's changed role in the world. In 1954 Pakistan started to receive American arms supplies, and also became a member of pro-Western defence pacts, CENTO and SEATO. In 1956 Nehru professed the ideal of non-alignment in a public speech in the USA. India also developed sympathetic ties with the USSR from the early 1960s. We will consider these developments further in Chapter 13 below. In 1954 the World Bank was dominated by American expertise and American money, more so even than at present, and in such a climate it is easy to see how there would be shifts in the understanding of Pakistan's position.

In 1955 the meetings between the two parties resumed. Negotiations dragged on over several years, and even the principle of awarding the three eastern rivers to India and the three western to Pakistan went back in the melting pot, as the Indians became aware of the costs of the Pakistani proposals, which continually added development to replacement. The solution this time was for a ceiling to be placed on the costs that India would face, plus loans to help it with the Pong and Thein dams, while also finding a consortium of countries who would help Pakistan financially with her schemes. By August 1959 the consortium, of the USA, Canada, the UK, West Germany, Australia and New Zealand (all connected with one or more of NATO, CENTO or SEATO) had agreed to find \$1 bn for the cost of the schemes, half of it to be in grants, and all such grants going to Pakistan.

In September 1960 the Indus Waters Treaty was signed. It provided for the division of the waters by river, as proposed in 1954, (but with provision for the existing minor works and their extension in the Indian-held upper reaches of the western rivers); for the funding of new works on both sides, but principally in Pakistan; and also in incredible detail and at great length for a ten-year transition period, during which India would continue to supply water to Pakistan. This specified how much water would be made available not only canal-by-canal, but also by time period within each season, and the extent to which changes would be made contingent on variations in water availability. What it specifically and explicitly avoided was recognition by either side of the other's rights in Kashmir: the formal position of countervailing claims was not resolved in the slightest.

Since then the Indus Basin Project of Pakistan has become one of the largest integrated schemes ever attempted by mankind on this planet. Two huge new dams have been built, at Mangla on the Jhelum, astride the border between Pakistani Punjab and Azad Kashmir, and at Tarbela on the mighty Indus. The latter is the largest earth-

and rock-filled structure on earth. The resources employed in the dams, new barrages, new canal colonies, have been sufficient to accelerate inflation in Pakistan, rendering the original cost estimates inadequate. But, despite the wholesale new developments, Pakistan never acknowledged to East Bengal that this project should be counted in the balance of resources spent in the national plans in the West and East – because it was always claimed to be re-development rather than new development.

On the Indian side, the Bhakra-Beas-Rajasthan project and its associated works in Punjab have also been on a monumental scale. Prior to Partition East Punjab had much less of the irrigated land, and used far less water – 9 million acre feet of water on 5 million irrigated acres. The completion of this scheme should mean that 15 million acres are irrigated.

The Rajasthan Canal, renamed the Indira Gandhi Nahar after Mrs Gandhi's assassination, more than 500 miles long, is the largest single canal project ever conceived. It is planned finally to irrigate 7.5 million acres, mostly in what is extremely arid desert regions within 40 miles of the Pakistani border. Although the main canal was completed by 1987, settlement has been occurring much more slowly than originally intended, mostly for political reasons, as debates and law suits have disputed who is eligible for settlement. By the mid-1980s perhaps 1 million acres had been settled and were productive. As there was tension between pre-Independence Punjab and Sind, so now there is tension between Indian Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan. The water used comes from the Pong dam, and crosses Punjab in a feeder canal, which was the subject of attacks by Sikh secessionists in the 1980s, who claimed that more of the water should be used in Punjab. It is also possible to see the canal in a military light: there are suggestions that it could have been built further east with a larger westward command area. As it is, it has undoubtedly changed the defensibility of the border with Pakistan. What was once open desert suitable for tank warfare similar to the terrain in the Rann of Kutch where there was fighting in 1965, is now terrain crossed by roads, and most importantly the canal itself, with a number of bridges. Nor is that Pakistan's only interest: being so close to the Pakistani border the Indians have been unable to develop drainage away from the area, so that waterlogging and salinisation will probably occur in many places on the Pakistani side of the border too.

Quite clearly there can be no human geography without politics, since politics is an inherent part of human group relationships. Yet one cannot help but wonder about some other utopian South Asia in which this great resource area had not been split. The grouping of the Provinces under the Cabinet Mission Plan would have made it possible, perhaps, for an Independent Federated South Asia (greater India) to continue the integrated approach that was being explored in the 1940s. But the experience of the struggle between Punjab and Sind during the British Raj and between Rajasthan and (East) Punjab now suggests that the prospects for agreement were always poor. Serious inter-state squabbles over water in India, resulting in public riots, police firing and deaths, are fairly common. The scale of the 'best technical solution' that nature proposes in South Asia often seems beyond the capacity of the political systems of management.

12.3 Sharing the Ganges-Brahmaputra Basin

Sir Cyril Radcliffe's other task was to draw a boundary line across the Ganges-Brahmaputra Delta, the largest delta on earth, and the most active, yet part of a well-developed regional economy with communications focusing on Calcutta. The new international border, just like the border in Punjab, would cause no great difficulties if the successor states were committed to the shared management of communications, infrastructure and environment – if indeed they continued to act as in a wider common market. But the bitter disputes that erupted between the successor states, over Kashmir and then over water in Punjab, and then devaluation (see Chapter 8) and Pakistan's export taxes, culminated in the fall of the revanchist curtain. Although economic and political links were severed, it was impossible for these states to pretend that they were no longer neighbours, that there were no ties that still bound them together, for the simple reason that they shared an environment that had no cognisance of sovereignty. In Punjab the water flow may have been divided between the two states, but floods still continue to flow from India into Pakistan whenever the discharge is too high. In Bengal, not only does Bangladesh (East Bengal) suffer from major floods originating outside its territory, it too is dependent, for some purposes in the dry season, on water from upstream states. The differences between the two cases, of Punjab and Bengal, are that Bengal can have no headwaters of its own, that there are four upstream states (China, Bhutan, Nepal and India), and the fluvial/estuarine environment of the delta is even more complex and dynamic than the hydrology of the Punjab. In addition, the major technical developments which are at the root of some of the first disputes post-date, rather than pre-date, Independence in 1947. The recent story of Bengal is mostly about one major contentious project – the Farakka barrage built in India on the Ganges – and a myriad of other problems of environmental management connected with flow augmentation, river training, flood prevention, and the minimisation of saline bores.

12.3.1 Farakka Barrage

Because the delta is so active, the geomorphology and hydrology of the area is constantly changing. Very roughly speaking, since the British first established their ocean port city of Calcutta 120 miles up the Hugli, one of the western distributaries, the flow of the rivers has been shifting more and more to the eastern distributaries. The mouths of the western distributaries are now known as the moribund delta – here the mangrove forests are thick. The eastern shore is very different, with bald new islands emerging from beneath the seas, but unstable ones liable to be shifted by the cyclonic storms that dash up the Bay of Bengal. Sometimes from the air it is very difficult to see where sea and land actually meet. The silt laden sea is a muddy brown which simply changes to a slightly different hue where it becomes a wet mudflat, and that in turn becomes lightly vegetated salt marsh. The belt of saltmarsh is usually small, since at the first opportunity some-one will try to claim it for agriculture,

no matter how exposed the site may be to the hazards of tidal waves

Calcutta was for long India's largest and most important port and manufacturing centre. It is still overwhelmingly the most important port for the whole of east and north-east India. Its population, for the urban agglomeration, is given as more than 13 million in the 2001 Census. Since its foundation, whether or not the port can maintain good communications with the open sea has been a matter of prime economic and strategic concern. So, whether the navigability of the Hugli to the sea has been deteriorating over time or not, has been a matter of anxiety and observation for much more than the last century. In all this time that the anxiety has been expressed, and the experts have delivered their reports, there has been no unambiguous nor unanimous conclusion about exactly how the condition of the river is changing. As a 'minor' distributary in the delta it has stretches where shoals form, and the navigable channel can get too shallow. For many decades dredging has been used to deepen the channels where necessary. But this does not constitute unambiguous evidence. Over time, sea-faring ships have got bigger, and their draughts deeper. And, as in any river, shoals can shift from place to place. The problem seems to revolve around a series of very complex questions – both in terms of data and in terms of theory – which include the following:-

- i) has the discharge of the Bhagirathi linking the Ganges to the Hugli (Hooghly) been declining over time, particularly in the low season?
- ii) have tidal bores increased in the Hugli, bringing greater salinity further north?
- iii) do tidal bores bring greater sedimentation with them?
- iv) will augmentation of the fresh water flow in the Hugli 'flush' the port of Calcutta and keep the Hugli open?
- v) will it be cheaper than other options (e.g. new ports downstream or more dredging)?
- vi) what impact will water abstraction have downstream of the barrage on the Ganges?

None of these questions can be answered unambiguously. The problem mirrors the current uncertainty over global warming and the 'official' response rather well. Most official reviews since 1850 have concluded that there is not much evidence of any long term decline in the Hugli, but on the other hand most surveys have suggested an increase in salinity at Calcutta and an increase in tidal bores: in other words there are lots of theories giving rise to concern, but very slight evidence. In these circumstances the Indian government effectively decided in the 1950s to go ahead with the Farakka Barrage – something along the lines of a precautionary principle. However, it did so without the experts knowing whether or not this would 'flush' the Hugli, and even despite the fact that some of them thought it would increase sedimentation. There were also suggestions that the real cause for the increase sedimentation downstream of Calcutta was the damming of the Damodar river, which previously flushed the lower parts of the Hugli – a problem wholly of India's own making. But the barrage would not just be about water: it would also carry the railway line round East Bengal to the land corridor to Assam and the

Table 12.2 Use of Ganges Water

Flow at Farakka (in millions acre-feet)

	Dry Season 50	Wet Season 322	Total (November to May) 372
<i>Requirements</i>			
Bangladesh	42	6	48
India	17	1	30
Nepal	–	–	30
<i>Excess/deficit</i>	-9	304	264

Source: Abbas, 1982

north-east – reforging a link which had been broken when East Bengal inherited the Hardinge Bridge on the former Assam line from Calcutta. A public announcement was made of the intention to build the barrage in 1961, and the project was completed by 1975. It can take up to 40,000 cusecs from the Ganges, which at some periods of the dry season in low rainfall years is almost a majority of the flow.

From the Bangladesh viewpoint the diversion of water in the dry (low-water) season has a number of deleterious effects. Those most commonly cited are a loss of water for irrigation and urban use. Over the last few decades, as population has grown fast and the green revolution has taken off, the demand for good irrigation water from the rivers has grown substantially. In Bangladesh the reduced low season flow also allows saline bores to penetrate much further upstream in many rivers than hitherto, again reducing irrigation potential, and also possibly harming ground water. Table 12.2 shows the figures given by Abbas (1982), to demonstrate that there is already a deficit in the dry season, without taking into account the future needs as population increases and development occurs in the region, in particular increasing demands for irrigation water upstream in the Ganges plains. The government of, first Pakistan, and then Bangladesh, as the downstream and smaller party, has struggled to sign a treaty for the equitable sharing of the Ganges. The dispute is almost the highest priority issue in foreign relations for Bangladesh, and a subject of emotional fervour for the people. Several times the government has been near to organising a mass march of hundreds of thousands of people the few short miles from the border to the barrage. There is no doubt that there would be that number willing to march if asked.

Crow (1995) divides the history of negotiation into four phases: i) From 1951 to 1971 the project was discussed and planned. Pakistan protested but was impotent. ii) From 1971 to 1975 the barrage was built and implemented, without international agreement: attempts were made to sign a treaty sharing the waters between India and Bangladesh, but failed. iii) In 1977 a short-term agreement was signed between

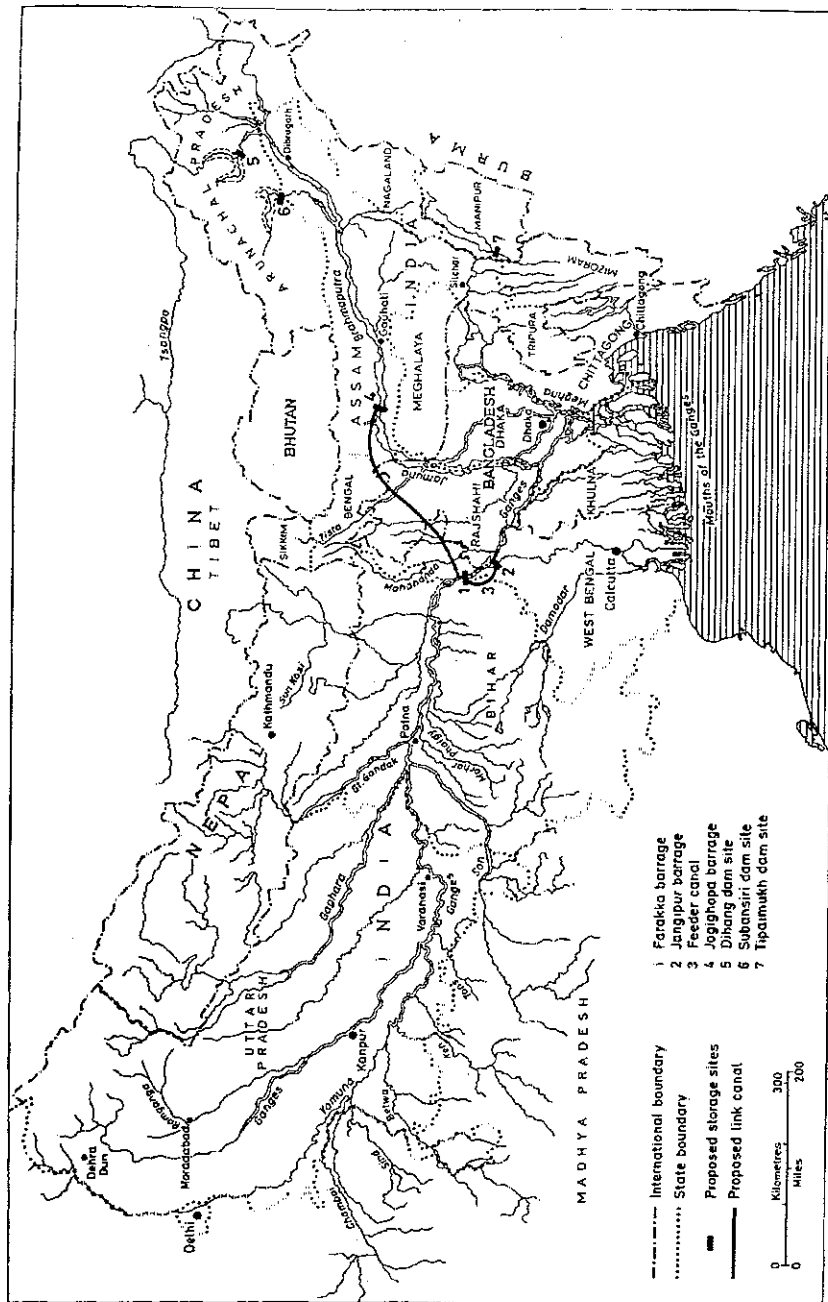


Figure 12.3 The Ganges-Brahmaputra Basin and the Link-Canal Proposal
Source: Abbas (1982)

India and Bangladesh over the allocation of low season flows, running for five years. During this time it was imagined that the negotiation would broaden to encompass not just the Ganges but water sharing in the whole delta. The idea was for international co-operation in the management of both the Brahmaputra and the Ganges – which would enable water from the former to augment the latter. This would have been a westward shift of water a bit reminiscent of the eastward shift of water in the Punjab in 1905. But the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 severed the scheme along the lines of political sovereignty. Bengal is now divided along lines of political sovereignty, and yet they were proposing to run an integrated scheme regardless of these borders. In the event there has been serious difficulty in reaching an agreement, hence there have been a number of ad-hoc extensions of the 1977 agreement in the form of Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) pending a new 'final' solution iv) From 1983 the emerging 'reality' is that a treaty dividing permanently all the waters of all the common rivers of Bengal will enable both countries to develop 'their' share on their own territory as they best see fit. This then replicates the 'reality' of what happened in Punjab over the Indus Waters.

Stage iv) has not been completed. The MOU ran out, although its provisions continued to be respected. But the core issue of Farakka has, for the time being, apparently been settled. In 1996 India and Bangladesh signed a Ganges Water Treaty, for the sharing of water at Farakka. The new arrangement is as follows: if the Ganges flow at Farakka is 70,000 cubic feet per second (cusecs) or less, both countries are to receive 50%; with a flow of between 70,000 and 75,000 cusecs Bangladesh receives 35,000 cusecs and India receives the rest; with a flow of more than 75,000 cusecs or more India receives 40,000 cusecs and Bangladesh receives the rest. Further provision is made for the situation where the flow falls below 50,000 cusecs, but this is much less clear.

In the first year following the treaty itself, the dry season of 1997, the inflow hit a low of 46,000 cusecs raising a question mark on sharing. No-one knew who under the treaty would sort out the 'special' situation. Calcutta got its share of 35,000 cusecs for 10 days and stood to get just 11,000 cusecs for the next 10 days. Then common sense prevailed, and each got 50% of the flow. This amount did not satisfy the Calcutta Port Authorities. At this level of flow they predict that Calcutta will silt up and the port die.

There are other ways of increasing the low season flow – through storage dams in the catchment – and of diverting water from the Brahmaputra. Figures 12.3 and 12.4 broadly summarise the conflicting strategies of India and Bangladesh in the early 1980s. Bangladesh wanted many storage dams in the Ganges basin, the biggest on the Nepalese border, to augment the low season flow during phase iii) identified above. (It would also allow a new navigation canal to link the new port of Mongla with Nepal, though crossing a neck of Indian land.) At various stages Bangladesh attempted to initiate tri-lateral talks with all three countries, although India resisted, insisting that it would be the vehicle through which the downstream-upstream issues could be discussed. The Indian proposal was to augment the flow at Farakka by diverting flow from the Brahmaputra. This would involve a canal half a mile wide

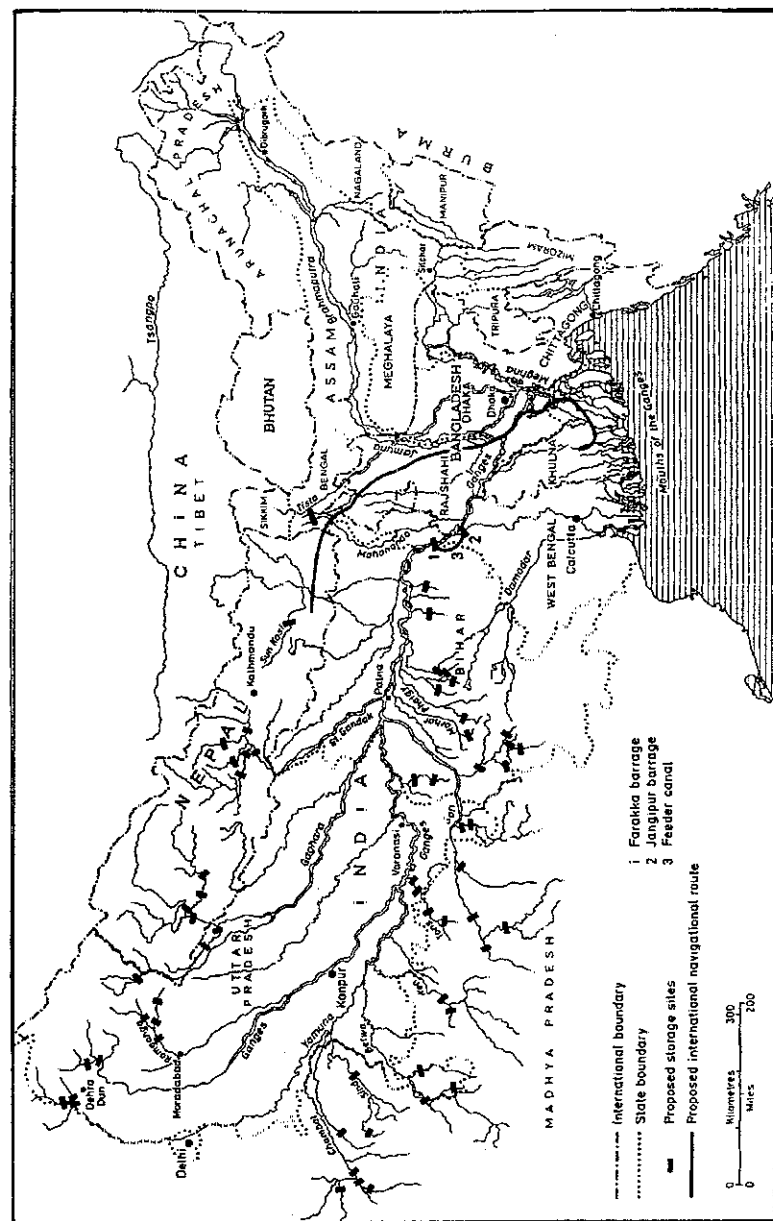


Figure 12.4 The Ganges-Brahmaputra Basins and the Proposals for a Nepal-Bangladesh Canal and Other Developments
Source: Abbas (1982)

right across Bangladeshi territory, with both of the significant control points in Indian hands. This was unacceptable to the Bangladeshis.

