Winter Workshop on Sources of Conflict in South Asia

Terrorism, Human Security Issues, Governance, Gender Security and Migration

The Sixth RCSS Winter Workshop was held at Godavari Village Resort, Kathmandu, Nepal, from 1 to 10 October 2004. This residential workshop was devoted to non-traditional sources of conflict in South Asia. The themes included:

- Terrorism
- Human Security Issues
- Governance
- Gender and Security
- Migration

As envisaged, the objectives of the workshop were to train young scholars in South Asia to evolve alternate approaches to prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts in the region. Continued interaction and communication among the network of professionals and scholars is a *sine qua non* for future peace in the region, to which RCSS is committed.

Prof. Sridhar Khatri, Executive Director, RCSS, explained the structure, design, and content of the workshop. He said that the themes for this year were derived from grants given by Ford Foundation to five different institutions in South Asia under Phase II of its project on Non-Traditional Security Issues. The other organizations collaborating with RCSS in the workshop and their areas of study include: Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, Dhaka (Human Security); Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace, New Delhi (Gender and Security); Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi (Governance, Democracy and Human Development); and Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit, Dhaka (Migration).

The keynote address was made by Ambassador I. P. Khosla, while the themes were discussed by the faculty members along with their presentations. Ambassador Khosla mentioned that most human security issues can be better understood in the dispersal of power from the State and its linkages with the organs utilizing such power. He maintained the need to concentrate more on implementation of research already done in the sphere of non-traditional security. His contention was that there is an overwhelming number of studies done and data available and over-reporting of issues, whereas there remains an under-resolution of the issues. He said that the task for young scholars is to delve deep into the concepts and define them, but deal with the root causes, and find prescriptions.

He linked the approaches to improve the security of the people with gradual dispersal of power from the State to other actors, such as NGOs, civil society groups, etc. About hundred years ago there was a "triple concentration" of power internationally with colonialists, internally with Governments, and within Governments with the small elite, he said. It has, however been replaced by a gradual leakage of power. This phenomenon has also affected the trade unions and labour movements, which once exercised tremendous influence on governments. For example, the Indian liberalization programmes of the early 1990s could not be challenged by the weak trade unions.

He also stated that the "over-towering bureaucracy" has expanded and it had led to a dispersal of power. The bureaucracy has two basic roles, first, it is an arm of the government; and second, as it expands, it becomes representative in its character by "developing local links".

As a result of the dispersal of power from the State, it is no longer possible for the State to preserve, consolidate and enhance power over its own people through coercion, laws and institutions; the state is now called upon to improve the lives of its people by focusing upon denominators like life expectancy, health, education, the environment, etc. The state is also expected to give away power to local bodies.

The response of the State in the face of such erosion of authority has been attempts to "recoup some of the losses". This is done through promulgating ideologies such as ethnicity, religion, and language. It has attempted to promote homogenizing projects like that of nationalism. It has also tried to focus more on economic indicators such as GDP, FDI and foreign exchange reserves. However, over-reliance on such indicators, Ambassador Khosla cautioned, can be highly erroneous.

He defined terrorism as a discourse about State and about accumulating more power in favour of the State. It is yet to be defined in a comprehensive manner. The power to tell who is a terrorist lies in the hands of the State. He pointed out that the State is not in favour of providing definitions to the term. This workshop can attempt to arrive at a definition, he said. The root causes of terrorism are about deprivation and poverty, and generally, it is a result of a "mismatch between the flow of power upwards and downwards".

The human security discourse is one result of a decentred State. "Security, i.e. defence against external and internal enemies, has gradually come to mutual and cooperative security," he said. In a dispersed State, security is being managed by many groups. The human security debate has been an international debate, and has been a continuing one. The idea about the modern State is about its permanence. The debate, however, happens at a below-the-State-level, a factor which the State is yet to internalize. Its absence is visible in the budget and plan documents. In fact, the State can reclaim some of its power by focusing more on human security.

Ambassador Khosla outlined two approaches to governance. One can be an attempt to construct an index, which is relatively easy, given the fact that there is no dearth of data and information. The second approach is to take the aspirations of the people into account. It is a long and complicated process. "What are people's goals in terms of well-being, security, income and prospects, often they don't really know." There is, thus, the danger of popular aspirations being distorted by the culture of consumerism.

