



RAPPORTEURS REPORT

Cooperative Security Framework for South Asia November 15-16, 2011



Inaugural Session



Director-General IDSA, Shri N.S. Sisodia in his opening remarks stated that the concept of the conference emanated from a vision for the future. He mentioned that while history has cast a shadow over the subcontinent, there have been successful experiments in the world, like in Europe and South East Asia, to forge unity at the economic and strategic level, which brought about collective prosperity in the region.

He held that the problem with South Asia was not only on account of past history, but also because of lack of sufficient initiative, in the past, from India, a country which loomed large in the region and accounted for about 80 per cent of the GDP. He mentioned that the countries in the region face many common challenges which cannot be met by any one of them alone. While the region has had a decent growth rate in the last few years, the economic downturn in other regions of the world in recent years has had a decelerating effect on the regional economy.

He regarded terrorism as a common challenge for all countries and mentioned that the largest number of casualties on account of terror strikes took place in this part of the world, and that Pakistan was an example of how terrorism could eat into the vitals of a country. He also touched upon the threat posed by nuclear proliferation. He underscored the need for collective effort and cooperation in South Asia, without which it would be impossible to meet all the challenges effectively.

He mentioned that the recent SAARC summit had intimations of hope and held that greater economic integration and connectivity would lead to regional prosperity and help mitigate problems of poverty and perhaps terrorism, and eventually create an environment conducive to regional peace and stability.

Shri A.K. Antony, Hon'ble Indian Minister of Defence and President IDSA stated in his inaugural address that the Conference offered a platform to analyse the problems facing the region, and that such informal dialogues can promote regional peace and stability.

He said that our region as well as the world faces several common challenges and focused on a wide range of issues that have acquired centre-stage like food, water, energy security, climate change, human and drug trafficking, migrations, economic instability, pandemics and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

He underlined the need for collective action, through innovative measures, to deal with the common threat of terrorism, and the challenges posed by non-state actors with cross-national linkages.

He said that the scope and content of the concept of security had expanded considerably to include a range of issues affecting human security and that many UN Summits had dwelt on diverse issues like population, food, information, society, environment and climate change. Such expansion had given rise to new opportunities for cooperation. In the South Asian context, he mentioned that cooperative security would require a focus on soft security issues. He suggested that South Asia could learn from the experiences of Europe, South East Asia and Central Asia, given their progress in developing a framework for cooperative security. He said that putting in place a security framework for the South Asian region would require regular consultations and dialogue at official and non-official levels. Some of these issues were being discussed at SAARC and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). He said that India had set up regular mechanisms of dialogue and cooperation with SAARC countries at the bilateral level and expanded the scope of official and non-official discussions to include issues pertaining to human security, and intensified people-to-people contacts.

He suggested that the discussions on such themes could be enriched by inter-sessional meetings of scholars and experts on themes of cooperative security to help expand ideas. He said that with respect to its neighbours, India had demonstrated willingness to go the extra mile, even on a non-reciprocal basis and had worked towards enhancing cooperation both at the bilateral and regional levels.

India has given special attention to defence cooperation and has increased the frequency of defence exchanges with the defence forces of a number of countries, which aim to improve capacity-building, training and cooperation. Indian defence forces have made significant contribution to disaster management. India has recently signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement with Afghanistan and Framework Cooperation Agreements with Bangladesh and Maldives. Her relations with Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka have been strengthened through high level visits and increased cooperation. India and Pakistan have maintained a steady comprehensive dialogue and there are clear indications that trade relations between the two countries may improve. While an atmosphere has been created where the dialogue on cooperative security can be expanded, a change in mindset would be required to reap the benefits of cooperation. He mentioned that asymmetries in size, resources and military capabilities should not be allowed to impede regional cooperation.

Dr. Arvind Gupta, Lal Bahadur Shastri Chair, delivered the vote of thanks.

Report for this session prepared by Sumita Kumar, Senior Research Associate, IDSA

Session I: Concept of Cooperative Security

Chairperson : N. S. Sisodia

S. D. Muni

Shahid Javed
Burki

Farooq Sobhan

Ahmed Shaheed

Daoud
Sultanzoy

W. I. Siriweera

Professor S.D. Muni focussed on the conceptual contours of South Asian Strategic Architecture and held that such architecture might incorporate elements of both regional cooperation organisation and a multilateral defence structure. It might also necessitate many institutions or organisations aimed at promoting security, both traditional and non-traditional, at the regional level.