12.3.2 Floods in Bangladesh

In 1987, and particularly in 1988, there were very severe floods in Bangladesh. One initial response from the world's press was that it was all the fault of farmers in the Himalayas cutting down too many trees. Actually, there are three types of flooding in Bengal, which can happen independently, or (a true calamity) simultaneously. These are flash-floods from adjacent higher ground, usually around the edges of some of the Pleistocene terraces. They come fast and go fast. The second is river flooding when the major exotic rivers over-top their banks. Third, there is rain-water flooding, common everywhere, when the monsoon rain falls faster than it is drained. This is usual in most of the bheels (beels) and other back-swamps, and the whole of the Meghna/Sylhet depression routinely turns into a lake during the monsoon.

None of this is necessarily too much water. The impact of the floods depends on the extent to which there is a 'normal' expectation of them and adjustment to them. Agriculture is finely tuned: flooded swamp land is planted as waters recede. In deep-water areas (predominantly in Bangladesh) there are long-strawed rice types that can grow up to 12 inches in 24 hours, and ultimately to 12 feet high, to keep abreast of rising floods waters. But throughout history there have been major floods, often when rainfall floods are backed-up by coincident river floods, which have caused major damage. On these occasions crops may be inundated long enough (total submergence for more than four days is usually fatal) to be killed off; human lives may be lost; draught animals may be lost with consequent impacts on the next land preparation; capital equipment (ploughs, byres, houses) may be lost. In addition, roads and railways may be damaged.

Flood protection levees have therefore been built in various places, some big, some small, some totally enclosing polders, to give some insurance against such losses. The problem is that the rivers shift their courses, and barriers built far back may even then find themselves under attack. If such barriers work for some years, and then are breached, the result can be worse than if they had never been built. Given the very high and ever-increasing population pressure in Bangladesh, people start to live in lower areas which appear safer after a barrier has been built, and hence these people are, almost literally, sitting ducks in the event of a breach of the defences.

The 1987 floods (Figure 12.5) (a map of the actual floods is not possible since there were no cloud-free days for satellite or aerial photography) were predominantly local flash floods and rainfall floods, whose drainage was impeded by exceptionally high river levels, particularly in the Ganges. The floods of 1988 were predominantly river floods caused by exceptionally heavy rainfall in the Himalayas and the Shillong block. The Brahmaputra (Jumna in Bangladesh) effectively became a river 50 km wide.

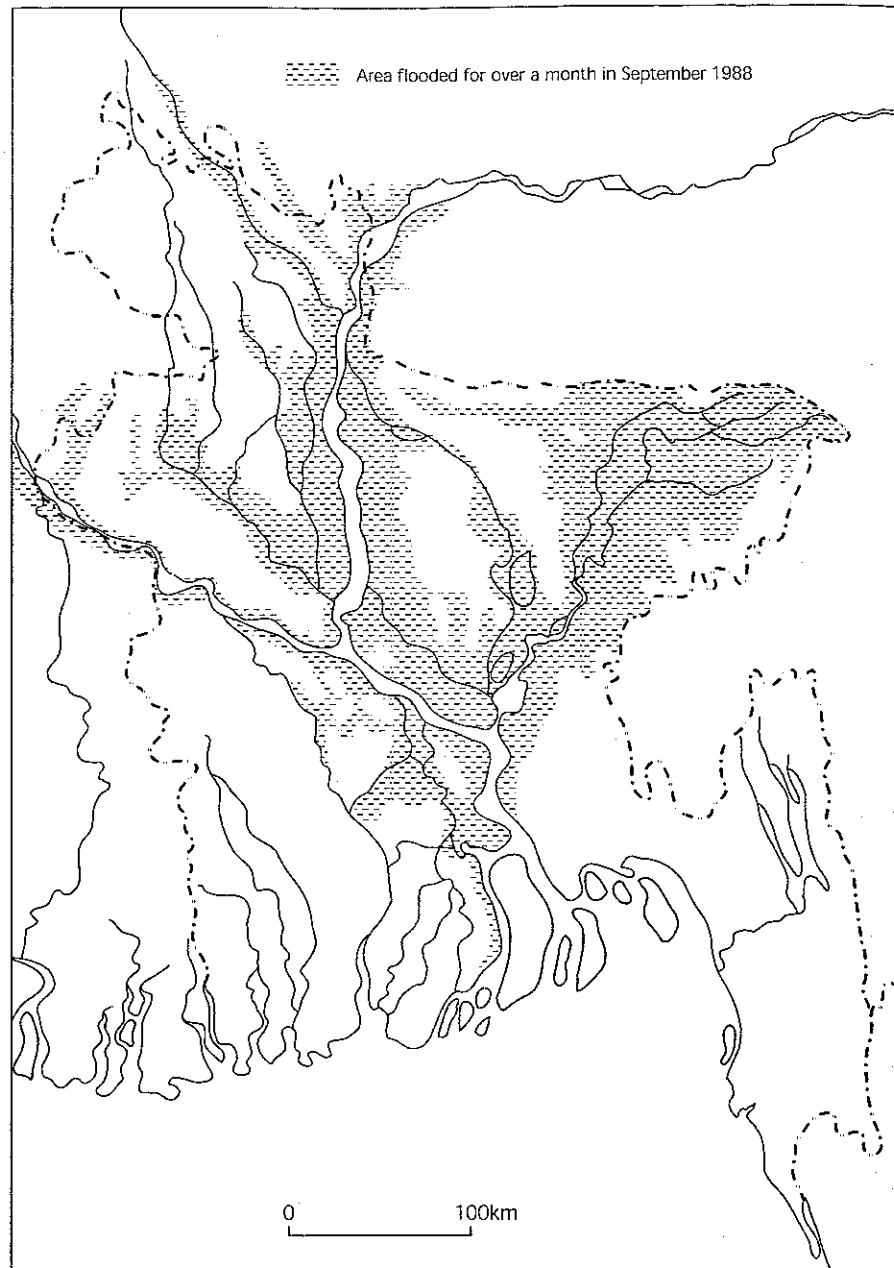


Figure 12.5 1987 Floods in Bangladesh

Source: Brammer (1990a)

In 1998 there were even worse floods, which inundated much of the country for the longest periods of submergence yet. The monsoon that year did not seem to stop: the rains continued well after their normal date of cessation. The floods caused extensive damage to urban and industrial infrastructure as well as to farms; but the death toll was lower than for the 1987 and 1988 floods because the government was better prepared in providing clean water and food for the population. In 1999 there was again extensive and late flooding.

The floods are seen at least partly as a separate issue from the Farakka problem, because the only major works upstream that could mitigate them (and then only some of them) would be the colossal storage dams which would have to be managed tri-laterally by India, Nepal and Bangladesh (and conceivably by China and Bhutan too). And one reason why Bangladesh has recently begun to shift its negotiating stance is that it has conceded that the dams might be too big, too costly, too far off in the future, and too unreliable in terms of operational performance (much of the rainfall that causes flooding would occur downstream of the storage sites anyway.) The reason why Farakka can be partly implicated is because there are claims (in my view unsubstantiated) that siltation in the Ganges has increased downstream of Farakka, so the bed has risen, making high season floods more likely. Then, in theory, if the Ganges rises higher, the Brahmaputra can be caused to back-up higher as well.

Several countries and country groups are involved in planning to obviate as far as possible repeats of Bangladesh's flood disasters, or at least to alleviate their worst effects. The G7 group of developed industrial countries have involved themselves in attempting to devise 'a solution' to the floods problem, and French and Japanese proposals were also forthcoming for different embankment schemes. The World Bank then became involved in producing a co-ordinated Flood Action Plan with the Government of Bangladesh, publishing the first overview and proposals in late 1989 (World Bank, 1989). The plan was abandoned in 1995.

The proposals cover many different aspects of the problem. They include studies of the engineering and siting of embankments, the development of compartmentalised polders, river training, and approaches to improving the management of water control, flood warning and flood preparedness, and enhancing flood refuges. The compartmentalised polders would allow selective flooding of land in the event of extreme flood events. All of these proposals therefore constitute 'within country' solutions; again acknowledging the difficulty of international co-operation. However, it is even unclear how it would relate to water transfer from the Brahmaputra to the Ganges via a link canal inside Bangladesh.

No-one should trivialise the complexity of the problems faced. Simplistic 'solutions' such as the massive re-afforestation of the Himalayas advocated by the western media after the 1988 floods are not helpful. (And the extent of deforestation in the first place is doubtful.) We do not know the extent of accelerated erosion in the Himalayas, if there is any at all. We should not forget that landslides following earthquakes probably shake most of the sediment into the rivers, that these are after all the youngest and highest mountains on earth in the area of highest rainfall, that

natural erosion rates are extremely high, and that the Bengal delta exists precisely because the rivers have been laying down silt and flooding for the last 60 m. years. Nor should we forget that the climate is unstable, and that our records of the last 100 years reflect a paltry sample of what can happen.

12.4 The Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna Basin and the Power of Nepal and Bhutan

Since the first edition of this book, there has been an increasing stress by many NGOs and professional associations, and government think tanks, on considering the basin-wide problems of water use and availability. The considerations embrace demographic, economic, political, and legal aspects, set in the context of international rivalry. The largest part of the flow of the Ganges at Farakka stems from the Himalayan tributaries it receives from Nepal. Nepal is a mountainous and less densely settled state than the adjacent areas of the Ganges Plains, and it has enormous hydro-power potential, supposedly as much as 83,000 MW – or very nearly as much as all of India's installed capacity in 2000, amounting to 98,000 MW. Four major perennial rivers (the Mahakali and Karnali, which form the flood-prone Ghagara in India, the Gandak and the Kosi) offer opportunities for mega-dams that could provide huge exports of power to India, and provide flood protection possibly extending as far as Bangladesh, augment the low season flow at Farakka, and provide irrigation on the plains.

The mega-projects have their detractors, fearful of excessive social and environmental costs, and the risks of structural failure during an earthquake. To Bangladesh and many Nepalese, it becomes rational to talk not of one river basin – the Ganges – but of the GBM – embracing the Brahmaputra and Meghna as well. On the whole India wishes to keep its relationships bi-lateral and resists this encroaching concept. The scale of these projects is so great and the money stake so large, that they could (have begun) to affect all parts of Nepalese politics. Some observers believe that Nepal's young and struggling democracy could be undermined by external pressures. The struggles over pricing policies are critical. What are the costs to Nepal, in land submerged and people dislocated? How can the flood-control benefits

Table 12.3 Major Dam Proposals for Nepal

Project	Capacity MW	Dam Height (m)	Reservoir Storage millions m ³	Submerged area (ha)
Karnali (Chisapani)	10,800	268	16,210	33,900
Mahakali (Pancheswar)	2,000	288	4,800	4,750
Mahakali (Poornagiri)	1,065	156	1,240	6,500
Kosi High Dam	3,300	269	9,370	19,500

Source: Rasheed, 1995 and Subba, 2001

in downstream India be accurately valued and monetised? What will be the price of electricity in India in, say, 2020, in a subsidised and regulated or free market? Can it be almost as high as the next best alternative – derived from coal-burning thermal stations on the plains?

Bhutan has an estimated hydro-power potential of about 20,000 MW (Subba, 2001). It could only ever use a fraction of this for domestic purposes. Small to medium projects in the range of 300 to 1,000 MW have been built or are under construction, with Indian aid and expertise, but the power demands of Assam are as yet much below those of the middle Ganges plains. Bigger projects are also entangled in the same pricing arguments as between India and Nepal.

12.5 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has dealt with issues that lie at the interface of environmental management and national sovereignty. The definition of the problems faced and the derivation and implementation of 'solutions' depends on the resolution of political, economic and technical assessments. The economic assessments normally revolve around the idea of viability – that benefits outweigh costs. But this is not always the case. The British accepted, and so have independent India and Pakistan, that investment in irrigation might *prima facie* appear uneconomic, yet in terms of providing food security, social stability and a longer term and more diffuse return to the economy, such schemes could be acceptable. This is, of course, a political judgement. What can be economically viable also changes, obviously, with changing technology. The feasible technology of environmental engineering has embraced larger and larger scale projects. Considering for example the issues raised in this chapter, the scale increases from inundation canals, to barrages, to small dams and then to large multi-purpose power/flood-control/irrigation dams, or river training and embankments on a massive scale. The largest scale works require financing from the highest political levels. In the cases we have considered of the Indus Waters Project in Pakistan or the Flood Action Plan in Bangladesh these have required international support. But, even at lesser scales, the political structure of society determines the parameters within which decision-making occurs. Thus, no matter in which order these issues are addressed, political factors come out as the dominant ones. Political feasibility underlies the resolution of technical and economic proposals. The great integrated irrigation schemes of pre-Independence Punjab were conceived and executed under British hegemony. They could and would survive only so long as an equivalent hegemony survived – and that did not happen. In Bengal, too, the sequence of events has shown that any grand scheme based on the sublimation of political sovereignty to technical optimisation has remained a dream.

In terms of the identitive, utilitarian and coercive forces of integration, it is quite clear that, although there have been and are environmental utilitarian imperatives for integration, these have never held enough sway with the broad body politic. We do not know, because it was never measured and probably could never

have been, how far the publics of each half of Punjab or Bengal saw their welfare interlinked with their other half. Everyone knew that there were linkages; but perhaps because these could not be quantified, they would always rest second to a precisely defined and clearly seen goal – political self-determination (even if it actually turned out to be something of a mirage). In other words, utilitarian bonds invariably come second to identitive bonds.¹ What of coercion? Some observers of the world's hydro-political scene predict that the next wars will be over water, not over oil as in the last war against Iraq. Water scarcity, they predict, could ignite conflict between Turkey, Syria and Iraq, or between Egypt and Sudan. In India conflict between the states over water has resulted in police firings and deaths – between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, for example, over the Kaveri river, or between Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi over the Yamuna. The irrigation-hungry and power-hungry plains of North India can cast longing eyes over the water resources and dam sites of Nepal's Himalayan foreland (see Chapman and Thompson, 1995). What role might such issues play in international relations in South Asia? I suspect and hope that the answer is that water will not ignite international armed conflict – although not necessarily for enlightened reasons. In the west, as a result of the Indus Waters Treaty, each side can mostly act as it wishes with the water it has been allocated. There are conflicts – over shifting river courses on the border and the consequent river-training works, over drainage and local floods – but these are not of major international significance. In the east the scale of the problems from Bangladesh's point of view is significant and large. But India is the upstream power with the environmental whip-hand and does not need military force to implement unilateral solutions. Moreover, India is such an overwhelming and dominant military power that Bangladesh could never challenge it in armed conflict without a major military ally to back it. That could only happen in the almost unimaginable scenario of Bengal being used as a launching pad for another invasion of South Asia. It would be a totally unimaginable scenario had it not happened once before, two centuries ago. In the case of Nepal and Bhutan, it will probably be in their long-term interest to sell energy, irrigation and urban water, and the services of flood control to the populations of the Ganges plains and Assam. These are their best export resources.

¹ This ought to be a salutary lesson for European enthusiasts in Britain who assume that the majority of the public understand how closely our welfare depends on unity within Europe. It is important not just that the British learn how to exploit Europe: they also have to learn how to be European, otherwise any 'mad-cow' set-back can cause a knee-jerk populist reaction and an exit from the Union.

The Greater Game

13.1 Geopolitics

The opening chapter of this book relates the sub-continent of South Asia to other continents through a discussion of geology and plate tectonics. Most of the rest of the book concentrates discussion on South Asia itself, although external factors such as the invasion of Mohammed Ghorī, or of the first Mughal Babur, or the advent of the British and their subsequent pre-occupation with the North-West Frontier, are reminders of the significance of the relationships between South Asia and the outside world. This chapter looks at how the international relationships of South Asia have developed in the years since Independence. The word 'international' here subsumes two different kinds of relationships: those between the South Asian states themselves, and those between South Asian states and countries outside the region.

Until the last moments of the Raj, the British had mostly managed to contain any difficult regional relationships between the parts of their Indian Empire. They were, however, concerned with the political, military and economic relationships between India (South Asia) and the outside world. They had more or less succeeded in keeping other external powers at bay, although they perpetually saw a bogey in the guise of Imperial Russia and later of post-revolutionary Russia in the northwest, which they feared would extend its power like a latter-day Mughal through Afghanistan and then on to the Indus and Ganges plains. This anxiety accounted for numerous military interventions in Afghanistan. The rivalry with Russia was what Kipling termed 'The Great Game', and the phrase has been used ever since to hint at some stratospheric geo-political game of chess, beyond the vision of mere earth-bound mortals. On the other flank of India in the northeast, during the Second World War the Japanese did take Burma and threatened at one stage to break into India too. The Himalayas, and empty and arid Tibet beyond, provided a strong defence line in the north.

