
Regions and Powers

The Structure of International Security

Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

4 South Asia: inching towards internal and external transformation

The argument in this chapter is that the security dynamics on the domestic, regional, and global levels show a lot of continuity. But the strengthening of the Asian supercomplex means that the interregional level is rising in importance relative to the others, and the bipolar structure at the regional level is weakening as Pakistan loses ground in relation to India. The first section briefly summarises the development, structure, and operation of the South Asian conflict formation during the Cold War. The next section looks at how the complex has evolved since the ending of the Cold War, asking whether it has remained essentially stable in form, or is showing signs of transformation. The third section concludes by considering the outlook for the South Asian RSC.

The South Asian RSC during the Cold War: decolonisation to conflict formation

South Asia has been examined in depth using RSCT (Buzan, Rizvi et al. 1986), so here we focus on bringing the study and the interpretation up to date, and locating the South Asian story more systematically in an all-Asia context.

The South Asian RSC, like most other postcolonial security regions, came into being as a conflict formation. India and Pakistan were born fighting each other in 1947 when what had been a societal security problem of religious conflict between the Muslim League and the Congress Party was transformed into an interstate, military-political one between an Islamic Pakistan and a secular, multicultural, but dominantly Hindu India. Political rivalry based on religion was long-running in South Asia and in that sense represented continuity. But the particular form of the

postcolonial state system was unique. Pakistan was a new state with no particular historical roots. Sri Lanka did have its own historical tradition. India could most easily be thought of as the successor to the empires (Mauryan, Gupta, Mughal) that occasionally held sway over most of South Asia when it was not a fluid system of warring states. Societal elements thus continued to play a role in security dynamics both at the regional level, where the interstate conflict between the two biggest powers formed the core of the RSC, and at the domestic level. Before independence, the process of securitisation was based on Muslim claims for politico-cultural autonomy. Afterwards, it was partly based on rival claims to territory (especially Kashmir) by the two new states, partly on status and balance-of-power issues, partly on claims of mutual interference in domestic instabilities, and partly on the rival principles of legitimacy embedded in their constitutions. India's secular, federal constitution, and its imperial legacy, motivated many in Pakistan to suspect India of wishing to reunite the subcontinent. The principle of Pakistan's ideology as a homeland for Muslims fuelled Indian fears that its own fractious patchwork of ethnic groups and religions would break apart. This constitutional tension provided fruitful ground for securitisation of national identities on both sides: governments found it convenient to cultivate threat perceptions of the other for their own domestic political purposes. The rivalry generated three wars (1947–8, 1965, 1971), several serious crises in which war looked a possibility (1984, 1987, 1990, 1999, 2002), and numerous lesser military incidents (Gupta 1995: 51–2). Over-spill of domestic conflicts also helped fuel the India–Pakistan rivalry: Hindu–Muslim generally, and particularly in Kashmir; and Sikh separatism in the Punjab. It was common practice for both governments to accuse the other of fomenting domestic political violence across the border. All of this sustained military competition, which from the mid-1970s onwards, and explicitly after 1998, acquired a nuclear dimension.

Like Pakistan, the secondary and minor states in the region (Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bangladesh) were all in one way or another tied into the RSC because of their economic and societal entanglements with India. Partly because of their isolation from each other, and partly because even their collective weight could not begin to match India's, there was never a tendency for the whole RSC to polarise around an anti-Indian alliance centred on Pakistan. Neither was there much sign of the smaller states bandwagoning with India, though at times Bangladesh and Sri Lanka had bilateral security agreements with India (not relating to Pakistan), and Nepal has been in India's security zone since 1950.

Neither Pakistan nor India attracted any South Asian regional allies, which meant that India succeeded in keeping the high politics of the region on a bilateral basis. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) never amounted to much and has not affected the security politics of the region. Nepal and Bhutan were both dependent on India for trade and transit, and Bhutan was a formal dependency. Sri Lanka was broadly neutral between India and Pakistan, but was tied to India by the long-festered problem of its Tamil minority, which linked what became a civil war to the large Tamil population in southern India. There was a major Indian intervention from 1987 to 1990, which failed to resolve the issue. The Maldives gained independence in 1965, and its turbulent domestic politics moved it to request an Indian intervention in 1989. Bangladesh was born in 1971 as a combined result of civil war in Pakistan and the third major war between India and Pakistan, and is tied to India by shared Bengali culture, by river water, and by migration problems. As a rule, economic relations among the South Asian states remained sparse during the Cold War. Economic relations were not significantly securitised at the regional level, and economic interdependence was much too limited to constrain the region's military-political antagonisms. India's continental scale and mercantilist economic policy have, until recently, kept it relatively unpenetrated by the global economy.

The South Asian RSC was also quite well insulated from those around it by Burma (from Southeast Asia) and Afghanistan (from the Gulf) – see map 3, p. 98. Major wars within these three RSCs tended not to spill over into neighbouring complexes. Had Nehru been able to maintain Tibet as an insulator between South Asia and China, the South Asian RSC would also have been well insulated from the north. But the annexation of Tibet by China put Chinese borders close to India's heartland and during the later 1950s created increasing friction over the disputed border. This resulted in a border war between India and China in 1962, a mini-crisis in 1987 (Gupta 1995: 57), and an enduring sense of insecurity in India about China. In parallel with this, a durable military partnership, though not an alliance, developed between China and Pakistan from the early 1960s. Significant security dynamics between South Asia and China posed a problem for early attempts to formulate South Asia as a model for RSCT. This problem was handled by putting China wholly at the global level. In the light of a more fully formulated theory, the Sino-Indian security dynamics arising during the later 1950s can better be seen as part of the wider process by which an Asian supercomplex was forming at

that time. Although Chinese involvement in South Asia did in some ways link upwards to the Cold War, it was primarily located at the interregional level, making it no surprise that it was not much affected by the ending of the Cold War.

At the global level, the South Asian RSC was marginal to the main theatres of the Cold War, but nonetheless became penetrated by it. As RSCT predicts, **when there is rivalry among the global powers, an RSC in conflict formation mode will draw in outside intervention along the lines of its own internal split.** Thus Pakistan sought from an early stage to associate itself with the United States and, a bit later, China. By the early 1950s it had succeeded in becoming part of the US network of containment alliances. Although its relationship with the USA was often troubled, especially from the 1970s onward over nuclear proliferation issues, Pakistan regained US support during the 1980s as an ally against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. This linkage between the USA and Pakistan, and especially US arms supplies to Pakistan and US naval manoeuvres in the Bay of Bengal during the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war, fed a durable securitisation of the USA in India. An Indo-Soviet association began to form from the early 1960s, initially on the basis of Soviet arms supplies, and then in 1971 as an alliance. The Sino-Indian war in 1962 both reinforced India's drift towards the Soviet Union and cemented the China-Pakistan relationship. In this way, the local split in South Asia became tied into, and reinforced by, the global level patterns of the US-Soviet and Chinese-Soviet rivalries.