During discussions on the presentation, Ambassador Khosla elaborated that even the role of the civil society and NGOs has been distorted by their agenda, "ethnic, religious and promotion of nationalism of a certain kind". He said that even though the civil society would like to exercise more power, the governments of the day have displayed great reluctance to allow the same. Governments, on the other hand, do not have similar problems in sharing power with private organizations. Another handicap of NGOs, in his opinion, is that "they are not organized enough" and do not have the resources to collect data on a national scale.

(Excerpted from the summary made by Dr Bibhu Prasad Routary of the keynote address)

The list of Faculty Members and the topics covered by them in the course of the 10-day workshop are given below.

Non-Traditional Security Issues in South Asia: Some Key Themes

Overview
Prof. Sridhar Khatri
Terrorism in South Asia

Prof. Abdur Rob Khan
Human Security in South Asia: Discourse, Practice and Policy Proposition
Globalization and Non-Traditional Security Issues in South Asia.

Terrorism
Prof. Imtiaz Ahmed
Understanding Terrorism in South Asia (presented by Dr Amena Mohsin)
Weapon Technology and the Reconceptualization of Terrorism (presented by Dr Amena Mohsin)

Prof. Sridhar Khatri
Understanding and Responding to "Terrorism" in South Asia

Prof. Dhruba Kumar
Understanding "Terrorism" in Nepal: The Marginalization Syndrome

Prof. S. D. Muni
Responding to Terrorism in South Asia

Dr Jehan Perera
The Misgovernance Syndrome in Sri Lanka: From Terrorist War to Negotiated Partnership

Dr Rubina Saigol
State and the Limits of "Counter-Terrorism": Experience of Pakistan and Sri Lanka

Dr Nira Wickremasinghe
Unthinking the "Terrorism"–"Globalization" Nexus

Panel Discussion

Prof. Dhruba Kumar, Dr Pancha Maharjan, Prof. S. D. Muni, Dr Rubina Saigol and Dr Nira Wickremasinghe
Understanding and Responding to Terrorism in South Asia: Some After-Thoughts and Policy Options

Human Security

Prof. Abdur Rob Khan
How are Human Security Issues Viewed in South Asia?

Mr Ajaya Dixit and Mr Dipak Gyawali
A Cultural Theory Perspective on Environment and Security

Prof. Krishna Hatchetu
Human Security Study: Survey and Peoples' Attitudes

Prof. Monirul Hussain
Poverty Marginalisation and Human Security

Prof. Dhruba Kumar
Nepal Country Paper on Human Security

Mr Jagath Senaratne
Human Security and State Security in Sri Lanka

Panel Discussion

Prof. S. D. Muni, Prof. Abdur Rob Khan and Mr Jagath Senaratne
Human Security in South Asia: Some After-Thoughts and Policy Options

Governance

Prof. Lok Raj Baral
Governance and Security in Plural Societies

Prof. Gopal Guru
Social Insurance and Social Security for Vulnerable Groups in South Asia

Prof. Valerian Rodrigues
New and Old Social and Political Movements and Their Impact on Non-Traditional Security Issues in South Asia

Dr E. Sridharan
Political Systems and Ethnic Accommodation

Panel Discussion

Prof. Lok Raj Baral, Prof. Gopal Guru, Prof. Valerian Rodrigues and Dr E. Sridharan
Governance and Regional Security in South Asia: Some After-Thoughts and Policy Options

Gender and Security

Dr Sumona Das Gupta
Gender and Security: Exploring the Problematic
Gender and Armed Conflict: The Kashmir Case

Dr Amena Mohsin
Women, Insurgency and the Chittagong Hill Tracts

Ms Rita Reddy
Gender and Peacekeeping: Lessons Learnt from the Experience of South-East Asia

Dr Rubina Saigol
Post-9/11 Terror, Terrorists and Women
The Farmers' Movements in Pakistani Punjab: With Focus on Gender Issues

Ms Rita Thapa and Dr Ava Shrestra
On the Edge: The Impact of the Insurgency on Nepali Women

Panel Discussion

Dr Sumona Das Gupta, Ms Rita Reddy, Ms Rita Thapa, Dr Ava Shrestha and Dr Rubina Saigol
Gender and Security in South Asia: Some After-Thoughts and Policy Options