There have been attempts to provide theoretical perspectives on these events and relationships, one of the first and still one of the most influential being Mackinder's theory of the heartland, the Pivot of History. The original paper, published in 1904, still bears reading: my attempts to summarise salient points do not do full justice to the original, which the reader is urged to consult in full. In essence, some of his paper seems empirical, detailing the history of the peripheries of the Eurasian landmasses – Europe and China – as at least in part responses to the pressures of successive waves of Asiatic nomads – Huns, Avars, Bulgarians, Magyars, Cumans, Mongols, Kalmuks etc. But other parts are more deductive, asking why the heartland of Eurasia has remained something of a citadel, radiating influences out, but not admitting reverse invasions. The answer lies partly in

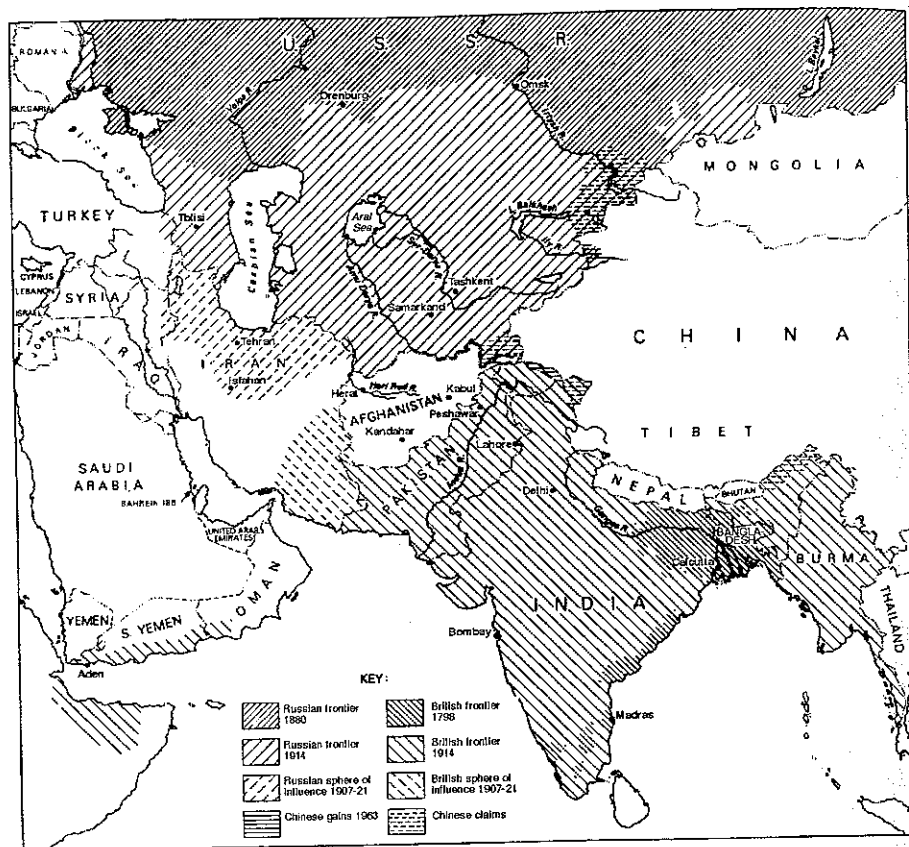
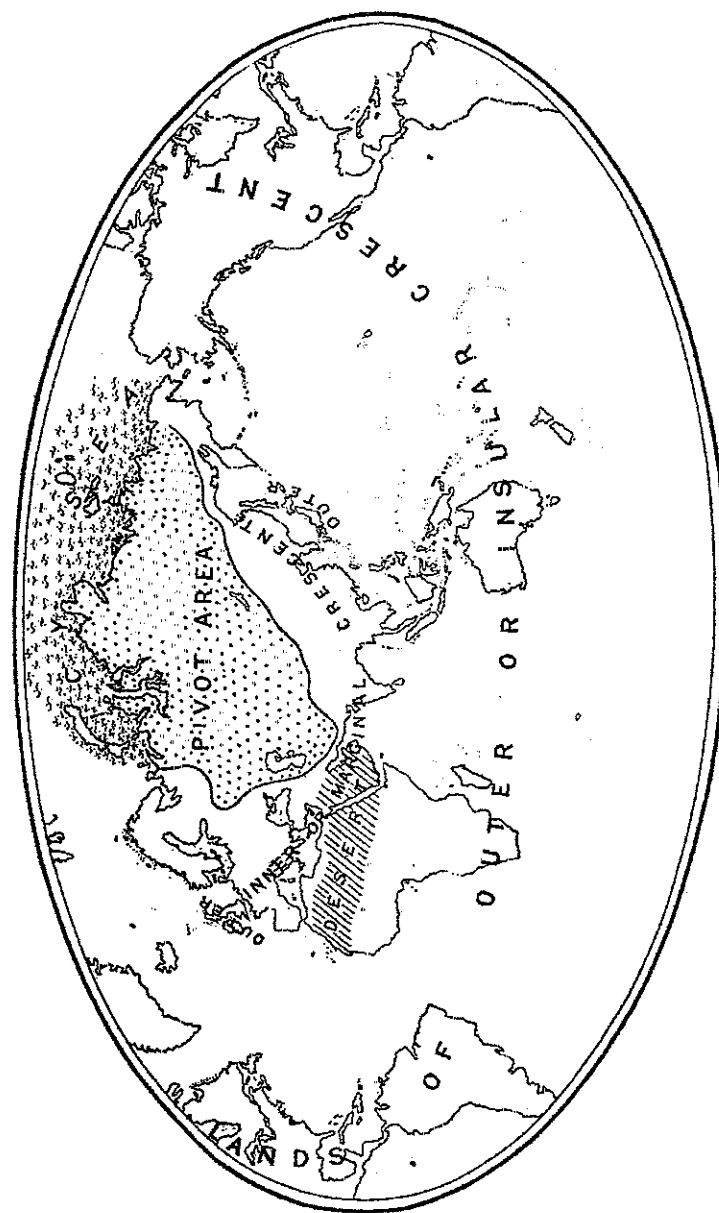


Figure 13.1 British, Russian and Chinese Spheres of Influence in Asia, 1800-1965

what kinds of movement are possible. For the peripheral world, river and ocean transport was and remained, until the railway age, much easier than land transport. In the heartland of the steppes, the horse ruled, and physical geography denied the peripheral world the opportunity to use its own technology to penetrate the interior. This was because the Eurasian heartland is a vast tract of the earth which drains to the frozen Arctic ocean or to inland seas, so the European and other maritime forces have no way to penetrate the river mouths and thence inland. The distinction between the Pivot area and the Outer Crescent (see Figure 13.2) was maintained even in the railway age – and indeed the railways reinforced the separateness of the two arenas of deployment:

‘The Russian army in Manchuria is as significant evidence of mobile land-power as the British army in South Africa was of sea-power’ (Mackinder in de Blij, 1967:289).



Pivot area- wholly continental. Outer crescent- wholly oceanic. Inner crescent- partly continental, partly oceanic.

Figure 13.2 Mackinder's Geopolitical Vision
Source: Mackinder (1904), De Blij (1967)

Commercially the two arenas were distinct too:

'In the matter of commerce it must not be forgotten that ocean-going traffic, however relatively cheap, usually involves the fourfold handling of goods – at the factory of origin, at the export wharf, at the import wharf, and at the inland warehouse for retail distribution; whereas the continental railway truck may run direct from the exporting factory into the importing warehouse. Thus marginal ocean-fed commerce tends, others things being equal, to form a zone of penetration round the continents, whose inner limit is roughly marked by the line along which the cost of the four handlings, the oceanic freight and the railway freight from the neighbouring coast, is equivalent to the cost of two handlings and the continental rail freight. English and German coals are said to compete on such terms mid-way through Lombardy' (Mackinder in de Blij, 1967: 289)

The Czarist empire was therefore essentially a land empire built around the resources of the pivot area. It may seem odd, or an exaggeration, to consign the rest of the world to a maritime Outer Crescent, to label the vastness of America, Africa and of Australia as maritime, but if the distribution of population is observed, for all these areas the bulk of the population is at or near the coast, and the coastal urban centres are interdependent on each other. This was where the British radically altered the geography of India, adding port cities to the periphery of what had been a land empire.

Mackinder's geo-political vision has survived, and been revived in different forms by later writers. Cohen (1963) derived a very similar deductive political regionalisation of the world, by applying two concepts, the higher level concept of the geo-strategic region, and the lower level concept of the geopolitical region. His geo-strategic regions are multi-featured in cultural and economic terms, but are single-featured in trade orientation and are also distinct arenas within which power can be projected. Mackinder's Outer Crescent is re-named the Trade Dependent Maritime World, and the Pivot area is renamed the Eurasian Continental power. Between these two are the 'Shatterbelts' of Southeast Asia and the Middle East. There is no doubt that such a Mackinder-Cohen view of the world informed US, British and Czarist/Soviet foreign policy for years. It is still an influential thesis. It offers perhaps a justifiable excuse for limited western action over Russia's 1999 campaign against Chechnya.

The Trade Dependent Maritime World has strategic nerve centres. Since the advent of the supertanker, one of these was the Cape of Good Hope, round which the vast majority of Middle Eastern oil reached western consumers. It was therefore in the interests of the Soviet Union to be able to disrupt this trade with submarine threats, and in the interests of the western powers to deny the Soviets access to the great oceans, to keep them bottled up in identifiable Arctic ports such as Murmansk, locked in the Baltic, and under surveillance in Vladivostok. What the West did not want was a move south to a warm-water port – in the mouths of the Indus for example. Hence the containment policy of the USA was to ring the pivot area with the NATO, CENTO and SEATO defences, and hence the bitter determination of the

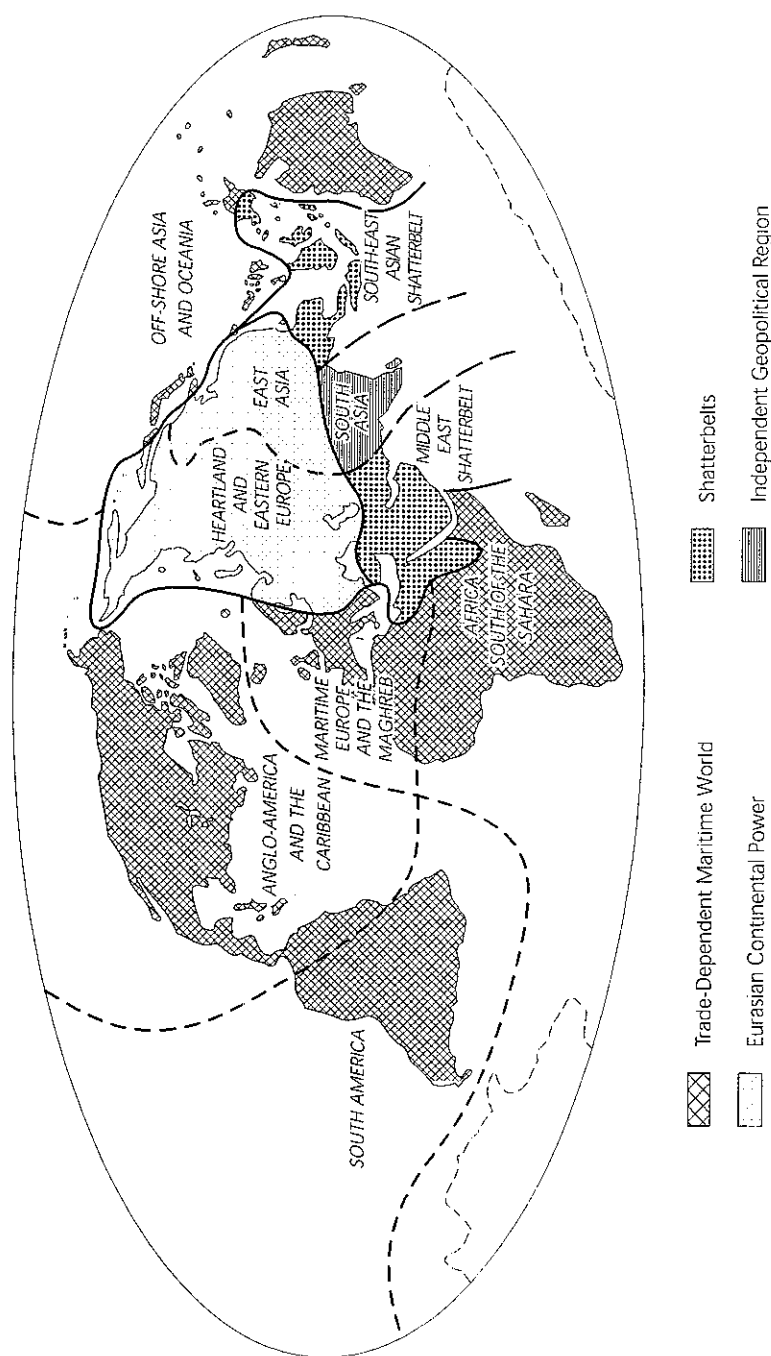


Figure 13.3 Cohen's Geopolitical Vision
Source: Cohen (1963)

USA not to allow the invasion of Afghanistan to succeed. Hence also democratic America supported the apartheid regime of South Africa and its allies in the civil war in Angola against the Cuban- and Soviet-backed government.

Cohen's geo-political region is defined as a sub-division of the geo-strategic;

'It expresses the unity of geographic features. Because it is derived directly from geographic regions, this unit can provide a framework for common political and economic actions. Contiguity of location and complementarity of resources are particularly distinguishing marks of the geopolitical region' (Cohen 1963:62)

So the Trade Dependent Maritime World is divided into Europe and the Mahgreb; Africa minus Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia (part of the Middle East Shatter Belt); North America; South America; and Australia along with New Zealand and Oceania. The Eurasian region is divided into the USSR and China.

In this scheme, South Asia is distinctive and unique: Cohen classifies it as an independent geo-political region, the only such on earth, not contained within either of the geo-strategic regions. It is big enough to be a sub-continent in its own right; it has been and is guarded from the Eurasian power(s) by the massive wall of the Himalayas, from the Middle East by the Hindu Kush and other mountains of the Northwest Frontier, and from Myanmar and Indo-China by lower, but heavily forested, jagged mountain ranges. All the imperial phases before the British had created land-empires, which at some point more or less embraced the whole geo-political region, and the British too had acknowledged this when their capital was moved to Delhi in 1911. If united, South Asia has clear lines of defence, and it has the options of self-sufficiency or access to the Trade Dependent Maritime World. But if divided, the scenario changes.

13.2 Antagonists and Protagonists since 1947: The Actors

When the British left India shortly after the end of the Second World War it was uppermost in their minds and an abiding passion with Mountbatten that the defence of South Asia was unitary. To that extent, having conceded Pakistan, nevertheless they also bequeathed a joint defence council for the two new neighbouring Dominions. Unhappily it did not survive long, because of the hostilities over Kashmir. From the Kashmir conflict onwards, South Asia was split open. Internal dissent laid the region prey to outside powers in a way which otherwise would not have been possible: for hostility within South Asia immediately meant that the rivals would be seeking outside support, if not alliances. The major world powers that emerged at the end of the war were the Soviet Union and the United States – the two poles of the two geo-strategic regions; but another major regional power also emerged in Asia, with the communist victory in China in 1949. The alignments between India, Pakistan and these three outside powers are the focus of this chapter. What is remarkable is the extent to which the same pattern of alignment for long survived many changing circumstances. The reasons for this I do not think difficult to demonstrate, but the

methods of my arguments are not those typical of most political scientists. I see less freedom of choice facing national leaders than I suspect they do. After the al-Qaida attacks of 2001 and the American response in Afghanistan, perhaps we are seeing new alignments – but it is too early to say just what new long-term patterns are emerging.

13.2.1 *The Soviet Union/Russia*

The Soviet Union was relatively slow in the years after World War II to develop a policy towards the emerging states of Asia. It was pre-occupied with events in Europe, and with its own reconstruction and rearmament as the Cold War enveloped East-West relationships. In India, the Communist Party was in avowed opposition to Congress, and in the early fifties sponsored a terrorist revolution in the Telengana region of Andhra. Ideologically the USSR 'should' have been supportive of this nascent revolution, but the ease with which it was suppressed confirmed for the Soviet bystanders what they had suspected also for ideological reasons, that it was not possible to jump from feudalism to communism without first going through the class-consolidating stage of capitalism. The Soviet Union therefore began to adopt a more pragmatic approach by allowing itself to extend economic and other aid to the Congress government, even though the latter was élitist and bourgeois and only partly socialist. Ideological doubts about Pakistan could not be so easily overcome, for this was a state founded on communal grounds. It was an emergent Muslim State not so far from its own southern Muslim Republics.

In the late 1950s the Chinese began to split from the Soviets. Their hostility to the imperialistic style of the USSR's management of East Europe and the USSR's reluctance to let China have access to nuclear technology, and a host of other issues, brought the two communist giants into open opposition. In 1969 they were involved in armed border skirmishes along their Amur and Ussuri river borders.

On the southern flank of their empire, the Soviets became more heavily involved in events in Afghanistan. They were clearly implicated in the overthrow of the King Md Zahir Shah in 1973, and the establishment of a left-leaning republic. Their defeat at the end of the Afghan War, 1979-89, described more fully in the next section, helped bring down communism.

With the collapse of the USSR in 1990/91, the constituent republics became independent in name at least. But what has resulted from this is, in some sense, a more transparent acknowledgement of the true map of power within the Eurasian heartland. Russia probably remains the dominant power. Both through its association with states such as Kazakhstan and Tajikistan in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and through specific military treaties, Russia continues to project real power throughout the CIS. In Tajikistan, for example, a large-scale Russian military presence helps patrol the southern borders, which divide Muslim fundamentalist Tajiks in Afghanistan from the less radical Muslim groups of Tajikistan.

Foreign policy cannot, however, continue exactly as before. The Warsaw Pact has collapsed, and the outright confrontation with the West has been replaced

by more diffuse and complex security concerns over the encroaching proximity of NATO; yet the nuclear weapons of the Cold War adversaries are no longer targeted at each other. To mollify Russian concerns, in 1997 a NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council was established under a Founding Act on Mutual Security. The economic decline of Russia during the painful years of the transition from a command to a demand economy has also had an impact on foreign policy, not just its own, but the foreign policy of former allies as well. Russia is now more prepared to sell military expertise for realistic prices to the Chinese and other bidders, rather than subsidise the export of military hardware and expertise for political purposes. This has meant, for example, that the cost to India of maintaining its Soviet weaponry has escalated rapidly, while the source has become far less reliable.

Since the ending of Russian involvement in the Afghan war of the 1980s, Russia has fought two more wars against separatists in Islamic Chechnya. The territory, on the north flank of the Caucasus mountains and adjacent to the Caspian oilfields, was conquered by Czarist troops in the 19th Century. Armed struggles to regain its independence have occurred at intervals since then. It is suspected that separatists (to use a term which is neither 'terrorist' nor 'freedom fighter') are behind bombings in Moscow and elsewhere in Russia. What is certain is that Chechen separatists have joined hands with extremists in Afghanistan.

13.2.2 *The USA*

The USA saw its prime role after the war as the containment of communism, and to that effect to assume, wherever possible, the mantle of global defence that the British were fast casting off. Ideologically, they were of course sympathetic to the world's newest and largest democracy: but such sympathy would only grow if India aligned itself with the crusade against what the Americans saw as democracy's greatest danger – the global Communist threat. Pakistan too was, in name, a democracy in the early 1950s, so there was no ideological difficulty in maintaining close diplomatic links with both countries.

The position in the early 1950s was therefore one of many open opportunities, but as yet few binding commitments. The first steps to change this were taken both by the Pakistanis and the Americans. The former desperately needed arms and outside support to survive what it perceived as the Indian threat. It played on its anti-Communist outlook with considerable force. The Americans wanted partners in their scheme to surround the USSR and its allies on all sides with military alliances, and were the founding force in the creation of NATO, CENTO¹ and SEATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, the Central Treaty Organisation, and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation respectively). These alliances completed a ring from Europe through Turkey and the Shah's Iran to South Asia, a 'rimland' containment of the Southern flank of Mackinder's Eurasian heartland. Pakistan signed a military aid agreement with the USA in 1954, and later joined both CENTO and SEATO. For the Americans, this meant that they had moved closer to the smaller

¹ CENTO started as the Baghdad-Pact

of the two states of South Asia. While this might appear the lesser prize, the USA had secured the co-operation of the state that guarded the North-West Frontier – and the relevance of that move became explicit in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. It also gave the Americans the opportunity in pre-satellite days to fly its U2 spy planes from Pakistan over Soviet territory to the UK and Norway and back the other way. In return Pakistan received military aid on a large scale, and civil aid which exceeded that given to India in per capita terms by a large amount – although in absolute terms India did receive more.

Indian reaction to the US-Pakistani arms deals was not warm; but it did not cause India to jump immediately into a pact with the USSR. Nehru's non-aligned ideals, the source of great irritation to the Americans, were genuine; but so was his commitment to some kind of watered-down socialism, even if it was only one of more 5-year central planning and more nationalised industry within a mixed economy. In 1955, in the warming relationship between Moscow and Delhi, an aid agreement was signed for the construction of a large steel mill in India; Nehru visited Moscow and was the first non-communist leader to address the Soviet people; and Khrushchev and Bulganin were given a warm reception when they visited India.

