

SECURITY BEYOND SURVIVAL

ESSAYS FOR K. SUBRAHMANYAM

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EDITOR

P.R. KUMARASWAMY



Sage Publications

New Delhi ♦ Thousand Oaks ♦ London

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First published in 2004 by

**Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd**  
B-42, Panchsheel Enclave  
New Delhi 110 017

**Sage Publications Inc**  
2455 Teller Road  
Thousand Oaks, California 91320



**Sage Publications Ltd**  
1 Oliver's Yard, 55 City Road  
London EC1Y 1SP

Published by Tejeshwar Singh for Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd, typeset in 10 pt Calisto MT by Star Compugraphics Private Limited, New Delhi and printed at Chaman Enterprises, New Delhi.

#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Security beyond survival: essays for K. Subrahmanyam/editor, P.R. Kumaraswamy.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. National security—India. 2. India—Military policy. 3. National security—South Asia. 4. South Asia—Strategic aspects. 5. World politics—21st century. 6. Subrahmanyam, K. I. Kumaraswamy, P.R.

UA840.S357

355'.033054—dc22

2004

2004013131

ISBN: 0-7619-3267-4 (Hb)

0-7619-3268-2 (Pb)

81-7829-405-2 (India-Hb)

81-7829-406-0 (India-Pb)

**Sage Production Team:** Abantika Banerjee, Proteeti Banerjee,  
Radha Dev Raj and Santosh Rawat

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## CONTENTS

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<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	7
<i>Preface</i>	9
1. National Security: A Critique <i>P.R. Kumaraswamy</i>	11
2. India's Place in a West-Dominated World <i>Raju G.C. Thomas</i>	33
3. Eclipsed Moon to a Rising Sun <i>Ashok Kapur</i>	52
4. National Security Council: Yet Another Ad Hoc Move? <i>D. Shyam Babu</i>	83
5. Re-examining the 'Forward Policy' <i>Rajesh Rajagopalan</i>	103
6. India and China: Bound to Collide? <i>J. Mohan Malik</i>	127
7. Pakistan's Security Perspective: Problems of Linearity <i>Ayesha Siddiqa</i>	166
8. Indo-Pak Track II Diplomacy: Building Peace or Wasting Time? <i>Stephen Philip Cohen</i>	192
9. Nuclear Risk Reduction in South Asia <i>Michael Krepon</i>	218
10. KS: A Personal Impression <i>Selig S. Harrison</i>	235
11. A Rather Personal Biography <i>Sanjay Subrahmanyam</i>	241
KS: A Select Bibliography Compiled by <i>Soundarya Chidambaram</i>	258
<i>About the Editor and Contributors</i>	269
<i>Index</i>	273

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## INDIA'S PLACE IN A WEST-DOMINATED WORLD

RAJU G.C. THOMAS

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*For nearly four decades, K. Subrahmanyam has been the primary advocate of realism in India's security policy, especially in the period when India's foreign policy tended to be idealistic or moralistic. I first got to know him in the Fall of 1972 when I was doing research in New Delhi for my doctoral dissertation at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) entitled, 'The Politics of Indian Defence Spending: The Rearmament Decade, 1963-72'. Subrahmanyam was then the Director of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) located at Sapru House on Barakhamba Road. Indeed, he was instrumental in building up the IDSA into the primary and well-known Indian security think tank that it is now. With his generous help at Sapru House (which also housed the Indian Council of World Affairs' facilities and library) and accompanied by his directive to his staff to assist me in my research endeavour, I was able to collect some valuable information from the annual Defence Services Estimates and the Reports of the Ministry of Indian Defence. These reports at the time were not readily available to the public although they were unclassified information.*

*Since 1972, I have been in occasional contact with Subrahmanyam whenever I am in India or when he is in the US. But mostly I have been in touch with his writings, which have been instrumental in shaping my writings ever since. There were periods of partial disagreement, mainly in the 1980s, and agreement especially in the 1990s and beyond. I came to realise in the 1990s that K. Subrahmanyam had got it right, especially that the US national security interest is not usually the Indian national security interest, especially on the expansion of Western alliance networks and on*

*nuclear non-proliferation questions. My writings since then have largely conformed to his strategic perspective and analyses. But over the last one year, in the new age of asymmetric conflict exemplified by the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001, and the rising tide of terrorist attacks within India, I have begun to wonder whether our views still remain the same. There is a growing demand among the attentive Indian elites, especially among Indian-Americans, for an alliance relationship with the US, and for supporting US policies in the Middle East, although the US has shown no intention of wholeheartedly supporting India on Kashmir and the threat from Pakistan. Have Subrahmanyam and the Defence Minister, George Fernandes, moderated and shifted on these issues? Do they still support India's traditional policy of non-alignment?*

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Like neo-realist Western writers such as Kenneth Waltz who argued that states seek various means to maximise their security through arms build up (rather than the earlier classical realist assumption of the colonial era that states seek to maximise their power), K. Subrahmanyam believed that the best antidote to military power elsewhere was appropriate and adequate countervailing Indian military power, including nuclear weapons and missile delivery capability. He felt the perpetuation of a global system of nuclear 'haves' and 'have-nots' was dangerous, and he was opposed to a world of 'nuclear apartheid', to use his phrase.