According to him, architectures evolve and they cannot be implanted. What emerges in the name of regional architecture is the aggregate thinking of diverse policy makers and political leaders. He said poverty, under-development, climate change, state failure and terrorism are recognised as common threats to peace and stability. But we are not adequately addressing issues like what will happen if China becomes more assertive. The neighbouring regions are witness to an increasing arms build-up and maritime security problems, yet there is little collective effort in this part of the region to cope with these.

He said that the need for cooperative security capability building is enhanced given the asymmetries among regional countries. He held that while unequal state capabilities would naturally weigh in favour of a hierarchical security architecture in South Asia, this would not be acceptable to everyone. He cautioned that no regional strategic architecture could be sustained without a core regional security structure and that infrastructure for cooperative hardcore security was nearly absent in South Asia. With respect to the role of extra-regional players, he said they could be involved if they could provide security through a balancing presence or contribute to development through unconditional support. SAARC has prepared the grounds for them by allowing the participation of ‘Observers’.

He expressed his reservations about whether SAARC could lead to a strategic architecture in the region. Even though there were mechanisms within SAARC to deal with some issues like terrorism, disarmament and disaster relief, it had not been able to address substantive security issues. He concluded by saying that SAARC could be part of the architecture, and that there was a need for establishing new institutions for coping with such issues.

Dr. Shahid Javed Burki’s paper was titled “New Opportunities for Populous Asia”. The author’s main argument was that the three large South Asian countries, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, should work with the fourth populous country, China, in the Asian mainland, so as to take advantage of the changes taking place in the global economy. Not only do these countries have nearly two-fifths of the total world population, but there was a high density of young population. He advocated using population as a major resource for economic development.

He held that he included these four countries in his scheme for the following reasons. China and India were not only the most populous countries, but also, they were investing heavily in developing new technologies that would underpin future growth of the world economy. Both the countries would need to change their growth strategies to maintain their past momentum of growth. Even though Pakistan was a weak economy and was politically unsettled, he believed that Pakistan could play an important role in the region given its unique geo-political positioning— common borders with China and India, and its location at the confluence of the Arab world, Central and South Asia. This would also help bring about stability within the country. He held that Bangladesh’s inclusion in his scheme was premised on the fact that it had a strategic

geographical location and split eastern India into two parts, making communications difficult, and both India and China had their interests in Bangladesh. He discussed various explanations offered for the recession of 2008-2009, and attributed it to lack of focus on the deep demographic change in the West, particularly the sharp drops in rates of human fertility and inversion in the population pyramid with the proportion of older people larger than the younger ones. It would have important consequences for the structure of the western workforce, and could be a positive development for the populous countries in Asia and they should come together to capitalise on this.

Mr. Farooq Sobhan, provided a Bangladeshi perspective on cooperative security framework in South Asia. He stated that there was increasing recognition of the fact that non-traditional threats could not be dealt with in isolation. He said that South Asia was one of the least integrated regions in the world. Earlier, it was not possible to discuss cooperation on security issues within the SAARC framework because such issues were outside the terms of reference of SAARC. Yet, in the last few SAARC Summits, non-traditional issues have received collective attention, e.g., joint action to combat terrorism, to ensure food, water, environmental, human and energy security etc. Increasingly, security issues are being discussed between several SAARC member states within the SAARC framework itself. However, the lack of a security framework has prevented the SAARC recommendations from being successfully implemented.

He analysed a range of traditional as well as non-traditional threats prevalent in the region, and the initiatives taken by SAARC to mitigate them. He outlined the contours of a cooperative security framework in which the administration and implementation would be undertaken at three levels— inter-governmental, governmental and non-governmental— and the main activities should include dialogue, research and training. He also identified the areas in which capacity-building measures could be undertaken. He held that incorporating the proposed framework within SAARC would require amendments to its Charter, and therefore, he proposed that such a framework should function independent of SAARC for the time being, with the possibility of its being incorporated into SAARC in future.

Dr. Ahmed Shaheed offered a Maldivian perspective on maritime security cooperation in South Asia. He stated that Maldivian efforts for a multilateral maritime security framework ran parallel to its quest for stronger bilateral ties with neighbours to enhance Maldives' overall security. He said that the physical layout of Maldives emphasised its strong maritime interests. Given the extensive dependence on fisheries, Maldives has been concerned about its inability to protect its marine resources adequately, and this has also had political implications. He spoke about the need for building greater capacity to patrol its waters so as to monitor illegal activities like drug trafficking, gun-running and terrorism.