For this period, one can sum up the South Asian complex in terms of RSCT as follows. It was a standard complex with a bipolar essential structure rooted in mutual securitisations between India and Pakistan. Because Bangladesh was so weak as both a state and a power, this bipolar structure was hardly affected by its secession from Pakistan. Bipolarity was bolstered by the nuclearisation of the military rivalry between India and Pakistan from the mid-1970s onwards. All of the states in the region can be classified to some degree as weak states, though India's robust democracy pushed it towards the middle of the weak-strong state spectrum (Buzan 1991b: 96-107). They had turbulent and often violent domestic politics fuelled by ethnic and religious differences and, since ethnic and religious affiliations often crossed national borders, there was strong interplay between the domestic and regional levels in South Asian insecurity. This pattern of domestic-regional linkage remained stable throughout the Cold War, as did the pattern of linkage upward to the three-cornered Sino-Soviet-US rivalry.

Despite the impressive stability of structure, three possibilities for change were always discernible during this period:

- Internal transformation, with Pakistan being unable to sustain bipolarity either because of its own political disintegration, or because India's natural weight advantage eventually became overwhelming. Pakistan's enthusiasm for alliances with outside powers and the nuclear option were its trump cards in attempting to forestall any such development.
- External transformation by an escalation of the India–China rivalry to a point where it pushed the South Asian regional level into the background. This possibility also was affected by the growth of nuclear weapons capabilities in South Asia, and by India's potential to achieve great power standing beyond the regional level.
- External transformation linking South Asian and Middle Eastern security dynamics. Although the Middle Eastern and South Asian security dynamics generally stood back to back, there were two mechanisms that might fuse them together. One was Pakistan's attempt to balance India by seeking ties first with Iran, and later with Saudi Arabia (especially in regard to the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan, but also in the hiring of Pakistani troops for internal duty in Saudi Arabia). The other mechanism was Israeli concern over Pakistan's rhetoric about an 'Islamic' nuclear bomb, and the possibility, mooted during the 1970s, that Israel and India might therefore find a pressing common cause. In the event, neither of these mechanisms became strong enough during the Cold War to threaten the essential separateness of South Asian and Middle Eastern security dynamics, though they did make for an active interregional level.

South Asia was never more than a sideshow to the main events of the Cold War. Its regional dynamics were strongly autonomous and, although exacerbated by the military inputs from the global level, were neither created nor reshaped by them in any fundamental way.

Post-Cold War: continuity or transformation?

Since the Cold War imposition was never that great in South Asia, simply reinforcing what were already strong domestic and regional patterns, it

is not surprising that the ending of the Cold War created no dramatic transformations in the security dynamics of South Asia. But neither can one simply say that the South Asian case has been 'more of the same' since 1990. There is a substantial case for continuity, but there are also signs that the South Asian RSC is moving towards a quite radical transformation.

The case for continuity

The case for continuity can be made across all four levels. On the domestic, regional, and interregional levels this is not particularly surprising given the deep roots of the dynamics at these levels. It is more surprising at the global level, which has undergone a big change.

Domestic level – The general pattern of violent internal politics in most of the countries in the region remained much the same, as did the pattern of spillover from this level to the regional, interstate one. Progress towards democratisation in most of the South Asian states did little to mitigate this pattern. In Sri Lanka, the civil war rooted in frictions between the Sinhala and Tamil populations dragged on into its third decade. Despite over 60,000 deaths (Gunaratna 1995: 80), and some extension of the conflict into India, neither side could defeat the other. The war remained largely contained within a still functioning Sri Lankan state, and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) became a more or less permanent nonstate player in South Asian security dynamics. By 2002 there were once again hopes that a truce might pave the way for a political deal, with the incentives for the LTTE increased by post-11 September antagonism to terrorism. In Bangladesh, fractious and sometimes violent domestic politics avoided civil war but kept the country weak and marginal. Equally incompetent government in Nepal seemed, by 2002, to be drifting towards civil war. None of these developments threatened the bipolar structure of the RSC.

Because of its defining position in the South Asian RSC, similar domestic turbulence in Pakistan raised more concern even though it was not discontinuous with earlier practice. The whole machinery of state remained distorted by a passionate commitment to a lopsided military rivalry with India that Pakistan could not win, but which inflicted on it a large, expensive, and politically active military establishment. Spectacularly corrupt and chaotic government combined with internal violence to raise questions about the long-term viability of the state. There was serious speculation that Pakistan was drifting towards the sort of semi-permanent political chaos achieved by Afghanistan and

Somalia. Pakistan's political elites were 'more concerned with looting the economy than developing it', and often pursued their bitter personal rivalries more in the street than in the parliament (Bray 1997: 322, 330). Its army dominated political life whether in or out of government, in the process contributing to the degradation of democracy, and becoming a quasi-autonomous actor in its own right (Ahmed 1998; Rais 1995). In 1999, the military once again seized political power. Pakistan's quasi-autonomous military and intelligence services had engaged the country deeply in the Afghan war against the Soviet Union and, after the Soviet withdrawal, in the civil war that followed among the varied religious and ethnic factions in Afghanistan. Among other things this allowed large numbers of Afghan refugees to train and arm inside Pakistan, and Pakistani-sponsored Islamic militants increasingly penetrated the life of Pakistan itself, bringing with them a lively trade in arms and drugs, with their associated warlords and mafias (*Strategic Survey* 1994–5: 198–9). The enforced recruitment of Pakistan into the US war against terrorism forced the government to abandon its Taleban allies. But after the fall of the Taleban, many of them and their al-Qaeda allies retreated into Pakistan and linked up with their supporters there (Ayoob 2002: 55–60), creating further prospects for domestic instability. In addition, there were ongoing instabilities in the southern provinces of Baluchistan and Sind that sometimes looked like civil wars, and a growing securitisation of religious identity accompanied by open violence between Pakistan's dominant Sunni Muslims and its Shi'a and Christian minorities (Saikal 1998: 123–4; Roy 1998; Stern 2000).

