Demographic Trends in Asia and India’s Security Futures

Ajai Sahni

1. A BAD NEIGHBOURHOOD

1.1 In a listing of 60 failed and failing states based on twelve ‘indicators of instability’, released in 2005, Asia accounted for as many as 22 countries.¹ In South Asia, every country that shares a land border with India – with the exception of China – finds a place in this Failed State Index.²

According to the PIOOM World Conflict and Human Rights Map, 112 of the world’s 277 conflicts were located in Asia during the years 2001-2002. Of these, as many as 57 were situated in South Asia (including Afghanistan) alone.³

1.2 In recent years, South Asia has – in some measure, arbitrarily and idiosyncratically – been described as the ‘most dangerous place on earth’.⁴ While such an assessment may be contested, the fact remains that South Asia is a region of current and sweeping transformations, of instability and of widespread violence. These propensities are aggravated by an equally momentous restructuring of geopolitical architecture and redistribution of power currently unfolding across the larger Asian region and beyond, on its European peripheries. An even greater turbulence flows from a rapid proliferation of unforeseen technological and unpredictable ideological shifts, and the persistence of primitive political structures and sectarian and national antipathies that have in no measure been diluted by the processes of what we divergently conceive of as ‘civilisation’. Violent and often self-destructive nationalist and sub-nationalist movements are increasingly in headlong confrontation with the technology-driven forces of globalization and complementary systems of political and economic liberalization, even as new patterns of exploitation, new ‘great games’, are superimposed over the detritus of brittle and fragmenting anciens régimes. The collapse of the tense equilibrium between the great Western and Soviet powers has fuelled ambitions and exacerbated tensions across the region, with even minor players jockeying for a

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² Bangladesh is ranked 17th; Burma (Myanmar) 23rd; Bhutan, 26th; Pakistan 34th; and Nepal, 35th. Ibid. As is evident from this list, the data sets and methodology may well be suspect (Nepal, for instance, should certainly be at the very top of this list, and some, at least, would question Bhutan’s inclusion). Nevertheless, the Failed State Index does provide a broad overview of the inherent instability of the South Asian region.
³ The methodology of and lists included with this Map are deeply flawed, and include a significant number of non-existent conflicts, including some that have long been terminated. Nevertheless, the list is, once again, useful if taken as indicative of broad trends and impulses. See, www.goalsforamericans.org/publications/pioom/atf_world_conf_map.pdf.
⁴ Notably by the then US President Bill Clinton before he visited the region in March 2000.
dramatic repositioning in the structure of global power within the context of a world situation that “currently has a fluidity that comes, usually, only at the conclusion of a major war.”

1.3 Into this broad scenario of uncertainty are injected the risks arising out of new ways of warfare that have astonished the world’s great powers and outflanked even the most potent and technologically advanced army of the world in a ‘revolution in military affairs’ that the planners of ‘star wars’ and other overarching strategic projections failed to anticipate. Terrorism and sub-conventional warfare, largely executed by non-state actors, though frequently backed by state sponsors, threaten to dominate the global scenario of conflict over the coming decades.

1.4 These factors are superimposed, in this region, on societies deeply fragmented by their obsession with caste and community; and with linguistic, regional and cultural differences; societies, moreover, that are enormously unequal and inequitable. The mixed administrative and political record of successive regimes in the various constituent countries suggests that risks of escalating violence and disorders will rise over the coming decades. Asia is also the location of the most dramatic demographic shifts, and these will wed uneasily with the spectrum of destabilized geopolitical equations, a rising crisis of energy, environment and natural resources, a deluge of rootless migrant populations, and the frenetic pace and movements of ‘modernity’.

1.5 The complex interaction of these multiple factors has the potential to produce wide areas of disorder and patterns of conflict that Governments in the region will find progressively more difficult to confront and contain. Robert Kaplan thus warns of “world-wide demographic, environmental, and social stress, in which criminal anarchy emerges as the real ‘strategic’ danger.” In an “epoch of themeless juxtapositions, in which the classificatory grid of nation-states is going to be replaced by a jagged-glass pattern of city-states, shanty-states, nebulous and anarchic regionalisms”, he predicts,

Future wars will be those of communal survival, aggravated or, in many cases, caused by environmental scarcity. These wars will be subnational, meaning that it will be hard for states and local governments to protect their own citizens physically. This is how many states will ultimately die.

1.6 This troubling scenario is evolving within an unequal and often inequitable process of globalization that, while it has enormously benefited many, has at the same time marginalized large populations, generating a widening schism between two emerging worlds, and spurring “the decline of states that are less connected to globalization, creating a new fuzzy bipolarity between areas of relative stability and economic growth and regions of instability and widespread

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7 Ibid., pp. 43-44.
8 Ibid., p. 49.
poverty”. A great tide of violence sourced in ideologies of envy and hate is, today, sweeping across and emanating from societies, or element within societies, that have been marginalized by, or that have not been able to secure for themselves a place within, the new modernizing and globalizing order. Asia is home to a number of such states that are “more or less disconnected from the globalization process”\(^9\), and that are today, and will be over the coming decades, sources of a wide range of destabilizing activities, including religious extremism, terrorism, weapons’ proliferation, transnational crime, inter- and intra-state conflict, demographic and environmental crises, and a range of humanitarian disasters.

2. **THE PERILS OF DEMOGRAPHY**

2.1 “Demographic visions of the future,” Myron Weiner and Michael Teitelbaum remind us, “have rarely been benign.”\(^{11}\) Today, across the world, demographic trends are cause for concern, both in countries of rising and of declining populations, and a measure of caution is necessary in making projections on the basis of such trends alone. It is useful to recall that, since the catastrophic vision articulated in Malthus’ “Essay on the Principle of Population” in 1798, demographers have seldom been sanguine in their visualization of the human future – yet, human ingenuity and enterprise, combining with scientific advances and technological transformation, have allowed populations to swell far beyond what could have been conceived of as possible, even as forces that these have unleashed have led populations in wide areas beyond the ‘demographic transition’, to stability, and in many cases, decline.

2.2 Demographic forces can alter the realm of the possible, both politically and economically, for established population groupings. But while demographic considerations can alter the complex strategic balance between, and within, countries, they do not always do so. There are simply too many variables – politics, economics, culture, mass psychology and movements, leadership, institutional strengths and vulnerabilities, among others – to evolve a clear set of projections based on population trends alone. The task of the strategic planner is essentially to take note of the broad propensities and predispositions, and accommodate these within projects and projections for the future. The intention, here, is to flag some of the most important of the ‘broad propensities and predispositions’ within the Eurasian region, which would have significant potential impact on India’s security. Within this context, an assessment will be made of trends in population size, age structures, geographic distribution and ethnic/religious/cultural composition.

