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U.S. Foreign Policy in Islamic South Asia: Realism, Culture, and Policy Toward Pakistan and Afghanistan

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U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN ISLAMIC SOUTH ASIA:
REALISM, CULTURE, AND POLICY TOWARD PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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Dedication

For Mary, Aman and Ariana, without your love and support this research would not have been possible. I offer my deepest gratitude to all of my family and friends for their faith, support, and guidance on the long journey I undertook to fulfill my potential and chase my ideals. The goal of creating a better understand of our world and fulfilling the promised to better it is now one step closer to realization.

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Table of Contents

Abstract		ii
Introduction		1
	<i>Research Agenda</i>	1
	<i>The Challenge of Adding Culture to US Foreign Policy</i>	7
Chapter 1	Theoretical Foundations of US Foreign Policy	11
	<i>The Explanatory Power of Realism</i>	12
	<i>Issues within Realism</i>	15
Chapter 2	Pivotal Events Influencing Policy toward the Region	22
	<i>The Afghan War</i>	22
	<i>The Kashmir Issue</i>	26
	<i>Nuclear Proliferation</i>	28
Chapter 3	Evaluating U.S. Foreign Policy	33
Chapter 4	The Future of U.S. Policy toward the Region	42
	<i>Genuine Regional Integration</i>	44
	<i>Other Issues Facing the Region</i>	50
	<i>The Issue of Civil Society</i>	56
	<i>Conclusions</i>	59
References		64
Bibliography		72

U.S. Foreign Policy in Islamic South Asia:
Realism, Culture, and Policy toward Pakistan and Afghanistan

Mian Ahad Hayaud-Din

ABSTRACT

The United States has a long-standing interest in the political events of South Asia. This research focuses specifically on U.S. foreign policy toward the Islamic nations of this region, Pakistan and Afghanistan (Referred to as Islamic South Asia). This research examines a variety of primary and secondary sources in an effort to understand the historical context and theoretical framework of U.S. policy.

It has been suggested by scholars that the age of realism has come to an end. This study seeks to verify this claim. Does realism provide the theoretical base necessary for policy success in Islamic South Asia? If it does, then can it continue to serve as the theoretical guide in the post-Cold War era? U.S. policy actions and the logic supporting them are examined in an effort to critique realism and to assess the policy toward this region.

The purpose of this study is to examine whether the continued use of the realist theory is substantiated, based on its record of past policy successes and failures. One of the core arguments against realism is that the level of analysis is too rigid, thus failing to

recognize internal constraints in state affairs. Of the many internal issues facing a state, none outweigh the role of culture within the social context of this region. This is exemplified in the case studies of the three most pivotal events influencing U.S. policy. Having examined the foundation and application of the realist based policies toward the region, this study will then evaluate the success or failure of U.S. policy. This evaluation is based on an analysis of the stated goals compared to the results of policy actions.

Considering the dangers on the horizon, this research also offers several guidelines for creating a more successful long-term strategy toward Islamic South Asia. Having already witnessed the collapse of the state in Afghanistan and the potential for state failure in a nuclear Pakistan, the concerns relating to this region are extensive. Weapons of mass destruction, environmental crisis, and social instability are just few of the problems addressed in this study. The variety of potential disasters emanating from this region makes this region and U.S. policy towards it a paramount concern.

Introduction

Research Agenda

International Relations as a field does not possess the high level of precision found in chemistry. This can be attributed not only to the abundance of competing theoretical perspectives, but also to the difficulty in gathering accurate data on topics such as the short-term priorities of various countries. The need to reduce ambiguity is what leads to the study of foreign policy, thus allowing researchers to conduct observations of state policy orientations, outlining patterns of behavior over a specific timeframe. The study of policy therefore allows researchers to identify and critique those patterns. This is the primary objective within this study. United States foreign policy will serve as the object of this analysis. More specifically, this thesis seeks to explicate whether or not the theoretical framework of this policy is still relevant. If so, might it remain relevant in the coming years?

The issue of data collection is one of the most difficult obstacles in policy studies, yet there are always ways to overcome the challenges of achieving new understandings in the disheveled practice of studying international politics. The investigation of relevant aspects of American foreign policy, as is the case in this paper, requires the filtering of data and cross-referencing of information through a variety of sources. Within this methodology it is possible to identify patterns in the foreign policy of a given state, if it is based upon the careful interpretation of relevant historical,

political, social, and economic behavioral data. These data then produce patterns that can be used to evaluate policies based on their intended goals. In this research, the methodology outlined above is applied through an examination of primary and secondary data sources. Used in combination, it is possible to create a comparative pool of data which provides a higher level of certainty for the evidence presented here.

The imperfection of competing theoretical perspectives within international relations (IR) is most evident through the inability of IR theorists to foreshadow the end of the Cold War. The end of the Cold War, which has been attributed to a variety of factors and marked foremost by the fall of the Soviet empire, was presumed to signal a new era in international relations. However, this has not been the case. This research exemplifies, through a closer examination of U.S. foreign policy, that the remaining super-power has not changed the philosophical underpinning of its foreign policy. The case of U.S. policy toward Islamic South Asia was chosen for several reasons. First, Islamic South Asia served as the battleground for super-power competition leading up to the pivotal moment in modern history, the end of the Cold War. Second, there is no other regional policy that illustrates the continuity and dominance of realism as the philosophical driving force in U.S. policy as a whole. Despite its shortcomings, specifically its inability to see long-term effects of certain policy decisions, realism is the dominant theory in U.S. foreign policy formulations.

The end of the Cold War was viewed by many international relations scholars as the final blow to the dominance of the realist tradition within the field of international relations. However, this research counters such arguments by illustrating how the policy toward Islamic South Asia preserves many legacies of the bygone era and the

philosophical underpinnings associated with it. These include the struggle between competing national interests, the emphasis on strategic diplomatic relations, the need to maintain a balance of power, a nuclear rivalry intended to assure the deterrence of military force, and the reliance of state policies to influence rational actors in world politics. All of these principles, as outlined by Hans Morgenthau more than sixty years ago¹, are still very much a part of how world affairs are conceptualized by the American policy-making establishment to this day. This position is substantiated more clearly later in this study.

In addition to evaluating the theoretical basis of U.S. policy toward Islamic South Asia, this research also examines the application of those policies, the satisfaction of policy goals, and the prospects for future policy success. This effort is made in an attempt to answer this fundamental question: is realism a sufficient or relevant theoretical basis for the U.S. foreign policy toward Islamic South Asia? In many ways, the current “War on Terror” may be the result of previous policy indiscretions. The mistakes of past policies, in conjunction with policies that are problematic, yield consequences which affect American security both now and in the future. In other words, the realist assumptions in American policy may have propagated the political conditions of the Cold War into the modern political landscape of Islamic South Asia resulting in a diverse set of threats to American national security.

Whether intended or not, the foreign policy of the United States has served as the primary tool in maintaining the conditions of a balance of power via nuclear deterrence and an environment of competition for power between states. Meanwhile these governments sacrifice the greater good in the name of national security.² The national

interest, presently conceptualized as national security, is an issue that addresses the basic need for state or societal survival. Circumstances such as these allow critics to charge that realism is a theory that promotes itself.³ Once the international political order was defined under the conceptions of realism, the international system of state relations then reinforced the concepts, priorities, and thinking of realists. This argument is elaborated upon in later chapters.

Islamic South Asia consists of Pakistan and Afghanistan; Bangladesh has been excluded from this list of Islamic actors within the region because it has remained largely peripheral to U.S. policy interests. India has been excluded for two reasons. First, it is not identified as a Muslim state despite the fact that it has the world's second largest Muslim population.⁴ India maintains a political-cultural identity of a secular and a Hindu nation. Second, India proclaimed itself as a non-aligned state within the international system. However, in the 1950's Indian policy makers changed their policy and sided with Moscow during the early days of the Cold War era. The result in U.S. policy-making toward India shifted from a position of alienated third world state to a hostile co-conspirator who supported the intended Asian hegemony of the Soviet empire.

The two states that will be examined have a long record of diplomatic, military, and economic contact with the United States. This research examines the nature of those relationships, how they have changed if at all, and what consequences the relationships between the lone super-power and these third world nations hold in the future of global politics if certain policy deficiencies are not rectified. Islamic South Asia is a region with a long and storied past, much of which bears relevance to current issues within the region. However, the history itself would require an extensive review upon which many

books have been written. For the purpose of this paper, only three pivotal events are discussed. Each has been selected for its significance on past, present and future orientations within U.S. policy towards the region.

The first chapter of this paper reviews the theoretical constructs of American foreign policy. The realist discourse is defined, evaluated, and then applied to the framework of U.S. policy. One of the key points within this chapter deals with the exclusion of culture in U.S. policy. The second chapter discusses selected events that have had a profound impact on U.S. policy in the region during the last twenty years. Those events include: the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Kashmir conflict, and the emergence of a nuclear Pakistan. How it is that these events have poised Islamic South Asia to become the battleground for a new Cold War is clarified within this section.

Many may wonder why the events of September 11, 2001 have been excluded from this analysis. The reasons are two-fold. First, the attacks took place in the context of terrorism against the United States, thus shifting the level of analysis from inter-state relations to security threats to the state. Second, the reaction by the United States has been largely in the form of a military response rather than a diplomatic one. The role of policy makers and diplomats is continuously unfolding and thus unclear in the long-term. By no means are the events of September 11th to be discounted for their effect on relations with this region. Simply put, the impact is yet unclear. However, given the magnitude of the events, several issues are mentioned.

Having set the stage through a review of the key historical events, it will then be possible in the third chapter to evaluate policy based on official documents and statements indicating the direction, interests, and goals of American intervention in the

region. The key point within this chapter examines how a diplomatic strategy based solely on the constructs of a single theoretical base, manifested in the doctrines of several presidents, was a poor strategy in pursuing a diverse set of policy goals.

Taking into account the consequences of these failures, the fourth and final chapter then seeks to offer some innovative strategies for creating a successful policy as America deals with South Asia in the aftermath of the first Cold War, during the current “War on Terror”, and seeking to avoid a Pakistan-India nuclear exchange. The role of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is highlighted as part of the solution to the issues facing the future of this region.

The final chapter is also intended to remind policy makers that the conclusions reached in this paper pose a clear and present danger to the United States. The threats emanating from South Asia are of vital concern to the United States and the context of U.S. policy desperately needs to be re-evaluated. The relevance to policy makers is made explicit within this chapter considering the change in the national interest because of the September 11th attacks and the “War on Terror.”