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### INDIA'S NUCLEAR DOCTRINE

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In *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security: The Realists Foundations of Strategy*,<sup>1</sup> Bharat Karnad provided a historical-strategic analysis revolving around the domestic Indian cultural milieu of *monopolitik* underlined by the philosophical values of Mahatma Gandhi and the idealistic politics of Jawaharlal Nehru, and as subsequently modified or perhaps superimposed by the more hesitant *realpolitik* of Indira Gandhi since 1966. But Indian realism—perhaps even *machpolitik*—in shaping national security policy emerged only with the advent of

the BJP-led coalition government in March 1998. Indeed, India's nuclear tests were conducted within two months of the BJP taking control of the central government. This was a fulfilment of Subrahmanyam's long-standing recommendation, something he had advocated soon after the Chinese nuclear test of October 1964.

If Subrahmanyam is the long-standing realist in the making of Indian security policy and the best-known advocate of a nuclear India, then Karnad is the more focused super-realist advocating a robust Indian nuclear and missile programme. For Karnad, going nuclear is not enough. Often known as the hawk and super hawk of Indian security policy (Brahma Chellaney probably falls in between), the policy differences and compromises of Subrahmanyam and Karnad may be discerned in India's National Security Advisory Board (NSAB)'s Indian nuclear doctrine issued in August 1999, which they were instrumental in formulating as members of the board.<sup>2</sup> Subrahmanyam believed in a minimalist deterrence posture whereby India would not fall into the security trap of the erstwhile superpowers who, during the Cold War, escalated the arms race up to levels of overkill sufficient to demolish the planet several times over. Karnad leans more towards a maximalist deterrence posture because a minimalist deterrence based on basic nuclear retaliatory strike capabilities may be no credible deterrence at all.

The final chapter of Karnad's book entitled, 'The Perils of Deterrence by Half-Measures: Why Grand Strategic Vision and a Thermo-nuclear Force are a Must', provided a timetable of power projection for India setting out an array of nuclear and missile force deployments that would be necessary to achieve a credible deterrence.<sup>3</sup> Karnad claimed that such a maximalist posture could be achieved at an affordable price with little impact on development programmes. The Indian nuclear doctrine, however, settled for a 'minimum credible deterrence' and a 'no first use policy', the kind of 'half-measures' that Karnad warns about, but which adheres more closely to Subrahmanyam's recommended posture.<sup>4</sup>

In response to criticisms in the West that India's draft nuclear doctrine was full of dangerous flaws and wishful thinking,<sup>5</sup> K. Subrahmanyam observed:

The core of deterrence, especially for a country which commits itself to no-first-use is its ability to carry out punitive unacceptable

retaliation. This is not Cold War language but the appropriate language to communicate to the nuclear warriors who believe in the use of nuclear weapons first. Unless one opts to allow his society and nation to be destroyed in a cold-blooded first strike by the adversary and not do anything to deter him, it is logical to make it clear to such nuclear adversaries, the consequences of his resorting to a first strike. The word unacceptable damage does not carry today the connotations of the MAD (mutual assured destruction) age of Robert McNamara and Zbigniew Brezinski. It is now recognised that one bomb on one city is unacceptable. Therefore, those who believe in wielding nuclear weapons to intimidate other nations and in the first-use of nuclear weapons have to be deterred by spelling out the consequences of their actions.<sup>6</sup>

He continued:

The Indian nuclear doctrine totally rejects the western approach to nuclear theology as is evident from the preamble and the last section, which reiterates Indian commitment to disarmament. India was compelled to go nuclear because of the obduracy of nuclear weapon powers, the legitimisation of nuclear weapons by the international community and the rising trend of interventionism by the industrialised nations in the affairs of the developing world. It became necessary to protect the autonomy of decision-making in the developmental process and in strategic matters, which are inalienable democratic rights of one sixth of mankind living in India. The Indian nuclear doctrine aims at providing India a credible minimum deterrent at an affordable pace of expenditure to create uncertainty in the minds of would-be nuclear intimidators, aggressors and interventionists that those actions against this country would not be rational options.<sup>7</sup>