2.3 In 1950, Asia accounted for nearly 1.4 billion of the world’s people 2.52 billion people (55.4 per cent). By 2000, this number had grown to 3.67 billion out of 6 billion (60.4 per cent). By 2020,

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\(^10\) Ibid.

this population will have risen to 4.55 billion (according to ‘medium variant’ estimates), but will secure a measure of stability in terms of its share of the world’s population of 7.58 billion (60.04 per cent), and a significant decline in proportions thereafter, accounting for 57.5 per cent of the global population in 2050 (5.2 billion of 9.1 billion). By 2020, crucially, China alone will account for 18.79 per cent of the world’s population, and India, 17.58 per cent.

Table 1: Populations Trends 1950-2050 – Asia and the World (in thousands, medium variant)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>West Asia</th>
<th>South-Central Asia</th>
<th>South-East Asia</th>
<th>East Asia</th>
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Table 2: Population Densities: 1950-2050 – Asia (in thousands, medium variant)

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<th>West Asia</th>
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<td>164</td>
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2.4 The sheer burden of population growth will have direct and potentially dire consequences for many parts of Asia. The population densities that would be achieved by this demographic surge, particularly in South and Central Asia (Table 2), will hurl these regions against the inflexibility of their natural endowments. Environmental and resource stresses already afflict many countries in Asia, and many of the most politically unstable or overpopulated concentrations will see the most significant rise in densities. While Asian populations in general will see a rise of 24.35 per cent over the 2000-2020 period, West Asia – the region with currently the lowest densities, but also the poorest natural resource base, with the exception of its rapidly depleting hydrocarbon resources, poorly developed political and administrative institutional structures and rising signs of instability — will experience a 45 per cent rise in population densities. South and Central Asia will see an increase of 33.33 per cent. East Asia registers the lowest increment, at 10.32 per cent, followed by South East Asia, at 26.09 per cent.

Table 2: Population Densities: 1950-2050 – Asia (in thousands, medium variant)

It is in countries that have already achieved the highest densities that the problem threatens to be the most acute. Bangladeshi population densities, among the highest in the world (with the exception of a handful of small city-states) at 895 per square kilometer in 2000, will push to over 1,259 per square kilometer by 2020; India would take the numbers up from 311 to 405 over the same period; Sri Lanka – 303 to 349; Pakistan – 179 to 266; Nepal – 166 to 242.

Absolute densities and increases, however, are not the only problem, and the ‘carrying capacity’ of different regions varies very widely, and is defined not only by natural resource thresholds, but also by a complex of social, economic and political factors – the last of which includes a spectrum of geopolitical variables that have become particularly volatile over the past decade. It is significant, within this context that not all cases in which poverty, environmental degradation and the over-exploitation of natural resource diminish the quality of life of a people would necessarily result in conventional security crises such as internal or international wars. High population densities, the concomitant degradation of the environment, and poverty do not have a direct and unambiguous correlation with political risks or risks of warfare, though occasional studies have found a low positive correlation. “It is a profound and repeated finding that the mere facts of poverty and inequality or even increases in these conditions, do not lead to political or ethnic violence.”

These factors, at worst, produce certain proclivities or vulnerabilities that require a range of complementarities and triggering events to translate into specific security risks and violence. Jack Goldstone assigns primacy to the role and conduct of elites and vulnerabilities of the state, including internal divisions and economic and political reverses, among the triggering factors that are necessary for “popular discontent or distress to create large-scale conflicts.” He notes, further, that “the essence of political stability or instability lies in a set of reciprocal relationships: among states in the international system, between states and their society’s elites, among elite factions and between both states and elites and popular groups.”

Demographic factors nevertheless, remain a critical variable within the complex dynamic that generates political violence. In their construction of the Failed State Index 2005, Foreign Policy and The Fund for Peace calculated the vulnerability of various countries to violent conflict on the basis of 12 ‘indicators of conflict’:

1. Mounting Demographic Pressures
2. Massive Movement of Refugees or Internally Displaced persons creating Complex Humanitarian Emergencies
3. Legacy of Vengeance-Seeking Group Grievance or Groups Paranoia
4. Chronic and Sustained Human Flight

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16 Ibid.
5. Uneven Economic Development along Group Lines
6. Sharp and/or Severe Economic Decline
7. Criminalization and/or Delegitimization of the State
8. Progressive Deterioration of Public Services
9. Suspension or Arbitrary Application of the Rule of Law and Widespread Violation of Human Rights
10. Security Apparatus Operates as a “State within a State”
11. Rise of Factionalized Elites
12. Intervention of Other States or External Political Actors

2.7 Crucially, while absolute levels of population and consequent environmental and economic stress may not be either necessary or sufficient for the emergence of conflict, particular patterns of population change have been historically associated with political instability. The ‘youth bulge’ – a high proportion of persons in the 15-24 age group – is prominent among such factors and studies have shown that the severity of armed conflicts, as estimated by the number deaths, is much higher for countries that have a large youth bulge.18 “The failure to adequately integrate youth populations is likely to perpetuate the cycle of political instability, ethnic wars, revolutions, and antiregime activities that already affect many countries.”19

2.8 Nevertheless, as the Russian example illustrates, rising conflict and instability may also characterize a population that is both shrinking in absolute numbers and in the number of youth or working age males. Goldstone notes,

Even countries with relatively low growth rates may encounter situations in which population changes contribute to political violence: It is not the absolute rate of population growth but the imbalance between growth in specific sectors of the population and growth of the economy that is crucial to the creation of conflicts.20

2.9 Certain types of ‘large-scale demographic shifts’ have, however, been identified as contributing to social stress and the potential for political conflict, including violent conflict:
   i. Age cohort differences, such as the widening youth bulge, particularly when combined with low job-creation rates or governmental indifference.
   ii. Chronic high fertility rates and population growth that exacerbates environmental degradation and competition for scarce resources, especially where these combine with narrowly based elites and weak institutions.
   iii. Movements from rural to urban areas, or, legally or illegally, across national boundaries.

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iv. Divergent fertility rates between ethnic groups with mixed settlement patterns and historical enmity within countries and between neighbouring countries.  