The issues threatening the national interests of the United States, emanating from Islamic South Asia, are abundant and diverse. They include but are not limited to terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, failing states, social unrest and nuclear proliferation.⁵ The escalation of these issues is certain to have an eventual global impact due to the fact that these issues effect one quarter of the world’s population.⁶ What were once considered as regional issues have proven to transcend the many regions of the globe. Never was this more apparent than with the attacks of September 11th.

The Challenge of Adding Culture to U.S. Foreign Policy

Culture is not easily defined in social research. It is a highly contested term, not only within a specific discipline but also among the social sciences. For example, political scientists generally do not agree with the concept of culture posited by anthropologists. Much can be learned if concepts are applied across disciplines, however this has not been the case regarding research into culture and politics. The pooling of knowledge across the social sciences not only promotes a larger body of social knowledge, it also creates the foundation for understanding the increasing number of political phenomena that requires cultural understanding.⁷

Defining culture is a problematical task within the field of anthropology where it is the focus. Within political science the issues facing researchers are compounded by the fact that culture is examined within a political context. Culture cannot be empirically measured without sacrificing reliability and validity. Therefore, this study will avoid the intellectual deliberations of defining culture and will borrow a working definition from the prominent anthropologist Clifford Geertz. Geertz conceptualizes culture as an organization of meanings humans beings give to their lives.⁸ Culture is how people in a given society interpret their lives with the purpose of giving meaning to it, based on the knowledge passed onto them by the preceding generation. This process of passing culture from one generation to the next is commonly referred to as socialization. In the Islamic world, the term Islamization is often used.⁹

The Islamization of the people of Islamic South Asia serves as the cultural turning point in this region's history. An understanding of culture is paramount when examining Islamic South Asia, but to understand why South Asia has been conceptualized in terms of religion and geography, a closer examination of Islam's role in the region is required. Religion is the key factor in differentiating Islamic South Asia from broader South Asia. It is important to keep in mind the great diversity within South Asia and the strong links among the many civilizations that co-inhabit the sub-continent. However, when Islam spread into Asia, it was Pakistan and Afghanistan which served as the cross roads through which Mohammed's message passed and it was the people of these nations who were most influenced by the values professed by the prophet.

Islam is not only a religion; it is a way of life. Islam serves as the cultural foundation of Islamic South Asia. As is the case in Muslim societies throughout the Islamic world, Islam is the core unit of social identity.¹⁰ Understanding this way of life and the values of social identity associated with it is vital in creating a successful strategy towards this region.

Religion is the common denominator within and among the peoples of this region. Through religion they share a common set of moral principles, a shared cultural memory, and as a result a feeling of community.¹¹ This aspect of how religion influences identity in Islamic South Asia will help illuminate how under-represented culture has been and continues to be in American policy. If the cultural effects of globalization are considered in conjunction with the effects of U.S. policy, it is apparent that fundamental differences in economic, social, and political beliefs result in a widening of the gap between societies in the eastern world and those in the Western world.¹²

The central element within the politics of Asia is the role of culture. One only needs to glance at the identity of the states such as China, India, and Pakistan to see the political relevance of culture in the region. The question of culture came to the forefront in Samuel Huntington's 1993 article in Foreign Affairs.¹³ He offered a controversial thesis, "The Clash of Civilizations". One does not have to agree with his thesis to accept his point: cultural differences are becoming increasingly relevant in global affairs. Culture and ethnicity increasingly serve as the primary catalysts of political cleavages.¹⁴

Though Huntington's analysis of eastern and Western civilizations was highly biased and exclusionary of evidence that have linked civilizations throughout history, the point remains that culture and cultural identity are increasingly important in today's political arena. From the beginning of the so called "new age" in international relations, marked by the end of the Cold War, identity-based conflicts have plagued the international political arena.¹⁵ From genocide in the former Yugoslavia and Africa, to the military buildup along the line of control between Pakistan and India, ethnic-based conflicts are on the rise.¹⁶

The nearly certain clash that Huntington proclaimed is one that requires conflict across cultural boundaries. As it is presented in this study the clash may take place on a variety of levels but it is not inevitable. There are a variety of options for peaceful co-existence across cultural boundaries. One of the primary vehicles for exploring these alternatives is the diplomatic level of engagement.¹⁷ Unfortunately, military options have been deployed in place of diplomacy with increasing frequency. From aerial bombings to ground invasions, talk has become discounted in the post-Cold War era of international relations.¹⁸

This alarming trend perpetuates a cycle of violence to which there is no end. Such was the case in the events foreshadowing the attacks of September 11th. These events and the decision-making processes which set in motion the sequence of events that keep the cycle of violence in play are discussed at length in this paper. The attackers, their supporters and their motives can be drawn directly out of the by-products of repeated U.S. policy failures in Islamic South Asia which are due in large part to cultural misunderstandings and, as some critics such as Ahmed Rashid charge, to a complete lack of cultural understanding.¹⁹

How it came to be that the most influential actor in global affairs ignored culture within its foreign policy will be made clear through an examination of the theory that serves at the heart of its decision-making process.

Chapter 1. Theoretical Foundations of U.S. Foreign Policy

No other theory has given as much form and structure to international politics as realism. Realism has been credited as the guiding light in U.S. foreign policy for more than fifty years.²⁰ The theory of realism emerged through a system of ideas that built upon earlier philosophical foundations. This is evident as much in the intellectual history of the theory as in the history of the decision-making in U.S. foreign policy. One of realism's great strengths is in its ability to find continuity from one generation to the next. In order for realism to maintain its dominance in the policy-making process, individuals who subscribe to the explanatory power of the theory continue to find their way into the foreign policy establishment. In other words, realism the theory needs realists the practitioners.

Such was the case during the early stages of Morgenthau's intellectual development. The writings and teachings of early realists were passed to Morgenthau who then further developed the conceptual framework of realism. The development and continuity of realism was equally apparent in the realm of policy practitioners. Without the continuity of the realist paradigm by both academics and policy practitioners, claims that state realism is the cornerstone of U.S. policy formulations would certainly receive less credibility. Realism thrived in American policy-making because of such key policy makers as Henry Kissinger and George Kennan who were able to see their policies utilized by several presidential administrations.²¹

Hans Morgenthau and E.H. Carr are known as the fathers of realist theory but even they had help from earlier thinkers such as Thucydides and Machiavelli.²²

Contemporary realism emerged as a response to the idealist nature of international relations in the post-World War I environment. E.H. Carr presented the thesis that utopian aspirations for peace, through institutions and treaties, had failed. Peace had failed to serve as a sustainable option with the onset of WWII. The shortcomings of the League of Nations caused many to lose faith in the ideals of peace it was to uphold. Instead, power politics emerged as an explanatory tool to define the pattern of behavior between states.

Carr, a classical realist, asserted that power politics most appropriately identified the pattern of behavior between states based on his observations of the historical behavior of states. The balance of power, deterrence, and rationality became core concepts or assumptions in foreign policy formulations. “States must take on strategic relations with one another to ensure their survival, they can not count on morality in the realm of world politics”.²³

The Explanatory Power of Realism

Hans Morgenthau’s Politics among Nations serves as the textual basis of modern realist thought.²⁴ Using Carr’s discourse as a foundation, Morgenthau added valuable elements to realist thought. According to Morgenthau, realism consists of the following six principles that describe and explain state-to-state interaction:

- 1) International politics are based on objective laws of human nature.
- 2) National interests drive state behavior to maximize power for self-preservation.
- 3) States may change, but national interest remains constant.
- 4) Morality does not guide state behavior.
- 5) There are no universally agreed upon rules of conduct.
- 6) Politics are divorced from other state activities.

The first principle implies that an inherent logic governs the relationships of states in international affairs. By interpretation, the behaviors of states can therefore be calculated based a set of logic-based norms. The second principle, the national interest, is the most difficult to interpret because it changes so often over time. The national interest is in flux when short-term priorities of foreign policy are examined. However, when examining the national interest over time one issue emerges as a consistent theme, the need for survival. This leads directly to the third principle dealing with the national interest and state survival.

The third principle identifies two themes that constitute the essential values in terms of the national interest as it relates to survival. The first theme is the need to ensure the survival of the nation which translates into national security, or national defense and military capability. The second theme associated with the national interest is the drive for maximization of power.

Power has three main functions according to Morgenthau's thesis.²⁵ Power, in one sense, is a means by which to preserve the status quo, preserve the distribution of power, or maintain limitations on power. Power can also be used to achieve imperialist expansion via military, economic, or social means. Lastly, through a projection of power a state can establish prestige that exaggerates its power long after it has declined. Peace is the result of a balance among great powers within this framework. Peace can be

maintained through consensus or through diplomacy. Within this conceptual setting, lesser powers can shift alliances between the larger powers, but their alliances remain insignificant in comparison to the power of hegemonic states.²⁶ The framework of U.S. policy on South Asia is based heavily on these notions of power.

The fourth and fifth principles outline an international system without a universal standard of moral principles and without a super-state governing mechanism or regime. Thus, anarchy reigns in the international system. These conditions force states to protect their own interests, making the state the central actors in international relations. The notion of competition or struggle among states for power set the foundation of the realist theory. The Kashmir issue and the U.S. involvement in Afghanistan are clear examples of such power struggles.

Realism implies that states have to take on strategic relations to ensure their survival rather than count on the morality within international community. National interest and maximization of power drive state behavior. The notion of a competition or struggle for power sets the foundation of U.S. foreign policy. The Kashmir issue and the U.S. involvement in Afghanistan clearly depict these power struggles. Pakistan's nuclear status is the direct result of the balance of power theory, as it seeks to counter Asian hegemony on its northern and eastern borders.²⁷

Without an overriding international power, organization, or regime to counter state policy, anarchy has reigned in the international system. This circumstance has allowed states to emerge as the central actors in global politics. Recently a proliferation of actors has taken place. However, despite the influence of non-governmental organizations, individuals, and international institutions there is no entity that comes

close to possessing the power of the state. Therefore, the state remains in a position of primacy when examining international interactions conducted through diplomacy. Foreign policy provides the framework of diplomacy. As the primary tool by which power is employed in the international system, according to realist discourse, foreign policy is vital in securing the national interest.²⁸

The sixth and final principle set forth by Morgenthau suggests that the foreign policy interests of a state are divorced from domestic politics. Therefore, domestic factors are not considered relevant to the framers of foreign policy. Domestic politics are clearly influenced by a variety of factors that include cultural, economic, and a broad spectrum of special interests. Such a variety of inputs could prove dangerous in the development and implementation of foreign policy. Policy-making is not a democratic / participant process. State-to-state interactions are governed by a foreign policy elite who are removed from internal concerns of the state. The elitist nature of the foreign policy establishment is indicative of the fact that, despite the excellent explanatory power of the theory, realism has its weaknesses.