On the surface, India might seem to present a similar picture, with corruption scandals and unstable governments serving as a backdrop to ethnic and religious domestic political violence. Given India's size, it was not unreasonable to think that the South Asian RSC was shaped just as much by India's relations with its neighbours as by India's internal military-political relations. The long-running insurgency in the Punjab, which was costing several hundred lives per year, peaked in 1992 but subsided into quiescence thereafter. The violence in Kashmir, which was more closely tied into Indo-Pakistan relations, rumbled on with high casualties, periodic crises, and no sign of solution. Also worrying was the flaring up of communal violence between Hindus and Muslims, and its association with the rise during the 1990s of so-called Hindu nationalist parties, particularly the BJP. How significant is the decline of the secular, modernist Congress Party that dominated India from independence to the early 1990s (Corbridge 1998) and its apparent

replacement by the BJP? Does the BJP's 'Hindu nationalism' suggest that India is undergoing a shift in its national identity towards a narrower cultural self-identity more akin to that of its Islamic neighbours? There are grounds for doubt about this (not least in the continued regional fragmentation of Indian politics), but if it is the case, the implications for securitisation both domestically and regionally would be substantial. Yet the military remained clearly subordinate to political authority, democracy had robust roots, and for all the seeming unsteadiness there was no sense, as there was with Pakistan, that the country was in danger of tipping into the ranks of failed states or lurching into political extremism. After the serious economic crunch of the early 1990s (Corbridge 1998: 8–10), measures of liberalisation generated a respectable rate of economic growth that was not too much disrupted by the economic crisis of the late 1990s in East Asia.

Regional level – Security politics in the region, and their linkages to domestic insecurities, continued in the Cold War pattern, with on-again/off-again tensions between India on the one hand, and Nepal (borders, trade and transit agreements, migrants, water), Bangladesh (water allocations, migrants, insurgency spillovers), and Sri Lanka (Tamil politics) on the other. In relations between India and Pakistan, however, the traditional pattern of sustained hostility was not only maintained, but considerably escalated.

The India–Pakistan rivalry continued to burn around three long-standing issues: border questions, particularly Kashmir; communal issues, exacerbated by the rise of the BJP; and military rivalry, escalated by the increasing nuclear weapon and missile capabilities of both sides. Border skirmishes between the two armies continued over the Siachen glacier and in Kashmir, and insurgent groups in Kashmir continued to find both official and unofficial support in Pakistan, linking them across to its Afghan engagements. India's defence of its claim to Kashmir occupied over half a million of its troops, and its attempts to suppress local rebels blurred into numerous border incidents and cross-border exchanges of fire with Pakistan. Politically, the intense domestic rivalry during the 1990s between Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif fuelled competitive anti-Indian rhetoric over Kashmir, escalating the two states' mutual accusations of interference in each other's domestic affairs. Pakistan also made much political mileage out of the various Hindu–Muslim clashes within India. All of this contributed to a virtual breakdown of diplomatic relations between the two states lasting from 1994 to 1997. Despite India's diplomatic initiative under the more liberal

'Gujral doctrine' (Sen Gupta 1997), the two fought a small border war in the Kargil area of Kashmir during the summer of 1999, and in the spring of 2002 were again in heavy military confrontation as India responded to a series of terrorist attacks which it blamed on Pakistan. Short of all-out war, there was no end in sight to the longstanding pattern of alternating hostility and dialogue between the two states on high politics issues, accompanied by a steadier ability to cooperate on issues such as the sharing of the Indus waters (Abraham 1995: 26–30).

On top of all this was an intensifying nuclear and missile rivalry, though in 1991 the two countries did manage to agree on nuclear installations and in 1992 on the non-use of chemical weapons (Krepon and Sewak 1995). India, with some Russian technical assistance, is steadily pursuing a whole family of SSMs (PPNN 1998a: 16). Pakistan has almost certainly had substantial assistance from North Korea and China for several short-range and one intermediate-range SSMs, and has for some years possessed Chinese M-11 SSMs (*Strategic Survey* 1992–3: 135; 1996–7: 208; Chellany 1998–9; Heisbourg 1998–9). Both states have longstanding military nuclear programmes. Pakistan received substantial assistance from China, and India possibly from Israel (Walker 1998: 518; PPNN 1998a: 19, insert pp. 3, 6; Kumaraswamy 1998: 45–6). Since the 1980s the general assumption was that both either possessed, or could very quickly possess, operational nuclear weapons. Their nuclear tests in May 1998 confirmed these suspicions, with both claiming weaponised nuclear capability (Walker 1998: 518). Many observers of this process are worried that poor C3I, underdeveloped strategic doctrines, and vulnerability to crisis instability could all override restraints on nuclear use (Joeck 1997; Walker 1998: 506; Heisbourg 1998–9: 82–6; Quinlan 2000–1). This concern was reinforced by reports that the Pakistani military had begun readying its nuclear missiles during the 1999 Kargil crisis (*International Herald Tribune* 16 May 2002: 8).

Interregional level – At this level, continuity is partly about the Asian supercomplex, and partly about the security interplay between South Asia and the Middle East. Continuity in the Asian supercomplex hinges on the pattern of relations between China, and India and Pakistan. South Asia continued to be a fairly minor front for China, and China's strategy for keeping it that way was to sustain support for Pakistan's effort to maintain the bipolar conflict formation in the subcontinent. This thoroughly realist strategy meant that, if India could be distracted by Pakistan's challenge, it would be diverted from making trouble for China. China's game in South Asia was helped by the demise of the

Soviet Union and India's consequent loss of a compensating counterthreat against China. China continued to back Pakistan's attempt to match India's achievements in nuclear and missile technology, and India continued to cite the threat from China, more than Pakistan, as the justification for its nuclear and missile programmes. Although an important element of continuity, this pattern should not be overinterpreted. There were limits to China's support for Pakistan, and Sino-Indian relations were in some ways cooperative. China did not want to be drawn into an Indo-Pakistani war, and did not have an alliance with Pakistan in that sense. It was concerned about Pakistan's instability, and even more so about the Islamisation of Pakistani politics, which had implications for China's own problems with its Muslim minorities. And despite India's use of China as the rationale for its own nuclear developments, India's actual military deployment is against Pakistan. Indeed, India and China have maintained a stable diplomatic relationship since the 1980s. There are regular high-level visits, and sustained talks on border issues. In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War there were some border agreements in 1993, and some prospect of demilitarising the border (Gupta 1995: 56–7). But no major shift has taken place in what essentially remains a correct but cool relationship.