2.10 Further, countries confronted with population declines and a progressively aging profile, such as those of Europe, may also see emerging trends in conflict as a result of significant migrant inflows from disturbed areas and communities across the world, especially where these are not sufficiently integrated into the social, economic and political fabric of the host community.

3. **THE EURASIAN PERIPHERY**

3.1 On Asia’s periphery, we find Russia struggling with a systemic collapse, and a demographic crisis of sparse and declining populations. A looming demographic crisis characterized by low birth rates and enormous need for migrant labour – overwhelmingly drawn from troubled Third World populations, including many systems and communities that have displayed a high proclivity for political and ideologically motivated violence in the recent past – will also have a crucial impact on European stability and the emerging global equation of power, even as Europe undergoes massive structural realignments, consequent upon the reunification with the Eastern Block, which are far from over.

3.2 It is significant that, in 1950, Europe and Russia comprised 22 per cent of the global population; the share is now 13 per cent; by 2020, it will be 11.2 per cent; and by 2050, it will have declined to just 7.5 per cent.  

Further, six of the 10 most populous nations were in the developed world in 1950; by 2020, only the United States and Russia will remain in this top-10 list.

3.3 Here also, the relative status of these countries is interesting. Minor players like Pakistan and Bangladesh will have populations substantially greater than Russia by 2020. As of 2005, Pakistan, with a population of at least 158 million, has already overtaken Russia which has a population of 143 million; and Bangladesh, at 142 million is following close at heel. By 2020, Russia’s population is expected to decline to 133 million, while Pakistan and Bangladesh will rise to 212 and 181 million, respectively. Well before 2035, Pakistan will have more than twice the people in the Russian Federation – a demographic transition that may have critical consequences for the region. And even as Russia’s population shrinks, it will continue to age, reducing the working age cohorts, and adding to the burden of maintaining a dependent elderly population.

3.3.1 On Russia’s eastern sparsely populated borders, the Chinese giant already has a population over seven times greater, and will grow almost to a multiple of eleven by 2020. The Chinese presence in Russia, at present is small, and was thought to be in the region of 150,000 and 200,000 in

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23 Long-Term Global Demographic Trends: Reshaping the Geopolitical Landscape, op.cit., p. 5.
Nevertheless, the continuous decline in populations in the region and the colossal imbalance with populations in neighbouring regions of China, are necessary cause for concern. Chinese migration, both legal and illegal, into the Russian Far-East is, consequently, already creating significant apprehension, and can certainly lead to tensions in the foreseeable future. It is already seen in some quarters as a deliberate strategy on China’s part to “Go outward” and “increase Chinese immigration into other countries”. Moreover, given the very sparse populations of the region in Russia, the demographic balance can easily be upset by a steady trickle of migration over the decades, provoking conflict with local communities which Russia is progressively ill-equipped to handle, and creating potential tensions with China as well. Crucially, however, Russia cannot avoid inviting migrant labour into the country if it is to meet its national manpower requirements. According to UN estimates, over the period 2010-2050, the country would need an annual average of 500,000 net migrants to maintain the size of its population at the 1995 level of 148.1 million.

This raises the next vital issue relating to Russia’s dwindling population: its incapacity to sustain the manpower requirements of a credible Land Army to defend and hold its sprawling borders, and to contain the unremitting threat of secessionist and terrorist movements along its borders. A realization of this rising manpower deficit has led to the evolution of a military doctrine that relies increasingly on nuclear and technological forces – but this will fail, and will soon be seen to fail, against the small wars, insurgencies and terrorist movements that currently plague the country, and that are bound to proliferate as other states seek to exploit the country’s increasing vulnerabilities. Ethnic disparities and the continuous problems and fractious and increasingly unstable neighbours, in the states of the North Caucasus region and Central Asia, are a chronic source of potential stress or conflict. If conditions in the neighbourhood deteriorate, “a stagnant Russia would be looked to by the others to maintain order along the southern rim as some Central Asian countries – Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan – faced potential collapse.”

The cumulative impact of these broad movements will be widespread:

- Russia’s geographic position, occupying a vast 11-time-zone swath in the heart of the Eurasian landmass, gives demographic developments there the potential to affect a large number (14) of contiguous states in both Europe and Asia and to alter political balances in Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Baltic states, and potentially Central Europe.

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27 Mapping the Global Future, op. cit., p. 74.
28 Long-Term Global Demographic Trends: Reshaping the Geopolitical Landscape, p. 19.
3.3.3 These demographic developments are overlaid on a severely fractured society, currently in a phase of some recovery from a state of an unprecedented social and civic breakdown, the dominance of organized crime, and a pervasive lawlessness. But this recovery has come at a cost of the revival of a system that has restored elements of authoritarianism and the police state that characterized the Soviet Union. Russian politics, society and the economy are currently in a brittle state, with limited capacities to absorb mounting shocks to the system that the current demographic trends promise to generate, in combination with a range of other hostile forces that prey upon the diminishing power and status of this one-time superpower.

3.4 Since World War I, Zbigniew Brzezinski, has noted, Europe has become “increasingly the object rather than the subject, of global power politics”, and there is concern that the West has become ‘fatigued and exhausted’. If demography is an index of the raw and natural impulse of a nation or a people’s will to life and power, Europe, indeed, appears to be suffering from an endemic weariness and loss of will. It is useful to recall that the great imperial expansion of the 18th and 19th Centuries was fuelled by a tremendous spurt in European populations in the 17th Century, and the burgeoning ‘youth bulge’ that followed, and which was directed outward into exploration and conquest. Today, as Europe fails to maintain a ‘replacement rate’ of reproduction, despite the European unification and the greater pooling of continental resources, the prospects of Europe retaining its present position appear to be shrinking. It is, of course, impossible to make firm projections of a shift of the strategic centre in Eurasia purely on population projections, but it is important to remind ourselves that “Contracting populations have often given way militarily, economically and culturally to expanding ones”, and the only visible option of maintaining population size in Europe is by increasing migrant inflows – a strategy fraught with a range of other risks.

3.4.1 While declining birth rates in Europe do portend a crisis, it is one of far lesser intensity than what afflicts Russia. Nevertheless, Europe’s shrinking work forces and a population that is aging dramatically will have serious implications. Europe’s fertility rate is currently at 1.4 – well below the 2.1 replacement level. European populations are expected to decline from 728.46 million in 2000 to 714.97 million in 2020 (1.85 per cent). The crisis is compounding by the rapid aging of the population: 65+ population of Europe was 13.9 per cent 1995; it will rise to 21 per cent by 2025 and further to 27.6 per cent by 2050. It is estimated that Europe would require an annual average net migration of 20 million if it is to maintain its potential support ratio – the ratio of the working age population to old age population – at peak levels.