Issues within Realism

The primary actor in the realist conception of international affairs is the state. However, the state-centric focus of realism is too rigid. The level of analysis focuses strictly on states but there is a growing list of influential actors in the realm of international relations. The emergence of globalization has brought the issue of a state-centered focus into further contention.²⁹ State sovereignty has been perceived as

weakened by globalization. Globalization transcends borders and undermines government controls in many aspects of state activity, in particular economic matters. Realism's unit of analysis is not flexible and does not recognize the role of non-state actors in state behavior.³⁰ These factors make realism too "top down" oriented.

States may persist as the dominant actors in international affairs. However, they are not the only actors of importance. Non-governmental organizations, multi-national corporations, sub-national groups, terrorists, and regional institutions comprise a short list of actors that have increased their impact on global politics. Since the 1970's, mainstream theorists in the field of international relations have expanded their analytic framework to include other actors. This includes such neo-realist theorists as Kenneth Waltz who shifted the level of realist analysis from state-to-state relationships to examine state-to-system level relationships.³¹

The controversy surrounding the level of analysis in American policy-making has become a serious issue. Realism examines how states interact and behave in the context of global politics. What occurs within the state is beyond the scope of realists. These shortcomings have led to colossal failures in policy-making. An example is the failure of policy makers to envision the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.³²

The policy agenda was set for containing the spread of the Soviet Empire. Policy makers were aware of external strains placed upon the Soviet regime as American policy was directly or indirectly responsible for most of those stressors. However, by ignoring the economic decline brought about through various internal events and processes policy makers failed to see the broader implications of those events. The scale of economies simply did not favor the U.S.S.R. in its competition with the United States in its effort to

develop a comparable military force.³³ In addition, the Afghan war depleted the fiscal resources needed to replenish the military; efforts to develop more sophisticated weapons programs were not feasible considering the economic situation within the U.S.S.R.

Idiosyncratic factors are another aspect of the internal factors that led to the demise of the Soviet Empire. Gorbachev's withdrawal from eastern Europe was more than a retreat because it marked the defeat of Soviet expansion. If the incompatibility of *Glasnost* and *Perestroika* are added to the entrenched communist philosophies, the result was a deconstruction of norms. These policies caused large-scale internal shocks throughout the Soviet empire, eventually leading to regime change. U.S. policy makers failed to see the consequences of each of these processes.

How did these oversights occur? Realists defend their theoretical underpinnings by classifying the Cold War as an unprecedented event, not a process. As outlined in the previous section, realism deals not with events but processes. This inability of realist-based policies to account for internal nuances of domestic politics is the most significant problem with realist-based American foreign policy.³⁴ The case studies to follow elucidate this shortcoming as well as other issues in American policy that pursues an agenda blind to the cultural context within which it is to be applied.

The relevance of culture to this research lies in the fact that U.S. policy has unofficially extended the list of significant players to include ethnic and cultural groups such as the Afghan Mujahideen, who were for the most part ethnic Pashtuns. Such groups, insignificant in comparison to states, have proven to have a profound impact on political outcomes.³⁵ However, the association with such groups has been in the context

of covert operations not through diplomatic channels. This is problematic as such actions blur the lines between covert ops and diplomacy. In Islamic South Asia the experience has been that a little of both, formal and informal contacts, will yield the greatest results. This was certainly the case in the response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

In sum, realism may best be interpreted by using Thucydides's formula of "the strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must".³⁶ The descriptive nature of the theory has allowed it to remain relevant from the onset of the Cold War in the 1940's to the beginning of the twenty-first century. Realism deals with processes between states that occur over time, not events internal to a state. The observation of patterns and problem-solving capabilities has allowed realism to provide valuable insights into global political phenomena. The causes of war and conditions for peace can still be explicated through realist discourse.³⁷ The fact that many of the same global conditions of the post-World War II environment are applicable today is a testament to the broad appeal of realist theory.³⁸ The persistence of the application of core principles to the understanding of political phenomena is what has allowed realism to remain the dominant paradigm in international relations and specifically American foreign policy-making.

Does realism maintain its relevance in contemporary American foreign policy? The answer lies in the primacy of the state as the primary actor in IR. The state, as Theda Skocpol conceives it, has changed from being the only actor to now being the primary actor.³⁹ In a brief review of Skocpol's work, it is quite apparent that a state-centric framework holds as much relevance today as it did fifty years ago, thus justifying the American policy maker's conception of global politics. The only difference is that a proliferation of actors has grown to include a variety of lesser actors such as non-

governmental organizations, institutions, multi-national corporations, and regional blocs such as the European Union. This point remains: the state is the dominant actor.

Skocpol asked what the role of the state is under the new global condition created via globalization. There is no consensus on the role of the state; it has a variety of roles that traditionally include political reformer, economic planner, bargainer or mediator, social program planner, and historically it has played a key role in class formation, ethnic relations, and women's rights. No theory to date has defined the role of the state to be all-inclusive of these diverse roles. Thus, she differentiated between societal-based and state-based levels of analysis.

Until the 1960's government was not considered a powerful independent actor; it was seen as an arena in which various interest groups came together to shape public policy. The state was seen as a forum for societal inputs and government played the role of being a distributor of resources and outputs. This perception caused social research at the time to overlook the role government played in influencing the public policy creation process. Pluralism, structural-functionalism, and neo-Marxism developed as dominant paradigms in the emerging perceptions of the state as an independent actor.

Each perspective had its faults; pluralists and structural-functionalists seemed unwilling to mention states as the primary actors. Neo-Marxists, on the other hand, over-generalized the important roles a state played as an actor by creating broad statements that applied to all states. The failure here is in the theories' inability to see nuances in the state-dominant system which came to be differentiated by "haves" and "have nots." (West v. East or North v. South). A paradigmatic shift was taking place as an interdependent world made up of state actors began to dominate the social sciences.

The state, through its socio-economic power, is the dominant actor in social structures for a variety of reasons. One of the best reasons is that the policies a state formulates affect the interests of society at large, but especially within the circles of those who have access to power. Political parties, political culture, interest group formation, and collective political action or agenda setters all set their plans to allow flexible responses to the actions of governments.

This creates a cyclical relationship that calls for a more mutually inclusive methodology in studying state behavior. Society, economics, and culture all need equal inclusion when attempting to understand what comprises politics within a given nation. Furthermore, the interactions within and across various sectors of society influenced by the state, along with other states as independent actors, need to be observed through a paradigm that allows for the broadest perception of a state. That perception will grant the state the status as the prominent actor within social reality, but not as the exclusive actor.

Skocpol does not offer a grand theory to replace current theories of the state. She proposes that a better understanding of the state allows an accurate analysis of what roles states play as causal influences in social reality. The central feature that characterized autonomy in Skocpol's analysis is the ability of a state to allocate financial resources to implement its decisions in various applications. However, in a globalizing economy no state is able to withstand the international market forces, positive or negative. The global economy is increasingly interconnected, thus causing states increasingly to lose value in traditional borders (physical) and in monetary activity. On the other hand, it is the state that has countered such forces through heavier regulation and strong efforts to reduce outside influence through stronger monetary policies. It is this fact which stands out in

Skocpol's analysis. States have the final decision-making power, even if that decision is one that acts by choosing not to act.

The state is in control and it seeks to secure itself. Realism is relevant to contemporary IR and is the only theory that holds enough weight to be considered the grand theory within the field. Realism may not explain every event, movement, or foreign policy action. However, it provides the most insights, as outlined above, for undertaking an analysis of American foreign policy decision-making. This will become increasingly clear through the following case studies.

Chapter 2. Pivotal Events Influencing U.S. Policy toward the Region

The Afghan War

In 1979 the Soviet Union began a military invasion and occupation in Afghanistan. This event had an immediate impact on the nature of American policy towards the region. American policy shifted from moral support to military support. This response to the Soviet invasion had repercussions that forever changed the political landscape of not only this region but of the entire world.

Why did the Soviet leadership decide to wage this campaign in Afghanistan? One popular explanation is that Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev was determined to hold the course on his foreign policy, the infamous “Brezhnev Doctrine”. The doctrine’s basic tenets were that once a nation chose to follow the path of socialism, the U.S.S.R. would not allow that state’s political institutions to pursue reformations leading away from the end goal of a communist system. Brezhnev expanded the Afghan conflict into a “low intensity” conventional war, holding true to his doctrine by invading Afghanistan as its communist-oriented government was losing power.

Others assert that it was more important in the perceptions of Soviet strategists to secure Afghanistan as a base of operations for the eventual invasion of Pakistan or war-ravaged Iran.⁴⁰ This expansion of the Soviet empire was perceived to hold two important geo-strategic benefits. The first advantage would be the creation of two or more “buffer” states, similar to those in eastern Europe, that would serve to further insulate the empire

from a conventional attack. The other strategic gain in the eyes of Soviet strategists was believed to be the realization of a long sought goal of the Soviet naval fleet, access to a warm water port. Whatever long-term vision Soviet strategists had conceived through the invasion of Afghanistan, it translated into the highest level of concern for the government of the United States.

William Wolforth claimed that the Soviet invasion was part of a familiar routine in super-power relations.⁴¹ Wolforth describes the cycle as one that starts with a perceived shift in power of the United States, publicly acknowledged by both sides. This is followed by a new Soviet drive for increased prestige, seeking positive early feedback on the new policy. Instead there is a sharp crisis that eventually revealed the contradictions between the two sides' interpretations of the political implications of the power shift and an eventual relaxation of tensions based on mutual acceptance of a stalemate. The realist's perception in Washington was that Moscow was now able to lessen its concern over an Asian threat, reducing the balancing effect of China in the global balance of power.⁴² Obviously, the United States did not want to see its adversary afforded a position of greater power.