In the post-Cold War world, US policy has been increasingly to attempt to mould Third World states to its own vision of market capitalism, open markets, and 'good governance', but in pursuit of these goals it has been reluctant to intervene militarily unless either it sees a direct threat to a vital national interest, as over the Kuwait crisis, or al-Qaida and the Taliban in Afghanistan; or it has seen what appeared to be a low cost 'policing' operation, as in the case of Somalia. It is deeply concerned over the possibilities of nuclear proliferation, and is alarmed by the nuclear capabilities of Pakistan and India, and the refusal of either state to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

There is a debate within the US military machine over the idea of Revolutionary Military Affairs (RMA). The nature of threats to national security and the nature of warfare changes – with revolutionary developments, like tanks once were, or missile-carrying submarines were more recently. The current revolution encompasses a step-change in the accuracy of airborne ordnance, with a shift in military doctrine to use this power to support allied land forces – exactly as in Afghanistan in 2001-2002. But there are also concerns about other revolutions, for example in bio-warfare and information-warfare, that may have great appeal to insurgent groups engaged in 'asymmetrical warfare'. The asymmetry is because a great power can be humbled by groups prepared to use methods (e.g. concealment within a civilian population) and targets (e.g. civilian populations) that conventional forces are supposed to avoid. From the point of view of insurgents, asymmetrical warfare is a logical answer to asymmetrical democracy – that is the ultimate control of weaponry that dominates the whole world residing in the hands of the electorate of but one country. At the global scale America's democracy is an oligarchy.

13.2.3 China, Tibet and the Himalayan War

In the early 1950s there was tension between India and China over Tibet. The British had treated the Tibetan Government as independent of China, and, for example, negotiated the McMahon line delineating the Himalayan Boundary directly with Lhasa. They had also interfered internally in Tibetan affairs, treating it roughly in the same way they treated Afghanistan (though never committing military forces on the same scale). The Chinese asserted their historic right to sovereignty over Tibet, and in 1950 pushed some of their troops into the province. In 1951 they signed an agreement with Lhasa that gave Tibet internal autonomy, but made external affairs the prerogative of Beijing. In 1954 the Indians signed an agreement with China recognising the status quo, and renouncing any claims to special rights in Tibet, although Tibetan leaders had hoped for India's support. In 1959 a revolt in Tibet was put down harshly by the Chinese and the Dalai Lama, Tibet's spiritual and de facto leader, fled to India. India was accused by the Chinese of being the instigator – although there is no evidence that India was willingly implicated.

After the success of the Communist Revolution in 1949, the new Chinese government began a long-term process of negotiating or re-negotiating their borders with adjacent states, in an effort finally to tidy-up and secure the territory they had inherited from the old empire, and which had so often been compromised or penetrated by external powers. They were fairly consistent in each particular case, suggesting a withdrawal by both sides during the negotiations, but showing themselves willing to resort to arms if they perceived the other side too obdurate. Following such a policy they established, without armed conflict, an agreed border with Myanmar, and they also established in 1963, again without armed conflict, an agreed border between China and Pakistani Azad Kashmir. This latter provoked an angry reaction from India, which, of course, claimed sovereignty over the whole of Kashmir, and certainly did not recognise Pakistan's authority to sign such an agreement.

The McMahon line between Tibet and India was disputed by China in several areas, not just because in places the delineation was not clear, but also because the Chinese rejected the validity of the original treaty, signed by Tibet and not Beijing. China's proposal was again that both sides should withdraw pending negotiation. But India did not draw back its troops pending dialogue. In fact it did the opposite, it pushed troops into areas it claimed despite the fact that none had been posted there for many years. This was the so-called 'forward policy'. In Aksai-Chin there was a huge salient of territory which had been occupied by the Chinese for years, across which they had built a road, but which nevertheless India claimed. India at this time believed open military hostility between the two countries was impossible. They had always felt that despite ideological differences, nevertheless there ought to be a natural friendship between the two Third World giants. Nor were they prepared for military action. Whereas in Pakistan the military had been pampered from the beginning because national defence was paramount, in India the government had done the opposite, and played politically with the military high command, sometimes

suspicious that the army that had served Britain might not be committed and loyal to the new Indian government. So it happened that, in an ill-conceived move, troops were pushed over the mountains using old rifles, and wearing the thin clothing of the plains. It was a military response but, dangerously, a token response. The Chinese view that they were the natural leaders of the anti-imperialist Third World led them to denigrate and undermine India's aspirations to lead the non-aligned movement, and the conflict in the Himalayas represented an opportunity to demonstrate their ascendancy.

In 1962 minor skirmishes erupted into outright warfare. The Indians, despite some heroic defence in some sectors, were overwhelmed. In the northeast the Chinese crossed the mountains into Assam, and potentially even Calcutta could have been within their reach. They halted unilaterally, and again proposed negotiation. The war traumatised India. She appealed to the USSR for help, but did not receive any, since the USSR still hoped to mend its relations with the Chinese. Instead the USSR tried to act as mediator. India, its back to the wall, offered a non-aggression pact to Pakistan, which the latter declined. The Chinese were also at this time virulently anti-American, having confronted the American Army in Korea. The USA and the UK helped India considerably, much to Pakistan's concern, as it worried that India might in the end grow stronger rather than weaker when the conflict had died. As winter neared, the Chinese withdrew, presumably anxious over their supply lines as mountain passes closed.

13.2.4 Pakistan

The Muslim League had not had quite the same opportunity to plan the future foreign policy of Pakistan as Congress had for independent India. The proclamation of the ambition to achieve an independent Pakistan came late – in 1940 – and the acceptance of that aim only six weeks before Independence itself. When the state was born, it was party to a defence council with India, and yet found itself shortly at war with India over Kashmir, and its fertile farms the subject of a water embargo. The first foreign policy aim of Pakistan was therefore survival; and in that aim it has been successful, even if 'dismembered' into two. In surviving it has seen, rightly or wrongly, that it has had to counter-balance the power of India, which it has always suspected of not being reconciled to Pakistan's existence. In the early years it is true that India assumed that Pakistan would not last long; but that does not mean that India wished to take steps to hasten its demise.

The alliances which Pakistan would naturally seek out were those with the great powers that were not well disposed to India. This included China, which had disputes over its border with India, and the United States, which was affronted by India's determined non-aligned stance. The 1962 war between China and India left the latter weak and demoralised, and then Nehru died in 1964, with no readily-groomed successor. Ayub Khan, President (and dictator) of Pakistan was presented with an opportunity to even scores with India while its defences were still suspect. In 1965 he instigated the war over border disputes in the Rann of Kutch, which lead

to mediation by the UK, but immediately followed it by a thrust on Kashmir. In this sector, and in the Punjab, the Pakistanis failed to attain their objectives: this was part of the despair of East Bengal which we noted earlier. The USA cut off supplies to both sides. The USSR arranged talks in Tashkent between the two protagonists, during which the Indian Prime Minister Shastri (Nehru's successor) died. The talks resulted in what passed as an agreement, the return to the *status quo ante*. It was the beginning of the end for Ayub, and the beginning of India's search for new arms partners. She began to purchase more from the British and the French, but above all turned to the Soviet Union.

The simple truth that my enemy's enemy is my friend began to work its inexorable logic. Pakistan began to forge an ever-closer relationship with China. The old Silk Road across the Karakoram between Pakistan and Tibet/China was developed as the Karakoram Highway, and Pakistan began to acquire Chinese arms as well. In Indo-China Chinese backing for the Soviet-backed Vietnamese began to waver, later to break out into open hostility and warfare. Although, for ideological reasons, it seemed highly unlikely, there were clearly strong grounds for the USA to find some accommodation with China, now openly hostile to the USSR and aligned with America's protégé Pakistan. In 1971 Pakistan made the arrangements for Kissinger's first secret trips to Beijing, and within a few years this new understanding was public.

The year 1971 also saw the disintegration of Pakistan, and the emergence of Bangladesh. Although the USA tried for a time to maintain an even-handed approach, it did not manage to sustain impartiality between India and Pakistan for long. It 'tilted' towards Pakistan, and supported Pakistan diplomatically in the UN, despite the protest of the US diplomats in Bengal who warned Washington that genocide had started. It also deployed one of its fleets complete with an aircraft carrier in the Bay of Bengal. From the Indian point of view, Washington's actions amounted to open hostility, and anti-American sentiment, already strong, has been stronger ever since. Neither were the Chinese uninvolved: troop movements and sabre-rattling on the Himalayan frontier provoked increasing concern over India's security. In 1971 India and the USSR signed a treaty of peace and friendship.

After the collapse of Ayub's military government in Pakistan, Bhutto's populist government was superficially anti-imperialist and anti-American. Bhutto was also strongly pro-Chinese, and used to wear his version (but well tailored in pure silk) of the Mao suit. But that was not enough to sever the external links upon which Pakistan depended: he was too pragmatic for that. The USA therefore largely put up with the public denouncements, knowing exactly the extent to which Pakistan depended on its support. When Bhutto was executed by General Zia after the 1977 coup, American support for Pakistan began to slacken. It was worried by the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism, and it was by then in confrontation with the Ayatollah Khomeini's new revolutionary Iran – with which Pakistan maintained cordial relations. And American public opinion was also increasingly hostile to Third World dictatorships. As Zia began to be pushed adrift, the Russians invaded Afghanistan. From that moment, the increasingly fundamentalist Zia was seen

in a completely new light, as an ally in the fight against communism. The old priorities reasserted themselves, and American public opinion approved a massive new influx of arms, both to Pakistan, and through Pakistan to the Mujaheddin of Afghanistan.

From 1988 to 1999 the Government of Pakistan was overtly democratic, though the power of the army would always be somewhere hovering in the background. Indeed it is questionable how much Nawaz Sharif, the then Prime Minister, even knew about, or could control, the army's incursion over the cease-fire line in Kashmir in 1999. When the current President, General Musharraf, seized power later in 1999, Pakistan was pushed by the international community further into isolation. Then, from being a pariah, in September 2001 after the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York, he became a gentleman-hero overnight of the American coalition against terrorism. Pakistan was needed as the nearest land-base from which to attack the Taliban government of Afghanistan, a government which it had done much to help install in the first place. Though India had been quick to offer bases to the US, no Pakistani could have accepted overflights of any kind of military aircraft from India across Pakistani air space.

Pakistan has joined the (Middle Eastern) Regional Co-operation for Development and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. This reflects both contemporary needs and historical past associations. It is thought that at least some of the finance for Pakistan's atomic weapons programme came from Libya, and on occasion Pakistan's bomb has been referred to the Western Press as 'the Islamic bomb'.

The atomic weapons programme of Pakistan is an attempt to level the playing field with India. It is of course hugely expensive, but Zulfikar Bhutto asserted the Pakistani people would prefer to 'eat grass' if necessary to gain parity with India. Because of India's overwhelming superiority in conventional weapons, Pakistan has refused a 'no-first-use of nuclear weapons' treaty.

13.2.5 Afghanistan

The Great Game between Russia and Britain to dominate Afghanistan waned in the 1920s and 1930s, because post-Revolutionary Russia was engaged in its own civil wars and economic de- and re-construction. During the Second World War defence of the Motherland against German Nazi invasion absorbed nearly all of its efforts. But in the Cold War and after Independence in India, the pattern of the Great Game re-emerged. A traditional and relatively quiet Afghanistan received aid from both the USSR and the inheritors of the British world-policeman role, the USA. In 1978 a coup in Afghanistan installed a communist government, but the army fractured and the country descended into civil war. For a while the government clung to power in Kabul with Soviet help. The Russians claim that they were simply forestalling a commitment by Afghanistan to the Americans, which would have opened up the possibility of penetration into the oilfields of the Caspian and the USSR's empire in central Asia. The new Afghan government was clearly about to fall when the Soviets launched a full-scale invasion in 1979. The internal opposition, the Mujahadeen,

was a pro-Islamic coalition of different tribes, united against the common foe. In this situation the United States had no hesitation in recognising the struggles of a people, who, like the Americans, were God-fearing, in the face of atheist communist aggression. Through Pakistan they armed the Mujahadeen on a massive scale, and helped in the training of Afghans and foreign volunteers, amongst them Osama Bin Laden, leader of al-Qaida (in Arabic this means 'The Base'), from Saudi Arabia. By 1989 the Soviets had had enough, and withdrew. Their 'Vietnam' was implicated in the fall of the USSR and the end of communism.

What the war had done to Afghanistan was truly awful. Soviet forces reputedly killed 1.3 million people and forced five and a half million Afghans (a third of the pre-war population) to leave the country as refugees. Another two million Afghans were forced to migrate within the country. On a proportionate basis, the Soviet Union inflicted more suffering on Afghanistan than Germany inflicted on the Soviet Union during World War II.

The Mujahadeen and the Americans may have both been God-fearing, but at the end of the war they noticed that it was not the same God they shared. The USA, and other western powers which were also guilty of prolonging this conflict, walked away, and left the ravaged country to its own devices, in an act of cynical indifference which has returned to haunt the world. Afghanistan again became a country of warlords and petty fiefdoms, but with each group better armed than before. Its economy became (as it often has been throughout history) heavily dependent on the cultivation and sale of narcotics, particularly opium and its derivative, heroin. Some fiefdoms had all the trappings of independent states. Then Pakistan's ISI (Inter-Services Intelligence) helped support a new fundamentalist Islamic movement amongst the Pathans led by Mullah Omar. The movement has the name Taliban, meaning 'students', but perhaps in this context better translated as 'disciples'.

The journalist Anita Pratap visited Balkh, the kingdom mentioned in Chapter 5, in 1996. 'While reporting the Taliban invasion from Kabul, I realised it was important to go across and meet Dostum because it wasn't yet clear whose side he was on, the Taliban's, or the ousted regime of Burhanuddin Rabbani. But Ariana, the national airline of Afghanistan, did not operate between Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif. The safest and quickest way to get to Mazar was to go to Peshawar and take a plane from there. In Peshawar we realised there was an airline called Balkh Air that could take us to Mazar' (Pratap, 2001). She arrived in Mazar to be refused 'entry' by an official who told her that her Afghan visa was of no use, since she was now in Balkhstan. 'General' Dostum's fiefdom had its own flag, army, bureaucracy, airline, laws and currency.

Mullah Omar's fundamentalism expressed itself in many ways. In March 2001 he destroyed the huge rock Buddhas in Bamiyan, two of the world's great cultural monuments, in an act of contempt which ranks alongside Ghoris destruction of the temple at Somnath some one thousand years before. The vicious war to 'unite' Afghanistan under the rule of the Taliban, involving terrible massacres in amongst many other places, Mazar-i-Sharif, was almost completed when Osama Bin Laden, the head of al-Qaida launched the worst of his attacks to date against the USA.

(There is no independent verification of this claim, but the weight of evidence seems to point that way.) The American response was to use a combination of air-power and Afghan ground forces from the Northern Alliance (that is a combination which included, for example, General Dostum and his Uzbek forces from Balkhstan) to overthrow the Taliban. By 2002 they had managed to install a caretaker government in Kabul, but the majority of the Taliban and al-Qaida leadership melted across the mountain and disappeared in Pakistan. The new government is again dominated by warlord factions, whose loyalty is bought with dollars. Yet again, it is violence and partisanship that is being rewarded.

The Americans have also now built bases in Kyrgystan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, and so the maritime powers have penetrated the heartland for the first time ever. The Russians have frequently expressed anxieties about this, but so far under President Putin have not physically opposed the move. It is not conceivable, particularly given the unwillingness of the USA to expose their forces to long-term risk, that this is the end of the Great Game.

There is an enigma in these last ten years. It is almost inconceivable that the American CIA did not know about, and did not connive in, Pakistani support for the Taliban. The conspiracy theorists believe that such covert support would have been because any government that could dominate the whole of Afghanistan was preferable to chaos, in order that pipelines could be built by major oil companies from the Caspian to the nearly 1.5 billion people of oil-deficient South Asia.

13.2.6 Kashmir

The festering sore of Kashmir has never been healed. Though to some extent the state became more tranquil after 1972, and by the mid-1980's tourism, so important to its economy, was soaring again, the possibility of either direct conflict between India and Pakistan or a new local insurgency has always been present. In 1989 local insurgency prompted an intensive and insensitive crackdown by Indian security forces. There are many groups now involved, not all striving for the same ends. Some groups want union with, and are supported by, Pakistan; and other more numerous groups are calling for Independence. Several times in 1995, 1996 and 1999 the Indian Government has tried to hold elections to return the state to its own administration (within federal India) and 'normality', but has been thwarted by violence and intimidation. Just like Northern Ireland for the British, Kashmir seems an insoluble problem, unless there are major concessions by all sides. Pressure from the outside – the United States, the USSR or Russia, and even the British – on this issue has at times proven counter-productive. This is an issue which touches the raw nerves of national identity and sovereignty for both states.

Predictably, the war to overthrow the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2001-02 had knock-on effects across the North-West. In 2002 India claimed that terrorist infiltration across the Line of Control had increased, and in many cases involving not just Kashmiris but other Muslim extremists (even possibly involving al-Qaida). There are strong hints that President Musharraf may not be sufficiently in control of

Pakistan's ISI, and that, from India's point of view, Pakistan is sponsoring terrorism. The military build-up by both sides along the border seemed to presage another war between India and Pakistan, which many observers feared could lead to an exchange of nuclear weapons. Clearly it would suit the leadership of al-Qaida and the Taliban in the first instance to tie down Pakistani forces on the Indian rather than the Afghan border. In the second instance it would suit them better to 'remove' unelected Musharraf and take Pakistan another step along the road of fundamentalism.

13.2.7 Bangladesh

Bangladesh was born one of the poorest countries on earth, with very little infrastructure, less than 10% urbanisation, and a largely illiterate peasantry. It is surrounded on most sides by India, and its borders are essentially indefensible. A short stretch of border abuts Myanmar (Burma). Its foreign policy from the beginning has been dictated by the need for survival, and it has played its role as a major client of international aid agencies well. Although formally the Ganges water dispute appears resolved, it is quite possible the at Treaty will prove unworkable. This and other resource problems have the potential for friction even in the near future. It also has had difficulties over finding a home for 500,000 Urdu-speaking Biharis, who left Eastern India for East Pakistan, and were not accepted by (West) Pakistan post-1972 as 'Pakistani', although in the early 1990s 'repatriation' of these refugees to Pakistan did start. Persecution of Muslims by Myanmar has resulted in an influx of more than 250,000 refugees into the southern coastal region and Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. This area is already the scene of anti-government insurgency, led by the local Chakmas who are mainly Buddhist. Thus the southeastern border with Myanmar becomes Bangladesh's second great foreign policy concern.

13.2.8 India

India's experience of two centuries of domination by a European power left it with an undeveloped economy which supplied raw materials in exchange for manufactures, and a mostly illiterate and mostly rural workforce. It had been party to two World Wars, neither of which was of its own making. In the first of these no national interest of its own had been at stake. In the second, the issue is more complex. Some leaders of the Indian National Congress believed that it could negotiate diplomatically with the Japanese, and that the Japanese planned invasion of India was simply and only to eliminate British military power. However, the reading of Japanese behaviour in China, S.E. Asia, Indonesia and the Philippines suggests that Congress' assessment might have been a bit naive.

But from the beginning Nehru, who retained the Foreign Policy portfolio as well as that of Prime Minister, determined that India wanted complete independence, from external military alliances and from external economic dependency. It wanted to become a leader of what would become to be known as the Third World, and to champion the cause of other colonial peoples – both in S.E. Asia and in Africa. It

became a founder member of the 'Non-Aligned-Movement', together with Egypt and Yugoslavia. To Nehru this meant both a practical policy of non-involvement in the Cold War, and a moral standpoint, which curiously permitted a pragmatic approach to issues, siding with major powers over specific issues if their actions were deemed worthy. To begin with Nehru courted China, in the belief that they could both share this new leadership in Asia and Africa; but the reality of China's uncompromising competitive hostility was revealed in the invasion of Tibet and the 1962 Himalayan War.

Economically India became autarkic – throwing up high tariff barriers against the rest of the world, and devising its own Five-Year Plans to promote massive heavy industrialisation – all reminiscent of the achievements of the Soviet Union. The combined effects of foreign policy neutrality, international moralising, and economic socialism and protectionism, became quite offensive to the USA. In 1956 the Chairman of Republican Policy Committee in Congress, Styles Bridges, observed:

'I lose patience with those nations which are not only neutralist in their military position, but insist on neutralism in their moral position. I know of no worse offender in this regard than Nehru, who proclaims himself the moralist of Asia. I know of no instance of Nehru having openly and sincerely taken the side of freedom and democracy. I know only of weasel words and idle pretension' (Cited in Singh, 1966:109).