3.4.2 A large proportion of these migrants would come from former Western colonies, including Muslim countries, creating further pressures on race and communal relations. Within this broad

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30 Long-Term Global Demographic Trends: Reshaping the Geopolitical Landscape, p. 13.


context it is useful to note that Muslim populations in Europe are expected to rise to between 25 to 30 per cent by 2020, from current estimates of about 15 per cent of the ethnic European populations. Radical Islam has found a resurgence among Muslim migrants in Europe in the recent past, especially among many second- and third-generation immigrants who have not been adequately integrated, or whose communities have resisted integration, into their host societies, and this has been the cause of a rash of Islamist extremist activities and arrests in several countries across Europe. Absent very radical changes in policy, attitudes and culture in Europe, and a complete and improbable rejection by Muslims of the ideologies of radical political Islam, these trends can be expected to deepen as the ratio of the Muslim population increases over the coming decades. These difficulties will be compounded by increasing ethnic tensions with other immigrant communities as the spectre of terrorist and communal violence and of further radicalization of the minorities provokes increasingly restrictive and discriminatory policies in some of the affected countries. It is useful to note, moreover, that migrant populations, on average, have a much younger profile than ethnic European populations, and have significantly higher birth rates.

3.4.3 The general decline in population, and particularly of the youth cohort, has necessary implications for Europe’s military capacities. Culturally, it has become increasingly difficult to attract youth to the Armed Forces across Europe, and long prosperity has brought with it a sharply diminishing tolerance for engagement in any kind of warfare, as of ‘body bags’ that may result from such interventions. With a dwindling recruitment base, it will become impossible to sustain the current manpower levels in Europe’s Armies, and it is clear that, over the coming decades, Europe’s military Forces “will have little capacity for power projection”. The capacities for maintenance of internal order – which have already coming under strain in the face of what could prove to be very preliminary challenges – would also be significantly constrained by the contraction of the population and the proportion of youth within it. In sum, the richest developed nations of Europe may become “demographically challenged, fiscally starving neutrals who manoeuvre to avoid expensive international engagements”.

4. CENTRAL ASIA

4.1 As the Soviet Empire unravelled, Central Asia’s oil and gas potential, as well as its pivotal location as a land bridge between Asia and Europe, have brought this troubled region to the centre of a new ‘great game’ between a multiplicity of powers. Russia seeks to restore its hegemony over the region, and is challenged in this, principally by Europe, America and China; India, Pakistan

34 Mapping the Global Future, op. cit., p. 57.
35 As was evident in the riots of October-November in France and its neighbouring countries.
and the ‘Islamic world’ are other players that seek a foothold in a sparsely populated but demographically volatile, underdeveloped, resource-poor (with the exception of oil and natural gas in some countries), poorly governed and politically unstable region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Kazakhstan</th>
<th>Kyrgyzstan</th>
<th>Tajikistan</th>
<th>Turkmenistan</th>
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**Table 3: Populations Trends 1950-2050 – Central Asian Countries (in thousands, medium variant)**

4.2 Central Asia populations have risen steadily since 1950, to more than treble their numbers by 2000, and will grow another 21.94 per cent by 2020. While absolute populations and growth rates are not distressing in isolation, the region has some of the lowest population densities in the world, they present significant risks when viewed from the perspective of the endemic weakness that afflicts these states, the continuous efforts at Islamist radicalization in many areas, and the consequent potential for religious and ethnic conflict over the coming decades.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2040</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2050</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4: Populations Densities 1950-2050 – Central Asian Countries**

(in thousands, medium variant)

4.3 These growing numbers, moreover, arise in the context of the limited potential for economic diversification in the region. Sectors of the economy of resource rich Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan will certainly benefit from the development of their oil and gas potential. The region will also benefit by international – particularly Russian – efforts to develop transportation corridors for energy supplies, as well as the emergence of the ambitious Chinese project to construct a ‘land bridge to Europe’. Central Asian economies may also benefit substantially as a result of potential manpower exports to Europe and to Russia – though there are a range of political and cultural sensitivities that will inhibit such movements. Most such developments, as

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well as the potential development of a project and service industry, however, will demand
dramatic improvements in Governance and political management at a time when most of these
states display a proclivity to lapse into authoritarianism, and when radical Islam appears to be
gaining strength in the region.

5. **THE ‘ARAB WORLD’**

5.1 Between 1950 and 2000, West Asia saw a near quadrupling of its population, from 51 million to
193 million. Between 2000 and 2020, it will surge another 44.2 per cent, to 278.4 million. The
picture is somewhat more troubling when it is extending to comprehend the wider ‘Arab World’
including countries in North Africa. UNDP’s Arab Human Development Report 2002 put the
population of this larger Arab World at about 280 million, and projected a rise (in two variants) to
between 410 million (46.42 per cent growth) and 459 million (63.92 per cent growth) by 2020.\(^{39}\)
The picture of growth is not uniform across all the countries of the Arab World, and the UNDP
Report divides the region into three categories:
1. Bahrain, Kuwait Lebanon and Tunisia, with fertility rates of less than three live births per
woman.
2. Nine countries – Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Qatar, Sudan, Syria, and the UAE,
with 3 to 5 live births per woman.
3. Nine countries – including Yemen (with 7.6 births per woman) – with birth rates of more than
five per woman.

5.2 Most countries in the region are currently in the ‘youth bulge’ stage, though the percentage of
youth in the population is expected to decline in most cases. Nevertheless, given projected growth
rates, the absolute numbers of youth would be significantly larger than they presently are, and this
will have significant destabilizing consequences, particularly within the context of political events,
structures and institutions in the Arab world. It bears repetition that “a large youth cohort
intensifies and exacerbates most existing problems of these societies.”\(^{40}\)

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\(^{39}\) UNDP Arab Human Development Report, p. 37.

