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Ensuring Peace in South Asia: A Fresh Approach Needed

by ***Deba R. Mohanty***

After the 'September 11' terrorist attacks on the US mainland, the security environment in South Asia entered a new and complicated phase. This has once more brought the United States into the region. The last time the United States was covertly involved was during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Now, aided by friends and allies, it has not only waged a battle against terrorism but is striving to play a balancing act between India and Pakistan—two of the major actors in this part of the world.

It is indeed not easy for any major power to contemplate a just order in South Asia as the region has long been a victim of the various interwoven security threats. Each is linked to the others and is often rooted in two or more states.

These threats include drugs and light weapons (Pakistan and Afghanistan), terrorism (India), ethnic secessionist movements (Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka), ethnic and communal violence (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh), and insurgency (Nepal, India).

Apart from these, the countries of the region have also been facing problems ranging from poverty and illiteracy to malnutrition. Although these countries have been striving hard to develop during the last half century, all of them have been plagued with socioeconomic and security problems. Differences in patterns of governance and forms of politics as well as internal politico-economic disparities have primarily been responsible for both stability and instability.

However, socioeconomic and other problems aside, the states of the region are now grappling with two major interlinked security threats—terrorism, and the profusion of small arms and light weapons. Barring sporadic incidents in some parts of the region where the use of weapons was witnessed before the late 1970s, this regional problem of terrorism assumed a new dimension during the early and late 1980s. The

flow of man-portable weapons began during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan where the armed resistance of the opposition Mujahedin was supported by the 'Afghan arms pipeline', operated by the CIA and the Pakistani intelligence organization, ISI. This nexus proved to be formidable: within a decade these weapons supplies led to success of the resistance.

As the Soviet forces withdrew, so too did the support given to the ISI by the CIA. Although it was expected that this would be the end of the Afghan crisis, surplus weapons from the 'pipeline' were sufficient to wage battles elsewhere—primarily in Kashmir and northeast India where, it should be noted, the problem of terrorism actually started during the late 1980s (when the Afghan resistance was winning). At that time the arms-drugs nexus also flourished, encouraged by the lawlessness in the state of Afghanistan and support from Pakistan.

The 1990s thus witnessed hundreds of violent incidents, primarily in Kashmir and northeast India. The state-sponsored 'low-cost' option of terrorist activities—waged with support from Pakistan—well suited its purpose of keeping India at bay. By this time, some of the terrorist organizations like the

Taliban had already graduated to holding state power. Amid all this, increasing nuclearization in the region encouraged India to 'go nuclear', later followed by Pakistan, adding a new dimension to the overall security dynamics. From mid-1998 to the present day, a number of dangerous situations have been witnessed including the Kargil conflict in late 1999, terrorist attacks at Red Fort and the Indian Parliament, and the massacre at Kaluchak, also in India. Since 'September 11', the United States has waged a battle in Afghanistan to wipe out terrorism in all its forms.

A major responsibility lies in the hands of the international community in bringing peace to Afghanistan. Countries such as the United States, Germany, France, the United Kingdom and others have to ensure that all possible forms of assistance are forthcoming and that effective supervision of the reconstruction process takes place. At the same time, 'negative fallouts' have to

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be tackled collectively. One of the fears troubling countries like India and China is that the spread of surplus weapons and terrorists might affect Xinxiang, Kashmir, or northeast India in the future. As infiltration and terrorist activities in Kashmir are still continuing, there is an urgent need to stop such activities as they have already brought India and Pakistan into a dangerous 'confrontation mode' with the potential for further escalation. The Indian demand that terrorism in Kashmir should cease must be looked into with all sincerity in this regard as the whole of India has been a victim of terrorism for a very long time. Similarly, Pakistan's much publicized effort to curb terrorism has to be watched carefully. Despite allegations and counter-allegations, the flow of weapons and terrorists into Kashmir is still ongoing, a sign that all is not well.

Both India and Pakistan, together with members of the international community, must work collectively toward reconstructing Afghanistan. As far as Kashmir is concerned, both India and Pakistan must find ways to solve this problem. Both must agree how to go about it. At the moment, however, unless terrorist activities in all their forms cease in Kashmir, a possible initiative toward talks between the two confronting neighbors seems remote. In this case, one possible initiative on the part of the international community could be to put pressure on Pakistan to ensure that terrorist activities do not sprout up again in Afghanistan or Pakistan, and then to urge India to join talks. All South Asian countries must cooperate sincerely in this effort.