India's moralising and hostility to the USA probably reached a peak over the Vietnam War. And India had many points on its side too. The USA had fought its own war of independence against the British, and had then withdrawn from any imperial defence system. It had indeed preached isolationism, had joined the First World War late, and after the shock of that had retreated back into isolationism until Pearl Harbour had compelled it to join in the Second World War. India, an ex-colony, simply preached its own version of isolationism, at a time when the USA, the new world hegemon, had become paranoid about the communist revolutionary threat.

India's non-aligned status did not prevent it receiving substantial aid inflows from the West. The USA was for decades the largest donor, and India one of its largest non-military aid recipients. Pakistan always got less aid in total terms, though much more in per capita terms and, later, much more indeed in military terms. In 1971 India signed a 20 year Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation with the USSR, and by 1980 the USSR was India's largest external economic partner as well as being militarily important. The move by the USSR into Afghanistan worried India, both because it felt the act was unjustified and its legitimacy suspect, but also perhaps because of fears over the Northwest Frontier. But Delhi did not publicly condemn Moscow; the relationship was too close for that. And it co-operated with the communist governments of Afghanistan, far preferring to see one such survive than a take-over by militant Islam.

India has seen its role within South Asia since Independence to be the regional

hegemonic power – in a sense to replace the strong centre that the British and the Moguls had represented. This means that she still sees the Northwest Frontier as much an Indian security problem as a Pakistani one. After the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, even though Mrs Gandhi was not publicly hostile to it, it was clear that Indian sensitivities had been upset. In the early 1980s India and Pakistan held dialogues to see if they could come to a common defence agreement on the issue, but in the end nothing transpired.

Independent India has intervened at some stage in most of the neighbouring states of S. Asia. In 1961 she launched an armed invasion of the Portuguese colony of Goa, and annexed the territory. Nehru had lost patience with the Portuguese over their retention of what was 'naturally' part of India. But there had been no plebiscite of the Goan population, who, after four centuries of Portuguese Catholicism, had a very distinctive culture of their own. The justification was slim indeed, and the act in contravention of international law. The USA objected to this treatment of its NATO ally Portugal. In 1971 India was instrumental in the birth of Bangladesh. In 1975 the Kingdom of Sikkim – whose exact status until then as a protectorate of India's may be disputed – was absorbed as a constituent state of India, officially after a full poll on the issue. This annexation has not been accepted by China. In 1987 the connection between the Tamil separatist war in Sri Lanka and political support in Tamil Nadu persuaded India to send its Indian Peace Keeping Force into Sri Lanka. This move resulted finally in military ignominy, and the death of Rajiv Gandhi. In 1988 India dropped parachutists on the Maldives to re-instate the overthrown government of President Gayoom. With respect to Nepal, India has been prepared to use trade embargoes to pressure Nepalese policy.

The years of turmoil have provoked India into becoming a major arms producer of considerable sophistication. Having feared Chinese nuclear weapons, she has also developed her own nuclear programme. Its exact status is no longer a close secret. Her explosion in 1974 of an atomic bomb underground in the Rajasthan desert near Pakistan's border, 'for peaceful purposes', left no-one in doubt of her technical mastery. But it did not provoke quite the same hostile reaction from the international community that the series of tests in 1998 caused. The first test was one-off, and at that time India did not possess an appropriate delivery system. Nevertheless, India did ignore pressure to sign the non-proliferation pact, preferring instead to keep all options open. In India's view, universal nuclear disarmament is the only viable option. The 1998 tests caused a major uproar; they were an early act of the incoming Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party. This time Pakistan responded, and this time it seems that both sides have delivery systems capable of hitting each other's cities. Finally, having felt the power of US naval deployment in the Bay of Bengal in 1971, India is committed to developing a 'blue water' navy, including aircraft carriers and nuclear-powered submarines. This means a navy capable of strategic action within the Indian Ocean and not just coastal defence. There is some logic to this, in that many important cities and installations, including most of her atomic power stations, are within range of submarine-launched missiles, not necessarily intercontinental missiles like Polaris, but small cruise missiles

launched from a submerged or surfaced submarine. These are now within Pakistan's capability. In other words, India now recognises that the defence of the seas is as important as the defence of the land borders. The heir to the Moguls and the British appreciates India's position as a unique geopolitical region, which must face both the potential of land power and sea power.

Since the collapse of Soviet power and the subsequent economic problems of the new Russia, India, though still maintaining very cordial relations with Moscow, has overtly courted closer ties with the USA. The overtures have been reciprocated, but short-term American interests in Afghanistan have fortuitously pushed Pakistan back into America's favour. India is anxious to be one of the big players on the international scene, and would like a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, just like China.

The involvement of outside powers in South Asian affairs has grown considerably in the last four decades, primarily because of the split within South Asia between India and Pakistan. It forced the USA, for example, to choose – the famous 'tilt' of 1971. If India and Pakistan had maintained friendly relations and a joint security pact, then perhaps they would have had that far greater autonomy that Nehru always had hoped for, and smaller defence budgets. Belatedly, there are moves afoot to bring them closer together. Realisation of the common interest is growing and has found expression in the founding of SAARC, the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation.

13.2.9 SAARC (The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation)

A favourite idea of President Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh, SAARC was inaugurated at a meeting in Dhaka Bangladesh in December 1985. Its membership includes India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Such an Association had been mooted for some time, and Prime Minister Callaghan of the UK and President Carter of the USA had at an earlier date offered financial help if such a movement got going. But India was suspicious, that the result of such a group would be a forum in which the smaller countries ganged up on the one undisputed regional power. The framework in which it has finally been established is therefore restrictive. The Standing Committee and the annual summit are thus far to consider only general issues of concern to all; no bi-lateral issues can be put on the agenda. These are still for individual countries to resolve, and not to be submitted to any regional pressure or arbitration.

Members of SAARC like to see a model of their future in ASEAN, the successful grouping of Southeast Asian states that is edging towards a common-market status. The late President Zia of Pakistan stated publicly that the success of ASEAN had stemmed from the fact that the one 'giant', Indonesia, had kept a low profile. His implication was that India should do the same to make SAARC successful. So far, this has run counter to the common perception of India's past actions (the invasion of Goa, the absorption of Sikkim) and recent actions, in particular its involvement in Sri Lanka, its continued military and naval build-up.

and its former support for pro-Soviet Afghanistan, which India would have liked to see admitted to SAARC. But, at a lower level, there are signs of slow progress. Co-operation is mounting in diverse fields such as agriculture, meteorology, sports, terrorism, drugs, and tourism, and there are schemes to provide for linkages and exchanges between industrialists and universities. A number of senior businessmen now have open visas to all SAARC countries. All the member governments have signed up to the aim of achieving a free-trade area by 2015, though experience suggests there may be a lot of foot dragging when it comes to decisive action. In the first stages this may require India to reduce its tariffs before the other states do, for fear that, otherwise, Indian industry would swamp theirs before adjustment could occur. Table 13.1 shows the extent to which trade between the two biggest economies of South Asia has almost ceased.

Outside observers wonder whether SAARC will survive and flourish. It is a low-cost operation – with a budget of \$1 million a year. The SAARC countries do not have a common external threat perception; Pakistan does not see China as a threat, India does. Pakistan clearly sees Russia as a threat; India has not said so in public, though it remonstrated with the Soviets in private over the Afghan invasion. They also have divergent political regimes internally: India's mostly secular democracy contrasting until the 1990s with the often theocratic-military dictatorships of Pakistan and Bangladesh for example. Their economies are also different, and in most cases with small fragile industrial sectors. The same kind of fear of Brazilian domination in LAFTA is echoed in the possible industrial and economic domination of India in SAARC, were the countries to open their markets to each other too soon and too

Table 13.1 Trading Pattern of India and Pakistan 1984-85

	Exports to	Imports from
India Indian Rupees (million)		
UK	6701	10188
USA	17685	16666
USSR	16546	18034
Pakistan	129	157
Bangladesh	932	445
Iran	1340	4849
Pakistan Pakistani Rupees (million)		
UK	2538	5227
USA	3965	11066
USSR	951	438
India	498	261
Bangladesh	1132	869
Iran	695	1061

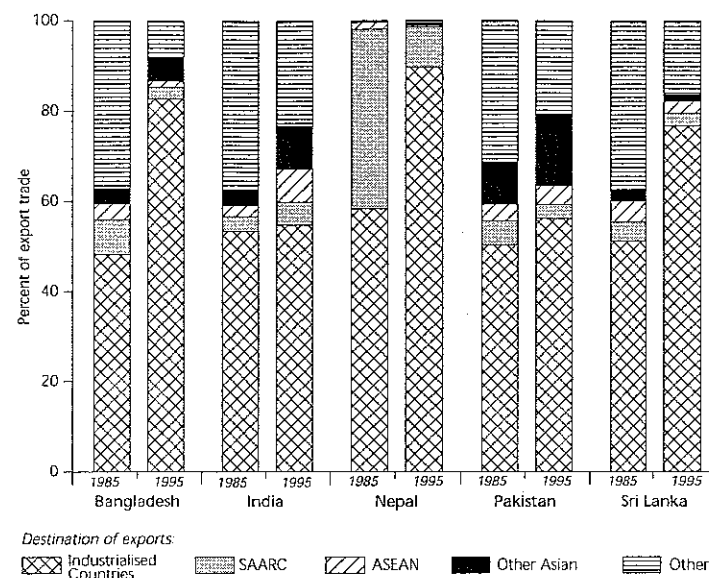


Figure 13.4a Exports from SAARC Countries: Percentage of Export Trade of Originating Country by Destination

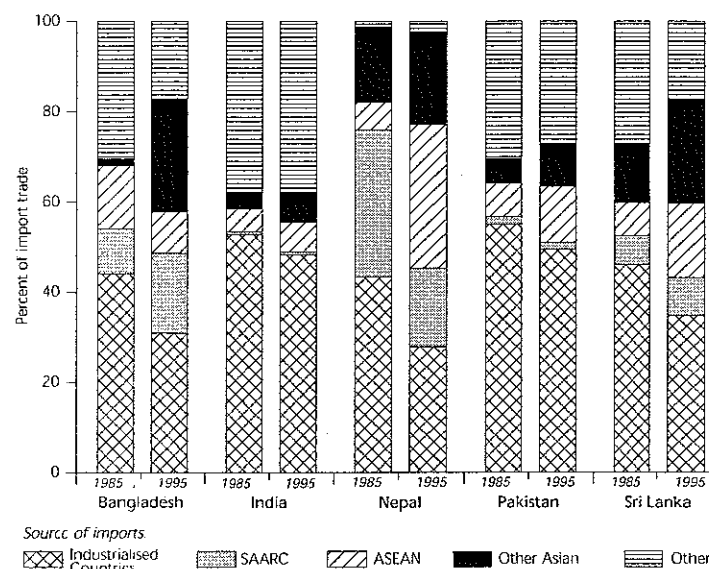


Figure 13.4b Imports into SAARC Countries: Percentage of Import Trade of Recipient Country by Source

Source: based on Waqif (1997)

fast Currently, the trade between SAARC nations is fairly trivial in most cases, and always trivial for India. It is least trivial for Nepal, a country which is apprehensive about Indian power. Why intra-regional trade should be so small can be explained in part historically, by India's and Pakistan's adoption of autarchic development policies, and their trade embargoes. But that is not the whole picture. The classical picture of trade between developing countries, which are suppliers of raw materials, and the developed countries, which supply industrial goods, can explain another part of the trade patterns of the smaller states of South Asia. As a further clue, in the last few decades trade has grown faster between the developed industrial countries than within any other group. This seems curious to begin with, in that they could be thought to have similar and not complementary economies. However, the growth of international corporations with distributed manufacturing, and the growth of consumer demand in aggregate and for consumer diversity of choice within product categories, suggests powerful reasons why this should occur. The conclusion to this is that if there were complete free trade, both within SAARC and with the rest of the world, then intra-regional trade would grow as a consequence of development, rather than be the cause of development. ASEAN's experience of free trade is that it has not increased trade between members states much. Rather, one external power, Japan, has been increasingly involved in investment with each member state.

But the states do have in common the heritage of greater India, and cultural and linguistic continuities across their borders. And the smaller states have many problems which inevitably involve India, whether it be Sri Lanka's Tamil problem, or water in Bangladesh. To that extent any forum for discussion is bound to have its uses; and the fact that the leaders can expect to meet annually and have informal discussions off the record hopefully will help reduce regional misunderstandings.

13.3 The Politics of Triangles

Although in the foregoing each country has had its relationships looked at somewhat independently of each other, it is clear that these relationships form an interconnected web. Within that web some relationships emerge that some protagonists do not really want, and some persist that one or other party would like to change but cannot. For example, during the Zulfikar Ali Bhutto years, Pakistan would have liked a more anti-US policy but did not manage to get very far with it. Both the USA and India would often have liked a closer relationship with each other. Russia at times would have liked a closer relationship with Pakistan. In this section I look at a way of conceptualising the web of relationships that offers some insight into how they are formed and why they persist. I do not claim that this analysis, which is simplistic in some senses, explains everything, nor that it can predict everything.

The inspiration for this analysis derives from Bhaneja (1973) *The Politics of Triangles*. We start with the simplest case of one triangle. Suppose Pakistan, the USA and India form a triangle, and that each of the edges is either positive or negative. If they are positive it means the two countries basically have a common point of view

and co-operate. If negative, it means they have different interests, do not co-operate, and in some sense compete. There are four basic arrangements of negative and positive values on three sides. These are + + +, + + -, + - -, and - - -. If these plusses and minuses are added up, then overall the value of these four possible sets of values becomes +, -, +, -. The two which come out positive are called stable patterns, and the two which come out negative are called unstable. To see why, we can plot them and look at the implications (Figure 13.5). In the first case, Pakistan, India and the USA all like each other, all co-operate, so the pattern is stable. Counting the number of positive sides gives an index of Harmony, in this case $H = 3$. In the second case Pakistan and India dislike each other intensely. The USA tries to like both, but at some stage India may turn to the USA and say 'You are helping my enemy, you are either against my enemy, or I will reject your friendship.' Pakistan will do the same. In essence, the Americans are forced to choose. A likely outcome is therefore for the USA and India to fall out. Thus a triangle of Harmony 2 which is unstable becomes a triangle of Harmony 1 which is stable. This is also of course the third state. It is also possible for the unstable triangle of Harmony 2 to reach the stable form of Harmony 3, if the two warring factions can be persuaded to bury the hatchet.

The last state is the unstable state of three negatives. History is riddled with examples of this, and the outcome: Churchill forming a pact with the 'Devil himself' – Stalin – to defeat Hitler, and more recently the Croats and the Bosnians who had fought each other nevertheless formed an alliance against the greater common

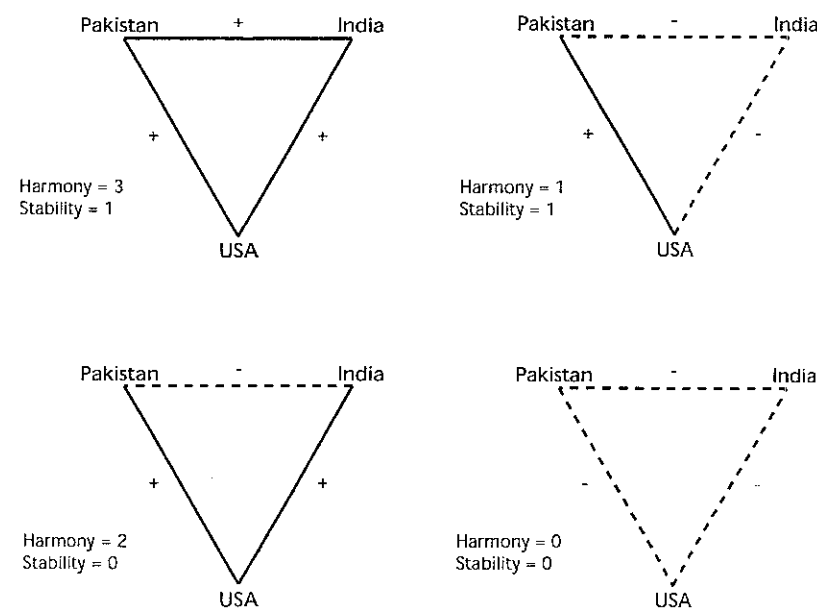


Figure 13.5 Triangular Relationships

enemy, the Serbs, in former Yugoslavia. Although for much of the time international relations are ambivalent, crisis tends to clarify them. In the triangle USA, Argentina, UK during the Falklands crisis, in the end the USA decided to supply advanced sidewinder missiles to the UK, not Argentina. In his reaction to the attacks of al-Qaida in 2001, President Bush of the USA declaimed, "you are either with us or against us".

Although the argument starts with simple binary (positive or negative) values on the networks, it is conceptually easy to develop more sophisticated and realistic models with both positive and negative values on multiples of the same links. For example, we could draw a positive link between Pakistan and India at the level of common cultures, another at the level of cognate languages, while having a negative link for the governmental level. Neither is there anything to stop one assigning different significance to different edges: the USA-Russia edge dominated all other edges in the thinking of the United States until very recently, and could do so again in a neo-Mackinder future.

This basic idea is first generalised to the case of six states which form a small network of relationships. The six states are Afghanistan, Russia (or, its former guise the Soviet Union), China, India, the USA, and Pakistan. These six states can be simply drawn as a hexagon, in which it is possible to draw a line between all pairs of countries. (Figure 13.6) The countries are called nodes, and the relationships edges. There are then $6 \times 5 / 2 = 15$ possible such edges. Many subsets of three edges also make triangles – and in this six sided figure the 15 edges define $(6 \times 5 \times 4) / (3 \times 2 \times 1) = 20$ possible triangles. So instead of dealing with Stability and Harmony in one triangle, we now have to consider Stability and Harmony for 20 triangles and 15 edges. An interactive computer programme is used to explore the relationships in this network.

I sketch the situation at the end of the 1970s just before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Bigger actors and their relationships can form one key, but so also can particular local associations. In this case I have taken the USA-USSR hostility to be the key to the post-Second World War world, and I have taken Indian-Pakistani hostility to be a regional key.

The USA would like to have friendly relations with both India and Pakistan, but that produces an unstable triangle. The USA will have to choose while local hostility between India and Pakistan remains. The USSR initially is not well disposed towards India, a bourgeois state, but certainly does not like the theocratic state of Pakistan. In the USA-USSR-Pakistan-India complex the warming of US-Pakistani and USSR-India ties will be mutually reinforcing, and productive of a stable pattern of alliances. The USSR-India ties will reinforce China's rivalry with India, now seen from Beijing as a partially client state of the USSR (a fate China struggled to avoid). With the invasion of Afghanistan and the installation of a government sympathetic to the USSR, the triangles involving India, Pakistan and Afghanistan must involve positive relations between Delhi and Kabul, even if there are misgivings in Delhi. In the days when US-Chinese relationships were hostile, the triangle USA-India-China was unstable: but not when there is a rapprochement between the USA and China.