Migration

Dr Jagannath Adhikari
Labour Migration Experiences: Within South Asia

Prof. Syed Imtiaz Ahmed
Labour Migration and Security: Conceptual Issues

Prof. Lok Raj Baral
Refugees and Regional Security in South Asia

Dr Tasneem Siddiqui
Migration, Development and Livelihoods
Labour Migration Experiences: From South Asia

Panel Discussion

Dr Jagannath Adhikari, Prof. Syed Imtiaz Ahmed, Prof. Lok Raj Baral and Dr Tasneem Siddiqui
Migration: Some After-Thoughts and Policy Options

After each session the young participants were asked to have group discoussions on the themes and prepare reports.

The participants, selected from Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, were as follows.

Random Glimpses of the Proceedings

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Dr Janaki D. Jayawardena
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Mr S. B. Atugoda
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Ms Minna Thaheer
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The workshop became a "conduit" for the young scholars to engage in more research in the various segments of study to explore fresh resolutions to problematc areas in the field of security studies in the region.

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Moving Away from a "New World Order" to a "Just World Order"

Text of the Action Agenda for South Asia endorsed by the Regional Conference on The Role of Civil Society in the Prevention of Armed Conflict, organized by the RCSS in collaboration with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and UNDP under the Global Partnership for Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) programme, Hotel Himalaya, Kathmandu, Nepal, 11–13 September 2004

Preamble

South Asia hosts more than a quarter of the world's population and is one of the most densely populated regions. It is the cradle of one of the oldest civilizations with enormous diversity, deep-rooted cleavages and stratification on the basis of gender, caste, class, race, ethnicity and religion. In over five thousand years of its history, it has been the scene of innumerable armed conflicts, social turmoil, and widespread violence against its people. It has also faced two hundred years of colonial rule that compounded its political and social divisions by imposing on them new cleavages of its own creation and decisions. In modern times, the forces of globalization have contributed significantly to social, political, economic and cultural tumult. The events following 11 September 2001 and the "war against terror" have added a new dimension of unprecedented consequences resulting in further polarization of societies. It has aggravated latent cleavages such as communalism, fundamentalism, and gender violence and further marginalized disadvantaged groups such as minorities, indigenous people and women. Consequently, South Asia today is one of the most conflict-ridden and violence-prone regions of the world. The South Asian people are not just facing patriarchal dominance, and majoritarian and hostile State systems, but also social and political systems that have increased structural violence, leading to widespread and multilayered conflicts.

With a view to identifying the role of Civil Society in the context of growing inability of the governments of the region to deal with the above challenges in which they are often accused of being complicit partners, some 50 activists and other participants from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka got together in Kathmandu from 11 to 13 September 2004. The occasion was a regional conference on "The Role of Civil Society in Armed Conflicts in South Asia", convened by the Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS), in collaboration with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and UNDP. It is part of a larger international programme initiated by the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), with the European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP) serving as its secretariat. In this conference, the participants representing organizations that spearheaded many pro-peace and anti-war movements in South Asia challenged the concept that armed conflicts are the only indicators of widespread and pervasive violence in society. They opined that if peace is the goal, then there has to be a process of introspective interrogation of all kinds of violence and inequities present in South Asian societies. For achieving minimal justice, lessons are to be drawn from the experiences of communities that have suffered violence. The participants strongly urged the United Nations to operate not only as an organization of different States, but also of people and nations.

The conference proposed that civil society organizations of South Asia should urge for a paradigm shift in international relations from national and state security to human security, people-centred developments over neo-liberal economic reforms and globalizations, dialogic mode of negotiation for conflict resolution over state-sponsored terror and confidence building over spread of fear. They urged South Asians to move away from concepts of a new world order and work towards a just world order.

Objectives

The conference discussed a variety of discourses that offered people-centred alternatives that promoted peace, justice, equity, and engendered human security in contrast to dominant mainstream paradigms.