\(^{40}\) Graham E. Fuller, “The Youth Factor: The New Demographics of the Middle East and the Implications for US Policy”, January
2003, [http://www.brookings.edu/fp/saban/analysis/fuller20030601.htm](http://www.brookings.edu/fp/saban/analysis/fuller20030601.htm)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>55.7</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>53.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>68.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>55.1</td>
<td>43.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Percentage of the Youth Cohort in select Arab Countries 2000-2020

5.3 A further compounding factor is that young male populations consistently outnumber the female population by over 1 per cent in virtually Arab countries, and the percentages in many of the Gulf states are even higher due to the presence of a large “guest worker” force that is overwhelmingly male and present in the gulf without families. Consequently, “if the situation in the Gulf were to move toward instability in the future, this large floating male worker population could conceivably add to local destabilization.”

5.4 Significantly, levels of illiteracy in the Arab world remain high, at 43 per cent in the mid 1990s – with female illiteracy dramatically higher. According to World Bank estimates, 10 million children in the Arab world between the ages of 6 and 15 are out of school, and if current trends persist, the percentage of children out of school in this region would rise to 14 million by 2015. The Arab world, moreover, has a low 9 per cent participation in higher education, as compared to 60 per cent in industrialized countries. Unemployment rates for those between 15 and 25 years of age are over 40 per cent for the entire region, and disguised unemployment is significantly higher.

5.5 Worse, the quality and content of education is also problematic, with high emphasis on religious disciplines and a neglect of subjects that create skills and capacities for absorption in the contemporary market. Much of the educational system has, moreover, explicitly passed into the hands of Islamist fundamentalist and extremist organizations “who have both the funding and the interest to assume the challenge.”

5.6 This youth, poorly educated, unskilled, unequipped for a productive role in a globalizing economy, “provides exceptional fodder for radical movements…”, and can fuel “new waves for Islamic activism in the Middle East”. There is enormous apprehension among regimes within the

41 Ibid.
43 Ibid., p. 63.
44 Long-Term Global Demographic Trends: Reshaping the Geopolitical Landscape, op. cit.
As the UNDP’s Arab Human Development Report observes, “Arab authorities live in fear of the Arab street.”

5.7 These circumstances can spur greater militarization in the region – both formal and informal. This would swell the already high Army/Population ratios in the region and encourage belligerence and military adventurism. Within the context of the Middle East, it would also swell the ranks of non-state terrorist and extremist groups, acting domestically and also exporting terror to other parts of the world.

5.8 A further element of the demographic profile of the region is the historical and abiding tension between Shia and Sunni populations, and this has, in substantial measure, been aggravated by the destabilization of Iraq. Iranian ambitions to secure greater influence in the Shia dominated areas of Iraq, or even to secure an amalgamation of these areas – where its influence is significant – into an integrated Shia empire, with ambitions of consolidation of Shia pockets in Eastern Saudi Arabia and Shia-dominated Azerbaijan – as well as the destabilization of Shia areas in Southern Saudi Arabia, and South Eastern Turkey, could easily be encouraged if the current structure of West Asia comes under further stress. This could provoke movements of covert warfare and terrorism, as well as possible open confrontations in situations of rising disorder in the Arab world. “A Shia dominated Iraq is likely to encourage greater activism by Shia minorities in other Middle Eastern nations, such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.”

6. EAST ASIA

6.1 The two principal powers in East Asia – China and Japan – display distinctive demographic trends which will have far-reaching significance for the distribution of power in Asia over the coming decades.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>China</th>
<th>Japan</th>
<th>Mongolia</th>
<th>Republic of Korea</th>
<th>DPR Korea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>554 760</td>
<td>83 625</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>18 859</td>
<td>10 815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>657 492</td>
<td>94 096</td>
<td>959</td>
<td>25 003</td>
<td>11 430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>998 877</td>
<td>116 807</td>
<td>1 663</td>
<td>38 124</td>
<td>17 196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1 273 979</td>
<td>127 034</td>
<td>2 497</td>
<td>46 779</td>
<td>21 862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>1 423 939</td>
<td>126 713</td>
<td>3 137</td>
<td>49 393</td>
<td>23 722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2040</td>
<td>1 433 431</td>
<td>117 621</td>
<td>3 554</td>
<td>47 405</td>
<td>24 414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2050</td>
<td>1 392 307</td>
<td>112 198</td>
<td>3 625</td>
<td>44 629</td>
<td>24 192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Populations Trends 1950-2050 – Selected East Asian Countries (in thousands, medium variant)

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6.1.1 Japan, an economic powerhouse, is seeing, at once, significant declines in population and a dramatically aging population. The most dramatic consequence of this trend is a contraction by as much as 40 per cent in the ‘household forming’ age group by 2020, which would have far reaching consequences in terms of domestic demand, and hence the sustainability of existing levels of production.

6.1.2 Japan would need as many as 650,000 migrants to maintain the size of the working-age population, through till 2050 – a tremendous political challenge within a system that has remained insular and that has enormously emphasised ethnic and cultural purity throughout its modern existence. If immigration policies are altered to meet the demand for workers, this could result in the pattern of ethnic tensions that are characteristic of mixed-population societies, aggravated in some measure by Japan’s lack of cultural and political experience in managing such an issue.

6.1.3 The cumulative effect of demographic factors alone would result in an economic slowdown in Japan and an estimated decline in living standards by as much as 23 per cent by 2050.

6.2 China continues to grow robustly, though at a declining rate, and will complete the demographic transition after 2040. However, it also confronts the burden of an aging population, which will rise to 200 million by 2025, imposing stresses that many believe the system is not equipped to handle, and creating unprecedented levels of distress among the elderly, with possibly deleterious social consequences.

6.2.1 At the same time, China’s working-age population will also grow continuously. This segment grew by as much as 13.6 annually, on an average, during the 2001-2005 period; and while this pace will decelerate significantly, the working-age population will continue to grow at an average of 5.5 million each year, to achieve 940 million by 2020. This would appear to be well above the economy’s capacity of absorption. A White Paper on “China’s Employment Situation and Policies” released in April 2004 indicated that there were “150 million rural surplus labourers who need to be transferred, and over 11 million unemployed and laid-off persons who need to be employed or reemployed.” The swelling work force can only push these unemployment rates well over their current level, and if other factors, such as the burden of support to the aging population, slow down economic growth, the pressure of unemployment can be expected to rise – though policy projections seek to provide employment to as many as 840 million people by 2020.48

6.2.2 China is also urbanizing at an unprecedented pace, and by 2020, 50 per cent – 712 million people – will live in its towns and cities, up from a current 513 million.49 Accommodating nearly 200 million people in urban areas over the coming fifteen years will put severe stresses on the system, demanding enormous resources to create the physical and social infrastructure to support this large

population. Nevertheless, China has, in substantial measure, shown itself equal to the challenge, and there is little reason to expect a dramatic collapse. But in the event of cumulative stresses of a multiplicity of factors – including unforeseen developments in the political arena – this element could play a critical role in determining the turn of future events.