Likewise, arguing against India signing the CTBT under American pressure, Karnad, declared:

Nothing is better appreciated and better guaranteed to create respect—the vital aim always missing in Indian foreign and military policies—in the world than a country that stands up for itself and its national interests whatever anybody else may think

or do. China is respected and allowed every consideration. India is badgered and asked to behave because Washington is convinced that the threat of punitive actions is enough to turn Indian resolve to jelly. Or, it is tempted by offers of freer access to high technology or whatever else New Delhi puts a policy premium on, because it is believed that India (and Indians) can be bought off or won over with blandishments. That is the principal difference in the American treatment of China and India.<sup>8</sup>

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## SECURITY IN A WEST-DOMINANT SYSTEM

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### THE RISE OF PAX AMERICANA

Despite increasing globalisation and economic interdependence, there are reasons why some of the old traditional security perspectives and behaviours persist. The US continues to pursue a massive build-up of conventional forces, tactical nuclear weapons, and missile defence systems and has threatened to use all of them to ensure its security. Without any serious visible threat or counter-alliance in sight, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) remains intact and continues to expand, resembling an all-White imperial expeditionary force determined to take up Rudyard Kipling's 'white man's burden' and America's 'Manifest destiny' worldwide. The new strategic environment has not stopped the recognised and unrecognised nuclear weapons states, and other states covertly seeking these capabilities, from believing that a nuclear deterrent posture is essential in a world where comprehensive nuclear disarmament is perceived as inconceivable in the foreseeable future.

During NATO's 78-day assault on Serbia from March to June 1999, Subrahmanyam provided a renewed and urgent case for a strong nuclear force posture in an article entitled, 'Clear and Present Danger: US Path to Unipolar Hegemony':

When in May 1998, India conducted the nuclear tests and justified them on the ground that the security environment had deteriorated, many in the world and in India raised the question as to what precisely had happened to arrive at that conclusion.



Now it must be clear to everyone that the present international security environment is the worst since the end of World War II .... The UN has been rendered redundant since there is no balance of power in the world and the entire industrial world, barring a ramshackle Russia, is under US over-lordship. If this is not a dangerous international security environment, what is? It is not accidental that the only countries voicing strong protests against the bombing in Yugoslavia happen to be Russia, China, and India, all nuclear weapon powers.<sup>9</sup>

Again, reflecting the widespread strategic sentiment in India at the end of the twentieth century regarding the new unipolar security environment, a *Times of India* editorial (most likely written by Subrahmanyam, one of the newspaper's foreign affairs editors) noted the dangerous new American-dominant world, the development of new missile defence systems by America, the legitimisation of wars of intervention abroad on self-determined moral grounds, and the ability to fight these with very few or no casualties to Americans because of the development of new high-tech weapon systems.

In these circumstances two major trends are likely to emerge. Independent powers like Russia and China are bound to develop their own military capabilities to deter the US dominance to the extent possible and to defend their own national interests and sovereignty. In this, the nuclear weapons and long-range missiles are bound to play a crucial role. Secondly, the deep resentment against US hegemonism is bound to unleash various terrorist activities by non-state actors against US interests and personnel in various parts of the world. India has to take note of these developments and formulate its own national security strategy to safeguard its strategic autonomy. That calls for the country to accelerate its acquisition of a credible minimum deterrent, programme of ballistic and cruise missiles.<sup>10</sup>

These conditions prompted Chinese military strategists to consider new rules of 'unrestricted war', which include the resort to terrorism, ecological destruction, cyber warfare through the spread of computer viruses, and trafficking in drugs to undermine the enemy population thereby bringing destruction into the heart of the Western countries,

especially the US.<sup>11</sup> According to Colonels Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, the brains behind the concept of 'unrestricted war', this strategy was the only viable method of balancing unequal military states. 'Unrestricted war is a war that surpasses all boundaries and restrictions' .... It takes non-military forms and military forms and creates a war on many fronts. It is the war of the future.' In an interview, Colonel Wang, declared: 'We are a weak country. So do we need to fight according to your rules? No. War has rules, but those rules are set by the West. But if you use those rules, then weak countries have no chance. But if you use non-traditional means to fight, like those employed by financiers to bring down financial systems, then you have a chance.' According to John Pomfret of the *Washington Post*, the Chinese military strategists saw a direct connection between Kosovo and Taiwan and Tibet. In the words of Colonel Wang, 'If today you impose your value systems on a European country, tomorrow you can do the same to Taiwan or Tibet.'