Continuity across the South Asia–Middle East boundary prevails despite the upheavals caused by the wars in Afghanistan and their repercussions in both regions. This boundary remains active, as during the Cold War, and is in principle therefore still a candidate for external transformation. But that activity has not linked, and does not look likely to link, together the security dynamics of the two regions. If anything, the war against the Taliban looks likely to reinforce Afghanistan's role as an insulator, whose fragmented warrior clans engage all the neighbours locally without causing the major regional security dynamics to merge (more on this below). In the past, interest in this boundary was over whether there would be some direct integration of security dynamics resulting either from Israel's engagement with Pakistan's 'Islamic' bomb, or from Pakistan's perennial seeking for support in the Islamic world. These concerns remained active, but never took on sufficient importance to bring the basic separateness of South Asian and Middle Eastern security dynamics into question (Kumaraswamy 1998: 7; PPNN 1998a: 19, insert p. 6). Between South Asian and Middle Eastern regional security dynamics, Afghanistan was always an insulator that faced simultaneously north, east, and west, engaging its neighbours on all fronts, but keeping them apart much more than pulling them together. Even if a

more sustained Western engagement in Afghanistan results from the war of 2001, this basic characteristic seems unlikely to change.

Afghanistan remains the key to the boundary between the South Asian and Middle Eastern (as well as ex-Soviet) RSCs. The civil war that followed the ending of the Soviet intervention created a mini-complex, reflecting political fragmentation at the substate level, but nonetheless generating a conflict formation that possesses most of the qualities of a state level complex. In particular, the conflict formation serves to channel external interventions along the lines of the internal rivalries. This mini-complex is comparable to that in the Caucasus, where a not wholly dissimilar ethno-political fragmentation sustains another mini-complex. Both of these mini-complexes act as insulating zones between larger patterns of regional security dynamics: Russia and the Middle East in the case of the Caucasus; South Asia, the Middle East, and Central Asia/Russia in the case of Afghanistan. In both cases the mini-complex draws in neighbouring states, but its internal dynamics are strong enough to keep the larger dynamics separate. The mini-complexes do not generate enough power or concern to become themselves the centre of a new larger regional formation, and they are less important to most of the states around them than security concerns that pull in other directions.

The basic forces that have been in play in the Afghan mini-complex are roughly as follows:

- mostly Pashtun, Sunni Islamic forces, initially organised as the Hizb-e-Islami under Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, but from 1993/4 to 2001 organised as the Taleban, and supported by Pakistan and for a time Saudi Arabia;
- Hazara Shi'as, supported by Iran;
- Uzbeks, supported by Russia and Uzbekistan;
- Tajiks, mostly organised under Ahmad Shah Masoud, and with some support from Tajikistan.

Pakistan was a major player in this game, from 1991 putting its considerable weight behind the Pashtun-Sunni forces, and helping to create the Taleban by making use of the three million refugees from the Afghan civil war camped in its territory (Saikal 1998: 116). With Pakistani and Saudi support, the Taleban were able to capture the south and centre of the country between 1994 and 1996. The Taleban's strength polarised the conflict into a Pashtun/non-Pashtun affair, so forcing the other groups to join forces in the Northern Coalition. This polarisation extended to

the outside players as well, effectively putting Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on one side, and Russia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Iran, India, and even Pakistan's partner China on the other. The United States, initially supportive of the Taleban, turned against them in 1997 because of their Islamic extremism and many violations of human rights in general and women's rights in particular (Saikal 1998: 118–22; Roy 1998). That hostility turned to war after the terrorist attacks on the United States in September 2001 linked the Taleban to al-Qaeda, and made the Uzbeks and Tajiks into allies of the United States.

It seems a fairly safe prediction that political turbulence and instability in Afghanistan will be a durable feature, sometimes muted by a weak central government, sometimes not. The divisions within the country run deep, and its warrior culture makes internal conflict frequent and easy to instigate. The various factions all have outside supporters in neighbouring territories, where kin and substantial refugee populations are to be found. During the 1990s all of Afghanistan's neighbours developed an interest in containing spillovers of religious extremism, drugs trade, and terrorism. Those interests will remain, now joined by a wider Western one of preventing the country from being used as a base for terrorists. Taking rival positions in Afghanistan has been part of the more general Gulf rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and that may well continue. All of this, plus the transnational character of radical Islam, might seem to point to a serious breakdown of the boundary between South Asia and the Middle East (not to mention Central Asia), as exemplified by the involvement of Afghan fighters in Kashmir. Yet that does not seem to be the correct way to interpret what is unfolding.

The key points are four. First, none of the neighbouring countries is either interested in, or capable of, establishing its hegemony over, let alone occupying, Afghanistan. The resistance power of Afghanistan against outsider occupiers was conclusively demonstrated by the Soviet invasion. Second, all of the neighbouring states have more pressing security concerns in other directions. Third, Afghanistan itself lacks the power to force any knitting together of wider security dynamics. Its power is mostly chaos power. It can neither project much power abroad (except terrorism) nor become the central focus of a new complex by drawing its neighbours in. Fourth, with the exit of the Taleban, Afghanistan has lost much of its utility as a safe haven for Islamic radicals. Taken together, these points mean that Afghanistan will continue to fulfil its function as an insulator, at best with a weak central government trying to balance

among both the local warlords and the outside powers. On some of the gloomier assessments about the 'Talebanisation' of Pakistan, all or part of that country might get absorbed into Afghan-like instability (*Strategic Survey* 1996–7: 208; Saikal 1998: 123–4; Ayooob 2002). Some might think this a fitting irony given Pakistan's hand in promoting the Taleban in the first place. Neither Iran nor India has any interest in expanding into what might be called 'the Afpakistan area'. Both have more pressing concerns in other directions, and share a durable interest in containing the chaos without getting too involved in it. The long-term interests of both of these key players are in maintaining the back-to-back tradition of the security dynamics in the Gulf and South Asia. Here the Sunni–Shi'a split in Islam serves India well, by denying Pakistan the strategic depth of serving as the frontier of Islam against India. By committing itself to the Saudi-backed Sunni cause in Afghanistan, and by tolerating violence against its own Shi'a minority, Pakistan has made a strategic error of potentially the same gravity as that which lost it Bangladesh. Its key ally, Saudi Arabia, is itself a conspicuously weak state, with an anachronistic and inefficient ruling elite sustained only by huge oil revenues. Pakistan's heavy involvement in Afghanistan, and its alliance with Saudi Arabia for this purpose, might be thought to raise the prospect of breaking down the border between the South Asian and Middle Eastern complexes. But more likely is that it will further weaken Pakistan, and encourage all of the other neighbouring states to pursue containment.

