

Sos Political science & Public
Administration

M.A Political science IV Sem
Contemporary International
Politics(404-A)

UNIT-III

Topic Name-South Asia & Super Powers

COLD WAR POLITICS OF SUPERPOWERS IN SOUTH ASIA

South Asia is a most complex, volatile and politically explosive region and it remains the most enigmatic and baffling in the world. It is also one of the most socially divided and fertile regions. The region of South Asia mainly consists of seven states: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. It is home to 1.4 billion people, more than 20 percent of the world population. Thus, about one-fifth of humanity lives between the western reaches of Afghanistan and Pakistan on one side and the eastern reaches of Bangladesh and India on the other. It is a region that lies between the sea routes of the Indian Ocean (Persian Gulf and the Asia-Pacific) and the land routes of Central Asia connecting Europe to the East. It is a large reservoir of natural and human resources, making it a prime destination for finance capital, a lucrative market for trade and a source of cheap raw material. It also sits at the confluence of the richest sources of oil, gas, rubber, manganese, copper, gold, tea, cotton, rice and jute and is the transit point for most of the resources and manufactures that criss-cross the world. Moreover, it is the most heavily militarized and bureaucratized zone in the world and it has a variety of complex and violent primordial ethnic groups

COLD WAR POLITICS OF SUPERPOWERS IN SOUTH ASIA

- ▶ . Historically, South Asia had been the finest passage of invaders from Central Asia, Persia, the Arab world and even Greece for thousands of years. Later, the region was colonized first by the Muslims and then by the European powers and ultimately it comes under the suzerainty of British Empire. Thus, British India was the base from which England projected its power towards China and Russia as part of the infamous "Great Game" in the 19th century. The region saw the rise of central state institutions more than two thousand years ago and there is a continuous history of the rise and fall of civilizations and accompanying social-political institutions and ideologies. In terms of geopolitics, the South Asian region has traditionally been looked at as a unified entity. The region is Indo-centric and all other seven countries of South Asia are located around India, without any mutual geographic contiguity

Potential superpower

- ▶ A **potential superpower** is a state or a political and economic entity that is speculated to be—or to have the potential to soon become—a superpower.
- ▶ Currently, only the United States fulfills the criteria to be considered a superpower. China on the other hand, has been referred to as an emerging superpower, given that Beijing's power is now beyond the classification of a .
- ▶ The European Union and the emerging BRIC economies comprising Brazil, Russia, and India are most commonly described as being potential superpowers.
- ▶ Collectively these potential superpowers, and the United States, comprise 68.0% of global nominal GDP, 62.4% of global GDP (PPP), more than one third of the total land area and more than 50% of the world's population

What is a regional superpower?

- ▶ In international relations since the late 20th century, a **regional power** is a term used for a state that has **power** within a geographic region. States which wield unrivalled **power** and influence within a region of the world possess **regional** hegemony

How did the Cold War affect South Asia?

- ▶ In Southeast **Asia**, the **Cold War** had a mixed legacy. ... **Asia** was drastically **affected** by the **cold war**. The Korean **war** divided Korea at the 38th parallel, making it into North and **South** Korea. China in 1949 was declared a communist nation and (technically) still is today.

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Role of super powers

- ▶ In **South Asia** the **super powers** have played a **major role** in its economic as well as political development. They have helped in resolving some tensions as well as created some tensions; they also have created problems but have kept them from rising/mounting into uncontrollable propositions

Is India a regional superpower in South Asia?

- ▶ There are two main reasons that explain the benign perception of India's rise in Southeast Asia. First, there are no territorial disputes between India and its immediate neighbours in Southeast Asia. India has a land border with only one Southeast Asian state, Myanmar, which was fixed by their British colonial rulers in 1937.
- ▶ India has maritime borders with three Southeast Asian states: Myanmar, Thailand, and Indonesia. India's maritime boundaries with Thailand and Indonesia were fixed through a trilateral agreement in 1978, while India's maritime boundary with Myanmar was finalized in 1987.
- ▶ Second, India is not pursuing any unilateral or policies towards Southeast Asia. In 2012, former Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, explicitly noted that New Delhi believes that "Asean centrality is essential in the evolving regional architecture," endorsing Asean's leading role in regional diplomacy.
- ▶ Similarly, at the military/maritime level, India not only prefers to be invited into the region , but former defence minister, Pranab Mukherjee, noted in 2006 that India was willing to assist the regional states in "any capacity" for security in the Strait of Malacca subject "to the desire of the littoral states.