Following NATO's assault on Yugoslavia in 1999 without the sanction of the UN Security Council, there was an attempt to establish a loose system of countervailing power against an expanding and unbridled NATO, a European alliance that seemed geared to carry on the new American writ worldwide. Counter moves started to be initiated among Russia, China, India, and Indonesia.

### Russia and China

In July 2001, Russia and China signed the familiar Cold War era-type 'treaty of friendship and cooperation', the first such treaty since the era of Stalin and Mao. It bound the two former communist giants for the next 20 years 'committing them to oppose jointly much of the framework for international security that the US is seeking to erect after the Cold War'.<sup>12</sup> The first part 'obligated both to refrain from assisting opposition movements of ethnic minorities'.<sup>13</sup>

### India and China

On 14 June 1999, a week after the hostilities ended in the Balkans, India and China established a 'security dialogue', which was stated by their respective foreign ministers to be a response to NATO's actions.<sup>14</sup> China also distanced itself from Pakistan's actions in Kargil

moving towards a more neutral stance. This position was reiterated in November 2000 when Zhang Qiyue, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson addressing an Indian delegation said that China did not see India as a rival or threat to itself but as a partner in maintaining global stability and peace.<sup>15</sup> In January 2001, Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Chinese leader Li Peng agreed to complete the process of clarification of the Line of Actual Control 'as soon as possible'.<sup>16</sup> Vajpayee stated: 'As two great civilizations and neighbours, India and China are engaged in the process of resolving, and putting behind us, past differences and forging a new and dynamic relationship for the twenty-first century for the benefit of our two countries and the world.' These statements reflect a return to Prime Ministers Jawaharlal Nehru and Chou En-Lai's joint declarations of peaceful coexistence embodied in the 1954 Sino-Indian Treaty.

### India and Russia

Similarly, in the Spring of 1999, there was some Indian interest in the call by Russian Premier Yvgeny Primakov to forge a counter-alliance against NATO among Russia, China, and India. Following NATO's massive assault on Yugoslavia in 1999 over Serbian efforts to suppress the Albanian Muslim secessionist movement in its province of Kosovo, a China-India-Russia 'anti-NATO axis' had started to evolve by the Fall of 1999 to check the new unbridled use of American military power.<sup>17</sup> Indo-Russian cooperation took on a more concrete shape during President Vladimir Putin's visit to India in October 2000, when a limited strategic partnership was established between India and Russia. Prime Minister Vajpayee stated that the two countries shared common concerns and interests, and that

... the history of the last five decades demonstrates that close Indo-Russian understanding is essential to peace and stability in Asia and the world. This is what makes India and Russia strategic partners. Our friendship is not based on short-term calculations, but transcends the twists and turns of history and politics.<sup>18</sup>

Putin claimed that a multipolar world was a safer world and the Indo-Russian strategic partnership would contribute to that desirable global condition.

## India and Indonesia

The threat of Western dominance and the right of humanitarian intervention also drew Indonesia and India closer together. During an exchange of visits by Prime Minister Vajpayee and President Abdurrahman Wahid in January 2001, the Indonesian President and the Defence Minister Mahfud both proposed a quadrilateral alliance of Russia, China, India, and Indonesia.<sup>19</sup> Subsequently, Indian Foreign Minister, Jaswant Singh, claimed that India did not believe in alliances. Notably, however, President Wahid supported Prime Minister Vajpayee's stand on Kashmir. Five Indo-Indonesian agreements were then signed in Jakarta, including one on the formation of a joint commission for defence cooperation. Indonesia's desire for such an alliance was understandable. It had just suffered the loss of East Timor as a result of Western diplomatic-humanitarian intervention. Referring to what appeared to be a new appreciation of each other's bilateral concerns, Vajpayee declared that 'as multi-ethnic, multi-religious and diverse societies, both our countries support each other's unity and territorial integrity'.<sup>20</sup>

### RESPONDING TO UNIPOLARISM AND ASYMMETRIC CONFLICT

While there existed a propensity at the end of the twentieth century to forge a diluted quadrilateral quasi-alliance relationship among India, Russia, China, and Indonesia as a balance to NATO, such efforts to counterbalance the US and NATO were limited even before the September 11 attacks because of the economic dependence of all four countries on the NATO group of countries. Opposing compulsions to band-wagon with the dominant state rather than balance it, had continued to persist and undermined the prospects of finalising a formal counter-alliance to NATO. Classical balance of power theory contended that for countervailing power to come about, three basic conditions must be fulfilled:

- (a) the main actors must be of relatively equal capabilities;
- (b) there must be no alliance handicaps; and
- (c) the states within the system must want to preserve their independence and sovereignty.