However, what may have been the most compelling and accurate explanation behind the Soviet invasion is one that simply did not make sense at the time. It is a cultural explanation with its roots in Soviet xenophobia towards Islam. With the rapid spread of Islamic movements throughout Afghanistan, manifesting themselves in an effort to gain political power away from the Soviet-backed regime in Afghanistan, any level of perceived success for the Islamists was a threat to the national security of the U.S.S.R.⁴³ The Central Asian states share the bond of Islam with their neighbors to the

south. Add to this the fact that Moscow was already on bad terms with the Islamic republics within the union due to perceptions held by Muslim citizens that they were second-class citizens. The threat of Islamic movements spreading north because of success in Afghanistan would undermine the authority of Moscow in the peripheral regions within the Soviet Union. If the Islamic republics were to revolt, the Soviet leadership feared that others would follow suit.⁴⁴ Ironically, this sentiment closely resembles the flawed “domino theory” dragging the U.S. into Vietnam just a few years earlier. The fear of Islamic movements spreading into the empire compelled Moscow to pursue a hard-line policy in Afghanistan by supporting the Communist regime and heeding its call for assistance. The assistance would come in the form of a military invasion.

The Afghan War quickly settled into a stalemate, with nearly 100,000 Soviet troops controlling the cities, large towns, and major garrisons and the Mujahideen roaming freely throughout the countryside. Soviet troops tried to crush the insurgency by various tactics, but the guerrillas generally eluded their efforts. The Soviets then attempted to eliminate the Mujahideen's civilian support by bombing and depopulating the rural areas. Their tactics sparked a massive flight from the countryside; by 1982, nearly 2.8 million Afghans had sought refuge in Pakistan and another 1.5 million had fled to Iran.⁴⁵

The Mujahideen were eventually able to neutralize Soviet air superiority using shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles supplied by the United States and the tactical assistance of the CIA. This marked the first time American-manufactured military hardware was supplied to a sub-state actor. Bringing an end to the era of “plausible

deniability.” Never before had the U.S. openly provided military support to a rebel group with hardware that was engraved with “Made in the U.S.A.”⁴⁶

The Mujahideen were fragmented politically into a handful of different groups and their military efforts remained uncoordinated throughout the war. They were eventually able to achieve victory through the quality of their armament and improved combat organization. This was due exclusively to the experience and arms shipments sent by the United States via Pakistan. In 1988 the United States, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the Soviet Union signed an agreement for the withdrawal of Soviet troops and the return of Afghanistan to nonaligned status.⁴⁷

To many observers including U.S. policy makers, the Afghan War seemed like a total and complete victory.⁴⁸ However, in war nothing is total except destruction. After the Soviet withdrawal and the proclamation of an Islamic state, each formerly “rebel” faction began to fragment into various political splinter groups. The result was a civil war to determine who would take power in Kabul.⁴⁹ What ensued was a bloody contest between pro-Western moderates and fundamentalist Muslim factions. The result was bipolarity among various groups into one of these two ideological camps. The larger of the two groups was the Taliban (“students”) who were highly effective in their ability to recruit, educate and govern a largely illiterate and devastated populace.

The policy outcomes in Afghanistan resulted in the containment of Soviet expansion, the rise of the Taliban, and the establishment of a base of global terrorism. Under Taliban rule, Afghanistan’s citizens suffered the most serious of human rights violations, the increased production of poppy for narco-production, and the failure of state institutions. As George Marshall asserted after victory in the Second World War,

“A military victory must be followed by a moral victory.”⁵⁰ In the case of Afghanistan the moral victory refers to the implementation of a post-containment strategy. In turn, this required a policy able to overcome the limitations of its realist framework.

The Kashmir Issue

The issue that is often addressed in current media and policy debates regarding South Asia centers on the resolution of conflicts between Pakistan and India over the Kashmir region. The question over Kashmir focuses on the status of that nation’s sovereignty. This is one example of an issue that arose as a consequence of British colonialism. When the British withdrew from South Asia, they knew that Kashmir would be the issue that would keep South Asia divided.⁵¹ By not clearly appropriating the lands between Hindu and Muslim populations, a struggle to protect national identities expanded into a clash of nations.

The dispute exists due to competing claims between Pakistan and India over the small and mountainous lands in the northern most region shared by both states. Do not allow the fact that the conflict has been portrayed as one that is territorial in nature to cloak the true nature of this conflict. The issue is not about territory, as no resources or agricultural lands large enough to matter to either side are at stake. Instead it is an issue of competing ideologies, cultures, and religions.⁵² All these elements embody the national identities of India and Pakistan. What Kashmir represents then is a rivalry between two national identities, each vying to cast their identity over the people of Kashmir as a symbol of greater political, social, and ideological prestige.

On the one side, there is theocracy, the Pakistani identity as a Muslim state, which is held as the nation's highest cultural ideal.⁵³ On the other side, there is secularism, India's pride in its ability to remain a civil society despite the numerous outside invaders and influences it has had to overcome. The dilemma over the Kashmir region has taken a heavy toll on both national economies and psyches. In 1947-48, 1964, 1971, 1989, and 1999 Pakistan and India have waged conventional wars of varying intensity along the northern border region. Both have devoted disproportionate amounts of their national budgets towards national security, with the Kashmir issue providing most of the justification for such expenditures.⁵⁴

The sacrifices made on both sides have resulted in weak governmental infrastructures, especially in the case of Pakistan where a third military coup toppled a democratic government in 1999. Another sacrifice made in the name of national defense and Kashmir has been the lack of funding toward social welfare programs for the highly impoverished societies on both sides. The trend toward large defense budgets has been mandated by political zealots on both sides of the conflict.⁵⁵ Moderates in office are an rare, while political extremists and their nationalistic rhetoric are frequently found at the highest levels of government.

Hardliners and their defense budgets were kept in check during the Cold War by the influence of the super-powers. Traditionally the defense budgets were fueled by aid packages that were a by-product of the Soviet-American geo-strategic rivalry. However, this is no longer the case. India has successfully created an increasingly self-reliant economy, with occasional assistance in the form of loans from Russia and others.⁵⁶ The Indian economy is growing at an unprecedented rate. Pakistan, on the other hand, is

failing. Its agricultural output was strong at one point, but the demand of a growing populace in conjunction with the free fall of agricultural commodity prices has been devastating. The role of Pakistan in global narcotic trafficking was greatly underestimated by many experts in Washington who thought that sanctions were effective in reducing Pakistani involvement in narco-trafficking for income.⁵⁷ However, an alternative to drug money was never introduced to bolster the national budget.

In the bipolar environment of the Cold War, it was mutually advantageous for Pakistan and India to play into the ideological rivalry to benefit their defense budgets. The fact that an ideological split between secular and theocratic identities already deeply divided the region only compounded the effects of the Cold War division between the South Asian neighbors. The bipolar environment that coincided with the creation of India and Pakistan, as separate entities, may have been a historical coincidence. The reality of the South Asian states was heavily influenced by the power politics of the international system that emerged during the post-World War era.⁵⁸ U.S. policy has always played a pivotal role in the politics of this region since its split into Hindu and Muslim states.

Nuclear Proliferation

The third event crucial to the formulation of American foreign policy was the surprise response from Pakistan in May 1998 when it followed Indian nuclear tests with several of its own. There was now a transparent nuclear arms race in South Asia. The Soviet Union made no secret of its export of nuclear technologies to India and its role in the Indian nuclear program. The first Indian test was in 1974, and Soviet involvement

was explicitly clear in their foreign policy which sought to establish a nuclear balance of power in Asia.⁵⁹ This was known as “the Asian Strategic Triangle” policy at the Soviet Foreign Ministry.⁶⁰ The triangle existed between Russia, China and India, states the Soviets considered vitally important for Asian stability.

Inevitably an arms race ensued, but the U.S.S.R. and U.S. thought they would be able to keep it under control through their respective super-power influence. With the unforeseen demise of the Soviet Union, South Asia’s arms race was left unchecked.⁶¹ This situation made Chinese leaders increasingly worried about Indian hegemony in Asia, so it countered Russia’s strategic relations by supporting Pakistan’s efforts to develop a delivery vehicle for its few nuclear warheads. Keeping India in check became a priority concern for Pakistan and China, but the U.S. failed to recognize the gravity of the situation. In this respect, the former Soviet Union was far ahead in creating a geo-strategic partnership in South Asia.⁶² The U.S.S.R. succeeded in creating the balance of power through the Asian strategic triangle.

However, the geo-strategic game between the super-powers ended on a path neither had envisioned. South Asia was not intended to project a nuclear threat toward the Former Soviet Union, nor was Pakistan’s “Islamic Bomb” meant to pose a terrorist threat to the United States. However, the situation remains where both former adversaries of the Cold War now face grave danger as a result of their rivalry for influence in South Asia. The concepts employed to dissuade the super-powers from entering a nuclear exchange were successful in their goal of maintaining peace through dialogue. However, in South Asia there are some key differences, disparities in core concepts such as the idea of détente through mutually assured destruction is one example. The geographical proximity

of Pakistan to India affords one adversary to strike quickly across short distances, thus reducing the ability of the other side to track a first strike attack. In terms of the American and the Soviet nuclear arsenals, the fact that two oceans separated the rivals assured the aggressor that retaliation would ensue. However, this is not the case with Pakistan and India, thus making a nuclear strike option far more appealing in an effort to decimate the enemy. Factors such as this allow first strike options to remain as viable options in the nuclear posture of both India and Pakistan.⁶³

The Gulf War, the Balkans, and other international issues gained the attention of American policy experts. Crisis after crisis in the post-Cold War environment shifted the attention of American policy away from South Asia. Eventually the issues in South Asia were all but removed from the foreign policy agenda. It was not until 1998 that South Asia regained policy relevance with underground nuclear weapons tests. It was too late. The attacks on September 11^{th, 2001} will haunt the policy makers from the previous era while reminding the next generation that the consequences of foreign policy blunders have detrimental effects on American national security.

In stark contrast to the open violations of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) by the Soviets and their Indian allies, the U.S. intelligence community kept American policy makers out of the loop on issues related to Pakistan's efforts to obtain components for nuclear weapons development.⁶⁴ In the case of American knowledge of Chinese involvement in the Pakistani nuclear program, very little was done to thwart efforts of nuclear technology transfers. Why was a region, already plagued by social and political woes, now under the threat of nuclear holocaust with the explicit knowledge (perhaps

permission) of the super-powers? The answers may be found deep within the nature of the realist tradition.

Realist-based policies have an inherent flaw: they are unable to distinguish between the needs of the state and the needs of society.⁶⁵ Moral issues, such as the movement to counter the nuclearization of Pakistan, are issues which stem from the rationalist methodology and are antithetical to the realist tradition. Further, any challenge to American nuclear hegemony is undesirable. In short, the logic of realism is to maximize the net expected utility of a policy action. This line of reasoning has the effect of excluding what ought to be (ideals and moral principles), thus limiting the moral/ethical inputs in a realist policy agenda and maximizing rational inputs.⁶⁶ The role of this logical progression plays an important part in determining the future course of American policy actions. Realism is not immoral; it is amoral. This is a serious issue when dealing with Islamic South Asia and its dominant Islamic population.