Deba R. Mohanty is currently a fellow at BICC conducting research into 'Reforms in India's Defence Industry: Problems and Prospects'.

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The Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC) is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and facilitating the processes whereby people, skills, technology, equipment, and financial and economic resources can be shifted away from the defense sector and applied to alternative civilian uses.

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Staff Spotlight:



**Moira
Davidson-Seger**

Moira Davidson-Seger (UK) has been involved with BICC since 1996, first as a freelance editor then, as of 1999, as a member of staff. Her main task has been editing BICC's yearbook, the *conversion survey*, where it has been necessary both to ensure a good level of language editing and layout consistency, as well as to develop procedures to improve and standardize the editing process itself. She has worked on numerous reports, briefs and papers and has compiled an editors' handbook for reference.

Moira's academic career began with an MA in German and French language/literature and philosophy at Edinburgh University of which one year was spent in Heidelberg. Returning to Heidelberg after graduation, she became an industrial translator in the fields of mechanical engineering, electronics, photographic chemistry and sales. She supported herself through half of a second degree in English, psychology and sociology by working as the representative of a British company and by teaching business and technical English at a language school.

Her husband's involvement in the United Nations took her and her young family to Vienna (1989) then Vientiane, Laos (1990–1993) where she edited UN project documents dealing with rural development, and taught English to doctors at the national Mother and Child Health Institute under the auspices of Save the Children Fund (UK). After a further move to Islamabad, Pakistan (1993–1995) she continued teaching English and produced a quarterly newsletter for the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung on subjects such as Indian-Pakistani relations, women in Pakistan and Pakistan's research institutes.

Recently Moira has been commuting between Bonn and Strasbourg where her husband is now based. Hobbies? As a working mother with two daughters she has little time but, when possible, likes to swim, draw and listen to rock music.

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A New Project on Defense Industrial Policy

The takeover of the leading German shipyard Howaldtswerke Deutsche Werft AG in Kiel by an American financial investor and the transfer of twenty percent of its shares to the US defense giant Northrop Grumman came as a shock to the delicate restructuring process of the nationally fragmented European defense industries. Analysts fear that, if Europe's 'defense pearls' are in American hands, there will be hardly any integrated European defense market left and that this will have political consequences for the planned Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) for which an independent defense industrial base is a prerequisite. Since the Federal Government of Germany does not have any legal means at its disposal to prevent such takeovers of strategic defense companies, the two-year project—which has just started and is funded by the Hans-Böckler Foundation of the German Trade Union Federation (DGB)—will analyze the adequacy of national and European institutions as well as the need in Germany for concepts of strategic interests and industrial policy in a country where hardly any institutions are assigned to this task.

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The Accountability of EU Militarization

The European Union is currently facing the challenge of providing military capabilities for its European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP). The so-called European Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF) is a combined task force that by 2003 must be able to deploy military forces of up to 60,000 persons within sixty days and sustain them for one year. These readily deployable military capabilities—through voluntary, they are coordinated national and multinational efforts—will carry out the 'Petersberg Tasks'. These include, at one end of the spectrum, humanitarian and rescue tasks and peacekeeping operations and, at the other end, more militarily demanding operations including peacemaking.

The real challenge, however, is building EU military capabilities that are democratically accountable. This subject is tackled in BICC *paper 24* entitled ***The European Rapid Reaction Force: Implications for Democratic Accountability***. It addresses what the European Union (EU) has set out to accomplish on issues related to the ERRF; how the EU acts with respect to crisis management; and, who it answers to. In this context, the study first looks at the delimitation of

the Petersberg Tasks, among definitions prevailing in EU member states. It then assesses EU decision-making processes, such as: How do the EU institutions work together on defense issues? How significant is parliamentary scrutiny in ESDP issues? And, more importantly: How do EU citizens feel about efforts to militarize the EU? Finally, the author relates the ERRF to the international context, examining EU-NATO relations, American reactions to EU militarization, and the role of the United Nations.

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Demobilization Assessment in Afghanistan

In the course of September, Kees Kingma visited Afghanistan for two weeks. BICC had been contracted by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) to help assess options for future German support to the Afghan Government in the rehabilitation of the war-torn country. Kees examined the current status of—and prospects for—demobilization and reintegration, particularly the need for the vocational training of ex-combatants.