6.2.3 Recent reports regarding an emerging and dramatic skew in China’s sex ratios is also creates scope of potential strife. China’s sex ratio was 116 boys to a 100 girls in 2000, and studies speak of an estimated 30 to 40 million “bare sticks” or “surplus adult males” (a figure that is strongly contested by Beijing), by 2020. This “surplus of men” translates into a “deficit of peace”, as this rootless population is “prone to seek satisfaction through vice and violence”.

6.2.4 These various demographic challenges have the potential of slowing down China’s present and impressive rates of growth, and could contribute to increasing political instability. Given these risks, there is a possibility that China may seek to accommodate some of its surplus youth – especially male – population through aggressive militarization and external involvements.

7. **South East Asia**

7.1 South East Asia is expected to register a growth of 26 per cent by 2020 over its year 2000 population of 518.87 million. Cambodia would register the highest growth rate in this pool (45.79 per cent, followed by Malaysia (36.86 per cent). Myanmar has the lowest growth at 19.55 per cent. In absolute terms, however, it is Indonesia that adds as many as 46.68 million people to its population over this period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cambodia</th>
<th>Indonesia</th>
<th>Malaysia</th>
<th>Myanmar</th>
<th>Singapore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>4 346</td>
<td>79 538</td>
<td>6 110</td>
<td>17 832</td>
<td>1 022</td>
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<td>5 433</td>
<td>95 931</td>
<td>8 140</td>
<td>21 595</td>
<td>1 634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>6 613</td>
<td>150 072</td>
<td>13 763</td>
<td>33 678</td>
<td>2 415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>12 744</td>
<td>209 174</td>
<td>22 997</td>
<td>47 724</td>
<td>4 017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>18 580</td>
<td>255 853</td>
<td>31 474</td>
<td>57 054</td>
<td>4 986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2040</td>
<td>23 792</td>
<td>281 211</td>
<td>37 180</td>
<td>62 746</td>
<td>5 313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2050</td>
<td>25 972</td>
<td>284 640</td>
<td>38 924</td>
<td>63 657</td>
<td>5 213</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Populations Trends 1950-2050 – Selected South East Asian Countries

(in thousands, medium variant)

7.2 Population densities in South East Asia are moderate, on the average, at 115 per square kilometre in year 2000, rising to 145 by 2020. Population stress is, however, acute in Singapore, at 5882

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51 Ibid. p. 12. Comparable problems afflict several societies in Asia, including, among others, India and Pakistan.
persons per square kilometre in 2000, rising to 7,299 persons per square kilometre. Myanmar, with just 84 persons per square kilometre in 2020, is under the least pressure on this account.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cambodia</th>
<th>Indonesia</th>
<th>Malaysia</th>
<th>Myanmar</th>
<th>Singapore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>24</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>50</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3,535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>5,882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>7,299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2040</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>7,780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2050</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>7,632</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: Population Densities 1950-2050 – Selected South East Asian Countries

(in thousands, medium variant)\(^{53}\)

7.3 The population growth in South East Asia will have a profound impact on economic conditions in many of the countries of the region, arising from the significant increases in total population, as well as increases in life expectancies, and consequent ageing of the population profile in most countries.

7.4 These stresses will aggravate current conflicts and tensions, particularly the emphasis on Islamist identity politics, as well as ethnic division in the mixed populations of many of the countries in the region. There is a risk that high levels of unemployment – particularly rural unemployment – in some countries could result in an ‘implosion of order’, and the consolidation of politically divisive identity issues. Long-standing conflicts, such as those in Mindinao and Acheh, will escalate, and may provoke an intensification of repressive military responses and, more dangerously, wider authoritarian tendencies in the region.

7.5 Once again, political, legal and social systems in the region have limited capacities to manage these stresses, and there are dangers of a loss of control and increasing disorders, which would compound the problems of terrorism, ethnic polarization and the threat to crucial sea-lanes in the region. There is possibility of some elements within the ‘Islamic world’ seeking to exploit these trends to increase their presence and role in the region. The US and Chinese influence, and the trajectory of their economic and geopolitical interests and policies, will play a defining role in developments in the region.

8. SOUTH ASIA

8.1 The South Asian neighbourhood has been dealt in detail in a number of presentations, and will not detain us for long here. However, a few important points may be flagged here.

8.2 Rates of population growth in the entire region, while they are declining, remain a cause for major concern, and the absolute increases in population that each of the countries in the region will

experience are distressing, and there is little basis for confidence that the region’s governments will demonstrate extraordinary efficiency in the management of these stresses, given their past record.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Afghanistan</th>
<th>Bangladesh</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>Nepal</th>
<th>Pakistan</th>
<th>Sri Lanka</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>8 151</td>
<td>41 783</td>
<td>357 561</td>
<td>8 643</td>
<td>36 944</td>
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<td>1960</td>
<td>9 966</td>
<td>51 224</td>
<td>442 344</td>
<td>10 070</td>
<td>46 259</td>
<td>10 066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>15 209</td>
<td>82 185</td>
<td>688 856</td>
<td>15 159</td>
<td>79 297</td>
<td>15 235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>23 735</td>
<td>128 916</td>
<td>1 021 084</td>
<td>24 431</td>
<td>142 648</td>
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<td>2020</td>
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<td>181 180</td>
<td>1 332 032</td>
<td>35 679</td>
<td>211 703</td>
<td>22 902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2040</td>
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<td>226 663</td>
<td>1 534 402</td>
<td>46 658</td>
<td>277 995</td>
<td>23 875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2050</td>
<td>97 324</td>
<td>242 937</td>
<td>1 592 704</td>
<td>51 172</td>
<td>304 700</td>
<td>23 554</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 9: Populations Trends 1950-2050 – Selected South Asian Countries (in thousands, medium variant)**

8.3 By year 2020, India’s population will exceed 1.33 billion, adding nearly 311 million to its year 2000 population (an increase of 30.45 per cent). The growth in other countries in the neighbourhood is even more alarming. Afghanistan more than doubles its population, adding 24.3 million to its 2000 population of 23.74 million (registering a growth of over 102 per cent); Pakistan would add nearly 69 million to its year 2000 population of 143.65 million (48.41 per cent); Bangladesh adds 52.26 million to its 2000 population of 128.92 million (40.54 per cent); Nepal would add 11.25 million to its 2000 population of 24.43 million (46 per cent). Sri Lanka, however, is the only country in the region where the rate of growth appears manageable, with populations rising by a little over three million from year 2000 levels at 19.85 million (15.39 per cent).