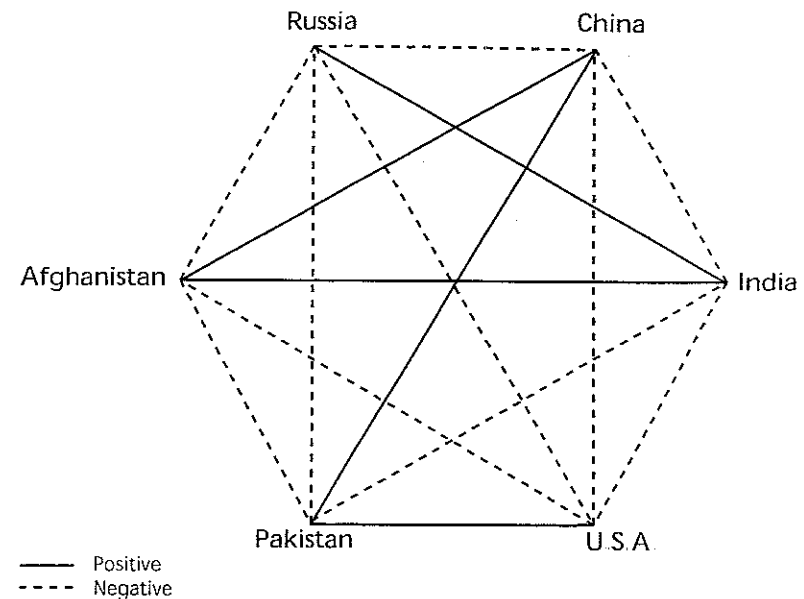


Figure 13.6 Triangular Relationships: South Asia and External Powers

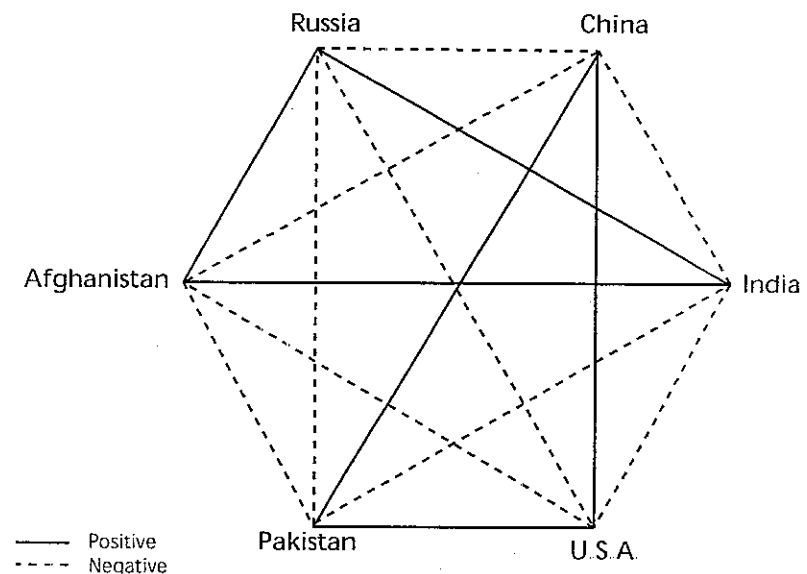


Figure 13.7 Triangular Relationships: South Asia and External Powers: New Alliances

The last line drawn is between Afghanistan, before the Russian invasion, and China, and is assumed to be positive, as part of Chinese containment of Russia.

This pattern has low ranking Harmony (5 edges positive out of 15) and moderate Stability (12 triangles out of 20). There are therefore 8 triangles remaining which are unstable, which will have forces pushing them to find a more stable state. In trying to solve this problem any edge could be changed, but it is assumed that at any one moment of time, only one edge is changed – i.e. simultaneous adjustment is avoided. Which edge should be changed? Any pair of countries could be involved in changing any edge – and that realistically is the view we ought to take, from the actors' level, within the simulation itself. If we select from the outside, it is a bit as though we are playing at being World System-Controller. The criterion used here is a high-level one, and it is that the edge which carries the most instability is the one that is changed. The edge which carries the most instability is defined as the edge which belongs to the greatest number of unstable triangles. It is not hard to think of such edges in international politics; for example, the discord between Israel and the PLO bringing every kind of instability to relations between the West and Arab oil states, and within the Western Alliance itself. In the case of the pattern here, there is more than one edge with the same instability value. In this case the computer arbitrarily selects the first of such edges it has calculated. Here, this is the Afghan-Russia edge, which is currently negative. One way of changing this line is to install in Kabul a government which is friendly to the USSR, and to achieve this by invasion if necessary. This mimics the Soviet invasion of 1979, to secure a left-wing government. The edge is now made positive, and the change has immediate repercussions. Overall system Stability goes up to 14, and Harmony goes up to 6, but major instability remains. (The concept of civil war can fit within the model by splitting a single node into two – obviously immediately complicating the network of relationships and instabilities.)

The computer program next suggests that the maximum instability is caused by the fact that China currently has positive relationships with Afghanistan, and that greater stability could be achieved by turning this *negative* – which would concur with China's dislike of the Russian (Soviet) action. The next suggested change is to make China and the USA friends. The final result of these two changes is universal Stability 20/20 – but Harmony stays at the fairly dismal level 6/15. We have achieved stability, but in an inharmonious world. (The full deductive analysis of evolutionary possibilities in the network, covered in Appendix A, suggests that the 'natural' state of such a world is to achieve maximum stability with harmony either 6/15 or 7/15. The state {Stability = 20/20 and Harmony = 15/15} is possible, but so improbable and so hard to achieve that we might as well call it nigh impossible.) The stability is achieved by the fact that there are two co-operating alliances (Afghanistan+India+Russia versus China+Pakistan+USA) competing against each other – i.e. competition at the individual state level has been transformed into competition at a higher hierarchical level. The point about the pattern that has been achieved is that it is very difficult to change any one part of it without changing other parts. The pressure of knock-on effects is immediate: or, to put it another way, the knock on effects are so difficult to achieve that the system will push back to its original stable form.

The picture overall is one of great stability, and one which cannot be changed without ramifications on other axes. It is for this reason that changes of regime do not necessarily make such radical differences. So long as Bhutto remained anti-Indian and pro-Chinese, Pakistan's pro-American stance is difficult to change. It also has a certain graphic dramatic appeal, in that the crossing point between two antipathetic axes – China+Pakistan+USA vs USSR+Afghanistan+India – is in the centre of the world, the land of mythical Mt Meru, somewhere in the Hindu Kush, Pamir, Karakoram mountains. If the regime in Kabul changes to a pro-Pakistani one, then Kabul's relationships with Delhi and Moscow will go negative, and an alternative all-positive triangle emerges, Washington-Islamabad-Kabul.

The analysis also says much about the difficulties of the Himalayan States and Bangladesh (not shown). For example, Nepal might like to strike a balanced friendship with both Delhi and Beijing, but it cannot do so too strongly, since then an unstable triangle will emerge. Certainly India does not want a close ally of China south of the Himalayas. Bangladesh finds it difficult to have close ties with both India and Pakistan, and simultaneously with India and China. If the China-Bangladesh-Pakistan triangle ever got very strong, India would feel frozen out and threatened in Bengal.

An extension to the Gulf States during the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-1988 shows some (not all) of the other triangles produced. Pakistan's continued friendship with fundamentalist Iran produces some unstable triangles: Pakistan-Iran-USA and Pakistan-Saudi Arabia-Iran: in both of these there is instability between one negative and two positive relationships. The war also produced a tenuous unstable relationship Iraq-USA-USSR. If anything was certain, it was that the end of the Iran-Iraq war would not permit that triangle to persist in quite the same way. The collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the Gulf War of 1990 have led to a new pattern.

The USA and Russia are achieving some better accommodation. So too are China and Russia. If (and I have to emphasise the condition) the USA and Russia ever came really close, and if Indian-Pakistani hostility remains, then the pressure

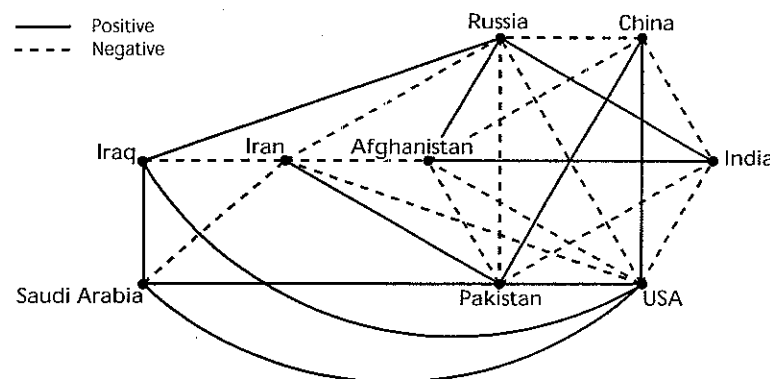


Figure 13.8 Triangular Relationships: South Asia and the Middle East, c. 1986

Figure 12 9a:
Stability = 4/4; Harmony = 2/6

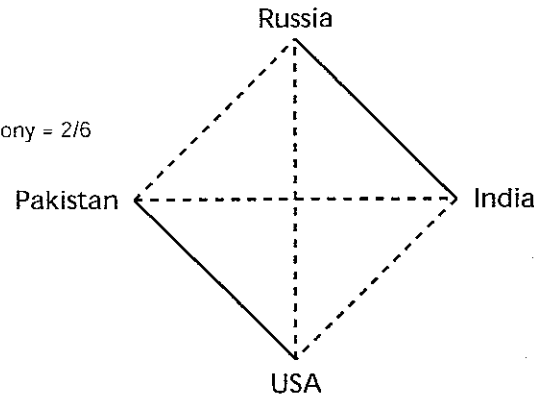


Figure 12 9b:
Stability = 2/4; Harmony = 3/6

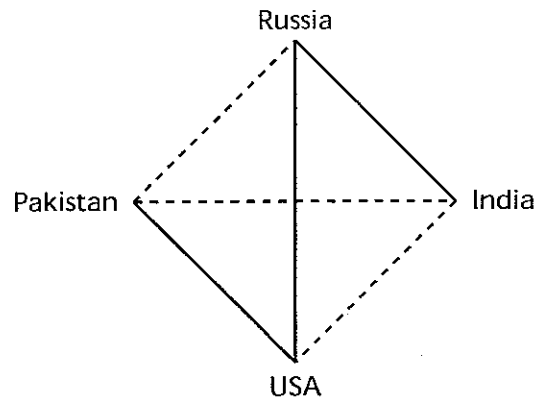
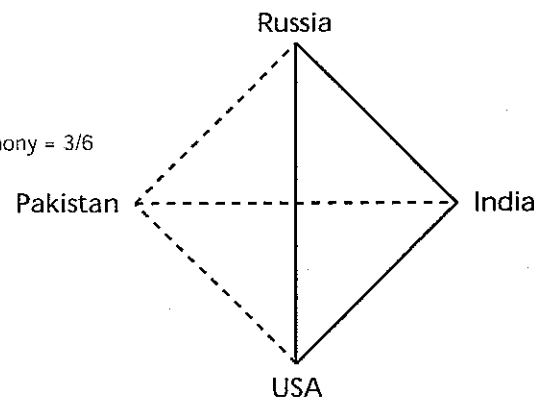


Figure 12 9c:
Stability = 4/4; Harmony = 3/6



— Positive
--- Negative

Figure 13.9a, b, c New Alliances in South Asia

is on the USA and Russia both to choose the same ally in South Asia. Figure 13 9 shows the sequence of events, for the four countries which have six edges of pairwise relationships making four triangles. At the start the pattern for the four countries is stable – there are two alliances which are in opposing camps – stability = 4/4, but harmony is only 2/6. If Russia and the USA become close, then 13 9b shows the pattern, in which stability has been reduced to 2/4, although harmony has increased to 3/6. If it is held as essential that the USA and Russia keep their good relationship, then the only stable solution to this problem is for both to choose the same ally. India is the more likely candidate, because of its size, potential market, and regional dominance. Figure 13.9c shows this solution, in which stability is again 4/4 and harmony remains at 3/6. Pakistan could then be left in the cold, even more reliant than now on Middle East backers. The war against the Taliban of Afghanistan has again pushed the USA into working with Pakistan, but the triangle USA-India-Pakistan is unstable. Unless the issue of Kashmir is solved, at some stage the USA will again have to choose between India and Pakistan, as it did early in the Cold War of the last century. More is said about general conclusions from this kind of modelling in the Appendix. One that warrants repeating here is that; even if some countries may wish to be in the same bloc – say the USA and Russia – an immutable hostile relationship elsewhere – say between Pakistan and India – may push them into opposing blocs.

13.4 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has looked at South Asia in its international context at some different moments in time, and from a variety of perspectives. The arguments which these perspectives support are both deductive and inductive. The major deductive viewpoint is that provided by Mackinder and Cohen, that South Asia is an independent geopolitical region, strategically placed as one of the rim-land regions flanking the central Eurasian heartland. The actual calculation of stability and harmony in the web of triangular relationships and the prediction of change is deductive, but the starting relationships in the webs are modelled empirically however crude the binary relationships may appear.

The four most significant countries which this account has focused upon are the USA, Russia, China and India. In terms of the ability to project power, the USA has had greater capacity than the USSR/Russia, and China greater than India. The reason for the latter differential can be found at least in part in the fact that China has inherited, by coercion if necessary, the whole of its own geo-political region (with the exception of off-shore Taiwan/Formosa, arguably not part of the mainland region anyway), whereas India has not inherited the whole of its equivalent region, because it was made to accept the principle of self-determination in 1947. The antagonism of the two successor states in South Asia has a bitterness about it which can only spring from fraternal civil war, the threat of which precipitated the division, and the reality of which accompanied its birth. Kashmir has become the symbol of

all that the two nations stand for, and the resolution of the conflict one way or the other would seem to represent a judgement of history – between the Indian claim that the creation of Pakistan was essentially unnecessary, and the Pakistani claim that it was the only way of protecting the rights of the Muslim minority. The judgement of history will probably be made from the victor's viewpoint, hence either side will go to any lengths to protect its claim. Both will turn for support to outside powers, the weaker of the two having aligned itself with the greater super-power and with the greater Asian regional power.

With the demarcation of new state borders, the space-economy and the mentality of the citizens begin to adjust to the new lines. Over the course of history there have been periods when much of what is now Pakistan was separate from the powers of the Ganges valley, and more closely related to Afghanistan and perhaps Persia. These periods add up to a small proportion of historical time, but they do occur. Perhaps such a period is being or is about to be repeated. However, the gains to be made from settling the quarrel between India and Pakistan are great, and both sides know this. At least the dialogue can continue, inside SAARC, inside the Commonwealth (which Pakistan left but rejoined – although as of 1999 its membership has been suspended after the military coup of Pervez Musharraf) and with direct bilateral meetings. But the states are taking on their new characteristics – and perhaps what was not so true in 1947 is becoming truer now – a more Hindu and less secular India, and a more Islamic and less secular Pakistan. It is a conclusion which, sadly, fits with Huntington's (1997) *Clash of Civilisations*, in which he sees civilisation/ cultural differences as the underpinning of the new world order.

PART IV CONCLUSIONS

States and Regions in South Asia

14.1 Introduction: Nature Proposes

The aphorism, 'nature proposes, man disposes' is applicable to South Asia. Nature – the result in this case of the interplay between plate tectonics and meteorology – has proposed a geo-political region. Within that region, the size of the population, the undogmatic qualities of its ancient theologies, and the time elapsed between external human shocks, has resulted in a unique and evolving continuity of culture despite the detailed complexity of society and regional variation. The details and variation are important, but to use a ceramic analogy, they form the finely patterned cracks in the glaze of an old, cracked, plate – yet the plate exists.

Thus, until the advent of the million-plus cities, India can best be described as divided into numerous 'pays', rather like those described and defined in France by Vidal De La Blache. There are numerous ways in which such 'pays' can be identified. Schwartzberg (1985) uses variations in local language and local perception to demarcate the folk regions of northwest India for example. A regional geography such as that by R L Singh (1971) (India only) or O H K Spate and A. Learmonth (1967) (India, Pakistan and Ceylon), provides descriptions of the economy and to some extent the society for some 240 or so such local territories, often with changes in the physical resource base marking the boundaries. There is a close correlation between ecosystem and 'pays'. There is however one important distinction between the 'pays' of De La Blache, and the 'pays' we note here.

The 'pays' of De La Blache existed within a well-defined and centrist state, whose laws were made centrally and recognised universally. In India there was no such centrist tradition – partly for reasons of scale. Given the early technologies there were plenty of costs but little economic advantage in the integration of large areas of India. More significantly it was because such functions as maintaining the social order were organised within caste, each having a tribunal (panchayat) for its own members. Inter-caste matters would be settled by the dominant caste of any one area, often by invoking the panchayat of lesser castes to take action against its members where necessary. (In contemporary India, some observers suggest that the lack of secessionist movements in states such as Bihar is a result of the caste tensions within the state, which replicate similar tensions elsewhere in other states, and which prevent the emergence of a unified 'state' view.) In such a society the concept of King or Monarch had a very specific connotation. The Raja, usually a Kshatriya and ritually inferior to the Brahmins, might be rich, but his wealth had, beside his own gratification, two major functions (Bayly, 1983). One was for pomp and ceremony which was for public consumption, the other was that of a General, or, Minister of Defence. In other words, the interpretation of customary law was the

preserve of the Brahmins, his was the defence or aggrandisement of the territory. The geopolitical history of South Asia may, in many ways, then be seen as the fluctuating ways in which such monarchs have assembled the pays into larger units.

Historically, it seems that after the periods of building and integration, dissolution has followed. Thus at any one time empirical analysis might see the units as defined either by integration of smaller units, or as the remnants of disintegration of larger ones. If understanding the patterns is approached as an exercise in deductive analysis, there are the same two ways in which we may approach such a regionalisation. But the two differ in what they suggest about the boundaries that may emerge. If we build up bigger units by aggregating the smaller ones the boundaries of the bigger units should reflect some of the boundaries of the constituent parts. If we divide the whole, to get progressively smaller units, in this case if the territory divides 'naturally' along the boundaries of the pays, then again the boundaries of the units will be made out of some pays boundaries. But if for whatever reason the division of territory ignores such lines, then new boundaries may be etched in the landscape, unrelated to the cleavages of the pays. In Africa the colonial powers were notorious for ignoring local ecology and culture in the construction of boundaries. The arbitrary divides using latitude and longitude in North America are also well known.

Schwartzberg (1992) concludes his Historical Atlas of South Asia with an analysis of the evolution of regional power configurations in the Indian sub-continent, and a geopolitical synopsis, using a variation of the top-down analysis. He starts his analysis by dividing South Asia into five regions (Figure 14.1) – of a scale and size which are reminiscent of John Bright's 19th Century imagination of India after British withdrawal. These units conform to 'natural' and repeated boundaries. By implication they are large assemblages of 'pays' which are frequently attained throughout history. He then defines a pan-Indian power as one which incorporates significant portions of at least four of these five regions, and a supra-regional power, as one which incorporates significant portions of at least two. By these definitions it follows that a pan-Indian regional power cannot easily coexist with supra-regional powers, but only with one regional power, and that at most only two supra-regional powers can coexist.

His analysis produces a diagram (Figure 14.2) which shows how pan-Indian integration has fluctuated in time – and he discusses the circumstances which would have favoured such periods. He further produces a map (Figure 14.3) of the core areas of the pan-Indian States, the vast majority of which are within the Ganges Valley. The three exceptions are: the upper Indus Valley which was important in the early Graeco-Buddhist cultures, and which is now the capital area of Pakistan; Malwa, the area around Indore and Bhopal; and the Mahratta area around Pune. Although the latter might, in some sense be said to be partly 'southern' (in this case meaning south of the Satpura range and the Narmada river) in language and culture it is still 'northern'. Schwartzberg's conclusion is that the resources of the north are necessary to sustain the military forces which have integrated the rest of South Asia, and that the north will contain the core areas.