Neo-Liberal Globalization vs People-Centred Development

Neo-liberal globalization does not address the specificities and requirements of civil societies in the region and instead aggravates inequalities, poverty and other deprivations including access to water, food, sanitation, health and education. MNCs and big domestic capital are strengthened at the cost of environment, most strata of society with women, children and marginalized communities suffering most. This resultant social dislocation accentuates violence and conflicts within and between states. An alternative people-centred development approach would be specific to country, locality, community (including castes, religious and ethnic groups) and would be directed at poverty eradication, ensured entitlements to all basic requirements, and accountability at all levels of economic decision making and government bodies. It would aim at creating and strengthening social solidarities, which, in turn, would contribute to creating a culture of peace locally and nationally, and later through people-to-people interaction regionally.

National Security/Human Security

The dominant discourse of national security is statist,

militarist, majoritarian, and masculinist. The interests of state power are paramount and the use of force (including armed force) is freely resorted to with the aim of curbing internal dissent or to counter external challenges. In a nuclear world and region, an alternative discourse that alone can address the problem of a possible calamity facing people of all nations is human security. In this regard, societal concerns are paramount, and dissent is accommodated to the maximum possible extent. All use of force is regulated by law, and the military is subject to human rights institutions and instruments. Human security would be based on the engendered people-centred development model which is just, equitable, and peace-loving.

New World Order/Just World Order

The US-led new world order and later its post-9/11 global war against terror are ideological justifications for the creation of a unipolar world headed by a global hegemon backed by its partners, including those in South Asia. The unilateral theories of pre-emptive strike and regime change have led to attacks on Asian countries like Afghanistan and Iraq, and further conflicts are likely. An alternative peace-centric notion of a world order emphasizes the supremacy of international law and the imperative of peaceful resolution of conflicts. A major source of conflict is deeply rooted in social, economic and cultural disparities, especially iniquitous distribution of physical resources at the disposal of states. International actors, specially the UN system, state actors and non-state actors must be committed to a sustainable and equitable distribution of resources for peace to be sustainable. As the Israel–Palestine conflict shows, there can be no peace without justice. As part of the process of renewing and strengthening the UN, it is instructive to remember that it is a comity of nations. The people of these nations represented by CSOs should be involved in the consultative mechanisms of the UN in all relevant areas and levels. It is imperative that these inputs also inform decision making in the Security Council.

Conflict Prevention: Two Approaches

Mainstream approaches to conflict prevention are largely based on dominant paradigms and are state-centric. A human security approach would empower civil society actors to map, forecast and prevent/resolve conflict through the intervention of local people familiar with the issues and groups involved. Instead of a militarist, there would be a dialogue process. Victims of conflicts, particularly women, would be empowered to intervene in the dialogue, including in the restoration of their rights and compensation for their losses.

International Relations/Transnational Civil Society

International relations are traditionally seen as interstate relations. Nevertheless, the people of these states are better represented by civil society than statist structures. Transnational linkages and sharing of expenses between CSOs would simultaneously democratize international relations, states, as well as civil societies themselves.

Terror/Dialogue

Militarist approaches to terrorism—as arbitrarily defined by states—not only demonize communities, e.g. Islam/Muslims, but are extended to other dissenters and often innocent civilians subject to punitive or unwarranted action including interrogation/arrest. Instead of conflict, violence and the culture of fear, an accommodative, multicultural attitude of dialogue is both more democratic and effective. The way to prevent terror and militancy is through dialogue involving civil society actors and conceding demands for autonomy, justice, equity, rights, etc.

Key Actors
Women
- Women can be at the forefront of picking up the pieces from violent conflicts, and, therefore, at the forefront of peace building; when engaging in challenging violence, they often contribute a new dynamic to the context.
- Experiences of bringing together women who have been affected by violence from across conflict divides

can be very instructive for developing common ground of understanding.

- Need to be equal partners in all aspects of peacemaking and peace building: can contribute experiences and perspectives that would otherwise be missing.
- Experience suggests that women's peace movements tend to be very durable.

Educators

- Importance of peace education.
- Highlighting the need for educational reform in the long term to address cultural violence and implicit messages that reinforce hierarchies of dominance/ exclusions and implications of inferiority.

Academics and Intellectuals

- Living up to the challenge in providing analysis and moral leadership to respond constructively to conflict and promote social justice.