None of these conditions are now fulfilled. In particular, three main factors have rendered an independent security posture among states difficult:

- (a) the inability of any state to counter US-led NATO's conventional military domination;
- (b) globalisation and the overwhelming economic dependence of much of the world on the economies of the US and European Union; and
- (c) the willingness of non-state actors to resort to terrorism to undermine the security of states from within.

Indian security must take into account these newer conditions.

As argued elsewhere, in the contemporary context of transnational terrorism conducted by non-state actors, the relevance of a state's nuclear deterrent capabilities appear dubious.<sup>21</sup> Traditional conventional and nuclear military analyses appear to have become less meaningful. Such views may now appear more relevant to the second half of the twentieth century rather than to the beginning of the twenty-first century. While a state's nuclear weapons deterrent posture may discourage both conventional and nuclear attacks by other states, such deployment may be futile against a handful of terrorists willing to commit suicide for their cause. The possession of nuclear weapons by the US, Russia, Israel, and India has not deterred terrorism on their soil. And if these non-state actors are able to gain access to small-scale nuclear devices, or are able to disperse radioactive material among civilian populations, then all discussions of Indian nuclear strategy—realist or otherwise—may be nothing more than an intellectual or historical exercise.

A credible nuclear deterrent is effective in deterring great power military interventions in domestic conflict issues as in the case of Russia in Chechnya and of India in Kashmir. In contrast, Serbia could not prevent NATO's military intervention in its province of Kosovo. The fact that Russia was not able to deter NATO from going to war against its close ally Serbia over Kosovo in 1999, would imply that extended nuclear deterrence by nuclear states on behalf of non-nuclear third party states is not credible. Such states would face intense pressures to conform to Western demands or face military intervention.

Therefore, it would seem that if Iraq had first acquired nuclear weapons before it invaded and annexed Kuwait in 1990, it might have gotten away with it. Even in 2002, if Iraq possessed nuclear weapons then the threat of American military intervention would carry no credibility.

However, the strategy of deterring a great power from intervening in the domestic affairs of other nations by threatening to unleash terrorism on its soil, as proposed by Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, does not appear credible. States are constrained in resorting to such tactics. On the other hand, strong conventional and nuclear weapons capabilities in the hands of states carry little or no credibility when dealing with non-state actors that resort to terrorism. They can influence only other state actors. Even if India can effectively deter threats from Pakistan and China and even military intervention by the US as in the entry of the USS Enterprise in the Bay of Bengal during the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war, there would appear to be no credible policy that would be effective against cross-border terrorism and terrorism from within.

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### AN ALTERNATIVE TO BANDWAGONING WITH THE WEST

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Under the current security conditions, it would bode well for India to return to the world of Nehru's NAM and the values of Gandhi's non-violent resistance in the conduct of its foreign and domestic policies. Since there are no opposing blocs now for India to be non-aligned between, India should take the initiative in forging a new Independent Nations Group (ING) that will provide a system of countervailing moral power to the new and unrestrained Anglo-American military power. Members of the ING should judge global and regional issues on its merits and then speak boldly even if this means offending the sole superpower. German leaders tried to do this in September 2002 by refusing to be railroaded into an Anglo-American war against Iraq but quickly backed off under American pressure. A free and democratic world is reflected through debate and dissent and not constant conformity.

Nehru's policy of non-alignment called for judging international issues on their merit while taking into account India's national interest.

Non-alignment for Nehru did not mean neutrality. Gandhi preached non-violent solutions for India's acute domestic crises, especially inter-religious conflict. He believed that moral power could overcome military power. Back then, these views were considered naive and utopian, but they appear more relevant today in a world without countervailing state power and threat of terrorism by non-state actors.

### NEHRU'S POLICY OF NON-ALIGNMENT AND GANDHI'S PHILOSOPHY OF NON-VIOLENCE

Nehru's vision for India was anchored in his four pillars of democracy, secularism, socialism, and non-alignment. Where Nehru went wrong earlier was in attempting to implement public-sector oriented Stalinist five-year plans within the context of a Western democratic political system. Market economies are more compatible with democracy than with socialism. As we know now, even within the coercive and totalitarian communist system, socialist economies could not compete against free market, private sector, and capitalist economies. Socialism failed miserably in India's democratic system where coercion could not be employed in the public sector operating without the profit motive.

Today Nehru's failed socialist economic policy is history. India is going in the right direction with privatisation, marketisation, and globalisation. India's close ties with the US, the European Union and East Asia are now irreversible. No matter what the political differences between India and the US over Kashmir or the Middle East are, the economic and people-to-people relationship between India and the US will continue to boom.