The problem here again lies within the cultural context of the region. According to Hassan Turabi, Islam advocates social justice, both internal and external to the state.⁶⁷ In other words, there is a sense of injustice within society and within the international system. The plethora of Islamic movements around the globe indicates this sense of injustice is growing among politically active Muslims. This trend is indicative of the political aspect of Islamic life, referred to as Islamism. Closely associated with the rise of political Islam is the rise of an Islamic identity that seeks to assert itself.⁶⁸ The rise of political Islam is attributed to a long list of grievances held by Muslim populations, some of which have been presented within the context of this paper. At the core of the Islamic political uprising, a political movement found not only in Islamic South Asia but in the

Islamic world in general, is the sentiment of injustice. In the wisdom of the Qur'an social justice and morality are synonymous terms.⁶⁹ If there is morality, then there is justice and vice versa.

In terms of U.S. foreign policy, there are several issues with morality that require attention in Islamic South Asia. The hypocrisy demonstrated by a policy of intolerance toward an "Islamic Bomb" fuels fears of an anti-Muslim sentiment within Islamic world. The abandonment of policy engagement in Afghanistan is another moral quandary that has resulted in mistrust and speculation of U.S. intentions for the war on terror. The Taliban may have proved to be a convenient moral enemy for the war on terror, but there are critics that charge that the "real" agenda behind long-term US military presence is to secure pathways for resource extraction. Oil, natural gas and mineral deposits found in Afghanistan and its neighboring states are thought to have factored heavily into the military decision-making process.⁷⁰

Despite the defeat of the ruthless Taliban regime, the dangerous ideology of radical Islamic movements and their list of grievances persist. This is precisely why U.S. foreign policy toward this region in particular must have a firm moral foundation. The result may be to reduce hostilities, including the threats to the security of the United States. It may also serve to increase positive experiences and interactions (such as economic and social exchanges), thus leading to increased trust between the region and the U.S. The continuity and adaptation of realism in U.S. foreign policy play an important part in regaining that trust.

Chapter 3. Evaluating U.S. Foreign Policy

The regional movements outlined earlier hold much significance when examining the theoretical constructs of American policy toward South Asia. It may be beneficial to summarize the relevance of each critical event. First, the Kashmir issue is the manifestation of an ideological split between South Asia's most powerful actors and this rift widened because of the competition between the super-powers during the Cold War. Second, the Afghan War provided U.S. policy makers the opportunity to realize their worst Cold War fears. What they did not realize was that the idealism and nationalism so fervent in the region would result in a South Asian nuclear arms race. Considering the many contributions and shortcomings of the realist paradigm, there is more than a reasonable doubt about whether policy makers should continue the theoretical application of realism and its decision-making concepts and models.

Does realism remain relevant in terms of US foreign policy toward Islamic South Asia? For better or worse, realism has remained at the core of policy-making during and after the Cold War.⁷¹ Several presidents found their ideological underpinnings for their policy doctrines in realism.⁷² George Kennan's "containment doctrine" was at the heart of U.S. policy formulation after WWII and was a guiding hand for international affairs in the United States throughout the Cold War. Kennan said that idealism is dangerous, and in the case of the Soviet Union, it was more than perilous, it was evil.⁷³ Ironically, the containment doctrine became an ideological issue in and of itself for the American

government.⁷⁴ The disillusioning effect of ideology that Kennan warned about came to effect policy makers in Washington. This had the effect of obscuring the faults within the realist theory from those who subscribed to it in their policy formulations.

History has proved that the U.S. policy goals in South Asia had a tendency to be uni-dimensional due to the ideological influences of the containment doctrine. It had the effect of creating “tunnel vision” for foreign policy makers, thus hiding the internal issues of a state and thereby discounting the effects of social factors such as the influence of culture in the political activities of a state. Containment of Soviet expansion was the only objective pursued with any measure of consistency in the Cold War period, occurring at the expense, unfortunately, of other policy goals, including humanitarianism, democratization and non-proliferation.⁷⁵

In Asia, the goals of the containment doctrine were achieved through supporting a variety of regimes ranging from democratic to authoritarian, so long as it was not a communist regime. The containment doctrine was implemented in full force despite the fact that its zero-sum approach became outdated.⁷⁶ In other words, it became clear that a gain by the United States in one aspect of power did not mean that the Soviet Union relinquished some measure of power in return. But the international system is in fact a positive sum game, meaning that there are multiple beneficiaries in the global power system.

President Jimmy Carter stated that “any attempt by outside forces to control the Persian Gulf region would be repelled by any means necessary.”⁷⁷ When one adds the containment doctrine to the Carter doctrine, it becomes increasingly evident that the United States thought that it “ought” to have no rival. This adds another level of analysis

to South Asian policy in that the United States based its policy on ethnocentric values of its own superiority and the inferiority of Asian states. Declarations made to thwart “outside influences” are left open for interpretation by states other than the Soviet Union to contemplate. The language implies that even those states which are all Islamic in composition, bordering the Gulf, have to go through Washington to secure their interests. The result of such policy doctrines is to serve as fuel for the increasing level of animosity within those Islamic states and others.

The combining of doctrines, such as the containment and Carter doctrines, is made possible because presidential administrations inherit the doctrines of previous administrations, thus creating a level of continuity within foreign policy.⁷⁸ A key reason why realism holds a dominant position in the decision-making process. Based on the policy-making logic presented here, the best scenario for the U.S. in South Asia (or in any region) is to contain any potential adversaries.

The idea of containing all hostile forces in the South Asian region marked a new era in the policy approach of the United States. “The regional balance of power” approach is one that allows adversaries to rival each other or rival the United States, so long as these rivalries cost states valuable resources, thus limiting their power in the region. The result of this approach is intended to reduce the capability of rival states to interfere with the American policy agenda. In the end, whom they rivaled was of no consequence. American foreign policy desired all competing actors to cancel each other in the struggle for power. An example of this combination of doctrines was apparent not only in South Asia but in U.S. policy towards the Gulf States of Iran and Iraq. The U.S.

supplied weapons to both parties during the 1980's. The motivation for pursuing such a policy stemmed from a desire to witness two losers from the Iran-Iraq war.⁷⁹

This approach is referred to as the Dual Containment policy. It is similar to the British policy concept of "Divide and Rule" and is a clear illustration of classic realism in world politics. Divide and rule was prevalent in South Asia only sixty years ago and now it has returned. The "division" now exists between states rather than kingdoms. Nonetheless, imperialism has managed to find a place in South Asia's political landscape long after colonial rule.

The current desire in U.S. policy is for the "normalizing of relations" between Pakistan and India. This appears to be mere rhetoric as both sides build up their military capabilities during the current era of the Indo-Pak arms race. Some argue that U.S. policy is intentionally slow-moving so that neither India nor Pakistan emerge as a regional power.⁸⁰ When examining U.S. policy in the Asian theatre in general, one might argue that "multi-containment" is the proper name for the orientation of U.S. policy in third world Asia. Consistent with the realist agenda, it is within the interests of a powerful actor such as the United States to control the international environment and limit its effects on sovereignty and security of the state.

From 1960 to 1979, China became a growing source of concern for the U.S. despite the ideological differences with the Soviet Union. In order to create a balance of power in Asia, as part of the regional balance of power approach mentioned earlier, the U.S. heavily supported the regime in Pakistan while the U.S.S.R. supported the Indian regime.⁸¹ Neither super-power wanted to see Chinese hegemony in Asia.⁸² At the time of the Soviet invasion into Afghanistan, ties between the super-powers and South Asia were

deeply entrenched. Interventions in Japan, Vietnam, and the Philippines provide additional evidence to illustrate the multi-containment efforts of U.S. policy in greater Asia. All of these doctrinal influences on American policy serve as textbook examples of power politics based upon a realist perspective in U.S. policy intervention throughout the world.

After 1991 U.S. foreign policy makers began to see how costly their blunders were in regards to its relations with South Asia. The policy of active involvement in Afghanistan may have been perceived as a victory, however it was not. Policy experts in Washington have long been persistent in their efforts to thwart nuclear technology transfers to the region and were essentially undercut by opting for involvement in the Afghan War.⁸³ The current arms race is then a byproduct of the Cold War battle in Afghanistan.

During the Afghan War, Pakistan and China formed a secret alliance that brought the primary components for a nuclear device into Pakistan's dominion. Washington was not in a position to compromise its alliance with Pakistan, so despite knowledge of Pakistan's accumulation of nuclear technology the U.S. chose not to act against it.⁸⁴ With the strengthening of the Indian-Soviet relationship in other sectors and increasing evidence of a Pakistani nuclear weapons program, the U.S.S.R. gave India the means to develop its own nuclear capabilities.⁸⁵ Of particular concern was the fact that the Indian military possessed all components of the "nuclear triad," referring to the Soviet transfer of technological capabilities to launch nuclear weapons by air, land or sea. India is now the second-largest purchaser of Russian arms.⁸⁶ Recently, India's defense minister visited Moscow to discuss the purchase of additional state-of-the art fighter-bombers, a multi-

billion dollar deal. Russia also promised to sell attack submarines and is discussing the sale of other weapons. In addition, Russia agreed to sell two nuclear power stations to India, defying international calls to punish New Delhi for its nuclear testing.

Russia and the United States have been at odds over the nuclear deal for years. However, these deals are worth billions to Russia's cash-starved economy.⁸⁷ Therefore, Russia is not persuaded as easily as it once was by international pressure. U.S. officials state that current technology transfers, after the largely condemned nuclear detonations in 1998, violate an important principle: that the world community should not engage in nuclear cooperation with aspiring nuclear weapon states, a principle that was agreed to in the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

India and Pakistan carried the torch of Cold War into the twenty-first century with their nuclear balance of terror. With Kashmir as the flash point, war is a shadow that hangs over both societies.⁸⁸ The Kashmir region's role as a trigger for nuclear engagement illustrates that certain issues lie at the heart of a nation's interests and will be defended at all costs, those interests being security and power.