Global level – Given the general upheavals in the global power structure since 1990, it is noteworthy how much continuity at the global level there was in South Asia. During the later decades of the Cold War, the Soviet Union was an ally of India; the United States generally supported Pakistan over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan during the 1980s, but opposed its nuclear programme, and did not politically support its rivalry with India even though its military supplies *de facto* strengthened Pakistan against India. In the initial fluidity following the collapse of the Soviet Union it seemed as if the Cold War pattern of external great power penetration into South Asia might change. India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh all supported the United States during the Gulf War, despite internal dissension on the issue. The implosion of the Soviet Union in 1991 removed India's ally, and disrupted its lines of military supply, already in some chaos because of the financial squeeze following India's extravagant military buying spree during the late 1980s (Gupta 1995: 3–6, 34–43). The confusion of post-Soviet politics made it difficult for

India to re-establish relations. With the disappearance of the Soviet threat in Afghanistan, United States–Pakistan relations swung into the negative. The United States invoked the Pressler amendment in 1990, cutting Pakistan off from military and economic aid because of its nuclear programme. For a year or two there seemed a prospect that the United States would swing to India, and that Sino-Indian relations might warm up.

But within a short time much of the old pattern fell back into place. India began to rebuild its relationship with Russia both as its main source of arms, and for transfer of military technology. United States–India relations cooled as Washington put more emphasis on non-proliferation and human rights goals than on building ties with India. In 1995, the United States seemed to tilt back towards Pakistan, lifting the Pressler amendment for one year after successful lobbying by Benazir Bhutto, and thus allowing some significant arms supplies to be delivered to Pakistan. The United States also began to find some common cause with Pakistan in supporting anti-Iranian forces in the Afghan civil war. Both India and Pakistan experienced severe US pressure over the negotiations on the renewal of the NPT and on a CTBT during 1995–6. During the late 1990s, it was not difficult to find either political rhetoric or academic analysis in Delhi that unhesitatingly identified the United States as the key threat to India (interviews; Bajpai 1998: 174–7). Thus, at least for the first decade, the ending of the Cold War left a surprising amount of the global pattern in South Asia more or less in place.

But, although the pieces from the Cold War alignments slotted into the same pattern during the 1990s, they did not have the same significance. India and Russia did rebuild some aspects of their military relationship, but these were largely confined to arms supply, and no longer contained the element of strategic alliance. The ongoing political and economic weakness in Russia largely put it outside the balance-of-power game in South Asia. The US role in the subcontinent remained as inconsistent as ever and not very deeply or continuously engaged. Until September 2001, nuclear proliferation remained the dominant US concern in the region. This meant that its relationship with India remained cool and prickly, and with Pakistan fluctuating between warm (mostly over intervention in Afghanistan) and cool (on nuclear proliferation). At least for the 1990s, the ending of the Cold War weakened what was in any case a fairly marginal American engagement in South Asia, and this worked most strongly against Pakistan. US responses to the nuclear tests in 1998 clearly hurt Pakistan more than India, and by 1997 the United States had

lost its interest in making common cause with Pakistan in the Afghan affray.

All of this was pushed aside by the US war against Afghanistan in 2001, which forced Pakistan to be on-side with the coalition, and interrupted a warming phase in US relations with India that had reflected the new US administration's concerns about Chinese power. The sharp deterioration in Indo-Pakistan relations that ran alongside the war in Afghanistan left the United States in an awkward position in South Asia, with India, like many other states, attempting to link its own struggle against insurgents to the US war on terrorism. The United States seemed to be stuck with an engagement with Pakistan in order to prevent chaos within the country bringing its Islamic extremists and its nuclear weapons together. Indeed, Pakistan could be forcibly deprived of its nuclear weapons if the United States thought there was a real danger that they might fall into the hands of Islamic extremists. Like India, the United States could not afford to let Pakistan fall apart, because the consequences of its disintegration would be worse than the costs of its continuation. Potentially, this situation tied the United States into South Asia as a ring-holder between India and Pakistan for the long term. But the US commitment to the subcontinent remained as ambivalent as ever, with both the durability and the direction of its commitment in doubt.

At first glance, therefore, there is much to be said for the view that the RSC in South Asia was not much affected by the ending of the Cold War. Its essential structure remained unaltered, as did the local forces driving it, and, at least up to 2002, the patterns of interregional and global penetration into the region, never anyway the dominant factor, did not change much. But 'more of the same' would nevertheless be a premature conclusion to draw about this RSC.

The case for transformation

The case for transformation does not rest on any immediate or dramatic effect from the ending of the Cold War. Rather, it comes about as a result of slower-moving forces, some generated within the region and others mostly happening at the interregional and global levels. The case for transformation can almost be interpreted as a kind of continuity, because the two main paths down which the evidence points are the same as those sketched above that were already being discussed during the Cold War: (1) internal transformation caused by the decay of the regional bipolar power structure; and (2) external transformation caused by the intensification of India's rivalry with China.

Internal transformation – The difficulty of Pakistan’s task in maintaining bipolarity against India means that the possibility of an internal transformation has always been present in South Asia. But in the absence of some transformative event, such as wholesale defeat in war or the collapse of the state, the problem is to determine whether or not a set of incremental developments have undermined Pakistan’s claim to be a regional pole of power. This question is almost wholly about power, for there seems little prospect that Pakistan will abandon its securitisation of India (Ahmed 1998: 361). Indeed, the whole socially constructed aspect of India–Pakistan relations seems locked into hostility (Rajmaira 1997). On the face of it, the evidence about bipolarity pulls in opposing directions. On the one hand, the achievement of nuclear parity equips Pakistan with the great equaliser, and therefore confirms the bipolar power structure in South Asia. But, on the other hand, there is much suggesting that Pakistan is steadily fading away as a plausible rival to, or balancer of, India. In other words, it is in danger of losing its status as a distinct number two to India and sinking down towards being more of a nuisance than a challenger.

In simple material terms, India’s population is seven times and its land area four times that of Pakistan. India’s GNP is more than six times that of Pakistan, and its current growth rate slightly ahead, though its GNP per capita is still only two-thirds that of Pakistan. But India’s military expenditure is well over three times Pakistan’s, and its military manpower twice as great (*Strategic Survey* 1998–9: 295–9).

These statistics have not prevented Pakistan from holding a plausible ‘number two’ position in South Asia over several decades. The main problem is Pakistan’s apparent slide from being a weak state towards being a failed one, and the contrast with India’s relatively robust democracy. The dismaying spectacle of Pakistan’s political elites looting the state’s coffers while at the same time indulging in highly personalised rivalries – and as the country spirals into economic and political chaos – is comparable to some of the worst performances from African kleptocracies. Venal, incompetent, and imperious leadership has already caused Pakistan to experience fission once, in 1971, and many of the same forces of ethnic resentment that generated that result are still present within what remains of the country. Although its leaders make much of the threat from India, ‘the external threat is less severe than the country’s internal fault lines’ (Bray 1997: 330). Indeed, it is the chaotic state of politics within Pakistan that fuels its need to exaggerate the threat from India (Ahmed 1998: 361). The illusory stability of yet another military

government since 1999 does not hide the fact that Pakistan is 'in the middle of a deep crisis' (Ayooob 2002: 59).