8.4 Population pressures are expected to lead to widespread resource scarcities and increasingly acute – possibly violent – competition between various groups, which can be exacerbated by political mismanagement and administrative ineptitude. Particular mention, in this context, needs to be made of the predicted advent of water scarcities (and ‘water wars’) and the depletion or degradation of a wide range of natural resources; the progressive diminution of the per capita resource base through cropland fragmentation, erosion, deforestation and desertification; and the augmentation of structural scarcities, that is, the denial of equal access to particular resources to specific groups as a result of social and political inequalities.55

8.5 Intra regional variations in growth may add to the skew. For instance, as much as 63 per cent of India’s population growth in the first quarter of the present century is expected to be in its most backward States – UP, Bihar, MP, Rajasthan, Orissa, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Uttaranchal.

This would take the share of these States in India’s population up from 40 per cent to 50 per cent. These are the areas which have demonstrated some of the most rapid rates of the growth of disorder and mis-governance in the recent past. Moreover, the more progressive States of South India would have “completed the demographic transition” by this time with very low growth rates of population and an increasing age profile. This could provoke massive migration from the North to these States, and such migrants could take with them the culture of lawlessness and violence that afflicts so much of their States of origin. There is, moreover, a significant undercurrent of anti-North Indian sentiment in much of the South, and this could be exacerbated in the event of large-scale migration. Such migration is already a fact in some pockets, such as the surge of skilled labour into cities like Bangalore, Chennai and Hyderabad.

8.6 It is significant, moreover, that scarcities and consequent social tensions may coexist with rapid rates of growth and with declines in the national poverty ratio. The late 1990s and early 2000s have witnessed the most dramatic declines in India’s poverty ratio, but also some of the most unsettling signs of rural distress (malnutrition, starvation deaths and the spreading incidence of ‘farmer suicides’ in some of the most unexpected locations), demonstrating the fact that “scarcity and abundance may very well coexist”. This period has also witnessed the most dramatic extension of the regions of disorder and violence, with insurgent movements of various ideological persuasion variously affecting as many as 212 of the total of India’s 602 districts by late 2004.

8.7 Some, however, celebrate this growth of population, speaking of the ‘youth bulge’ that will help the Indian economy boom – and eventually equal and eventually overtake China.

With the gradual integration of China, India, and other emerging countries into the global economy, hundreds of millions of working age-adults will become available for employment in what is evolving into a more integrated world labour market… This enormous work force – a growing portion of which will be well educated – will be an attractive, competitive source of low-cost labor at the same time that technological innovation os expanding the range of globally mobile occupations.

As already mentioned, however, the ‘youth bulge’ also has a down side, and has historically been associated with instability and internal conflict in many theatres in the world. Security concerns over the youth bulge are

57 Ibid.
59 Ajai Sahni, “Bad Medicine for a Red Epidemic,” South Asia Intelligence Review, Volume 3 No. 12, South Asia Terrorism Portal, www.satp.org. In addition to the 125 districts under the influence of the Naxalites, and the additional 24 districts that are being targeted by them, there were at least another 63 districts in the country variously afflicted by different patterns of ethnic or communal terrorism and insurgency (Jammu & Kashmir: 12; Assam: 22; Tripura: 4; Meghalaya: 6; Manipur: 9; Arunachal Pradesh: 3; and Nagaland: 7).
not primarily linked to natural resource scarcity, but rather to the strain they put on social institutions such as the labour market and the educational system, thereby causing grievances that may result in violent conflict… some scholars have argued that youth bulges may *aggravate* already manifested conflicts over natural resources.61

8.8 The consequences of the youth bulge may be aggravated further by the significantly skewed sex rations across the region, creating the dangers of substantial populations of rootless ‘bare sticks’ or surplus adult males.

8.9 Changes in the composition of the population may also have significant destabilizing impact, particularly as democratic political mobilization exploits ethnic and communal divides in an effort by political leaders to increase the size of their ethnic group in order to gain or consolidate power.62

8.10 Patterns of the urban-rural distribution of populations will also prove crucial for a variety of reasons. Much has been made in India, for instance, of the growth of the urban population to 40 per cent by 2020, from 27.8 per cent in 2001, and the pressure this would exert on urban infrastructure, governance and security. This figure alone does not comprehend the enormity and complexity of the issues involved. First, the increase of 12.2 per cent actually represents a near doubling of the urban population, from about 285 million in 2001, to 540 million by 2020. With urban infrastructure teetering at the very edge of chaos even now, and with urban governance failing to come to terms with the magnitude of the present crisis, it is difficult to imagine how the future can be well ordered.

8.11 Crucially, however, the dramatic growth in the urban population would not provide any relief to the rural areas. India’s rural population in 2020 would stand at 810 million, significantly above the 2001 figure of 742 million. Despite massive migration to urban areas, consequently, dependency on the agricultural and rural sector would not decline. Given the patterns of narrow and focused development in a handful of priority sectors in the hi-tech arena, rural-urban disparities can be expected to widen, aggravating social tensions in rural areas.

8.12 The pattern of urbanization and development raises other security concerns. A bulk of the development is projected as occurring along a handful of “corridors of growth”,63 which would make these particularly vulnerable to subversion and disruptive activities.

8.13 As population pressures rise within these various countries, political turmoil and resource pressures could compound current instability, and at least some of this could be directed outwards – and towards India – as a consequence of mass migratory trends and diversionary political and covert military adventurism.

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9. IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIAN SECURITY

9.1 In broad terms, these trends suggest that pressures of demographic and resource management across the Eurasian region will incline to greater stresses, tensions, conflicts and a pervasive sense of insecurity. These trends would afflict, in different measure and in different ways, virtually all societies and states in the region, from the most developed to the least. Demographic stresses appear to be the most significant within the South Asia region itself, and this would certainly and directly result in a deepening of the disruptive propensities and potential in the region.

9.2 Within this broad perspective, specific threats to India’s wider and widening security interests arise out of the fact of increasing linkages with countries in the Eurasian complex; the rising dependencies of systems in the region; the potential for export of conflict from one area to another – including the export of current movements and cadres connected with Islamist extremism from one country to another; the disruption of existing and potential trade links and economic projects; and the call upon Indian Forces to support friendly regimes or maintain the peace in widely dispersed areas. Simply put, India’s engagement in the processes of globalization have created a demand for a much wider projection of both soft and military power.