He said that Maldives was also ecologically vulnerable, and it sought regional cooperation to enhance its disaster-preparedness, its search and rescue capabilities, and environmental resilience. He mentioned that the Indian Ocean was the centre of global commerce and that the growing interest of China in the ocean added to its strategic significance. As a small state, the functional needs of Maldives depended on maritime cooperation and it was looking towards drawing investments for development, as well as ensuring that its civil supplies remained uninterrupted.

He said that both India and China were taking close interest in Maldives. He said earlier the ideology of non-alignment served the country well, however, in changed context, the government was seeking to pursue its national interest through active engagement. He said that piracy in the Indian Ocean Rim was the single biggest threat to Maldives, given its dependence on maritime trade. Maldives had given a proposal for a SAARC regional arrangement on maritime security cooperation against piracy, yet there has not been much discussion on it. He also mentioned that the bilateral Framework Agreement on Bilateral Cooperation signed recently between Maldives and India, sought to address some of the security challenges faced by Maldives.

Dr. Daoud Sultanzoy dwelt on the security concerns of Afghanistan. He stated that since 2001 Afghanistan has been in a reactive mode, while the sponsors of terrorism were pro-active. He spoke about lost opportunities, and argued that the Afghan government was not able to govern effectively; the international community did not realise that a more transparent and cohesive approach was required to stabilise Afghanistan; and the Afghan people were unable to take responsibility as a nation.

He stated that the reactive strategy left a lot of people unrepresented, especially the youth. He said that earlier the warlords, druglords, the economic and political mafia, sponsored by the West, were imposed on the society. They had reaped a good harvest in the meanwhile and were no longer dependent on the sponsors. He held that there could not be any lasting security if the citizens did not feel that they were involved in the political process and had ownership of it, and if there was a lack of proper leadership. He stressed on the need to make the democratic process more accountable and the challenges that Afghanistan faced in the context of withdrawal of NATO and US forces by 2014.

He held that the cooperative-security framework would perhaps be best for South Asia. He said that the zero-sum mindset of some countries in the region needed to be balanced by emphasis on economic cooperation which would help establish a security framework in the region; for any security framework to work, it had to appear legitimate and the governments involved should also be perceived as legitimate by the people. He said that Afghanistan was a land-bridge between Central Asia, China, Iran and South Asia and it could play an important role in promoting regional integration.

Professor W.I. Siriweera presented a Sri Lankan perspective on cooperative security framework for South Asia and said that all the SAARC countries should be brought under a common platform and efforts should be undertaken to discourage the practice of redressing power imbalances through assistance from external quarters. These countries should resolve political conflicts amongst themselves, and build a collective regional security architecture, which would be the best way of dealing with extra-regional threats. However, this could not be achieved overnight.

He spoke about some irritants between India and Sri Lanka including that of the re-demarcation of maritime boundary, and poaching by fishermen in each other's waters, as well as the issue of the Sethu Samudram project. He highlighted Sri Lankan concerns in this regard. He stated that there was a feeling of insecurity vis-a-vis India amongst its South Asian neighbours and India needed to assuage these concerns by resorting to Confidence Building Measures. He said that the nuclearisation of India and Pakistan impinged on the security of the whole region, and both countries needed to be sensitive to the security of their neighbours. He also brought out the threat from cross-border activities like trafficking of arms and drugs. He said that resolution of political conflicts within the region could reduce external involvement.

He argued that the nature of security issues in South Asia were such that they were interrelated and that it was difficult for any one country to deal with these issue individually in isolation and thus, cooperative security was becoming increasingly relevant.

This was followed by discussion. Some of the issues that came up from the floor during the discussion related to the need to focus on the threat from improvised explosives in Afghanistan once the US leaves; the depleting number of fishes in the Bay of Bengal area; the need to deal with the sponsors of terrorism when discussing a cooperative security framework; whether countries like Myanmar needed to be brought into the ambit of SAARC; that the threat from China had different connotations for different countries, and that there be a benchmark for cooperative security; and that unless bilateral issues were resolved and relationships brought down to a working level, cooperative security will not work.

Dr. Arvind Gupta, who chaired this session concluded by saying that there was an overall consensus that with the profusion of so many new issues, the time has come to discuss whether we need a cooperative security framework and how to establish such a framework. There was a need to take a serious look at urgent issues affecting regional security.