However, Nehru's policy of non-alignment makes sense even though two opposing ideological or military blocs do not exist today. Nehru first gave expression to the doctrine of non-alignment in a speech to the Indian Constituent Assembly on 4 December 1947:

We have proclaimed this past year that we will not attach ourselves to any particular group. That has nothing to do with neutrality or passivity or anything else .... We are not going to join a war if we can help it; and we are going to join the side

which is to our interest when the time comes to make the choices. There the matter ends.<sup>22</sup>

At the outset of the Cold War, India rejected calls by the US to join its alliance systems to counter threats from the communist world. Like President Woodrow Wilson who considered balance of power politics the underlying cause of the First World War, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru believed that alliances and counter-alliances were the underlying causes of wars.

In a speech to the Indian Council of World Affairs in 1949, Jawaharlal Nehru argued for a policy of non-alignment that avoided alliances in a global system of military balances.

If war comes, it comes. It has to be faced. The prevention of war may include providing for our own defence and you can understand that, but that should not include challenges, counter-challenges, mutual cursing, threats, etc. These certainly will not prevent war, but only make it come nearer.<sup>23</sup>

Not only did non-alignment in military blocs make more distant the prospect of war, it also reduced the need for large defence budgets. Nehru also believed that military weakness did not necessarily imply a reduction in India's political influence in the world: 'The fact of the matter is that in spite of our weakness in a military sense—because obviously we are not a great military power. We are not an industrially advanced power—India even counts in world affairs ....'<sup>24</sup> His response was to maintain a policy of non-alignment between East and West while leaning heavily towards the Soviet Union for military support against an American-armed Pakistan.

Following severe criticisms in the Indian parliament for having signed away Tibet's independence to China under the Sino-Indian Treaty on Tibet in 1954, Nehru responded:

Several Honourable Members have referred to the 'melancholy chapter of Tibet.' I really do not understand. I have given the most earnest thought to this matter. What did any Honourable Member of this House expect us to do in regard to Tibet at any time? Did we fail, or did we do a wrong thing? The fact is, and it



is a major fact of the middle of the 20th century, that China has become a great power, united and strong.<sup>25</sup>

According to Nehru, the realities of relative power must be respected, reminiscent of the Athenian advice to the Melians during the Peloponnesian War chronicled by Thucydides: the strong do what they have the power to do, and the weak accept what they have to accept under conditions where the weak cannot change the eventual outcome in war.<sup>26</sup> Far from being an idealistic concept, underlying Nehru's concept of non-alignment was an element of hardheaded realism.

Likewise, underlying Gandhi's morality of non-violence was an element of realism. In his book, *Gandhi: Struggling for Autonomy*,<sup>27</sup> Ronald J. Tercheck argued that Gandhi was a political realist and not a pure idealist and moralist alone. Tercheck claimed that realists see a world full of violence in pursuit of self-serving goals against which a moral approach was bound to fail. However, Tercheck believed that Gandhi understood the destructiveness that humankind could inflict upon itself, and so he had strong faith in humanity being the only real hope. Tercheck therefore concluded that Gandhi's emphasis on non-violence and moral power could resolve the problems of a violent world, and was the best hope for all mankind.

The religious convictions held by Gandhi did not undermine his faith in tolerance and peaceful coexistence among all religions. Gandhi's Hinduism was not the one that created schisms among fellow Indians of different faiths. His fight for peace amongst the various religions of India and of the world was part of his legacy of peace. Not unexpectedly, on the morning of his last fast on 13 January 1948, over a hundred Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, as well as Nehru and the High Commissioner of Pakistan, pledged themselves to a doctrine of religious peace. They declared that their intention was to stop Muslim/Hindu violence in India and to establish communal harmony. For Gandhi, truth was not the exclusive possession of any one religious community, but rather the revelation and transcendent unity of all people.<sup>28</sup> For a highly complex multi-religious nation like India whose one billion plus population belongs to numerous linguistic and racial groups and where terrorism is often the weapon of choice for disgruntled groups, Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence and moral force may be the best prospect for peace and prosperity.

## THE END OF THE NEHRU-GANDHI VISION OF INDIA?

### THE EVOLVING US-INDIA-ISRAEL MILITARY ALLIANCE

With the rise of Hindu nationalism in India since the success of the BJP in 1998, Nehru's policy of non-alignment is in the process of being discarded, and Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence has lost its resonance. India appears to be going in the wrong direction in its pursuit of quasi-military alliance relationships with the US and Israel and its adoption of a strong Hindu nationalist agenda at home. These are steps in the wrong direction because the nature of the internal and external security environments of the US, Israel, and India are fundamentally different. Military entanglement with these two countries could aggravate India's security, not advance it. Now my views here are a departure from the position I held, back in the 1980s, when I had pushed the idea of security cooperation between the US, Israel, and India in some of my writings.

