

greater security cooperation with the Soviet Union.⁴ Hence the entrenched regional rivalry that typifies most of contemporary South Asian history.

This sketch of the post-partition evolution of South Asian relations tells only part of the story, however, because it deals with a bipolar system of great power rivalry. In reality, an overriding triangular competition between Moscow, Washington and Beijing has been superimposed onto the regional conflict between India and Pakistan.

As an Asian power, China has for years actively confronted Indian perceptions of its regional dominance. India suffered its only military defeat at the hands of China in the Himalayas in 1962, but the participation of China in the affairs of South Asia has developed as more of a political challenge to India than as a military threat. Although the Chinese victory had meaningful strategic importance, in that it led to significant improvements in India's military posture in the north of the country, it has had more long-term relevance in terms of Indian esteem. The humiliation of the defeat, and the fact that the border issue with China remains unresolved, has had a bearing on the development of Indian defence and foreign policy that cannot be underestimated. Because of the defeat in 1962, India suffers under an immense psychological burden of inferiority when viewing its relations with China.

This feeling is compounded by what New Delhi perceives to be a lack of international respect for India's standing in the world. It is particularly irritating to Indian policymakers, for example, that China is recognized as a world power and has a permanent seat on the Security Council.⁵ In contrast, India, which has virtually the same attributes of power as China -- in

⁴ Precisely the same arguments developed during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, where American weapons supplies to Pakistan appeared to pose more of a potential threat to India.

⁵ One of India's leading strategic thinkers, K. Subrahmanyam, regularly expresses his bitterness over this issue in the following terms: "One out of every six people in the world is an Indian... But you in the West devised a world order in which the second largest country isn't even a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. That's a big omission." Quoted in: Munro, Ross H. "Superpower Rising," *Time*, April 3, 1989, p. 9-10.