

## **NEW POLARISATION: REASONS TO SEARCHING STRATEGIC ALLIANCE**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

During most of human existence, contacts between civilizations were intermittence or nonexistent. Then with the beginning of the modern era, about 1500 AD, global politics assumed two dimensions. For over four hundred years Britain, France, Spain, Austria, Prussia, Germany, the US and others constituted a Multipolar international system within Western civilization and interacted, competed and fought wars with each other. During the Cold War global politics became bipolar and the world was divided into three parts. A group of mostly wealthy and democratic societies, led by the US, was engaged in a pervasive ideological, political, economic and military competition with a group of poorer communist societies associated with and led by the Soviet Union. Much of this conflicts occurred in the Third World outside these two camps, composed of countries which often were poor, lacked political stability, were recently independent and were claimed to be non-aligned.

In the post Cold War world, for the first time in history, global politics has become Multidimensional. The end of Cold War era generated an illusion of New World Order, which is the first coined by President Gorge W Bush (senior)<sup>1</sup> i.e. a world of social and economic prosperity with new norms, values and behaviour. But in reality, the so called New World Order could not bring much hope to the ordinary people in both developed and developing world. The problems, which face the world – overpopulation, poverty, environmental degradation, resource depletion, hunger, disease etc, remain as serious as ever.

We are entering into a unique and unpredictable era, which is significantly different from the preceding one, with existing security theory seemingly unable to cope with the transformation. The world and regional alignment today is undergoing dramatic changes; small powers also polarized for mutual interests. In this reality, Bangladesh cannot be left alone; she has to find her role in the regional and international political system and search for a friend for the existence and survival.

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1. President Bush proclaimed the dawn of a new world order, and this phrase captured the spirit of optimism, which fired the imagination of so many people.

Amongst many, Bangladesh has good diplomatic, political and economic interests with China, US, Japan, KSA and Malaysia. China always plays significant role for the development of her defence and industries. On the other hand, US at all times has greater role in her internal and external security issues. Besides, Bangladesh has earned great reputation in the UN Peace Keeping Mission and gained considerable influence in the UN, SAARC and other international and regional forum. Exact exploitation of these organizations combined with right identification of trusted partners will certainly enhance amity, tranquillity, security and development of the country.

This study, firstly analyzes the concept of security, world order and alliance system. Secondly, finds out the new alignment in the world and regional power politics; determines the implication of new polarization to the region and Bangladesh. Finally, this paper identifies suitable strategic partners that will support Bangladesh maintaining her sovereignty, integrity and prestige in regional and international arena.

## **THE CHANGED FACES OF ALLIANCE AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY**

### **Security and Alliance Before WW and After**

**Alliance in Europe.** The ‘Auld Alliance Treaty’ signed in 1295 between Scotland, Norway and France created oldest allies in the history. The terms of the treaty stipulated that if any country was attacked by England the other countries would invade English territory. The ‘**Treaty of Westphalia**’ which ended the ‘Thirty Years’ War’, the ‘Eighty Years’ War’, and officially recognized the United Provinces and Switzerland was signed on 24 October 1648. The treaty allowed forming Loose Alliance in order to protect weaker powers, to maintain balance of power and to bring back hegemonic power in to order. In

Illustration 1



League of the Three Emperors (German: *Dreikaiserbund*) between the monarchs of Austria–Hungary, Russia and Germany. In 1882, this alliance was expanded to include Italy in what became the Triple Alliance. For long time, until WW I the treaty ensured stability and peace in Europe. ‘Dreikaiserbund Treaty’ between Germany, Austria-Hungary and Russia in 1873 ensured Bismarck protection against a two front war from France<sup>2</sup> (Illustration 2).