Under the Cold War conditions of complex strategic alignments between Pakistan, the US, and China, I had argued that the prospect of Indo-US military cooperation would be difficult given the greater importance of Pakistan and China vis-à-vis Washington's global military strategy. Common security perceptions could only emerge if India first adopted a free market capitalist economy and where military ties would be a spin-off of a robust Indo-American economic relationship.<sup>29</sup> Again, in the 1980s, I had pointed out the asymmetrical relationship between India and the Arab states. India unconditionally backed the Arab stand on the Palestine issue against Israel without any quid pro quo from the Arab world on India's stand on Kashmir. If the US could maintain close ties with Israel without political and economic (oil) retaliation from the Arab States, then why could not India do the same while demanding a fair exchange of commitments on Palestine and Kashmir?<sup>30</sup>

Today, Indo-American military ties are growing partly as a spin-off of blossoming Indo-American economic ties. And there has been an unprecedented growth of Indo-Israeli military ties, mainly as a result of the sale of much needed military equipment by Israel to India to deal with security problems related to Kashmir and Pakistan.

Yet, these closer military ties between India and the US and Israel make less sense after 9-11.

### DIFFERENCES IN MILITARY RESPONSES AND SECURITY CONSEQUENCES

In varying degrees, the US, Israel, and India have all experienced terrorism and continue to be faced with the threat of terrorism by non-state actors. The resort to overwhelming military force in response to terrorism against suspected populations harbouring terrorists in their midst has not proven successful in the case of Israel in Palestine, and is yet to be demonstrated in the case of the US in Afghanistan and in Iraq. Indeed, by mid-2004, the situation in Iraq had become much worse with periodic suicide bombings against US forces and civilian contractors. In Afghanistan, the situation remained calm under US occupation, but carried the potential for inter-ethnic and inter-tribal strife if US forces are withdrawn. India learnt the lessons of domestic and foreign military interventions after its military assault on the Golden Temple in Amritsar in 1984 to root out the Bhindranwale terrorist group, and the military intervention in Sri Lanka to bring peace between Tamils and Sinhalese. The Indian military action aggravated the terrorist violence by radical Sikh militants. Military intervention in Sri Lanka pitted the Tamil insurgents and terrorists against their would-be Indian military protectors, and to the suicide bombing and death of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi by a Sri Lankan terrorist.

The use of overwhelming military force by the state only increases the level of terrorism, and, indeed, would mean playing right into the hands of the terrorists. There would appear to be no conventional or nuclear military solution to terrorism conducted by faceless and suicidal non-state actors. Linking up with the US and Israel who continue to believe in overwhelming counterforce against terrorism may only aggravate India's security problems although India has not resorted to overwhelming military force in Kashmir. But we are dealing here with an interlinked radical fringe of Islamic extremists who transcend national boundaries. Individual sources of terrorism may generate common cause against all three states. So far, India's new

military ties with the US and Israel have not produced a backlash against India in the Muslim world. India maintains close ties with Iran, Iraq, and Israel, three mutually antagonistic states. But how long will this last?

The second difference among the three countries is the nature of their Muslim minority population. In the US, in a total population of 280 million there are less than 2 million practising Muslims (0.7 per cent), in Israel in a total population of 6 million there are 1 million Arab Muslims (17 per cent), and in India in a population of 1.1 billion there are 150 million Muslims (14.5 per cent). In the US and Israel, the Muslim minority population (barring Black Muslims in the US) are usually distinct and distinguishable from the mainstream population. In the Indian subcontinent—more so in India itself—Hindus and Muslims are indistinguishable from each other regionally. The American security apparatus to deal with radical Muslims in its midst is one of near total control through computer data banks. Parallels do exist between Israel and India, both of which have a large percentage of Muslim minorities, and where terrorism is conducted mainly by infiltrators from outside the national boundaries.

However, Israeli-Indian military cooperation would equate the Palestinian and Kashmir problems in the eyes of much of the Muslim world and they are not the same. Palestine is not a part of Israel. Kashmir is a part of India. Besides, policies that may alienate 150 million Muslims in India through military over-reaction would generate an internal security problem that would become unmanageable in such a large and diversified country like India, which would not be the case in a relatively more homogenous Israel. If only 0.001 per cent of disgruntled Indian Muslims (1,500) were to conduct provocative terrorist attacks against Hindus, and if only 0.001 per cent Hindus (8,000) were to engage in overwhelming acts of revenge against Muslims, India's internal security and investor confidence would collapse.