The elements that had long provided the structural foundation for American policies toward the region demanded involvement. In general, U.S. policy decisions toward South Asia were based on realism's rational actor model. This incorporated a system of values that emphasized that the policy-making process follow a rational course of thought. This was thought to maximize the ability of policy makers in reaching intended goals by considering all alternatives and all necessary information. This process involved four steps. First, policy makers would recognize and define the issue. Second, they would prioritize the goals of the policy. The third step involved identifying the

alternatives to action. Fourth, a choice would be made according to the cost-benefit analysis placed before decision-makers.⁸⁹

Despite the apparent logic in the decision-making process outlined above, there are important weaknesses in the realist paradigm that translated into policy failures through this model. Several of these weaknesses lay in the models that were themselves based upon conservative realist values in its decision-making processes.⁹⁰ For instance, the miscalculation of consequences caused by too much or too little information available to policy makers. Limited rationality is also an issue when policy makers take the first course of action that satisfies the absolute minimal policy requirements. Time is another factor because it forces pre-packaged decisions to be implemented rather than a case-specific solution. These policy weaknesses became especially apparent in the U.S. policy orientation towards South Asia, specifically in the case of Afghan policy.

One example of these policy flaws was a result of policy inputs based on intelligence coming out of Afghanistan prior to and shortly after the Soviet invasion. Intelligence was unreliable at best, even after the CIA sent its agents into southern Afghanistan. Information was often flawed or biased in order to satisfy their supervisors' demands for intelligence that would enhance, not limit, U.S. involvement.⁹¹ After several Cold War failures, the CIA desperately needed to salvage its tarnished image. Since the rational actor model was simulated by the CIA, the simulations gave the agency "knowledge" needed to manipulate policy when it wanted to engage in realist power struggles, just as it did in Afghanistan.

Another failure of the realist agenda in American policy-making occurred when the Carter doctrine was implemented. The doctrine's impact went beyond foreign policy.

In the context of South Asia, the Carter doctrine intended to retaliate against any attempt by the U.S.S.R. to gain access to the Persian Gulf through Iran and Afghanistan.

However, the realist orientation towards power, in this case the preservation of American economic power, failed to recognize the domestic consequences of such a policy.

President Carter was furious at the Soviets for invading Afghanistan. In a reactionary move, he decided that the U.S. should place an export embargo on grain to the Soviet Union. This proved to be debilitating to the grain producers in America's farmlands and the Soviets managed to find other nations willing to fill the void left by American suppliers.⁹²

A final example of the shortcomings associated with realism's dominance in American foreign policy is evident in the inability to forecast the consequences of policy success in Afghanistan. The civil war after the Soviet withdrawal was a consequence of a lack in long-term vision beyond the concept of self-preservation. The containment policy failed to recognize that a power vacuum would eventually result from the U.S. defeat of the Soviet Union. American policy makers consistently pursued a policy that contained the Soviet threat; however, since they had never been successful in achieving this goal, they did not know what to do once they had achieved it.

"They won the war, but lost the peace".⁹³ This statement reflects the outcome of U.S. policy in South Asia. The Soviet threat was contained, but the price for containment was international peace. More specifically, regional conflicts with their roots in ethnic conflicts could no longer be muted by super-power influence. The bipolar international system was quite stable, because of a nuclear balance of power. That balance does not exist in the post-Cold War environment.

With an unprecedented policy success in hand, policy makers chose to turn their backs on the Afghan people who were so critical in carrying out U.S. policy in the region. American policy makers failed to provide the citizens of Afghanistan the proper assistance to recover from war as it had in almost every other case in which it carried out an interventionist policy. When compared to U.S. interventions in Latin America and Europe, it becomes painfully clear that the war effort in Afghanistan served a single-track policy objective: Soviet containment. This suggests that policy makers did not make an effort to anticipate an exit strategy, consequently leaving Afghanistan desolate, impoverished, and easily exploited by terrorist networks such as Al-Qaeda.

Cultural understanding is clearly absent from the formulation of U.S. foreign policy on Islamic South Asia. Considering the potentially lethal consequences posed by continued policy failures, most important of which is the danger posed by a Pakistani-Indian nuclear exchange, the formulation of U.S. foreign policy must be re-evaluated to include a deeper understanding of the region and its people.

Chapter 4. The Future of U.S. Policy toward the Region

The task of incorporating culture into foreign policy is difficult, but it is growing more important in the context of American policy. If the United States seeks to develop the basic infrastructure of Afghanistan, a democratic system in Pakistan, and regional peace, then the existing policy must be re-examined. Understanding cultural practices is an integral part of comprehending cultural and political life in Islamic South Asia in an effort to create successful policies toward the region. One dimension of the cultural life and how it is practiced that would greatly assist American policy makers is the influence of culture on economic activity. Culture and economics crossover within the Hawallah system found throughout the region.

The Hawallah system is an underground monetary transfer system. It is a closed system, meaning that it is not susceptible to penetration by “outsiders.” This system is the means by which Muslims around the world, especially in the developing world, conduct their financial transactions.⁹⁴ The growing mistrust of the West and their “imperialist” institutions only further strengthens the reliance on the culturally familiar systems such as the Hawallah network. The task for U.S. policy makers is to incorporate such cultural institutions, practices and beliefs in future development strategies. Cultural institutions, such as the Hawallah, offer advantages that national banking systems within Islamic South Asia simply can not offer. One method for overcoming this issue is for the regional banks to offer similar features and employ incentive-based tactics such as low

interest loans. A lending practice that is consistent with Islamic beliefs concerning the collection of interest.

The Hawallah system is only one of the many potential cultural factors facing the successful implementation of development programs by the U.S. and other states and international organizations. The Pashtun code, Pashtunwali, serves as another example of cultural resistance towards modernization and Western ideals. Improvements in the area of gender-related issues may serve as a benchmark for developmental success across both Pakistani and Afghan society. Higher levels of female participation in government, education, and economic life are only a short list of gender-related indicators that can mark the success of development.

Expanded roles for women might indicate that the culture is capable of change and adaptation when faced with the prospect of modernization or failure of the nation. A shift in attitude towards gender issues would indicate the willingness of the people to trust modern institutions, thus legitimizing their respective governments. It would also show that they are open to the prospect of new (to some, dangerous) ideas through the education system. An attitude adjustment may allow the environment for accepting the diversity of other cultural groups. Eventually, the acceptance of new ideas within Pakistani and Afghan society will afford each nation the opportunity to succeed where they have failed in their attempts to pursue national development. However, even if their respective cultures can change their perceptions, sustainable development in this region requires a great deal of international leadership and financial assistance. This is where the greatest opportunity for success in U.S. policy is possible, in terms of achieving goals within the policy agenda and meeting the needs of the region.

Genuine Regional Integration

The unfortunate reality is that American foreign policy no longer seems to follow a definitive vision leading to policy action. From containment, to promoting democracy, to focusing on development, to the war on terror, U.S. policy is often shifting its priorities. While such a flexible diplomatic approach is positive, something is lacking. What is missing from US foreign policy in Islamic South Asia is a measure of consistency that serves as the backbone through any shift in policy.⁹⁵

The security and trust projected through some level of consistency in American diplomacy in this region will serve as the most important step in any effort made to achieve any future policy goals. The heavy-handed diplomacy practiced in this region must give way to a more peace-oriented dialogue.⁹⁶ This is compulsory for several reasons. The following list is comprised of the most significant reasons or motivations for a shift in policy. Pakistan and India have achieved a nuclear stalemate, the war on terror requires local assistance, and (if India is factored into the future of the region) the economic crunch of one quarter of the global population is too heavy a burden without heavy assistance from extra-regional players. The U.S., China, Japan, Germany, Turkey and Russia all claim interest in the political events unfolding in Islamic South Asia, evident from the Bonn conference on Afghanistan.

Implementing these policy goals into action requires more than discussing and defining the issues, there must be action. The regional actors have already taken steps towards addressing the issues facing them as individual actors and as a geographic

regional entity. The solution South Asian states used to address their mutual concerns is an integrated approach. The framers of the institution witnessed the success of regional integration in Europe and came to the logical conclusion that such a strategy may resolve the many issues facing the region. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was officially created in 1985 through contributions made by its member states in the form of membership dues. The objectives the SAARC framers envisioned were greater economic stability, higher standards of living, better educated citizens and peaceful relations between all members.⁹⁷ Unfortunately, these goals face a plethora of challenges both internal and external to Islamic South Asia and South Asia as a whole. The institution has the potential to play a significant role in the future of the region, but it will require significant assistance and guidance of the lone super-power.

In his 1995 article in Foreign Affairs, Richard Haass outlined several policy courses that US foreign policy can follow in the post-Cold War era.⁹⁸ Of the many possible roles U.S. foreign policy could play in the future, one alternative appears best suited to the political culture of Islamic South Asia. The role of the United States acting as a regional leader of a multilateral coalition serving through a regional institution is the approach best suited for achieving the majority of future policy goals.⁹⁹

Development, whether economic or social, is crucial for this region to move toward modernity. Democracy, elections, and human rights have and should continue to be subordinate goals in U.S. policy toward Islamic South Asia. The ability or opportunity to elect officials freely is meaningless by comparison to the reality of poverty and starvation affecting the great majority of the region's people. Being able to vote, while suffering from malnutrition, loses meaning within the context of these dismal conditions.

It has been commonplace in American third world policy to promote political and economic values at the expense of basic social needs.¹⁰⁰ The infrastructure to support human welfare in an effort to improve the human condition and quality of life is non-existent in Islamic South Asia. In most of the rural landscape it is even difficult to find running water.

Institutionalizing a formal set of rules for interactions between South Asia's major powers, with a visible international presence lead by the United States, may be the only path to a long-term peace and sustaining development. The already high level of economic interdependence that has taken place world wide since the 1960's demands that South Asia plan for its future by keeping an economic focus on its plans to develop a sound financial base. In the age of globalization, in terms of the deepening economic, political and social relationships between states, interdependence has become increasingly necessary for the survival of third world nations. This can be attributed to several factors, but none is more important than the rise in competition within the emerging global economy. In a world where competition exists between and within first and second tier states, it has become increasingly difficult for third world states to be competitive, or to participate at all.

Having witnessed the formation and success of the European Union, leaders of South Asia concluded that regional cooperation should exist among third world states.¹⁰¹ The European model made sense for South Asia for several reasons. Western-educated professionals occupy most of the administrative government positions in South Asian states. Using a culturally compatible model would greatly increase the likelihood of success in the eyes of the foreign ministers from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh,

Bhutan, Nepal, and the Maldives, all of whom participated in establishing the movement towards South Asian regional integration. Along with the extensive knowledge that South Asian states have with Western forms of administration, they also knew from experience what can and cannot be implemented successfully in their region of the world.