Report for this session prepared by Sumita Kumar, Senior Research Associate, IDSA

Session II: Security Challenges for South Asia: Traditional and Non-Traditional Security

Chairperson : I P Khosla

Shaista Tabassum	PK Gautam	Saifullah Ahmadzai	Dushni Weerakoon	Chhimi Dorzi	Medha Bisht
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The second session was chaired by **Ambassador I. P. Khosla**. The focus of the session was on the key non-traditional security challenges to South Asia and how they impacted regional security as a whole. The participants also dwelt upon the nature of interaction between non-traditional security and traditional security.

The first paper of the session was presented by **Prof. Shaista Tabassum**, from Karachi University, Pakistan. She focussed on the Indus Water Treaty and considered it as an historical document which was signed in an environment of tension with the objective of avoiding conflict. She pointed out new challenges that have emerged in the Indus Basin System where the impact of climate change was visible. She did not agree with the perception that the treaty could be easily violated by India to create problems for Pakistan. She was of the view that the treaty functioned without interruption only because water has been separated from rest of the issues and agreed as a non-political matter. According to her, the amendment and modification of treaty would be difficult; however, progress could be made through bilateral and multi-lateral means. She ended by saying that treaty should not be violated and focus should shift from conflict to cooperation.

PK Gautam from India (IDSA) attempted to provide a theoretical framework for regional cooperation on climate change and environmental issues in his presentation. He enumerated the steps taken in the region to deal with issues related to environment and climate change and suggested that these issues affected all the states and needed to be addressed through regional cooperation.

Saifullah Ahmadzai, from Afghanistan, presented his paper on non-Traditional security issues affecting his country. He felt that the 30 years of war in Afghanistan had damaged the social, political and economical infrastructure of the country. He gave an overview of non-traditional security (NTS) issues in Afghanistan and considered them as interconnected. He feared that these threats can spread from one region to another and even could cross the borders and have negative impacts on global security. He argued that there was a need for finding ways and means to turn these threats into a source of cooperation among the countries of south Asia.

Dushni Weerakoon from Sri Lanka dwelt on economic development and regional integration and argued that economic security was important for south Asia. She held that better and equitable development outcomes were critical for stability; however reverse was the case in south Asia. Moreover, the disparities in economic development outcomes across the region were likely to be further aggravated by regional fragmentation.

Chhimi Dorji from Bhutan presented his paper on climate change and Security and offered a case study from Bhutan. He viewed climate change as a problem of present generation which required immediate and serious attention. While some countries had recently joined the race as highest polluters, others had been there for a long time. Talking of Bhutan he felt that even in that country water and energy security could

be under threat due to climate change and such challenges could not be met individually; hence there was an urgent need to have a cooperative framework to deal with non-traditional security issues in South Asia.

Medha Bisht (IDSA) in her paper titled “Engaging ‘Water’ in South Asia: Is Cooperative Security Plausible?” highlighted the importance of water in south Asia. She pointed out that the framework for cooperative security needed to be operationalised at multiple levels. The reason for this was the interdisciplinary nature of the issue. She also argued that, the effect of water mismanagement could have regional and even international ramifications and the issue could be dealt through a multilateral cooperative framework.

The chair also agreed that the climate change has become an important issue that needs to be tackled through regional effort.

Session III: Is Cooperative Security Feasible in South Asia?

Chairperson : Tan Tai Yong

Srinath Raghavan	Rajan Bhattarai	Chaminda Dilhanake Hettiarachchi	Smruti S Pattanaik and Nihar Nayak	Mahwish Hafeez
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Professor Tan Tai Yong from the Department of History, National University of Singapore chaired the session and six panellists representing India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Myanmar presented their papers on a diverse range of topics. In his opening remarks, Prof. Tan Tai Yong underscored the importance in deliberating on the challenges, motivations in devising a security framework and its feasibility and effectiveness in a region affected by tensions, difficult relationships and even conflicts.