Media and Journalists

- Shape and reflect the perceptions of context and discourse for responding to it.
- Powerful medium for propaganda and stimulating conducive environment for violence.
- Linked to state apparatus as channel for reinforcing status quo establishment.
- Sometimes promotes national chauvinism—including in its most rabid forms.
- Need for media literacy education for the public at large.
- Importance of photography and documentary reporting for raising awareness and sensitizing the public about what is going on: these capacities need to be supported and strengthened.
- Need for a gender lens in their reporting and analysis; usefulness of gender training for journalists and editorial staff.
- Journalists can be a conduit for making contacts across conflict divides.
- Important role that can be played by journalists' associations.

People Displaced due to Conflicts

- A totalizing experience that affects all other aspects of life.
- Challenge when host population becomes unwelcoming; responsibility of the state in meeting needs.
- Challenge of maintaining national conscience on the problem.

Children and Youth

- They are the future, and have tremendous capacity for change and energy to contribute to activism.
- Violence-affected young people need special programmes of support to develop skills and knowledge, and trauma counselling.

- Can become powerful peace workers with encouragement and support.

Religious and Faith-Based Organizations

While they may have the potential to be powerful voices for peace, most experiences discussed in the conference seem to portray them as being either forces for radicalization of extremist politics, with ideological frameworks that seem to strengthen/legitimize violence, or as in some/many cases, religiously-derived intolerance is a tool for suppressing women and other communities.

Diaspora

There are large South Asian diaspora communities in many parts of the world. These could be a resource for advocacy coalitions and other resources.

Issues

As indicated above, the various segments and actors of civil society build up, mobilize, and are clustered around issues of justice and peace in the context of all-pervasive violence in our societies. These are listed below.

1. Exclusive forms of nationalism, majoritarianism, communalization, and discrimination against ethnic, religious and national minorities and indigenous people.
2. Globalization impeding access to health, education, human rights, sustainable livelihoods and leading to impoverishment and social inequalities, including caste discrimination.
3. Human security and the new forms of justice.
4. Victimization, vulnerabilities, structural violence and extreme violence.
5. Justice as the benchmark of prevention and resolution of conflicts: gender justice, environmental justice, and legal reforms and other form of justice.
6. Representation of women and all victim groups at all levels involved in preventing and resolving armed conflict.
7. Militarism, nuclearization and weaponization of states and societies.
8. Conflict-induced and development-induced mass displacements, issues of divided peoples and families, humanitarian disasters and human misery as cost of armed conflict and war.
9. Forced disappearances, extra-judicial killing, extraordinary legislations that suppress human rights and confer immunity on officers of the state.
10. Suppression of legitimate dissent and demands in the name of suppressing terrorism.
11. Denial of collective rights, leading to conflicts and extreme violence.
12. Unipolar world, hegemonism and interference by big powers, global and regional hegemons, and lack of respect for sovereignty of peoples and nations.

13. Media and information as tools of conflict and of peace.
14. Globalization and access to health, education, livelihood and the sustainability of socio-economic rights.
15. Land rights and other resource rights of the people.
16. Religious fundamentalism and intolerance.
17. The "mindset" which determines the behaviour in general and violent behaviour in particular; violent behaviour as the product of a particular mental set ossified over a period of time.
18. The need to study such behaviour in South Asia, and the requirement to investigate stressful conduct in the overall conflict situation in the region, so that particular mechanisms can be developed to modify behaviour through cognitive appraisal rather than automotive thinking.
19. Peace education.
20. Accountability, and developing norms of responsibility at all levels, from the UN to the region, country and local.

Above all, the conference discussed the term "Civil Society" itself at great length to ascertain its nature, representative character, role, and capacity and came to the conclusion that while it is difficult to reach a consensus on the definition of the term at this stage, it is clear that the term is not co-terminus with "NGOs", as the former is more extensive, covers more ground, and should, therefore, be kept separate. In this context, it was widely appreciated that civil societies can play significant roles in building trust and strengthening networks in a way that this "social capital" can become a bulwark of peace and development of the society.