With 1.4 billion people living in the region and the presence of rival nuclear states, there exists the very strong potential for a human disaster of unprecedented proportions if South Asia failed to “further develop”.¹⁰² (The use of the term “further develop” is used here to imply development on the economic, social and political levels.) The numbers are staggering when examining this region. SAARC represents 1.2 billion people within the confines of its territory, making it the largest geo-political bloc in the world.¹⁰³ The consumer base is estimated at 425 million people in the middle-class income bracket, so the region represents the largest consumer group in the world. The potential is enormous, as are the hazards.

Terrorism, sectarian violence, separatist movements, cultural and ethnic rivalries, religious tensions, scarce resources and clashing national identities make up a short list of violent clashes that take place in South Asia on a daily basis. The combination of any of the various conflicts, ranging from environmental to political, within the region could result in the largest loss of human life that the world has ever seen.

It is often the case that violent acts committed by a small number of individuals negatively impact the perception by outsiders of an entire society. The effects of violence lower the societal level quality of life and can be considered either alone or with other quality of life indicators when gauging the overall living conditions of South Asians. The most telling indicator of the quality of life is that the majority of the South Asian

citizenry live in absolute poverty, with little or no access to medicine, food, water, shelter, clothing and other basic necessities including education.¹⁰⁴ These dreadful conditions, which have persisted for over a thousand years, were finally approached in a communal fashion through the creation of SAARC. These problems are not new to the region, however an integrated approach had never been attempted.

Internally SAARC will have to overcome India's lack of commitment to the institution's agenda. India, the largest in size, economic power and influence, is undermining many of SAARC's efforts by creating competing alliances with surrounding regions such as the Indo-Iranian-CIS bloc.¹⁰⁵ India takes the position, as have many SAARC critics, that SAARC has overlapping trade and industrial commodities.¹⁰⁶ This issue lowers the prospects for success due to the lack of diversification among the participating economies. In India's eyes the organization has a high potential for economic collapse. Coupled with Pakistani hostility over the Kashmir issue, India has been reluctant to accept a leadership role within the institution. The Indian government's sentiment toward SAARC is not consistent with the behavior of a regional leader/hegemon, thus "rendering SAARC impotent" as one columnist puts it.¹⁰⁷

India is the key to future peace or development in South Asia. Should India choose not to act as a catalyst for change, then the true leader of the current international system, the U.S., should take its place. Not simply because the U.S. is the global hegemon, but also for the reasons already mentioned. The United States has had a long and complicated relationship with this region. The failed policies of past administrations must end and new approaches put in place to remedy some of the problems and to redeem

America's image in the views of many Asians, especially the Afghan and Pakistani peoples.

If SAARC is able to solidify its relationships through a major commitment from India, the potential for growth in the new global environment will be unlimited. However, securing this commitment will be difficult and that is why the United States must return to a South Asian policy that calls for active involvement as it did during the period of the Afghan War. The only way to ensure that U.S. policy goals are met and that the region's potential is utilized is to strengthen SAARC. It has the ability as a regional institution to promote not only economic and social development but also, as mentioned before, to bring lasting peace to the region. If economic partnership enhances security as it has in the EU, then valuable resources can be reallocated from defense programs towards development.

Policy-makers in the U.S. need to recognize that SAARC provides the institutional foundation for long-term peace in the region because it compliments U.S. policy objectives. If mutual security exists through economic interdependence, then all neighboring states benefit, thus drastically reducing the need for arms transfers. This in turn eliminates the need for containment and proliferation concerns by the United States. Once peace exists, the circumstances around which the Kashmir dispute persists can begin to be negotiated without the threat of mutual destruction. As peace and stability begin to ease the tensions of the political landscape, democracy can be fostered through institutional reforms. Pakistan and Afghanistan desperately need to reform their institutions if they intend to participate in the new market that will emerge in South Asia.

Other Issues Facing the Region

One of the largest English-speaking pools of scientific and technical workers in the world exists in South Asia.¹⁰⁸ With the return of the Afghan refugees the pool will grow, as many of them fled to and subsequently became educated in developed nations. If development of the economy occurs, these countries need to take advantage of their human resources in a variety of industries. Furthermore, they could begin to alleviate the disparities that exist between the rich and the poor.

South Asia is the region with the world's largest population living in poverty.¹⁰⁹ South Asia's most ominous crisis can be defined as a crisis between its people and its resources. The simple fact is that people do not have the financial resources to provide for their basic needs. Poor distribution networks for agricultural goods are also a problem and are causing many of the poor to starve (even those with the money for purchases).

When a nation begins to industrialize, its people often move from rural to urban areas. The activities of South Asia's economy are mostly found in rural areas, as are the people; this pattern illustrates their cultural heritage dating from the first settlements on the continent. There are few areas of urban activity. But the number of people involved in, and more importantly, depending on agricultural activity overwhelms the current infrastructure (this illustrates how immature the process of industrialization is in this region).

These poor nations heavily depend on agricultural industries for subsistence in both the domestic and international markets.¹¹⁰ The need for children under this

economic system creates a population pyramid, meaning these children are the primary wage earners for the elderly. In other words, children provide social security, rather than the government, within this social system. This leads to a classic dilemma: are these nations poor because they have so many children, or will they stay poor without all these children?

The fact that 61% of the population in South Asia is rural accounts for the high population growth rate in the region, which on average is 2.1%.¹¹¹ This places additional strain on these nations as they struggle through economic transition. With an already large population continuing to grow rapidly due to economic and cultural factors, the need for a strong regional presence such as SAARC to implement social programs is becoming more evident when examining such high growth rates.

The people of South Asia also face a dual-edged sword when it comes to the environment. They need to industrialize rapidly yet they need to protect their environments as well. Of all the resources necessary for a country's population, only one is universally vital and environmentally significant. It is the largest issue facing every person in South Asia, the availability of water. The primary rivers (Indus and Ganges) have become polluted and fresh water sources are nearly extinguished.¹¹² With the continued rate of population expansion, the struggle over water will intensify in the near future. Furthermore, the large amount of activity in the agricultural sector in conjunction with the scarcity of water has allowed for the emergence of a new problem in South Asia, land degradation.

Soil composition has been deeply scarred by the introduction of chemicals and fertilizers, continued soil erosion, and the resulting loss of bio-diversity.¹¹³ This poses a

serious threat in nations that depend on fertile lands for survival. The recognition of this issue by SAARC has led to the creation of policies which take into account both the demand on the land and the number of people who create these demands. There is a definite connection between overpopulation in nations and the serious damage to soils. In general, policies aim at educating the masses, women in particular, so that they are literate and informed on issues such as birth control. It is believed, "These policies will help these nations to break the vicious cycle of rapid population growth, poverty, and environmental degradation".¹¹⁴

The United Nations created the model on which the countries of SAARC have based their individual environmental policies; the model was chartered in 1993 as *UN Agenda 21*.¹¹⁵ It provides a detailed ten-step proposal on dealing with issues where populations create stress on environments. The recognition of educating the female population and the importance of birth control are the most likely sources for resolving these interrelated issues.

The issues of South Asia are global issues. If the nations of this region continue to grow as they have, their populations will come to rely heavily on others for food. Then those nations who export to the region may degrade their own environments and resources, making the situation potentially more desperate. Hopefully, with the recognition of the population crisis facing them, South Asian countries will enforce policies to protect the environment and educate the masses. If this occurs, the people of South Asia will be able to be optimistic about their future. If not, the consequences will be felt by their children and those around the world.

Political disputes which plague South Asia's stability must be resolved in a similar manner through the help of the United States, prior to any future efforts to further integrate the region. The reasons for this are two-fold. First, a certain level of trust must exist in order for nations to cooperate within a regional institution. Such is the case in Europe where political hostilities must be toned down prior to admission to the European Union. Turkey's disputes with Greece are the most visible reasons for its inability to gain membership into the EU.

The second reason for resolving these issues first can be explained in simple economic logic. If these nations are able to trust one another through regional cooperation, then they will not need to spend themselves into overwhelming debt as they attempt to expand their national defenses.¹¹⁶ This will allow them to allocate funding to be used for many of the programs needed for transforming their national economies. As mentioned before, this process includes moving away from their colonial heritage to self-reliant economies. The implication here is not for self-reliance in every aspect, but enough to withstand external financial or political pressures so that only the will of South Asians are represented in regional policies.

An example of a nation that has been able to do this is Iraq. It built a large foreign reserve through its oil production industry that is now used to sustain critical aspects of the nation's infrastructure, despite the coalition bombing of the infrastructure and the economic embargo placed on it by the UN. The intent here is not to imply that Iraq is not suffering, but the level of suffering would have been higher, had it not created a system of monetary reserves.¹¹⁷

The European Union has been able to bind its member states to formal agreements, thus creating meaningful legislation. The security issue within Europe has diminished between EU members; instead it is dealt with by local authority figures on the state level, thus allowing the EU parliament to focus on further integration. These procedures set an example for SAARC nations to implement in a form appropriate for its regional predicaments.

The political issues facing SAARC make it seem as though some members, such as Pakistan, are attempting to counter globalization. The closed nature of the system of monetary, social, and political policy makes integration seem quite distant. Internal pressures to open the Pakistani economy and thereby raise standards of living for millions of poor people are strong, but only on a grass-roots level. If Pakistan and others could satisfy some of the issues facing the poor members of their societies, then they may be better able to focus on integration.

These issues will need to be addressed region-wide. SAARC needs to find a way to face its largest test: its ability to redirect and generate capital for the reorganization and in some cases the outright creation of social welfare programs within its member states. India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh in particular have completely failed in attempts to create a safety net for the poor. The cause is simple; economies have allocated insignificant resources in comparison to the number of impoverished individuals they must provide for.¹¹⁸ The United States must step in as a dominant leader. If South Asian nations cannot provide for their citizens, then many more states may follow the path of civil war and state failure demonstrated in Afghanistan. With these fears in mind, many of the

intellectual and professional cadres have already left. This process, known as “brain drain,” makes it even more difficult for these nations to develop.

These nations need to adopt national or regional policies that create an environment that attracts South Asians back to the region. India is far ahead in this process with its implementation of practices that support Indian students to study abroad. Upon return, they are given high-level positions, especially in the public sector, and receive prestige and status for their contributions to the nation's welfare.¹¹⁹ India and Pakistan have generously compensated individuals who have returned with a high level of scientific expertise, but that practice has been an informal defense policy for the development of their nuclear programs.