Military capability

- ▶ In other words, despite India's more advanced military capabilities, New Delhi is not claiming the mantle of leadership there but prefers to work in accordance with the local norms and mores.
- ▶ Therefore, it is not surprising that Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's recently deceased statesman, welcomed India's presence in Southeast Asia in 2007 by noting that there was "no fear" that India had "aggressive intentions."
- ▶ India has now transcended its home region of South Asia due to its growing power in Southeast Asia, thus becoming a key component of the Asian security architecture along with the region's other great powers: the United States, Japan, and China. Notably, all three Asian great powers also seem to be willing to work with India in Southeast Asia.
- ▶ US President Obama has urged India to "act East" on a number of occasions. Furthermore, the US and India released a joint vision statement earlier this year in which they specifically called for "safeguarding maritime security and ensuring freedom of navigation and over flight throughout the region, especially in the South China Sea." On his part, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe sees the India-Japan relationship as a "confluence" of the Indian and Pacific Oceans

Security Angles

- ▶ **Security angles** India has three main security-related interests in Southeast Asia. First, as noted by Mukherjee in 2005, India's "Look East" strategy is based on the principle of "the maintenance of an equitable strategic balance."
- ▶ India does not want Southeast Asia to be dominated by any single great power. Consequently, India is upgrading its naval and air assets in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Located at the mouth of the Strait of Malacca, India's maritime and air capabilities in the Andamans help India meet its second security interest in the region: the security of the Strait itself. Finally, India's growing maritime and air capabilities — centered on diverse platforms such as the P-8I aircraft, the C-130Js, the C-17 Globemasters, Sukhoi-30 MKIs, aircraft carrier(s), nuclear submarine(s), and landing dock(s) — allow India to project military power into the South China Sea from the Andamans.
- ▶ After all, India's third security interest in Southeast Asia is to ensure the freedom of navigation in the South China Sea. In fact, India's regional partnerships — including docking rights at Vietnam's Nha Trang port — may further augment India's capabilities

Intensified Arms Race in the region

- ▶ India is already the world's second-largest importer of arms and as its geostrategic competition with China intensifies and tensions with Pakistan soar, the country is likely to further intensify its arms procurement and military modernization. Convincingly, it will create a security dilemma for Pakistan and country will be left with no other option except to increase its own arms procurement to deny India any significant advantage and ensure arms race stability in the region, which forms an important component of Strategic Stability. Consequently, the country's already crippling economy is likely to come under further pressure and less allocation to the Human Development Index related domains means further increase in the impoverishment in the world's sixth most populous country

Conclusion

- ▶ South Asia region is all set to become one of the most important battlefields for the emerging geostrategic competition between the USA and China. The region is already home to ever-hostile nuclear-armed neighbours and the emergence of new great power politics in the region is all set to lead towards further instability. To add to the precariousness is the rising fascism in India and due to India's strategic efficacy, USA's continuous policy of appeasing the fascist Modi regime. Absolute impunity for its tyrannical moves and hysteria has rendered India ever more assertive and aggressive, and there are chances that country may instigate a war over the disputed region of Kashmir, which can escalate to cataclysmic levels. Soaring regional tensions are probable to enhance the Modi regime's romance with arms buildup and an unrestrained arms race in the conventional and nuclear domain is very much on the cards. Furthermore, soaring geopolitical tensions leave no space for the toning-down of the trend of proxy wars and once adversarial countries are bent on exploiting each other's fault lines, it will just augment to the instability and volatility in the region. Grownup instability and ratcheting-up of hostilities are likely to condense the chances of any economic cooperation between India and Pakistan, and South Asian economic integration would remain a dream unfulfilled

THANK YOU

The background features abstract, overlapping geometric shapes in various shades of green, ranging from light lime to dark forest green. These shapes are primarily located on the right side of the frame, creating a modern, layered effect against the white background.