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## CONCLUSION

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It should be kept in mind that 'the ideas that conquered the world' during the Cold War (to use the title of Michael Mandelbaum's recent book),<sup>31</sup> were the Anglo-American ideas of democracy and the free

market, and not the logic of Anglo-American military might. Likewise, it was Nehru's idea of peaceful coexistence and the Gandhian vision of peaceful resistance that gave India international stature and national dignity and kept India together after Partition. Their ideas were far ahead of their times and are needed badly today in a world without countervailing power. A return to Nehru's policy of non-alignment overseas and Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence at home would best ensure India's external and internal security and advance the prospect of a less violent world.

## NOTES

1. Bharat Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security: The Realists Foundations of Strategy* (New Delhi: Macmillan, 2002).
2. For the text of the nuclear doctrine, see 'Annexure: National Security Advisory Board Indian Nuclear Doctrine', in Bharat Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security*, pp. 703-6.
3. Bharat Karnad, *Nuclear Weapons and Indian Security*, pp. 446-702.
4. See K. Subrahmanyam, 'India and the International Nuclear Order' and Bharat Karnad, 'India's Force Planning Imperative: The Thermonuclear Option', in Damodar Sardesai and Raju G.C. Thomas (eds), *Nuclear India in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2002), pp. 63-84 and 105-38.
5. These criticisms may be found in the extensive writings of the non-proliferation academic and policy community in the US.
6. K. Subrahmanyam, 'Credible Deterrent: The Logic of the Nuclear Deterrent', *The Times of India*, 4 October 1999.
7. Ibid.
8. Bharat Karnad, 'Policy on CTBT', *The Hindustan Times*, 4 November 1999.
9. K. Subrahmanyam, 'Clear and Present Danger: US Path to Unipolar Hegemony', *The Times of India*, 3 May 1999.
10. See *The Times of India* editorial, 'Securing Our Future', 3 April 1999.
11. See John Pomfret, 'China Ponders New Rules of "Unrestricted War"', *Washington Post Foreign Service*, 8 August 1999.
12. See Patrick E. Tyler, 'Russia and China Sign "Friendship" Pact', *The New York Times*, 17 July 2001.
13. This quote and assessment is from Bruce A. Elleman and Sarah C.M. Paine, 'Security Pact with Russia Bolsters China's Power', *International Herald Tribune*, 6 August 2001.
14. See Seema Guha, 'China, India to Set up Security Dialogue', *The Times of India*, 15 June 1999.
15. 'India's Development Not a Threat: China', *The Hindu*, 1 December 2000.
16. 'India, China Decide to Stop Fencing Over Boundary', *The Times of India*, 16 January 2001.

17. Tyler Marshall, 'Anti-NATO Axis Pose Threat, Experts Say', *Los Angeles Times*, 27 September 1999. According to Marshall, US analysts were warily eyeing the evolving post-Kosovo China-India-Russia coalition intended to check American military power.
18. Quoted from Press Trust of India report of 4 October 2000 in the *India Network News Digest*, 4 October 2000, Vol. 12, No. 170.
19. Amit Baruah, 'Wahid Supports Vajpayee Position on Kashmir', *India Network News Digest*, 12 January 2001, Vol. 13, No. 8.
20. Ibid.
21. See the author's introductory chapter, 'Nuclear India in the 21st Century', in Damodar Sardesai and Raju G.C. Thomas (eds), *Nuclear India in the Twenty-first Century*.
22. See Raju G.C. Thomas, *The Defence of India: A Budgetary Perspective of Strategy and Politics* (New Delhi: Macmillan India, 1978), pp. 14-16, and *Indian Security Policy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 14-15.
23. Jawaharlal Nehru, *India's Foreign Policy: Selected Speeches, September 1946-April 1961* (New Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India, 1961), p. 46.
24. Jawaharlal Nehru, *India's Foreign Policy*, p. 47.
25. Ibid., p. 304.
26. The dialogue between the powerful Athenians and the weak Melians as chronicled by Thucydides in his classic study of the Peloponnesian war has been reproduced in several edited readers under the title, 'The Melian Dialogue'. See, for instance, John A. Vasquez (ed.), *Classics of International Relations* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1996), pp. 9-14, and Richard K. Betts (ed.), *Conflict after the Cold War: Arguments on the Causes of War and Peace* (New York: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 66-71.
27. Ronald J. Tercheck, *Gandhi: Struggle for Autonomy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1998).
28. See Louis Fischer, *Gandhi His Life and Message for the World* (New York: Mentor Books, 1954).
29. Raju G.C. Thomas, 'Prospects for Indo-US Security Ties?', *Orbis: A Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. 27, No. 2, (Summer 1983), pp. 371-92.
30. Ibid.
31. Michael Mandelbaum, *The Ideas that Conquered the World: Peace, Democracy and Free Markets in the 21st Century* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 2002).