Recommendations

Keeping in mind: (1) the history of civil society activism in South Asia for resolving conflicts and peace, (2) the principles that guide these actions, and (3) the various segments and interests involved in these activities and the issues that animate civil society in this region, this conference proposes as general principles of a programme of action that:

a) the peace constituencies of South Asia will take all necessary actions to urge upon the two nuclear armed states of this region to adopt policies of restraint, gradual denuclearization, capping of all further nuclear weapons programmes, and work jointly and to give leadership to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction from this world;

b) the civil societies of this region have to work towards eschewing violence as a method of resolving conflicts, both interstate and intrastate, because the continuum of violence is at the heart of acute and persistent armed conflict;

c) in order to eliminate recourse to violence as a mode of settling conflicts, the civil society has to bring pressure to bear on states and mobilize public opinion on the need to make international human rights and international humanitarian laws applicable to conflict situations in all states and national legislations that often violate human rights and justice in the name of national security, homeland security and suppression and prevention of terrorism;

d) in urging the adoption of human rights standards, one of the key principles of justice that animate civil society is justice for women: the conference, therefore, urges that throughout the region equal representation of gender at all levels and in all bodies, in particular legislative, administrative, and judicial bodies, be ensured;

e) similarly, in the work of preventing conflicts and resolving them, women's voices concerning the efforts have to be duly recognized and their representation ensured at all levels and in all forms;

f) the civil society will draw upon its historical experiences and resources of reconciliation mechanisms, social capital building, truth findings, investigation, public commissions, crime tribunals, eminent citizen groupings and other forms of dialogue to develop its autonomy in its function of peace;

g) in work of peace, media literacy and creative use of media will be significant tools, and to this end, civil society will have a media programme integral to its peace action plan; similarly gathering, accessing, and distributing correct information and combating mis- and dis- information—one part of this work;

h) in developing peace activism, the civil society will have to develop coalitions, networks and resource sharing strategies and will have to take the victims' viewpoints as distinct from and opposed to the dominant state-centric view, though it will utilize all partnership opportunities and avenues;

i) in opposing the arms race, arms proliferation, structural violence, extraordinary legislation, and in developing richer notions of justice as the basis of prevention of armed conflict, the civil society realizes that networks and alliances are key instruments, and the voices of these alliances have to be heard at every level, municipal, national–parliamentary, regional–interstate (SAARC), to the UN;

j) combating the debilitating consequences of neo-liberal reforms of the economies of South Asia is an important part of the peace agenda, and as in other things, gender-just viewpoints will enable the civil society to build up appropriate network and alliances;

k) dialogues, interaction strategies, capacity building and sharing, combining mass mobilization with appropriate technical means, and representation civil societies' voice at all levels—and the key role in the work;

l) the civil society has to examine how much of the grant, aid and funding reaching the peace constituencies from abroad, particularly the West, enhances or hampers civil society's capacity in working for peace. In the light of the foregoing observations, the conference specifically underscores the need for civil society organizations to operate at high levels of transparency by respecting international norms to enhance their credibility as a viable actors at all levels.

m) In the light of these principles, the conference specifically proposes that:

i) the civil society mobilize all efforts to institute early warning and early action systems in places/zones of conflict in negotiating conflicts and incident violence, so that damage is lessened, chances of reconciliation increase, and popular forces of peace are mobilized in time in defence of peace;

ii) such early warning and action systems and mechanisms will be local, will develop regional connections, develop appropriate databases, directories and indication as tools of work for peace;

iii) it is incumbent on civil society to struggle for adoption of specific measures for minority protection, autonomy, and various power sharing measures at country and local levels till they are instituted in place;

iv) various appropriate measures for security section transformation are needed so that peace can be sustained;

v) the civil society of this region will work to form a Forum for Gender Justice;

vi) likewise, steps should be taken to form a South Asian War Crimes Tribunal with appropriate mechanisms;

vii) international networks of solidarity are to be developed as a matter of priority;

viii) the civil society calls on the UN to create an official forum of civil society at the UN to monitor government policies and action in the areas of gender justice, environmental justice, social and cultural justice, and economic justice, and to provide recommendations to the Security Council on these; it further calls on the UN to promote such an organ so that popular voices are heard by the UN before the Security Council meets each time to adopt policies for coping with armed conflicts;

ix) it calls for support to build its technical capabilities in conflict prevention, transformation and peace building skills.

In suggesting all these measures, the conference emphasized three main aspects or standards.

• Justice as the ethical and political standard of action.
• Participatory nature of all conflict prevention and transformation programmes.
• Dialogue as the supreme procedure.

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Chari, P. R., Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema and Stephen P. Cohen, *Perception, Politics and Security in South Asia: The Compound Crisis of 1980*, London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003.