This effort to lure educated professionals and technically skilled labor is a practice with the wrong focus. Rather than building a strong civic culture through an educated workforce, the effort has been to strengthen the national defense arsenal. Working professionals are essential in the creation of civil society, a necessary element for aspiring democracies. Until the professional cadre is offered an attractive work environment, the incentive to return to their native land is minimal. Other than a sense of nationalism, which erodes over time if one spends a substantial amount of time away from their homeland, there is little or no motivation for South Asia's most developed human resources to assist development within the region.

The Issue of Civil Society

The creation of civil society is paramount for the future of Islamic South Asia. Political culture explored in the work of Almond and Verba that asserts democracy requires a supportive civic culture, “a set of attitudes and values towards politics shared by the citizenry and political elite concerning individual rights, public authority, and political power.”¹²⁰ They also attribute the absence of a liberal and plural democratic style of government to the existence of authoritarian practices in non-Western countries. They ascribe this to the absence of a civic culture. A straightforward definition states that political culture is an assessment of the influence culture has on political behavior.¹²¹ Although the controversy surrounding democracy and civic culture continues, the point remains: democracy cannot be sustained without a body of concerned citizens to support the democratic process.

Lucian Pye argues that the protective nature of Asia’s political culture characterized by dependence on authority, avoidance of open conflict, and an emphasis on stability makes democratic government unlikely to succeed.¹²² This point raises important issues in this study. Pye is making descriptive observations based on historical behaviors, but his conclusions will be negated in these findings. The following analysis of Asia’s dominant political cultures reveals that Pye’s knowledge of the interaction between culture and politics fails to interpret accurately the role of cultural pre-cursors for democracy.

Pye's argument follows the cultural determinist view of politics which rests upon what Emerson called "ultra-Orientalism."¹²³ It assumes that a single set of values applies to all the people in Asia, covering dozens of countries, speaking thousands of languages and believing in different religions. This is then contrasted to a single, but different, set of values held by an equally diverse population in the West. Cultural diversity is reduced to no more than two polar extremes: "the East as the East and the West as the West."

The implications of the cultural determinist argument are farfetched. The case study into Chinese political culture is exemplary of the logical flaws within this argument. China was at one time debating how to modernize. One of the options they explored would require them to abandon their cultural norms and adopt a Western value system which included concepts such as capitalism and democratic governance. China's government believed that science and "democracy" were the keys to modernity; and since the traditional Chinese culture was a hindrance to their development, China should move away from its own heritage and learn from the West.¹²⁴ This debate had a significant impact on the subsequent trajectory of modern China. The same debate took place in India at the end of British rule over the region.

The cases of India and China illustrate the dangers of marginalizing the cultural heritage of developing nations. Given that liberal democracy represents human progress from traditional to modern times, and that liberal democracy can only exist under a civic culture that is absent in non-Western cultures according to the current paradigm. It follows the logic that either non-Western countries have to abandon their own culture in order to achieve democracy or "they can never attain modernity if they maintain their

own culture.”¹²⁵ The notion of Asian democracy emerges as a critical response to these claims. In resisting the imposition of Western standards on Asian politics, “advocates of Asian democracy uphold the cultural determinist view of politics, but reject the supremacy of liberal democracy over other forms of political system.”¹²⁶ They argue that power and authority can more closely follow local culture, as in the case of India. China, cognizant of these factors towards modernization, has responded by taking steps that mirror Indian efforts.

By denying liberal democracy as the only desirable form of modern government, proponents of Asian democracy are able to avoid belief in the claim that “the inferiority of Asian culture is a hindrance to political modernization.”¹²⁷ This serves as a contrast to the liberal democratic emphasis on individual rights, rule of law, and impersonal authority. China’s polity is characterized by respect for authority and hierarchy. This becomes evident through its dependence on leaders rather than on laws. Other factors such as the presence of a strong state vis-à-vis society, an emphasis on communitarianism, and conformity to group interests over individual rights serve as additional indicators of Chinese political culture.¹²⁸ India, although a self-proclaimed secular state, is quite similar to China. The high level of dependence on politicians as social leaders shows that the influence of the state dominates society in modern India.

The concept of Asian democracy has a number of gaps that need to be filled. One way of filling these gaps is to make use of culture as a bridge between the past and the future. Jung Choi suggests that in the case of democratization, Asian values of modernity may prove to be more practical than Western values.¹²⁹ The future of democracy on the Asian continent is another reason why an understanding of culture is paramount in future

US policies toward the region. Gaining insights and putting them to use are difficult tasks, however they are challenges that must be accepted if civil society is to be cultivated in the region.

The peoples of both Afghan and Pakistani societies have not had a voice in their political landscape for more than half a century. In an effort to address this and other issues, US policy makers agreed on several points regarding the future of the region. The official goals of US policy towards the development of Islamic South Asia are closely related for both Pakistan and Afghanistan. Those goals and strategies for achieving them are the subject of the final section.

Conclusions

The net result of U.S. policy toward South Asia since the 1950's is failure. The realist orientation of the containment doctrine may have been slightly altered (or even renamed as a promotion of American values) in the post-Cold War era, but in general no major shift in U.S. policy has occurred.¹³⁰ Many believed that with the fall of the Soviet Union the ideological divisions of the third world into camps created by the super-powers would have ceased. However, the South Asian example clearly shows that the hostilities continued without super-power rivalries. China, Russia and the United States have maintained their rivalry for geo-strategic alliances in order to increase their influence in the Asian theatre especially since September 11th.

India and Pakistan, with their nuclear balance of terror, have carried the torch of the Cold War into the twenty-first century. With Kashmir as the flash point, war is a shadow that hangs over both societies. It may be useful to compare the Kashmir conflict to the Cuban Missile Crisis. Similarities between Kashmir's role and that of Cuba, as triggers for nuclear engagement, illustrate that issues of national security lie at the heart of a state's interests and are defended at all costs.

Current U.S. foreign policy discourse outlines several areas of concern in South Asia: non-proliferation, market expansion and economic stability, eliminating the drug trade, spreading democracy, protecting the environment, and supporting sustainable development.¹³¹ These concerns are very much in tune with the ideals of the United Nations. However, the United States should not try to solve every global problem. Such an undertaking is not a practical approach to international affairs for any sovereign nation. It not only jeopardizes limited natural resources by overextending its capabilities but it also jeopardizes the status of the United States. The U.S. can support and fund the UN to carry out many of these broad policy aims. As for its own policy agenda, the US should limit its involvement in South Asia to the following areas of concern: nuclear proliferation, reduce Indian and Pakistani hostilities, and boost SAARC's role in the region.

The current era of a South Asian Cold War poses a number of challenges for U.S. policy makers. The objective of nuclear non-proliferation already failed. The question is what to do next. The first step is to deter the rival nations of Pakistan and India from further testing, thus serving a dual purpose in U.S. policy. The first is to keep these nuclear rivals from developing more sophisticated weapon systems. This implies limiting

their ability to expand from a regional to a global threat. Second, it eliminates the need for further testing, thus greatly reducing the possibility of using nuclear weapons as a reactionary measure to a show of force by the other.¹³² Avoiding nuclear accidents, such as an inadvertent detonation or reactor meltdowns, is a serious issue. The best way to assure that this does not occur is to use America's experience in command and control measures to administer the nuclear arsenal in both Pakistan and India.

The next phase is to avoid further technology transfers, especially to states in the Middle East, Iran, and North Korea. Despite the fact that both Pakistan and India have pledged not to do so, the historical precedent is that an existing nuclear weapon state has assisted an aspiring nuclear state in obtaining or developing its nuclear capability.¹³³ Currently neither India nor Pakistan has signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty or the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Both Pakistan and India seek international status as "elite" members of the nuclear club. Solving the issue of perception and prestige may not only ease tensions within the region, but domestically as well. By providing both nations with heightened international status, the incentive for them to maintain it is elevated by both internal and external pressure. This is best accomplished through involving India and Pakistan in future international treaties and increasing their value in the international economy. This may have the effect of reducing extremist type rhetoric from the political landscape of both nations.¹³⁴

A moderate India and a temperate Pakistan enhances the national security of both nations and in turn fulfills the U.S. policy goal of normalizing relations between those nations. If the U.S. is to implement non-proliferation in South Asia, it must assist in

creating a lasting peace by bringing the two sides together. One must keep in mind that positive relations with the United States are incentive itself, especially for India which has long sought to increase American investment within its borders.¹³⁵ Indian businessmen desperately want the technological and investment benefits associated with American foreign direct investments, something their government has denied them and Pakistan businessmen have long enjoyed.

The recommendations listed above provide a framework for restructuring U.S. foreign policy towards South Asia. They point to the need to move beyond the realist conception of a competition between states to cooperation among states. However, implementing the stated goals requires more than diplomatic rhetoric. It will require a dedication of resources and policy action to this region. Whether or not there is a lasting commitment to this region in the post-September 11th world remains to be seen. The circumstances warranting a deep, long-term investment continue to exist in South Asia.

The link between culture and politics is nothing new, but never before has an understanding of that relationship been as important as it is in the international political environment of today. The pursuit of US policy goals with the assistance of Pakistan and Afghanistan as regional allies requires an appreciation for the difference between Islam and Islamism.¹³⁶ Identifying those who practice Islam the faith as different from those who practice Islamism, a struggle for power, would greatly assist in achieving a higher level of cooperation in this part of the world.

Future policy successes may be predicated on understanding the cultural background of South Asia, and more specifically Islamic South Asia. Taking culture, religion and social factors relevant to a particular state into consideration will increase

understanding for both sides. One way to implement cultural sensitivity in policy making is to seek out avenues and utilize cultural commonalities. Human rights, social justice, high ethical standards, and personal safety are some of the common concerns shared between Islamic South Asia's culture and U.S. foreign policy. Such measures allow for dialogue relating to the key issues facing the region. At the top of the list is the need to establish peace on the sub-continent and the implementation of a sustainable development plan. The trust needed to resolve these issues must be cultivated through the only resource specifically dealing with this region's problems, that is the role of SAARC.

In the end, SAARC is the only option that satisfies both regional concerns and U.S. policy initiatives across the board. However, this requires the recognition by U.S. policy makers that SAARC should be supported through American foreign policy and foreign aid channels. The age of idealism in foreign policy may seemingly have died with the US-Soviet Cold War. It is the position of this author that the new Cold War era calls for a return to idealism. If American foreign policy strives to attain the ideals and goals set forth in this paper, only then can there be optimism about resolving the problems facing South Asia that currently pose immanent danger not only to the United States, but to the whole world.

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