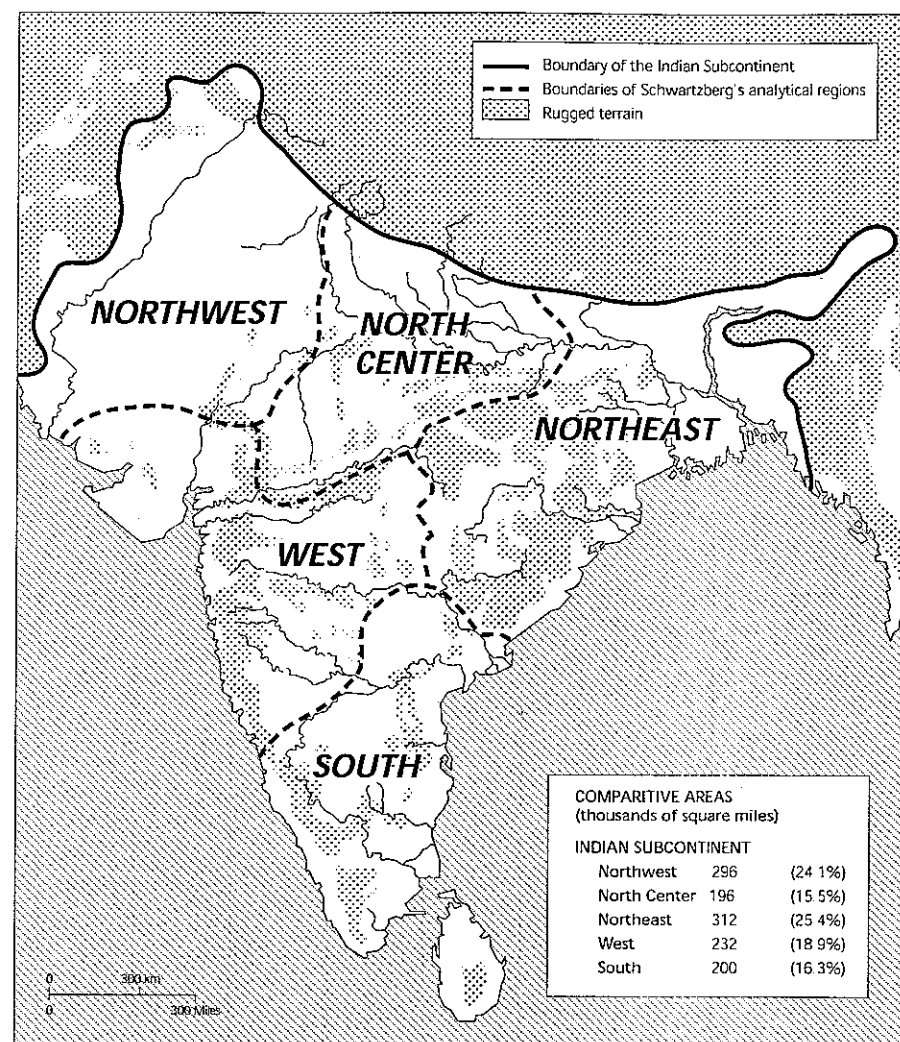


Figure 14.1 Basic Regions in South Asia

Source: Schwartzberg (1992)

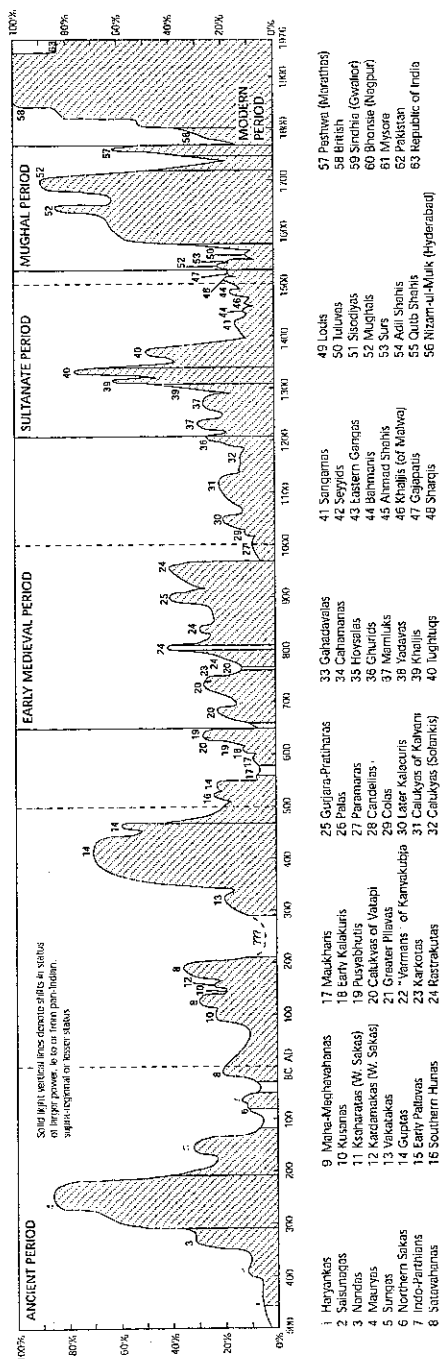


Figure 14.2 Pan-Indian Power over Time
Source: Schwartzberg (1992)

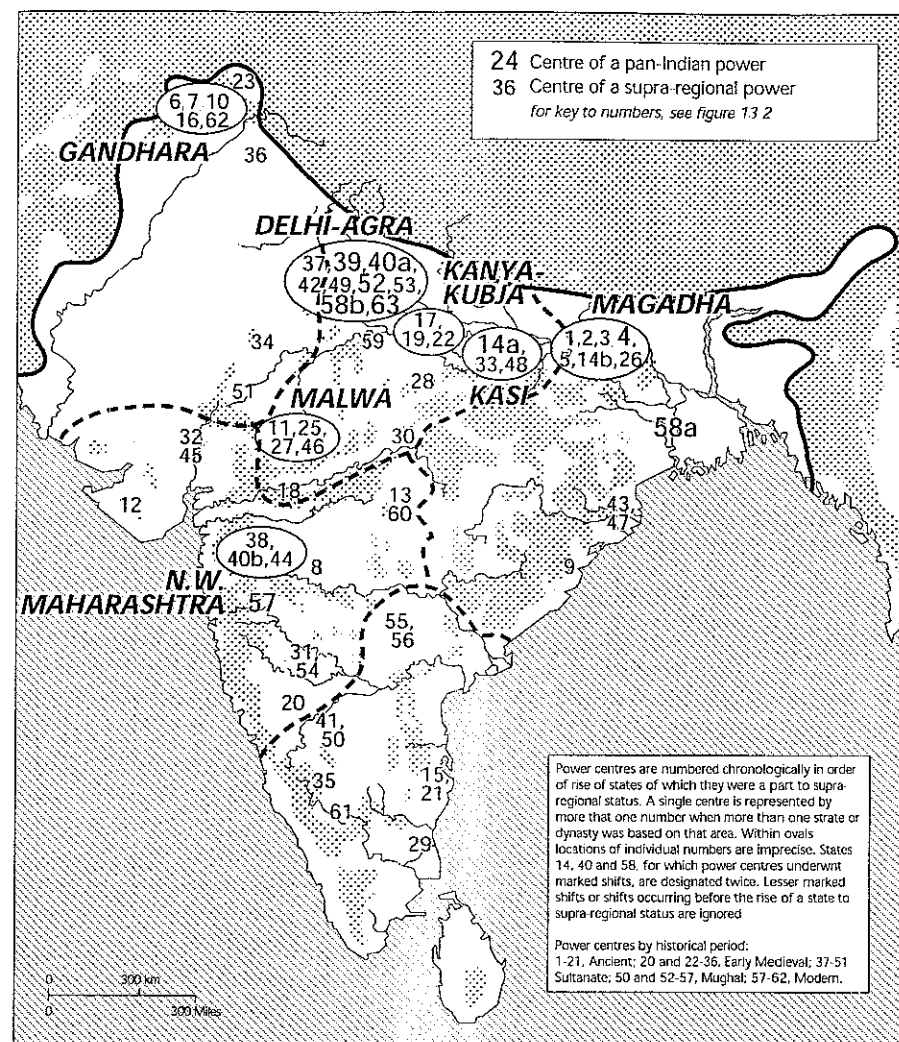


Figure 14.3 Core Areas in South Asia
Source: Schwartzberg (1992)

Malik provides a similar kind of diagram, Figure 14.4. He reduces the two dimensional map of India's regions to a single dimension, so time may be added as the second axis. Note that, instead of Schwartzberg's five regions, Malik proposes ten. The diagram shows how the different phases of imperial integration have come and gone – but he does not define nor establish in the diagram an equivalent of Schwartzberg's Supra-regional or Regional powers. The coexistence of such states with an empire is not an issue for him. His diagram does however stress the importance of the same core areas that Schwartzberg derived, and also shows how the Deccan and far south is hardly ever incorporated in these empires – not until the final achievement of hegemony by the British in the early 19th Century. If a simple probabilistic reading of history were ever to establish anything, it is that such a diagram would cause one to wonder whether or not the south might again go its own way. Seemingly, from this evidence, this is a much more likely scenario than the partition of Bengal or Punjab.

What this section has established is that although many patterns of division or integration in South Asia are possible, nature has established the most likely core areas, and that integration into much larger units – possibly the whole subcontinent – is, with the passage of time, increasingly likely.

14.2 Humankind Disposes

The implicit model of the 'pays' of South Asia being integrated into larger states works quite well not only for the ancient and mediaeval periods, but also for the Islamic periods of the Sultanate and the Mogul Empire, even despite the fact that Islam introduced an immiscible dogmatic theology into the subcontinent. Islamic society in India was and is recognisably South Asian, and gave birth to its own much-valued South Asian language, Urdu. In India we have already noted the complexity of social groups that Hinduism spawned. When some of these groups were converted to Islam, they did not abandon their origins overnight, no more than someone today by proclaiming himself a Christian could therefore expect to change his job tomorrow. Islam may prescribe the equality of man, but it does not command that people marry at random. Within Islam-i-Hind, therefore, in significant ways caste persists, defined not so much by pollution rules, as family marriage rules. In Pakistan the network of families, bound within a marriage group known as a *biradri*, is fundamental to all social and political life. Further, the acceptance of Islam and the recitation of the Koran in Arabic does not deprive a man of his native tongue – so that a Bengali Muslim is as a rule first and foremost a Bengali, yet also a Muslim. So, within Islam as within Hinduism, local regional cultures persisted. Usually the same regional culture pervaded both religions in one place. The major difference between the two major religions was, and is, that for Muslims the common and exact reference point of a dogmatic revealed and egalitarian theology could be established with Muslims from different areas, and indeed internationally, whereas for Hindus such common references were (and still are in many ways) much harder to establish and were always confounded by caste

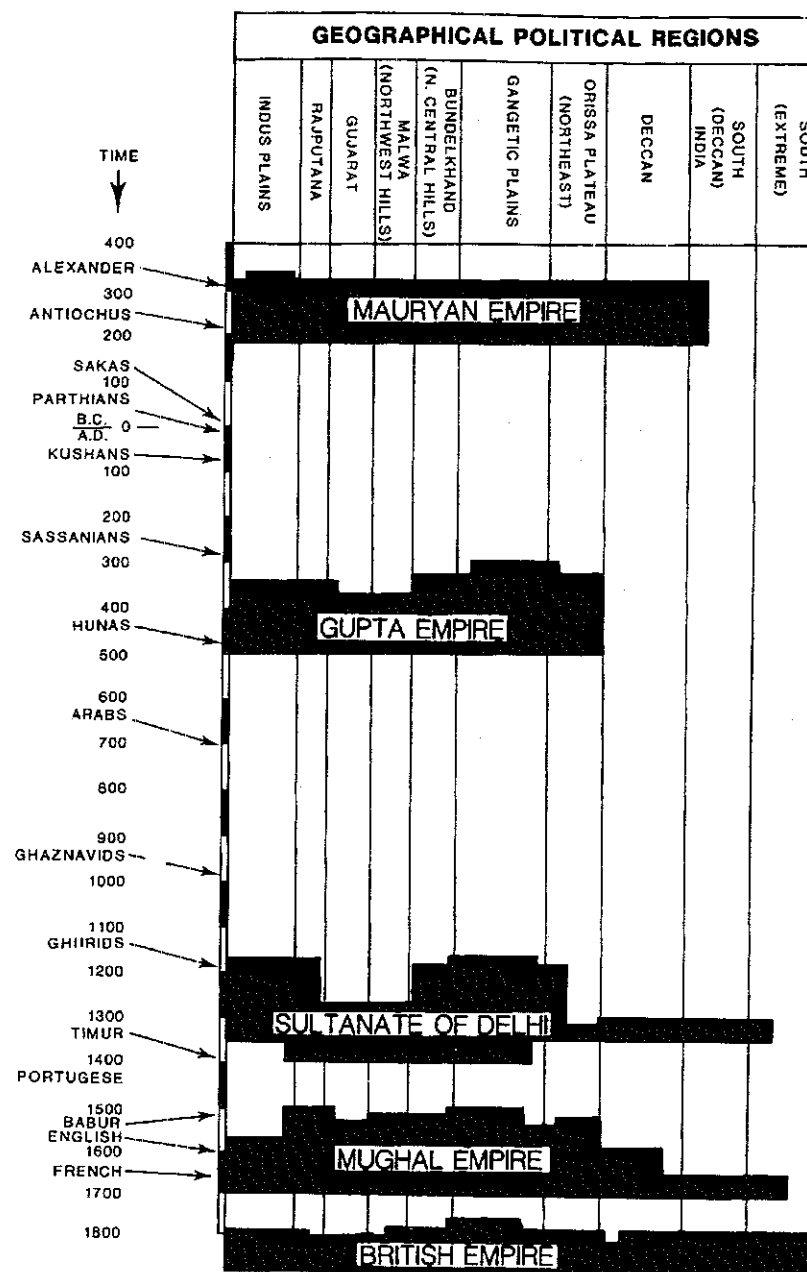


Figure 14.4 Pan-Indian Power over Time

Source: Malik (1968)

In sum, though religion and culture may overlap, they cannot be seen as the same thing and these different facets of their world view may be drawn out of people, or repressed, augmented or diluted, according to circumstances. These circumstances fluctuated, sometimes with a dogmatist in authority, sometimes with a more accommodating ruler. This was the nature of the fluid mental landscape in which the British merchants and imperialists became immersed, as a truly radical new kind of 'circumstance'. They may have wished for no more than power, law and order, and trade, but the impact of their new infrastructure and the turning inside out of the economy, and above all the gradual osmosis of their native democratic ideals and institutions, meant that the relationship between religion and culture in individual world-views would be changed and would be a nerve that could be tweaked by all manner of agents with all manner of intentions. Before the British, to a large extent emperors and nature usually disposed together. By the time they left, it was much more the masses that disposed; in the last months leading, as much as following, the politicians.

The distinction between the élites and the masses is useful in elaborating all three of the forces of integration. An élite may have identitive bonds in common, although the subject peoples do not. These bonds can then form the cement of integration and, so long as the masses are divided, they cannot combine to eject the élite. In the case of utilitarian bonds, these may be perceived more easily by the élite than by the masses. In the case of the use of coercive force to achieve integration, this almost by definition – but not quite completely – has to be controlled by an élite. This is because the use of force by the masses against other masses is more likely to lead to anarchy, genocide, and disintegration than to integration.

The identitive bonds are those mutually recognised by a people as the symbols of their community. They are usually associated with language and religion, but they may also be associated with territory. Where they are strong, utilitarian integration can also follow if the technology permits. Utilitarian bonds are those of economic self-interest. The British now know that they are bound economically to Europe and that to break away would be injurious, no matter if they do not 'feel' European. Coercion is expensive, and its fundamental premise is the threat of destruction. So after the costs of an invasion, which may instantaneously be met by plunder, a period of accommodation and reconstruction has to occur.

The British integration of South Asia relied on all aspects of the three forces we have mentioned, but not equally at élite and mass levels. They used superior technology as the basis of coercion where necessary. They relied on the identitive bonds of the British as 'British' to cement the rulers of Empire, and they were forbidden to become landed gentry. The civil service was early on Europeanised at the highest levels, and English was instituted as the language of Government, supplanting Persian. But the new rulers came from a country which had a rudimentary parliamentary democracy. At some stage they would have to confront questions about the legitimacy of their rule, and the exclusive proprietorship by their group of that right. Although, for the majority of the rural masses they did nothing, they nevertheless fostered utilitarian integration by the development of the railways, and

by the development in many areas of major irrigation schemes. They established large new and cosmopolitan cities, and also founded new universities in which a new middle-class intelligentsia studied in English and incidentally discovered its own Indian-ness. They were the harbingers of the demise of the 'pays', just as industrialisation was in de la Blache's France.

What the British did not do was deliberately foster the identitive bonds of the Indian masses as 'Indians'. Partly, it was not in their own self-interest; partly they believed that India was a sub-continent of many races and tongues, an empire in itself, not just because that was what history said, but also because it suited their own propaganda. Identitive integration at the level of the masses was the last thing they either believed in or wanted to believe in. C. Ramat Ali's rejection of the 'All-Indian-ness' of Congress was close to the British understanding of South Asia, and that tacit understanding may have played an unacknowledged role in the failure of the British to leave behind a unitary successor state.

With the filtering of Western liberal ideas into India's small emergent middle class, demands for representation were first conceded by elections on very small franchises to town boards, while true power resided with the Viceroy and his Council and the Provincial Governors and their Councils. But it was the beginning of a long (and still continuing – more quickly in India than either in Pakistan or Bangladesh) road of bottom-up encroachment on power, which grew on a wider and wider mass base as Gandhi spread the message of Congress. In order to spread this message, it had to be phrased in a way which the masses could understand; it could not be handed down in an uncompromised fashion. Thus although Congress had always sought to be secular and multi-communal, its behaviour locally was often more parochial and partisan. The new leaders might well have been nationalistic: but the masses were sunk still in local perceptions. When they had to be enlisted in the struggle for power, they were told it was for self-determination. But who or what was self? To a Tamil it is Tamil, or perhaps Tamil Brahmin or Tamil non-Brahmin. In Bengal self meant one's own community, here very clearly either Hindu or Muslim. The Bengali part went unspoken – taken-for-granted as the starting point. With classic myopia local differences seemed large, distant ones less important. Thus, later, Jinnah could and did appeal to Muslim Bengalis as Muslims, to join his Pakistan movement. Playing on the different religious and cultural facets of the world views of the masses was the key to power in the new South Asia. The question was whether any representative kind of federal constitution could conserve the sovereignty of the whole, while devolving maximal self-rule in the parts.

Here we see the point behind the remark made above about coercion by the masses rather than the élites. Jinnah held very few cards, which was one of the reasons that he was given so little credit by Congress. The Muslim communities were the minority, and not strong in the institutions of the new society, not strong in trade or banking, nor strong in the civil service. But the masses could be awoken, and what Jinnah could threaten was, simply, anarchy. As law and order collapsed and genocide began, so did all alternatives to partition, and any time for debate, nuance and subtlety in the settlement evaporated. The logic of partition was applied

forthwith, not only by separating province from province, but by the vivisection of Punjab and Bengal too. The new lines drawn on the map were not 'normal' or 'natural' re-using ancient 'pays' boundaries. This was a partition of minds, and the homes that those minds lived in. This was not a partition that reflected local ecology, the basis of 'pays', nor the communications that ran within and between the 'pays'. Even at the largest scale what was produced was 'unusual' and 'odd'. Though in the past the Indus Valley has often been the core of a regional power (but see Schwartzberg's map which includes Rajasthan within this region), until now no Indian power ever included the South and Assam, and only half of Punjab, and half of Bengal.

The tragedy of the hundreds of thousands of deaths and twelve million refugees is testimony to the unpreparedness or incapacity of either British, Congress or Muslim League élites to deal with the forces they had in part unleashed. Four and a half decades later, at the end of the communist imperium in Yugoslavia, murder, genocide and ethnic cleansing and migration reproduced in Europe a similar chain of events. The tigers unleashed by the community leaders becoming harder and harder to ride, though with the twist that here 'secularity' was proclaimed by the 'Muslim' government of Bosnia. In Yugoslavia the divisions and fighting sucked in external powers. In South Asia, although not in the same way as in Yugoslavia, the internal divisions of the sub-continent and the open hostility between the two largest successor states has also brought in the armaments and interests of external powers.

By the end of Empire in 1947 pan-Indian identitive bonds among the masses were not strong enough to maintain the integration of South Asia. For this, the Indians may blame the British who divided to rule, keeping Princely states apart, and acquiescing in separate electorates for the Muslims. But the Muslims blamed Congress – for not honouring their secular pretensions at local levels. Casting blame to one side, it is clear now that to have expected this sub-continent of creeds and castes, at that time still largely illiterate, and a veritable linguistic Tower of Babel, to have formed a national identity at that moment in history was to expect the impossible. As an alternative to identity, coercion was not possible either – except arguably at the fringe over issues like Kashmir. For independence was about self-determination and the rejection of imperial coercion; and reluctantly Congress had in 1947 concluded that negotiated independence for Pakistan was best, at least in the short term. That way they inherited a stronger Centre in the new India, still the largest self-governing unit the sub-continent has ever seen, and the world's most populous democracy.