In the minds of outside observers, South Asia is identified as a crisis-prone region, and since 1990 these crises have carried the threat of escalation from harsh diplomacy to limited war, to a wider conventional war, to the possible use of nuclear weapons.

This book is the first attempt at a comprehensive understanding of the 1990 crisis as it evolved, and as it was seen at the time by key decision makers and strategic analysts within and outside the region. It is a successor to an earlier book that examined the onset and evolution of the Brasstacks crisis in 1987. This volume is also a tentative "first complete look", having the advantage of there being several earlier efforts to describe and explain the events of the 1990 crisis, the

work draws upon them throughout. The volume is "confident of the story" it tells, and clearly designates those areas where it is less sure of. It tries to offer alternative explanations of what happened and why.

Gyawali, Dipak, *Rivers, Technology and Society: Learning the Lessons of Water Management in Nepal*, Himal Books and Panos South Asia with Nepal Water Conservation Foundation, Kathmandu.

An engaging examination of what has happened to Nepal's premier natural resource has a significance that far transcends both the specific experience of the author's own country and the water sector. He shows that both analytical comprehension and effective policy action require a holistic conceptualization of the interface between water technology and social context. In a series of fascinating examples and case studies, including the notorious World Bank-promoted Arun 3 hydro-scheme, he makes clear the complexity of the

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development process, the extent of institutional distortion that external donor policies can induce in recipient societies, and the anti-developmental impacts which the state, unrestrained by the countervailing power of civil society, can have.

Stern, Jessica, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill*, Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 2004.

For four years, Jessica Stern interviewed extremist members of three religions around the world: Christians, Jews, and Muslims. Travelling extensively to refugee camps in Lebanon, to religious schools in Pakistan, to prisons in Amman, Asqelon and Pensacola, she discovered that the Islamic jihadi in the mountains of Pakistan and the Christian fundamentalist bomber in Oklahoma have much in common. Stern's extensive interactions with the faces behind terror provide unprecedented insight into acts of inexplicable horror, and enable her to suggest how terrorism might most effectively be countered.

Abrar, Chowdhury R. and S. Nurulla Azad, eds., *Coping With Displacement: Riverbank Erosion in North-West Bangladesh*, RDRS Bangladesh/North Bengal Instiutute, Dhaka, 2004.

This study looks into the vulnerability and coping mechanisms of those affected by riverbank erosion in north-west Bangladesh. It traces their struggle through various phases: pre-displacement, disaster management, rehabilitation, and long-term livelihood management. Instead of attempting to alter the course of nature, the study underscores the need for institutional mechanisms to help the affected people in coping with adverse consequences.

William, Robin M., Jr, *The Wars Within: Peoples and States in Conflict*, Manas Publications, New Delhi, in collaboration with Cornell University Press, USA, 2004.

The author brings together decades of thought about ethnic conflicts in an effort to better understand their dynamics and to lessen their disastrous consequences. William presents a worldwide perspective, conscious that many studies of ethnicity focus primarily on the US. The stakes of struggles can involve both material resources, such as oil, diamonds and gold, and socioculturual measures such as group status and cultural distinctiveness. Ethnic conflict, William finds, can be portrayed as a set of dynamic processes that may escalate from restrained confrontations over limited issues to devastating ethnic warfare and genocide.

Gyawali, Dipak, Ajaya Dixit and Madhukar Upadhya, eds., *Ropeways in Nepal*, Nepal Water Conservation Foundation, Kathmandu, 2004.

For the last half a century, Nepal has neglected a valuable transport technology, the ropeway. It has many virtues suited to a mountainous terrain: it is almost three times cheaper to build than an equivalent motorable road, eight times quicker to install, and twice as energy efficient. Despite the successful example shown by another mountainous country, Switzerland, and their obvious benefits, ropeways have remained outside the purview of transport planners and failed to be promoted by the main political ideologies.