Even a sympathetic observer of Pakistan's politics (Rizvi 1998: 110) writes (before the 1999 coup) that:

Pakistan's civil order and domestic political economy is in turmoil. Widening ethnic, regional and religious-sectarian cleavages, the after-effects of the Afghan War, and weapons proliferation all pose serious challenges to the government. Pakistani society is now so fractured, inundated with sophisticated weapons, brutalised by civic violence and overwhelmed by the spread of narcotics that it is no longer possible for any civilian government to operate effectively without the Army's support... Competing political forces tend to be intolerant towards each other, thereby undermining political institutions and processes. There is no consensus among them as to how to keep the military out of politics.

Although securitisation rhetoric is still strong at the interstate level, Pakistani society seemed increasingly to be fragmenting into substate referent objects for security based mainly on ethnic and religious identity. The army and intelligence services both have a quasi-autonomous character, but it is far from clear that their interests are the same or that either is immune from internal fragmentation. And there is no sense that this internal incoherence is a temporary or recently developed situation. It is of a piece with Pakistan's entire political history since independence, and this deepens the suspicion that there is scant hope for any major change of direction. Pakistan has been steadily dissipating the political resources that gained it independence in 1947, and it is not clear how long the state can soldier on before it either disintegrates or sinks into sustained incoherence within its existing borders. The prospect of political fission thus stands to undo the strategic gains that Pakistan made with nuclear fission.

With the loss of US support during the 1990s, the army became no longer the match for India that it once was. It is far from clear that the renewed US support since 2001 will address any of these problems, and it could easily make many of them worse. As Manor and Segal (1998: 64) note, India is now basically secure on the subcontinent: 'Pakistan is an inferior power and will remain so with a minimum of Indian effort.' Evidence for this was clear in the rhetoric and behaviour surrounding the 1998 nuclear tests. India studiously downplayed Pakistan's nuclear tests, conspicuously not taking up the opportunity to follow Pakistan's tit-for-tat behaviour, and referencing its own behaviour mostly against

that of China and the other nuclear weapon states (PPNN 1998a: insert p. 4).

The line of argument for internal transformation is that Pakistan is losing the capacity to stand as a pole of power against India, and that the South Asian RSC is thus easing towards unipolarity.

External transformation – Transformation across the frontier with the Middle Eastern complex having been ruled out above, the remaining possibility is that the South Asian RSC will undergo an external transformation on the basis of developments in relations between India and China. The traditional form of this scenario was an increase in Sino-Indian tensions to the point where they transcended India–Pakistan ones. As India’s nuclear rhetoric and China’s continued arms supply to Pakistan indicate, this line of thinking still has some relevance. But the escalation of Sino-Indian military rivalry is not the only way that external transformation along this axis can occur. The other path is for India to transcend its region by rising to the status of a third Asian great power. India’s reach for great power status does not require all-out rivalry between India and China, and could occur in a context of improving Sino-Indian relations. But it does give China a substantial and increasingly widely recognised role as the benchmark for India’s status (Chellaney 1998–9; Delpech 1998–9). Before and after the May 1998 nuclear tests, India’s defence minister George Fernandez repeatedly identified China as the main threat to India (*Economist* 9 May 1998: 86; PPNN 1998a: insert p. 4), even though in general terms Sino-Indian relations have been relatively cordial since their 1993 border agreement.

It might be objected that this is nothing new. Since independence India has measured itself against China, and has always thought of itself as a great power. Among the post-test rhetoric was an Indian government statement that: ‘Our strengthened capability adds to our sense of responsibility, the responsibility and obligation of power’ (Walker 1998: 520). India’s nuclear tests were clearly intended to reinforce its claim to great power standing. In RSC terms, there are two problems for India’s claim: first, India’s actual military deployment has remained mostly focused on Pakistan and, second, neither China nor the rest of the world has acknowledged its claim. There is evidence of some continuity in this posture. China condemned India’s tests in general terms, but refused to take up the Indian defence minister’s challenge to pose itself as a threat to India, and avoided making any overt countermove such as resuming its own nuclear tests (PPNN 1998b: 4, insert p. 3; *Economist* 9 May 1998: 86). China’s response to India’s test and India’s response to

Pakistan's are strikingly parallel: the smaller power sought to measure itself against its larger neighbour, with the bigger power doing its best to ignore or downplay the challenge. But, like the decay of Pakistan, the rise of India is an incremental event lacking much in the way of dramatic points of transformation. Again, as with Pakistan, the question is whether enough has changed, or is on the brink of changing, to warrant a re-evaluation of the regional security structures.

India's assertion of nuclear weapons state (NWS) status notwithstanding, the material statistics do not strongly favour its claim to great power status. Globally, it ranks alongside Mexico and the Netherlands in terms of GNP, and Brazil and Israel in terms of military expenditure. Its GNP per capita lies alongside that of Senegal and Nigeria, at around 7 per cent of the level of the main Western states. Even within Asia, India is not unquestionably in the front rank. Its GNP and military expenditure compare with those of South Korea, Taiwan, and Australia, rather than Japan or China. There is not much doubt that its leaders and peoples conceive of India as having special rights and duties in the management of international society based on its status as one of the world's major civilisations, and on population size. The doubt lies in whether other leading members of international society are willing to accord India that right formally, and whether they treat it *de facto* as a great power in their own foreign policy calculations.

The West still tends to answer this question negatively. Washington has not treated Delhi with the same respect, either formal or informal, that it accords other great powers. There is also the obstacle that the legal framework of the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) makes it almost impossible to grant India formal status as a NWS, and that this status denial is one of India's main grievances (Walker 1998: 511–12). Until President Clinton's visit in March 2000, the United States seemed to classify India along with Brazil as a regional power located in an area of marginal interest. Clinton's visit may have marked some movement, and there are signs that the Bush administration's more assertive attitude towards China could help India's cause. There is some prospect of the United States giving more sustained acknowledgement not only to India's status as a longstanding democracy, but also to its economic potential and to its possible utility as a counterweight to China. As Manor and Segal (1998) note, India's economic performance since 1994 has been quite impressive, and it looks well placed to continue down this path (*Economist* 29 April 2000: 69–70). Renewed US interest demonstrated the borderline quality of India's global level status as lying between the biggest of the

regional powers and the smallest of the great powers, but India does not seem to be a beneficiary of the US engagement in the region in 'the war against terrorism'.