Dr. Srinath Raghavan from Centre Policy Research (CPR) initiated the session by presenting his paper titled *Regional Integration in South Asia: Possibility or Pipe Dream*. Dr. Raghavan emphasized the point that prior to formulating a cooperative security framework for South Asia, one should take an analytical look as to why the region is one of the least integrated in the world. His presentation revolved around five points which explained why regional integration in South Asia had proven a difficult task. He also isolated four sources of change which offered some rays of hope. According to him, the five historical and structural factors which worked against the idea of regional integration were,

1. Long shadow cast by partition is reflected in the foundational problems for many of the inter-state disputes and the evolution of national identities of states in contradiction to one another. Oppositional identities and their narratives were continuously impinging upon relationship between states and becoming a structural barrier for regional integration. Peculiar geographical and demographic specificities of the region, i.e., the pre-eminence of India which shared borders with almost all and lack of other forms of geographical inter-connectedness among other states. Overlap of ethnicities, religion or languages across the borders and the spill over of ethnicities, religion and languages across the borders made India a factor in domestic politics of various neighbours.
2. Commonalities of culture have failed to translate into a shared set of political norms and values. Differential approach by states when it comes to practising common values such as democracy and human rights.
3. Absence of regional economic or trade integration. Coalition of interests which can work across borders and reinforce certain set of values and practices are absent. Low regional trade (5% out of overall GDP) because of (a) economic consequences of partition - fractured the level of integration which existed before the partition; (b) political consequences of the partition - petty political logic militated against the idea of cooperation; and (c) the suspicion of free trade – due to links with the legacy of colonialism

The structural reasons were

1. Strategic and physical asymmetries between India and its neighbours; and
2. External involvement in the region; the problem is not with such involvement, but with the manner in which that involvement took place. External involvement reinforces (a) antagonism with India, (b) authoritarian tendencies in these countries, (c) overspending of Indian diplomatic energy in preventing external intervention in South Asia.

The sources of change were identified as:

1. Re-orientation of the Indian economy to play a leading role.
2. Bilateral initiatives between India, Sri Lanka and Bhutan which underscored the potential for integration.
3. Indian economic growth translated into political assurance and confidence to India in dealing with the disputes with other countries, especially territorial disputes.
4. Growing clout of China in South Asia. The fact that China has more economic ties with India's neighbours than India has has become a competitive dynamic which India can no longer ignore.

Dr. Rajan Bhattarai, the Chairperson for Nepal Institute for Policy Studies spoke on the prospects and challenges in cooperative security in South Asia. He dealt with the conceptual aspect of cooperative security, its basic thrust, the components, and whether it was feasible for South Asia; whether SAARC would suffice as an institutional mechanism, or whether it was a hindrance. He also dwelt on the changing mindset and perceptions in Nepal about national security, and the importance of security cooperation at the regional level. He was of the opinion that broader meaning of security provided the required incentives for the states to cooperate. Apart from that common cultural values and norms provided common ground for cooperation. Moreover, the emphasis on economic progress also underscored the need to cooperate and minimise the costs of conflict. Bringing insights from home, he explained how Nepali mind was undergoing a transformation and the Nepalis were now realising that the threat to national harmony emanated from inside rather than outside. Unresolved issues between countries should not be regarded as an obstruction for cooperation. They should be resolved through dialogue. Academics, analysts and policy makers ought to work towards finding common ground that would facilitate cooperation.

Chaminda Hettiarachchi, Associate Director for Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo speaking on the cooperation on maritime security in South Asia brought out the main issues in maritime security in South Asia, the current mechanisms available to deal with those issues, and proposed several guidelines for regional cooperation in South Asia. One of the security concerns in the Indian Ocean was to keep the gateways open for trade and communication. Maritime issues were multi-dimensional and comprised of terrorism, piracy, smuggling and human trafficking. Since these issues involved more than one country, it was necessary for all to cooperate. He suggested that the cooperation at sea could be set off as a pilot test for other domains of cooperation, where inter-state rivalries, diversity in terms of size, scale, orientation acted as barriers to cooperation in South Asia. It was important therefore to have an agreement on 'who will play what role'. Also, there were no acceptable frameworks for maritime cooperation. Moreover, Indian Ocean has multiple stakeholders. A mechanism to cooperate can be developed at global, regional or bilateral level which can develop different structure, infrastructure to cooperate. Information sharing, surveillance, technologies can act as enablers of such a cooperative architecture. Moreover, one can adopt a network of bilateral agreements which can later form the basis for a multilateral agreement.

The ground realities in South Asia, underscored the importance of going ahead with this mechanism rather than attempting to negotiate as a group. In his recommendations, he pointed out that maritime security was not limited only to the littoral countries. Actors have different roles to play based on their expertise, capabilities and priorities. He proposed the model adopted for maritime cooperation between India and Sri Lanka to be adopted as a viable model.