Heijmans, Annelies, Nicola Simmonds and Hans van de Veen, *Searching for Peace in Asia Pacific: An Overview of Conflict Prevention and Peace Building Activities*, Boulder, CO and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

This is the fourth book in this series, following *Searching for Peace in Central and South Asia*, *Searching for Peace in Europe and Eurasia*, and *Searching for Peace in Africa*, published by the Searching for Peace Program of the European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP). The aim of the publications is to contribute to a peaceful transformation of violent conflicts around the world by filling the gaps in information, communication and coordination that exist in the fields of conflict prevention and peace building. It is a result of an ongoing process involving research and regional seminars, as well as collaboration with local partners, practitioners, and prominent international scholars. The book provides detailed, objective descriptions of ongoing activities, as well as assessments of the prospects of conflict resolution.

Annelies Heijmans is a coordinator and Nicola Simmonds is a project officer of the Asia Pacific Program of ECCP. Hans van de Veen is a senior journalist and coordinator of an independent network of journalists, Environment and Development Productions, based in Amsterdam.

Sri-Ram, Chandra Lekha and Zoe Nielsen, *Exploring Subregional Conflict: Opportunities for Conflict Prevention*, Boulder, CO and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

The causes of violent conflict and the approaches to conflict prevention have been studied extensively, but only recently has attention been given to the subregional dynamics of internal wars. The authors explore conflicts in Africa, Central Asia, and Central America, seeking new insights that can provide the foundation for more nuanced, more effective preventive strategies.

Chandra Lekha Sriram is a lecturer in international relations at the University of St Andrews, Scotland. Zoe Nielsen is an associate director and senior editor of the Human Security Report at the Liu Institute for Global Issues, University of British Columbia.

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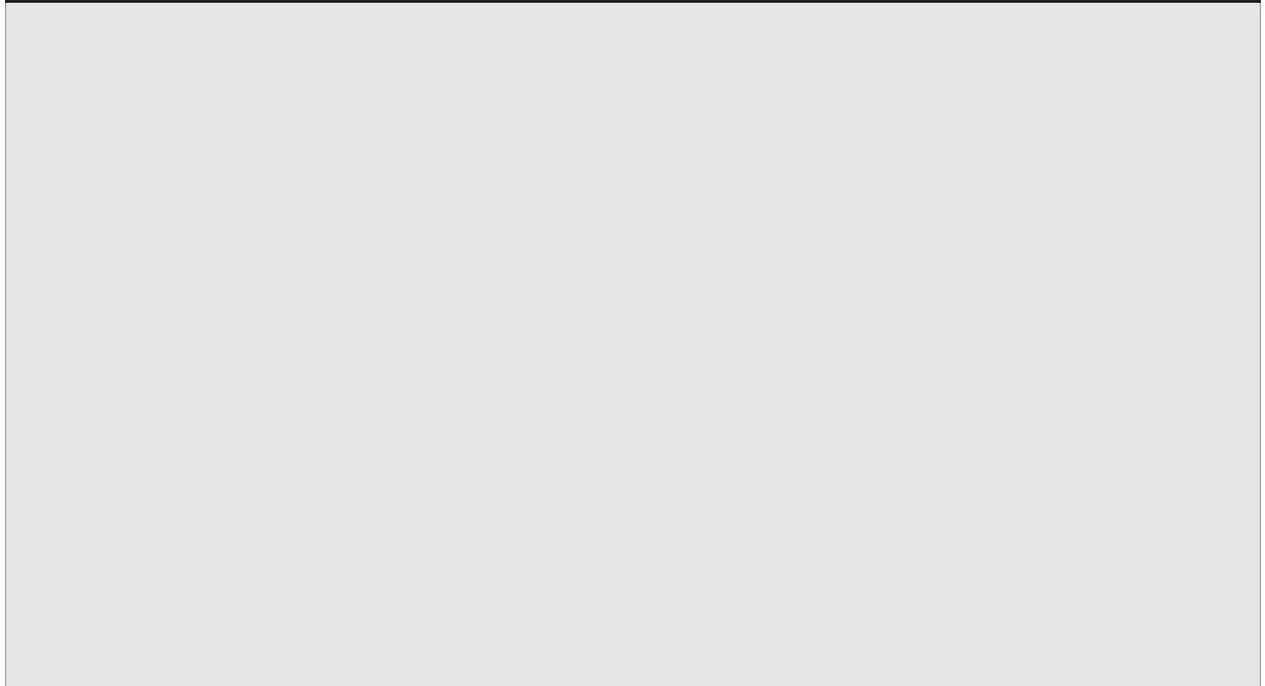
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