There is plenty of evidence to support the contention that India saw Pakistan in 1947 as a temporary aberration of the political map. In accepting the partisan plan, Congress issued a most blatant geographical and ideological statement:

'Geography and the mountains and the seas fashioned India as she is, and no human agency can change that shape or come in the way of her final destiny ... when the present passions have subsided, India's problems will be viewed from their proper perspective and the false doctrine of two nations in India will be discredited and discarded by all' (cited in Mansergh 1978)

Since then the Government of India has stated publicly that it has no claims on Pakistan; but there are still regional imperatives that interlock the destinies of the two countries. Both countries, and Bangladesh too, may well wish to keep internal matters to themselves and not to interfere in their neighbours' affairs; but precisely because many issues are regional in a pan-South Asian sense, it is impossible to isolate many issues as purely domestic. There are still a few Sikhs in Pakistani Punjab, who can offer transborder support to their brethren. There are Bengali Muslims and Bengali Hindus in both Bengals. The Indus river basin is shared by Pakistan and India. The Ganges-Brahmaputra is shared by India and Bangladesh (as well as Nepal, Bhutan and China). And there are Tamils in both India and Sri Lanka, some of the latter being locked in a civil war with the Sinhala majority.

Pakistan has cohesion when exposed to external threat by India; but left to its own devices is riven by regional dissent and the fight between the Mohajirs and indigenous groups, which has brought virtual civil war to Karachi. Thus, the most remarkable feat of its history is that, apart from the loss of Bangladesh, it has survived. It has not done so through identitive bonds: though perhaps there is a new generation that accepts Pakistan as a natural sovereign state. It has done so partly by a policy similar to India's: protected industrialisation which has created a new middle class with vested interests. But this class has been smaller and more concentrated than in India. Pakistan has done so also through coercion, through several periods of army rule, by an army hugely supported by outside funds from the USA.

The point is this. Though no-one has ambitions to absorb Pakistan, if the country itself fell to pieces, the little bits could soon enter into different arrangements with neighbours, as the Czech Republic and Slovakia have gone their separate ways since the end of the Communist Imperium in East Europe.

Besides defence, the rationale of a unified South Asia had other merits. In 1946 the Raj governed a sub-continent with a uniform currency, uniform external tariffs, unified postal service, and a commercial and civil legal code which had many common elements. In specified spheres, such as agriculture, considerable powers were delegated to the provinces. The overall impression is of the kind of common market which Europe is now trying to achieve – except that at its core was the coercion of empire. Since 1947, South Asia has de-common-marketed itself. But the regional imperative cannot simply go away, and recognition of this has resulted in the foundation of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC). This is years, if not decades, away from re-building a common market; but if one day it is achieved it will hopefully do so without coercion from the centre.

14.3 States of Development

This book is not about the process of 'development' in the successor states of South Asia, but it is useful to make at least some passing reference to what has happened in South Asia since 1947. Pakistani and Indian governments since Independence have accepted that they have a role and responsibility in the process of economic growth,

even if the commitment to development has varied in time and varied in policy. The nature of the commitment is part of the contract between State and people.

The trauma of Partition in 1947 left a real fear of the possibility of further Balkanisation and secession. Therefore, since 1947, the central Government of India has had as an absolute priority the instillation into the minds of each and everyone of the citizenry of the republic, that they are first and foremost Indian. The Prime Minister, Jawarhalal Nehru, viewed the India of 1947 as sunk in backwardness, ignorance, poverty and superstition. India had been colonised by a small, but powerful, industrial country, which had treated it as a source of materials and as a vast market, and which had left India's own level of industrialisation, even simple industrialisation, abysmally low (at Independence in 1947 India produced no bicycles indigenously). The pursuit of Indian-ness, of international economic independence, and of industrialisation and modernisation, therefore, all fitted together.

Nehru believed that for the country to progress, planning by the Government was essential, and that 'planning was science in action' (Vasudeva and Chakravarty, 1989:417). In short, the Government would seek to 'develop' India, and it readily acknowledged its place among the 'developing nations'. It took inspiration from the rapid development (and in the early years it was rapid) of the Soviet Union, and developed its own idea of five-year planning, and public sector dominance in the commanding heights of the economy.

India's share of world trade collapsed dramatically, and import substitution became a central goal. Public sector investment was poured into heavy industry; but the rural sector was not forgotten. Here the effort was as much administrative as financial. In sweeping reforms in the late 1950s, villages were grouped into new Blocks, about 100 villages at a time, to implement a programme known as Community Development. Each Block was headed by a Block Development Officer who oversaw Village Level Workers. Some efforts, often abortive, were made in land reform, to eliminate the excesses of feudal landlordism, and to give more equal holdings to the peasantry. Nor did technology pass rural areas by. India accelerated the development of large-scale irrigation, and began the construction of huge new dams – the temples of modern India as Nehru called them. The point is that the word 'development' intruded virtually everywhere that society and government intermeshed.

India has become the 10th ranked industrial power in the world, but its rate of growth in the years 1947 to 1990 was disappointingly slow. Regional disparity, which Congress had hoped to reduce, has increased, so that there are two Indias now; a 'high-speed' India in the West, more urban, and including Mumbai, Gujarat, and the national capital area, and a 'slow-speed' India in the East, more rural and including much of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa. (See Chapman, 1992 for an elaboration of this.) This slow-speed India retains the world's biggest concentration of absolute poverty. In the late 1960s this area saw again true famine – something which Congress was supposed to have eradicated. Urbanisation has increased from 15% to 28%, leading to a new 'middle class' that has left rural India behind.

The newspaper editors of Mumbai have identified their new elite readership as 'post-nationalist'. This term does not mean internationalist and non-Indian, but

rather it identifies those in major cities who take for granted that India now exists and has coherence, that their part of this India has developed, that they are now aware of the outside world, and are keen to exchange with it. But it would be false to suppose that this means that they are international in the sense of being supra-national in outlook, part of an undifferentiated world cosmopolitan class. Amongst these people will be found some of the fiercest critics of Western hegemony, and, although there may be a general awareness of international forces, pragmatically, issues at home make the news.

Slow-speed development, new awareness of the external world, and the collapse of the socialist model, have all conspired to end Nehru's India, and to prepare India for opening again its economy to outside forces. But this has to be done from an Indian perspective. This accounts in part for the rise to power of the Bharatiya Janata Party, a Hindu nationalist party, ready to mediate between India's past, its cultural present, and the outside world. This was shown most vividly when the British indulged in nostalgia at the 50th anniversary of India's Independence, with a plethora of programmes and newspaper articles. The British could not understand why so little was made of the event in India. One answer was of course that India did not start 50 years ago – it had been there all along, for millennia. The advent of the BJP and the decline of Congress can in part be seen as the sloughing off of the British shadow. Nehru's vision of secularity was in part an acceptance of plurality. His India never promulgated a uniform civil code, and Hindu and Muslim customary law prevailed within the family life of each community. The BJP's view of secularity is the adoption of Hindu codes and the reaffirmation of the cultural distinctiveness of India with which this book began.

Pakistan, too, has been through similar development fashions. But it is also fashioning a 'nation state', which does not have the same historical depth as India. It embraced import substitution, which produced a high cost industrialisation in many sectors (but not all – sports goods are always cited as an exception). It embraced a degree of planning and, in the Ayub years tried, too late, to use this to help reduce the inequality with East Pakistan. It has urbanised too. But it has done little in terms of land reform, and has left a feudal rural aristocracy fairly intact. It has a poorer record in education than India, and one of the world's highest population growth rates. Its population has overtaken Bangladesh's, and in the next century it will probably become the world's third most populous state. It too is now trying to open its economy more to the outside world. Some of its structural distortions are greater than India's, and the pain and political consequence of adjustment are not to be downplayed.

In both India and Pakistan, defence has laid claim to a significant part of public expenditure (Table 14.1). Defence expenditure in the world as a whole is 2.5% of GDP, and in the UK it is also 2.5%. Pakistan's 6% is an appalling indictment of its priorities. At constant 1998 value, expenditure in South Asia as a whole went from \$11 bn. in 1992 to \$18 bn. in 2001 (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2002).

Table 14.1 Defence Expenditure and the Economies of South Asia

	India	Pakistan	Bangladesh	Bhutan	Maldives	Nepal	Sri Lanka
Population (millions) 1998	973.4	131.6	127.2	0.7	0.3	22.1	18.8
Est. Pop. Growth rate 1995-2015	1.3	2.5	1.6	2.6	3.2	2.4	1.1
GDP (\$/million) 1997	385000	61000	32000	1570	301	4700	14800
Per capita GNP 1997 (\$)	390	490	270	420	837	210	800
Real per cap. GDP 1997 (\$/PPP)	1650	1590	1050	1382	3230	1090	2460
Defence Exp. as % of GDP 1997	3.0	6.0	2.0	...	...	1.0	6.0
Defence expenditure as % of combined public expenditure on Health and Education 1990-91	65.0	125.0	41.0	...	...	35.0	107.0
Armed forces (active) 1998	1175000	587000	121000	...	...	46000	115000
Defence Budget (\$/millions) 1997	9900	3200	602	...	...	41	725
Defence Exp. per capita: \$/1998	12.4	22.8	4.6	...	...	1.8	48.1
People per soldier	836	239	1056	...	...	501	162
People per doctor	2165	2000	12500	4255	5330	12612	3935

Note: Figures may not conform to official estimates; ... data not available

Sources: Asiaweek, January 1, 1999; World Bank, World Development Report 1998/99; UNDP Human Development Report 1998; IISS, Military Balance, 1998/99; Data for Maldives as received courtesy of Maldivian official source.

In both India and Pakistan the era of autarchic economic policy has probably strengthened utilitarian integration within each state. However, it would be easy to overstate the political significance of this. Regional inequality has accompanied autarchy, already threatens stability, and could even worsen with liberalisation.

Independent Bangladesh started life as an international begging bowl. Despite nepotistic governments, corruption, periods of dictatorship, and natural calamities, its economy has begun to grow. Dhaka may be Asia's fastest growing city – much of the growth coming on the back of a cotton goods industry that has emerged spontaneously. New sources of rural production have emerged – shrimp farming plays a large part in its export trade. Though still with appalling problems of poverty, the idea that change and improvement is possible has taken root. Jinnah's rural slum is now noticeably less rural, and is modernising. Though Islamic, it is clearly aware of its Bengali and South Asian identity. That is not an issue.

14.4 Nature, Culture and Civilisation

In his book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1997) Samuel Huntington observes that there have been two (truly global) World Orders – the European (Western) domination from the Renaissance to World War II, and the Cold War, from WW II to the collapse of the Warsaw Pact in the 1990s. What will be the nature of the next World Order? In this age of globalisation, industrialisation and urbanisation, it might be tempting to think in terms of one culture and one hegemony – essentially the Westernisation of the globe. But Huntington's lengthy analysis suggests otherwise. He suggests it is possible for modernisation to occur without Westernisation, and that – to take an example – Islamisation may strengthen in Pakistan at the same time as that nation develops shopping malls and atomic bombs. The same point is made by Khilnani with respect to India:

'Nehru wished to modernise India, to insert it into what he understood as the movement of universal history. Yet the India created by this ambition has come increasingly to stand in an ironic, deviant relationship to the trajectories of western modernity that inspired it ... [T]he 'garb of modernity' has not proved uniform, and Indians have found many and ingenious ways of wearing it.' (Khilnani, 1997:8)

Huntington does not claim that his model is the only model of international relations, nor the best in any objective sense. He sees it as the most revealing in understanding the contemporary world. He believes the primary divisions of the world are civilisational; which other authors may refer to in terms of high-level cultures. He sees civilisations/cultures as the highest levels at which individuals understand their own identity – and these are the highest levels to which they can appeal in understanding the worth of their own behaviour. This is the highest level which the super-ego can incorporate when a new 'self' is being formed. In Huntington's view, the clashes (often grumbling 'fault-line' wars like those of the Balkans) in the new world order are and will be the clashes between civilisations.

The primary civilisations are Western, Orthodox (i.e. Eastern Christian Orthodox Churches and predominantly Slavic areas), Islamic, Hindu, Sinic, Japanese, and Buddhist with emergent roles for African and Latin American. He concludes that it is imperative for the West to realise that its civilisation is but one of several, that it is neither universal nor universalising, and that the best hope for a more peaceful future is not for the imposition of one civilisation's values on the others, but for dialogue to find and reinforce whatever inter-civilizational values exist, and for understanding of alternative perceptions. To understand the nature of Islamic states it is necessary to realise that in them government of a Western secular style will always be weak – since pan-Islam is prescriptive and embracing, and there is little authority left to the State, except perhaps in defence. There are of course many reasons for political instability in Pakistan since 1947, but surely one of them has to be the difficulty of building a secular Islamic state, and another may be (the same thing seen another way) the inappropriateness for Pakistan's regional cultures of the Western Sovereign State model (the 'European system of states').

By definition, Huntington's cultural and civilisational analysis is less environmentally determinist than the geo-political one with which this chapter opened. Looked at from this viewpoint, the whole of Pakistan is India's North-West Frontier Agency (not a comforting thought) and an individually weak component of a greater Islamic realm. Certainly the 'freedom' with which Islamic militants from other territories have joined the affray in Kashmir could suggest just that. Here, in other words, is one of the world's fault lines, within South Asia. Bharat/Hindustan governed by the BJP, less secular in its policies than Congress, confronts an Islamic realm stretching to the Middle East. But:

'culturally and not least in security terms, Pakistan could not fully free itself from its South Asian moorings even if it wanted to.' (Talbot, 1999:34)

In fact, the BJP government has made stronger attempts to build human bridges with Pakistan than preceding Indian governments – despite the atomic bombs – and like many groups which are fundamentalist when small, has become much more moderate as it has grown and assumed power. The opening of (perhaps for the moment token) a bus route across the border, and the contacts between concerned citizens on both sides are all testimony to the pull of South Asian cultural continuity and shared history.

14.5 The Politics of Reaction

There is a school of thought that says that the history of South Asia since the Mutiny of 1857 has been a history of reactionary politics: that the British gave the nationalists too little and too late – for had they been given Dominion Status at the end of the First World War, there would have been no calls for Pakistan. The Congress is likewise accused of offering Jinnah too little, too late, and even as late as 1946 Pakistan

was not inevitable even though the British no longer accepted the responsibility for foisting unity on India. And it is said West Pakistan offered the East too little, too late. But this is a little simple: counterfactual history cannot prove that a great Indian Federation in 1919 would have survived.

History has shown that there have been no spontaneous grass roots movements for sub-continental integration until this century. Before that, the sheer scale and complexity of South Asia has meant that only coercive empire could in any sense (usually slight) unite it. What the 20th Century has given the public at large is some conception of the right to self-determination. This 'self' has usually had fairly narrow confines, and regionalism remains a serious threat to both Pakistan and India. But wider nationalisms, post-nationalisms and internationalisms are emerging in the late 20th Century age of mass-communication and industrialisation. Whether the concept of the strong centrist state will survive long in the next century is open to question. The scale of problems, and the advent of large-scale technologies, combine to propel whatever forms of state may survive to negotiate with each other those common resource problems (particularly in river basin management) and trading complementarities which they must accommodate to mutual advantage. Apart from resource issues, and the continuing sore of Kashmir, there are few causes for continuing outright hostility between the current states of South Asia. Nearly all boundary problems are resolved, and from the nadir of trade embargoes one assumes that things can only get better. However, the size of India so outweighs the other states that they must have their anxieties quietened by Indian diplomacy. But, since at the end of the 20th Century industrialised countries are not increasing their imports of goods from the developing countries fast enough, the latter group are going to have to open themselves to increasing their trade with each other.

What is the future for South Asia? This book has been an attempt to explain the broad history of this geo-political region, a story which has not and cannot end, and which can be followed in the press every day. I proclaim my inability to make any predictions about the future. So, the most I can do, is hazard the haziest of guesses. On the pessimistic side India and Pakistan are often singled out as the most likely combatants in the world's next nuclear war. Neither appears to have a well-worked out nuclear doctrine, there is no hot-line between Delhi and Islamabad, Pakistan does not have a second-strike capability and there are also doubts that India does. This, coupled with the short distances and very fast flight-times to targets, means that there could be a provocation to a pre-emptive strike. In 2002 nearly all OECD countries advised their nationals to leave the two countries because of the fear of an escalation of fighting in Kashmir. The possibility of a nuclear exchange frightens the international powers, particularly the United States, which is determined somehow or other at the end of the day to bring both states under the umbrella of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty.

If India and Pakistan do nothing to settle this issue, we are likely again to see the politics of reaction, the politics of too little accommodation too late, and yet more war and carnage. What is needed now is the politics of proaction. Both Pakistan and India know this. Any international assistance in settling this dispute

from within SAARC or from outside South Asia must be available when needed – and should be readied with quiet diplomacy that provokes neither side into even more entrenched positions. Supposing this issue is resolved, then it seems to me that the other imperatives promoting closer co-operation among the nations will prevail. Whatever the states of South Asia may then be, they will come to form a more integrated whole, with perhaps less strong sovereign governments. Then South Asia will have refound itself, as a subcontinent within its own secure borders. It could even contemplate its own South Asian Treaty Organisation, banishing Hedley Bull's vision of anarchy, with which this book started, beyond its regional borders.

References and Bibliography

Introductory Note

As I said in the Foreword, this book is intended to be introductory. Readers may wish to go into different periods and subjects in much more detail. This is getting easier – there is more material available all the time – but that means there is more to have to choose from. Attention should perhaps be paid to the series of volumes being published as *The New Cambridge History of India* by Cambridge University Press. For a more compact view on some subjects, try the older two volumes of the *Cambridge Economic History of India* (Raychaudhuri, I. and Habib, I. (Eds.) (1982) and Kumar, D. and Desai, M. (Eds.) (1983)).

There are no obvious comparative introductions to Hinduism and Islam – in fact I like to think my opening chapters are quite good as they stand. For the early history of India and the expansion of Europe there is a legion of sources. Some of these are good fiction – or as some would have it 'faction' – like J.G. Farrel's *The Siege of Krishnapur*, Humayun Kabir's *The Land of the Rivers* or *The Exploits of Asaf Khan*, by 'Afghan', mentioned in Chapter 5. Standard comprehensive histories of early India and more modern India like those of Thapar, Spear and Sarkar are in the list below. The two outstanding sources on the development of irrigation and its impact on the north of India are the accounts by Michel (1967) and Stone (1984). Michel's book very specifically deals also with the consequences of Partition and the Indus Waters Treaty.

The study of Partition has produced some classic and standard texts, including Chaudri (1967), Hodson (1969), Moon (1961), Philips and Wainwright (1970). However, for a reporter's eye view of the personal stories and dramas of 1947 it is well worth reading Collins and LaPierre (1975) *Freedom at Midnight*, which may not be 'academic' but is very informative of both small and big events, and quite 'riveting'. The immediate consequences of Partition are well dealt with in Vakil (1950) and Vakil and Raghava Rao (1968).

The story of the integration of (West) Pakistan is best told in Wilcox (1963) *Pakistan: the Consolidation of a Nation*, which, of course, pre-dates the break-up of Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh. That is looked at from different slants by Rudolph and Rudolph (1980), Stepanek (1979), Griffin and Khan (1972). Regionalism in India is analysed in Chanda (1965), Hardgrave (1975), Taylor and Yapp (1979), Wallace (1985).

India's war in the Himalayas is the subject of a major monograph, Maxwell's (1970) *India's China War*.

The following reference list and bibliography contains the details for these and other sources, as well as the full details of material cited in the book itself. I might also add that in the last stages of preparing this text I have checked facts