The international community is preparing to assist the Afghan Government to reduce the number of persons under arms and to facilitate their return to civilian life. However, both at the political level and in the socioeconomic environment in which these combatants have to reestablish their livelihoods, much remains to be done. Many troops are not under Government control and there is no real peace agreement among the 'warlords' and the Government. With regards to reintegration, it all comes down to jobs. These are hard to find or to create in the current economic situation.

However certain initiatives can, and are, being taken to prepare for demobilization. The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has prepared a one-year pilot project for demobilization that would, among other things, assist in establishing a National Commission on Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration and demobilize an initial 20,000 combatants. Important background work will be conducted to establish what the profiles, needs and ambitions of the combatants are.

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BICC Publications

In addition to its annual *conversion survey*, the BICC *disarmament and conversion studies* and other books, BICC publishes *reports*, *briefs*, and *papers*. These series analyze the international conversion process, report on conversion projects and experience gained, and offer scientific as well as practical know-how. Further details can be obtained at www.bicc.de/publications/.

Brief 24: Vanessa Farr and Kiflemariam Gebre-Wold (eds.): *Gender Perspectives on Small Arms and Light Weapons: Regional and International Concerns*, July 2002

Brief 25: Andreas Heinemann-Grüder (ed.), *The Military in Transition: Restructuring and Downsizing the Armed Forces of Eastern Europe*, August 2002

Brief 26: Andreas Heinemann-Grüder, *Becoming an Ex-military Man: Demobilization and Reintegration of Military Professionals in Eastern Europe*, October 2002

BICC Notes

Siobhan Byrne, an intern from our partner Organization Project Ploughshares in Canada, joined BICC on 1 September. Siobhan has just finished her master's degree in international relations at Queen's University in Kingston, Canada. While at BICC, she will be working on the SALIGAD project.

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→ Siobhan Byrne at byrne@bicc.de

A new Ford Fellow from India, **Deba Mohanty**, joined BICC on 1 September. During his time here, he will conduct research into 'Reforms in India's Defence Industry: Problems and Prospects'. For five years now, he has been associated with the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi. **Sumita Kumar** (India), who has been a Research Officer at the same institute since 1993, has joined BICC as a Guest Researcher. While in Bonn, she will conduct research on South Asian security issues, with a special focus on Pakistan.

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Herbert Wulf, former director of BICC, was nominated Professor during a ceremony at the Ministry of Science in Düsseldorf, Germany. With this title—the highest offered by North Rhine-Westphalia for outstanding achievements in the area of science, art or culture—the State Government is honoring Herbert Wulf's remarkable accomplishments in the field of

national and international conversion research. After handing over management of BICC, Professor Wulf has continued to work for the institute as a senior researcher.

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After having successfully launched *brief 24 Gender Perspectives on Small Arms and Light Weapons* at the International Women's Conference in Uganda in July, BICC also presented it to the German public at the *Bundespressekonferenz* in Bonn. Together with BICC, State Secretary Erich Stather from the BMZ, Jeanette Spenlen from the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Gabriele Albert-Trappe from the *Internationales Frauenzentrum* (IFZ) in Bonn and Wolf Poulet from the GTZ stressed the importance of compiling more research on this crucial issue and of raising public awareness.

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From 11–13 September 2002, BICC's director Peter Croll participated in the conference on *Governance and the Rule of Law in the Horn of Africa* in Mombassa which was organized by the International Resource Group on Disarmament and Security for the Horn of Africa (IRG) and chaired various sessions, amongst others, one on Conflict and Water.

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On 18 September the launching of *brief 25 The Military in Transition: Restructuring and Downsizing the Armed Forces of Eastern Europe* took place at BICC's offices in Bonn. Project manager Dr Andreas Heinemann-Grüder gave a short introduction to the issue. At the same time BICC had invited guests to the opening of the exhibition *Former Russian Barracks* showing photographs taken by Daniela Behr who had participated in *ConverArt—The Art of Disarmament*, an art project and competition run by BICC between 1998 and 2001.

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From 15 September to 6 October the exhibition *Ich habe den Krieg gezeichnet* was on display at the Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle Bonn. The exhibition, which was supported by BICC, showed pictures children had drawn of their impressions of war from World War II to the war in Bosnia. An additional program included lectures by Sami Faltas (Small Arms in Africa), Corinna Hauswedell (Peace Process in Northern Ireland) and Wolf Christian Paes (Small Arms in the Balkans).

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