Regardless of whether or not India succeeds in convincing the West of its credentials, it may well find a more responsive audience in Asia. To the governments and peoples still resident in the 'zone of conflict' India's nuclear tests will be seen as significant and impressive. Right across Asia from Iraq and Iran, through Russia and China, to Korea and Taiwan, there are governments and peoples who will have no difficulty empathising with India's position regardless of whether they regret or support its action. India may well be close to a position from which it can play China's old trick (Segal 1999) of trading on its future as an up-and-coming power. The prospect of economic growth and rising military capability may put India in a position where both China and the United States have to take it seriously. India could be an ally or an opponent of both. If China and the United States begin to compete for India's favour, then it will be well on its way to achieving great power status. From this perspective it becomes clearer that substantial changes may well be underway in the standing and relevance of the South Asian RSC itself. As we have seen, the domestic and regional security dynamics within South Asia have largely preserved their traditional form. But saying that is not necessarily to say that their overall significance in the larger pattern of things remains the same. Despite the ongoing confrontation with Pakistan, there is evidence both that the South Asian regional level is diminishing in importance to India and that India's significance within the Asian supercomplex is increasing.

The case to consider here is that India is steadily transcending its long-standing confinement to South Asia, and beginning to carve out a wider role as an Asian great power. This is certainly the hope of those advocating a nuclear weapons policy more openly focused against China (Chellaney 1998–9). It was also the aim of what came to be called the Gujral doctrine (Sen Gupta 1997), by which India has, since the early 1990s, sought to pacify its smaller neighbours, make accommodative agreements with them, and increase intra-regional trade. This policy was based on the understanding that India had no hope of being taken seriously outside the region until it could stabilise its own local environment. Although not without its frictions (common to any regional community), this policy has generally been considered quite successful. Pakistan is the most resistant to it, but, even there, informal trade is

said to be much larger than the official figures would suggest. And the political decay of Pakistan, despite its nuclear arsenal, reinforces this development. It opens the way for thinking of the South Asian RSC as transforming from being a vigorous bipolar conflict formation towards a kind of unipolar hegemony. By labelling this a 'unipolar hegemony' we are not saying that India has successfully dominated or overawed its neighbours in a classical imperial sense. That might be true of its relations with Bhutan and Sikkim, but it is clearly not the case with Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, and certainly not with Pakistan, whose sense of rivalry with India remains acute. Rather, we mean that India no longer feels strategically threatened from within South Asia, at least not severely so, and that it has the resources and the will to carve out a wider great power role on the Asian stage. This does not suggest that the South Asian regional level ceases to operate. It will not be easy for India to stabilise or contain the potentially very dangerous relationship with Pakistan. But unless Pakistan, or factions within it, succeeds in keeping alive the threat of head-to-head war with India, India will steadily get more room to develop roles outside the region.

Perhaps the most significant move in this respect was India's acceptance of the invitation to join the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1996, an invitation that was pointedly not given to Pakistan despite its earlier links to the region as a member of the now defunct SEATO alliance. No matter how toothless one might think the ARF to be, it is nonetheless a substantial piece in the security architecture of the Asian supercomplex (see ch. 6). There can be little doubt that the Southeast Asian states wanted India to join as a counterweight to China, and that both India and China understood the significance of that move. India's membership also complemented its 'look east' economic policy from the early 1990s, which sought to link the country to the East Asian boom. The military complement to this – and also India's response to China's cultivation of Burma – was a greater Indian naval presence in Southeast Asian waters and plans to build up a naval base in the Andaman Islands. All of this was much battered by the economic storm in East Asia during the late 1990s, and it is still too soon to tell what will become of it, though India has recently expressed interest in the former Russian naval base in Vietnam (*Strategic Survey* 2001–2: 302). Although not having any immediate military significance, India's joining of the ARF broke its traditional security insulation from Southeast Asia, and thereby consolidated its place in the Asian supercomplex. A similar, though less

significant, indicator of India's move upwards from regional power is its role in the Indian Ocean Rim Initiative, which aims to strengthen local control over that ocean.

National identity and security discourse in India

India's choice of securitisation is crucial to the development of the RSC. Indian security policy is unusual not only for vacillating between different countries as primary threat, but also for these being at three different levels: Pakistan at the regional, China at the super-regional, and the United States at the global level. In addition, domestic security plays an important role, not so much as competitor for external security (as in South Africa), but as implicated in each of the external threats.

A survey or mapping of actual securitisation will in this case not tell us much that is new because these different threats – and especially the relationship between the United States and India – have been quite volatile without any trend standing out clearly. Instead, we will look at deeper factors that might condition or constrain securitisation and therefore help to predict the likely dominant future pattern. Two historical patterns will be presented: what kind of security concerns have traditionally shaped Indian conceptions, and the nature and effects of national identity.

Historically, security concerns in India have typically been about internal/external combinations. Kanti Bajpai concludes from a historical survey that across the different strategic threats, partly inherited from British India, an important 'lesson' was that 'invasions succeeded because Indians were internally disunited and because they were backward' (1998: 160). India's own stability is the key to security. Internal weakness and disunity are exploited – and/or caused – by outside threats. This understanding of India's history and its consequences for security is an important line of reasoning for nationalists, because any division is thereby potentially a security risk. It also serves to elevate development as a security issue.

National identity would at first seem to be fully occupied by the split between secularism and Hinduism in Indian politics. The BJP 'revolution' has altered the relationship between ethno-religious identity, state identity, and security. And in the presentation of secular Indians (who are the ones most often heard outside India), this is

almost a security risk in itself, because it threatens the *raison d'être* of India. The Hindu-nationalists, in return, think about the Congress Party and the other seculars as a threat to 'India'. However, both have a Hindu background: the secularists' slogan of 'unity in diversity' is an ideal that developed within Hinduism as a way to reconcile the many forms of worship within it (Banerjee 1997: 36–7). Both draw from the idea that India is an ancient civilisation and should be recognised as such. Exactly how this civilisation is defined is not a point of agreement, but they both pursue a policy aimed at global recognition that India is a *world civilisation*. It is an important aspect of security discourse that 'for India survival means survival as a great power and security has become synonymous with the safety that enables India to develop, maintain and prosper in its political eminence' (Ashley Tellis quoted by Kak 1998). Obviously, the Hindu-nationalist wave and its clash with secular visions is very important. But we should not necessarily accept the self-presentation of the parties according to which they share almost nothing with each other. The general challenge to any discourse in this area is to link security and identity, threat and nationalism.

The three main external threats should be assessed against this background.