Colonel Hla Than Mong from Myanmar offered the Myanmar perspective on the non traditional security issues. He called attention to the differences between traditional and non-traditional security

threats such as terrorism and piracy. In addition, he also dealt with the changing role of the military and put emphasis on the importance of civil-military ties in Myanmar.

Dr. Nihar Nayak presented his co-authored paper with Dr. Pattanaik, titled “Does South Asia need a cooperative security architecture?” Commencing his presentation with a general background which explained the consequences of the absence of a regional framework, he suggested that a prospective architecture should first take up non-military issues and then build confidence which would facilitate a transition towards cooperation on hard security issues. He also stressed the need for India to take a prominent role. As challenges, he brought out the impact of partition on identity politics, regime security and its equivalence to state security and lack of a regional definition on terrorism and non-state actors. He held that it was important to shift focus from state security to human security in addressing the question ‘cooperative security for whom’. In handling the negative perception of India which had become an impediment for further cooperation, he argued that there should be a reciprocal transformation of mindset.

Mahwish Hafeez, a research fellow in the Institute of Strategic Studies, Pakistan presented an analytical study on the cooperative security in South Asia, whether it was an elusive dream or the need of the hour. Her presentation had a brief survey of literature on cooperative security and focussed on the reasons why South Asia lagged behind other regions in terms of regional integration. She presented a detailed account of sources of mistrust between India and Pakistan which remained the main barrier in forming a regional consensus.

The session ended with a general consensus on the need to think deeply on the cooperative security framework, and evolve ways of meeting common challenges in a consensual manner.

Prepared by Amali Wedagedara

Session IV: The Way Forward

S. D. Muni				
Daoud Sultanzoy	Shahid Zaved Burki	Farooq Sobhan	Anjoo Sharan Upadhyaya	Hla Than Mounq

The two day conference on cooperative security framework for South Asia discussed various perspectives on the theme and sought to explore the means by which a consensus could be reached for such a framework. The participants laid emphasis on nontraditional security issues like climate change, pandemics, disaster management, water, energy and poverty etc as common challenges confronting all the countries in the region.

In the last session, a panel discussion was held to discuss how to move forward and evolve mechanisms to put in place a cooperative security framework in South Asia. The panel discussion was chaired by **Prof SD Muni**.

The panel consisted of scholars, experts and analysts from all the SAARC countries, i.e., **Daoud Sultanzoy from Afghanistan, Farooq Sobhan from Bangladesh, Anjoo Sharan Upadhyay from India, Rajan Bhattarai from Nepal, Chhimi Dorji from Bhutan, Shaista Tabassum from Pakistan, Ahmed Shaheed from Maldives and Chaminda Dilhanake Hettiarachchi from Sri Lanka.**

Several questions were raised by the chair to stimulate the discussion. Is there a room for cooperation on hardcore security/ traditional issues when talking about cooperative security? How to implement cooperation on issues which have become impediment to stability? How to build cooperative security, where some issues have been bilateral in nature? Following points emerged out of the panel discussion:

1. There is a need to pay attention to both traditional and nontraditional security issues,
2. The trust deficit that has engulfed entire South Asia region needs to be done away with,
3. International community should come forward in supporting the efforts to generate new ideas for peace and stability in the region,
4. All policies should be implemented with discipline and those responsible for it, should be held accountable.
5. A three pronged approach to this should be taken outside the SAARC framework, which would include intergovernmental process, development of task forces to recommend measures for policy makers and increased networking among scholars, think-tanks for greater awareness. Investment in public policy is a must
6. Need for joint exercises, trainings for peacekeeping in the region
7. An introspection is required on the part of the countries regarding the legacy issues that inhibit the process of regional cooperation.
8. Concept of cooperative security needs to be worked upon and developed further.
9. Shared values, overlapping identities and common challenges should be emphasised to reduce trust deficit and tensions that exist between different countries
10. The countries in the region should deal with soft security issues in a cooperative manner to begin with and prepare the grounds for cooperation to address hard core security issues.
11. Media should play a constructive role in disseminating right perceptions and information among the people of the region.

12. Continued dialogue should be held at various levels to address issues of common concern involving both traditional and nontraditional security issues.
13. India and Pakistan should reduce tensions between them to prepare the grounds for cooperative security in the region.
14. The South Asian diaspora should be engaged in this effort.
15. There should be more emphasis on public diplomacy and soft power.
16. There is a need to evolve a more mature and innovative approach to issues for growth and stability in the region

Report for this session prepared by Anwesha Ray Chaudhuri, Research Assistant, IDSA