9.3 Energy security will be a crucial component of this Byzantine web of interests. According to estimates, India will double its consumption of energy by 2020, while China’s needs grow by at least 150 per cent. This will fuel an intense and global competition for supplies, and will make the stability of the primary oil and natural gas resource countries – from and Indian perspective, overwhelmingly concentrated in West and Central Asia – critical to Indian economic interests. It is important to note that fossil fuels – principally oil, natural gas and coal – will continue to dominate global energy utilization through 2020. It is significant, moreover, that by 2015, only one-tenth of Persian Gulf oil will be directed to Western markets; three quarters will go to Asia.

9.4 At least some of the efforts to ensure control or guarantees of supplies of energy resources are taking the shape of geopolitical adventures and mischief involving the exploitation of the politics
of religious identity, and India will find its interests challenged in both Central and West Asia by Pakistan’s exploitation of Islamism, and by Pakistan’s hitherto unsuccessful efforts to consolidate its strategic overreach beyond Afghanistan.

9.5 Considerations that apply to securing transportation routes and sources of energy apply more widely to the securing of transportation and trade routes in all regions. Within this context, the projected construction of the new ‘land bridge’ to Europe, through Central Asia, and the existing and vital sea routes in South East Asia, will demand particular attention.

9.6 The threats emanating from weak and failing states are being exacerbated by certain aspects of the dynamics of globalization, including the “unprecedented empowerment of small groups of non-state actors, including terrorists, who have access to modern technologies, including both highly destructive weapons and advanced communications and information systems.” 64 These threats afflict every region in the Eurasian mass, and disruptive activities in any area – from Europe to South East Asia and the Far East – will have a potential destabilizing impact on Indian interests.

9.7 Such destabilization acquires an additional edge when countries in the immediate neighbourhood seek to externalize their own and potentially growing problems by exporting terror, engaging in subversive activities, or overt military adventures – though the potential for the last has been substantially diminished by the nuclearization of the South Asian region – and to exploit India’s internal faultlines.

9.8 India’s own internal difficulties will persist, and will require increasing attention to the maintenance of internal order and the evolution of a range of instrumentalities, including non-military interventions and mechanisms, that discourage neighbours from engaging in mischief on Indian soil.

9.9 The threat of Islamist terrorism is integrally linked to developments in all regions of the Eurasian mass. Success or failure in Iraq will reverberate across the world; the collapse of one of the West Asian or Central Asian regimes, and a takeover by an Islamist extremist entity of any such state would encourage further radicalization in all regions, and feed the armies of jihad; the radicalization and consolidation of Muslim populations in Europe, and their engagement in extremist and terrorist activities would not only directly threaten the local economies, but all other economic systems – including the India – that are linked through trade and complex economic relationships with Europe, and would also revitalize Islamist elements in other parts of the world. The Shia-Sunni dynamic in West Asia, similarly, will find its echoes in South Asia, and perhaps directly in India as well. In sum, the growth of disorder in any part of Eurasia – indeed, of the world – jeopardizes order and stability everywhere.

9.10 Such an impact may be direct or indirect, the former, for instance, in the case of areas of loose or poor governance, or of governmental collusion, that permits anti-Indian terrorist or criminal groups to plan, coordinate and manage their activities from foreign soil, or to recruit and train

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there; the latter, in terms to the impact such disorders have on general economic capacities, undermining the country’s growth rates, and impacting directly on the quality of life of large masses of the people.

9.11 It is important, within this context, to realize that India remains one of the most ‘under-militarized’ countries of the world, and a significant expansion of military capabilities – including manpower – is mandated, not just by the dramatic extension of the necessities of future strategic projection, but in terms of current and static circumstances themselves. A look at the population/troops ratios is significant, in this context. Given population trends, moreover, it is inevitable that other countries in the region would expand their military manpower over the coming decades as well.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Population65</th>
<th>Active Duty Uniformed Troop Strength66</th>
<th>Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INDIA</td>
<td>1,065,070,607</td>
<td>1325000</td>
<td>803.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAKISTAN</td>
<td>159,196,336</td>
<td>620,000</td>
<td>256.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>60,270,708</td>
<td>515,000</td>
<td>117.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRANCE</td>
<td>60,424,213</td>
<td>259,000</td>
<td>232.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHINA</td>
<td>1,298,847,824</td>
<td>2250000</td>
<td>577.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>293,027,571</td>
<td>1625852</td>
<td>180.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Army Population Ratio of Selected Countries

9.12 However, the complexity of the emerging world situation makes it impossible for individual nations to develop independent capacities that would meet all their security needs unilaterally. As one commentator notes, “Conflicts that will require military operations will be so cumbersome, sophisticated and expensive that the need grows towards a multilateral approach in settling not only economic issues but political and military conflicts as well.”67 The future will, consequently, require multifaceted and multiple cooperative security arrangements with a wide range of countries and international organisations.

9.13 Any assessment of future security needs within the context of demographic developments would need to recognize that culture is the core. The outcome of demographic shifts will depend on cultural factors: whether particular societies become technologically, economically and

administratively competent, or continue to exist as ‘communities of hate’ relying on divisive issues for political mobilization and management.

9.14 A corollary, here, is that any country that seeks an international role will have to rely increasingly on ‘soft power’ projection, and to integrate such soft power considerations into its wider military and security strategies. The quest for power in the contemporary world, is increasingly being transformed into a quest for soft power – though the military equation is far from losing its importance.

9.15 Finally, some qualifications are necessary here. First, the projections above have been made principally in terms of ‘medium variant’ calculations – if, however, actual demographic trajectories follow a lower or higher pathway, this would impact directly on the intensity and character of the various threats generated.

9.16 Further, Asia in general and South Asia in particular, are also regions of the most extraordinary hope and opportunity today, with Asian powers developing economic muscle as they seek an expanding role in the rapidly enlarging and increasingly interdependent global economy. While the problems of Asia’s constituent states are certainly mounting, so indeed, in many cases, are their capacities to cope. There are, consequently, a number of countervailing factors that would go some way in neutralizing or balancing the many negative impulses that demographic forces may generate. It is necessary, in evolving specific policies, to factor these elements into projections, and to design mechanisms that would accentuate such trends, even as they seek to mitigate the many deleterious impulses that are currently unfolding.

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