Pakistan as a threat clearly fulfils the internal/external criteria very well – it is about an external power that is mainly a problem because it supports a revolt within India. The other dimension is more tricky. Does a conflict with Pakistan help to get India its sought-after recognition as a great power and/or a world civilisation? As a smaller state, Pakistan cannot be the mirror in which India becomes a great power. However, the civilisational question is at stake, both because seeing the Pakistan challenge off is crucial to lifting India above the region, and because the conflict itself is a threat to the civilisational vision. To secularists, Pakistan is a threat because the religiously based self-definition of Pakistan pushes India in the direction of a similar self-conception which would mean a 'smaller' India, an ethnic nation, not a large world civilisation. To Hindu-nationalists, Pakistan's Islamism represents the great invader that dominated India's Hindu civilisation for many centuries. The conundrum is that Pakistan threatens India's identity in basic ways, but that conflict with Pakistan defines the principal obstacle to India's culture-aspiration to be recognised as a great power.

China performs relatively weakly on the internal threat dimension. A few remote border areas remain contested, but China's impact on India's domestic affairs is limited and does not threaten identity. China, however, performs strongly as a means for producing an Indian great power. China is the most obvious choice here because, if India wants to ascend the ladder of power status, the Asian super-complex seems to be the next step after it transcends Pakistan.

The United States would at first seem unlikely to connect to the internal/external factor. However, as argued by Bajpai (1998: 174–9), the major threat in New Delhi since 1991 has been a concert of the United States and the other leading industrial countries. It dominates world politics to an extent that limits India's autonomy, and 'one of the greatest fears' is that powerful outsiders will intervene regionally to constrain India. The fear is that external actors might get involved in the main regional conflicts such as Afghanistan and Kashmir, or support the smaller states in disturbing ways. In terms of recognition, the US strategy seems the most promising. In a good Hegelian way, it is important to mirror oneself in as powerful an entity as possible to become recognised as that which one strives for.

The most likely outcome is a continued vacillation among the three levels. In addition to the practical problems associated with eliminating Pakistan, taking on China, or challenging the United States, each securitisation only partially fulfils the needs in relation to national identity and tradition.

Conclusions

Much of this region's story still fits within the state-centric, military-political terms of 'classical' RSCT. India–Pakistan is still largely a story of securitisations about military power, weapons, and political status. The more open attitude of revised RSCT towards non-traditional sectors and referent objects does draw more attention to the domestic level, but using a securitisation approach does not significantly change the profile of what was observed using more traditional methods. In terms of sectors, societal insecurity is a big part of the domestic story, and draws more attention to the internal goings-on in the states of the region, particularly Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, but also India. It helps one to see a variety of substate actors and entities with standing as security actors and referent objects within states, and sometimes on a regional scale. But even this non-traditional sector is substantially

integrated into the interstate rivalries, and much of it is readily visible through military-political lenses. So far the economic and environmental sectors make a relatively minor appearance on the balance sheet of securitisation within the region. Water sharing is the key environmental concern on the subcontinent and, up to a point, has been successfully handled politically. To the extent that the economy has been securitised, this is with reference to the impacts of globalisation (Mahendra 2002), though that could change if intra-regional trade continues to expand. The fact that so much of security in this region can be comprehended in the old style reinforces the idea put forward in part I that the post-Cold War international system divides into 'two worlds' for purposes of security analysis. Within that model, South Asia is clearly in the zone of conflict, where the traditional power-politics rules of international relations still prevail.

A second observation is that there is evidence of a considerable disjuncture between the picture that would emerge from traditional strategic analysis and the one that results from a securitisation approach. Traditional strategic analysis focuses on the India–Pakistan and India–China rivalries, with their associated wars, tensions, military deployments, and material capabilities. But, in a wide range of interviews conducted by Buzan in Delhi early in 1999, Pakistan was mentioned mostly as an irritant, and not even its nuclear threat was taken seriously. China was not seen as an immediate threat, despite its support for Pakistan, and even as a future threat was largely seen as a problem for the United States to handle, not India. The overwhelming weight of rhetorical concern was on the United States as the main threat to India. One heard repeatedly the (what seemed to an outsider highly exaggerated) idea that the United States 'threatened India with nuclear weapons' during the 1971 war. And given US hegemony post-Cold War as the last superpower and as the leader of global capitalism, there was not much sympathy for the idea that the global level had become less important relative to the regional one as a result of the ending of the Cold War. The image was one of an increasingly coordinated core pressuring a periphery made weaker by the demise of the Soviet Union – thus a stronger global level, not a weaker one, when viewed from a third world perspective. Both its preoccupation with the United States and its dismissal of Pakistan make sense in the light of India's self-perception as a great power. Its relatively calm and detached attitude towards China is harder to explain, and could be crucial in how the Asian supercomplex unfolds.

To sum up, we can make the following points about how the South Asian complex and the wider security constellation within which it sits have evolved since the ending of the Cold War.

- At the domestic level the general pattern in the region shows a great deal of continuity across the transition from the Cold War to the post-Cold War era. Within this pattern, domestic political life in Afghanistan and Pakistan became conspicuously more fragmented, chaotic, and violent.
- At the regional level, the pattern of amity and enmity remained broadly similar, with some intensification of the hostility between India and Pakistan. But Pakistan's seeming slide towards failure as a state looked increasingly to be bringing the power bipolarity of the South Asian RSC into question. Despite Pakistan's nuclear equaliser, India looked more hegemonic in the region. Thus, although the regional level retained its traditional form, it was becoming less important to India, and allowing it more latitude to define wider security horizons. If the honeymoon between the United States and India opened by Clinton's visit survives the turbulence unleashed by the 2001 war against Afghanistan, this could reinforce India's status within the Asian supercomplex.
- At the interregional level, one finds mainly continuity in the patterns between South Asia and the Middle East and between China and South Asia. The South Asian RSC underwent no external transformation, but its position in the Asian supercomplex was strengthened by India's membership in the ARF. The boundaries between the South Asian complex and its neighbours were *not* breaking down and forming new configurations of amity/enmity and polarity. Instead, something quite different seemed to be unfolding. The regional boundaries remained broadly stable, while the whole South Asian regional level diminished in relative importance for India. In effect, India was beginning to establish its great power credentials at the interregional level in Asia, though it was still at best only in the early stages of doing so at the global level.
- At the global level there was a high degree of continuity in the overall pattern of outside intervention in South Asia. Although India lost its support from the Soviet Union, Pakistan seemingly retained its on-again/off-again relationship with the United

States, developments which left China in an improved position vis-à-vis influence in South Asia. The main option for change was the possibility that as a consequence of its 11 September engagements in South Asia, the United States would find itself more durably drawn into the region as a ring-holder between India and Pakistan.