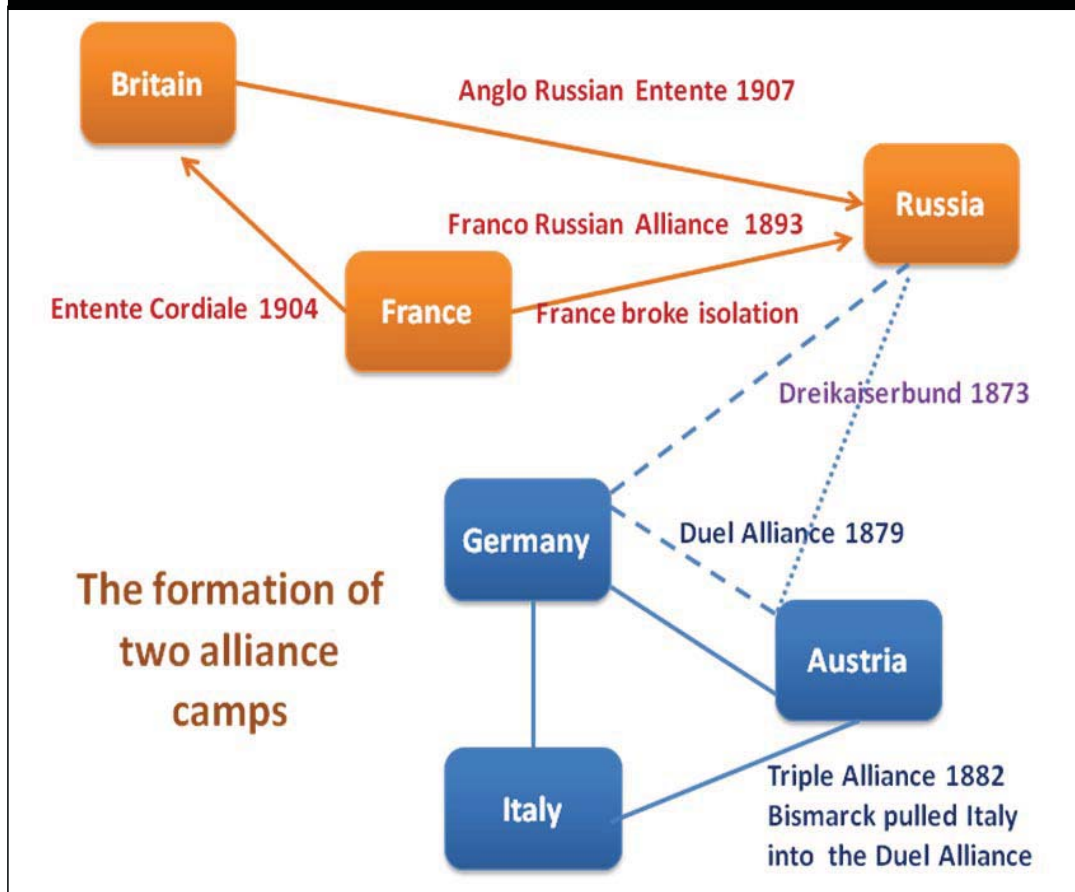
**WW Alliance.** The world witnessed the massive build up of force around the globe in the name of peace and security<sup>3</sup>. World War I divided world into two poles, i.e. Entente Powers and Central Powers. World War II was fought chiefly between the Allies and the Axis Powers<sup>4</sup>. The Allies won, and the Axis lost, because the Allies had greater cooperation, productive resources, and were able to turn these resources into greater numbers of soldiers and weapons than the Axis Powers.

2. Trevor C Salmon and Mark F Imber, *Issues in International Relations: Power*, (UK and US: Routledge Publications, London and New York 2008), p.65.

3. Sheehan Michael, *National and International Security*, (US: Ashgate Publication Co, New York 2000), Pp. 7-8.

4. However, some maintained neutrality (such as Éire, Sweden and Switzerland) but greatly benefited from the allies.

**Illustration 2**



*Alliance System as a Cause of the War*

**Cold War Alliance: Interlock Rivalry-Ideological War.** During the Cold War period, international politics were heavily shaped by the intense rivalry between two great blocs of power and the political ideologies they represented: democracy and capitalism in the case of the US and its allies, and communism in the case of the Soviet bloc<sup>6</sup>.

5. The Corner, *Alliance System*, available at: [http://www.thecorner.org/hist/wwi/alliance.htm#as\\_causeofwar](http://www.thecorner.org/hist/wwi/alliance.htm#as_causeofwar).
6. John C Grant, *European Security after the Cold War*, (UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd, Cheltenham, London, 1996), p.21.

**Alliance in the New World Order.** End of the Cold War era in the late 1980s, generated a sudden surge of hope. The evil empire had collapsed and as Francis Fukuyama pointed out the ideological struggle had ended in an outright victory for capitalist values. President Bush proclaimed the dawn of a New World Order, and his phrase captured the spirit of optimism, which fired the imagination of so many people. The New World Order although shifted the balance of power in West's favour but there was hardly any change in the third world security. The problems, which face the world – overpopulation, poverty, environmental degradation, resource depletion, hunger, disease etc, remain as serious as ever.

**Paradigm Shift: Uni-multipolar System.** Now there is only one superpower. Much debate goes on, however, as to whether today's world is unipolar, multipolar, or something else. It is a mixture or hybrid of one superpower, and several major powers. It might be called a uni-multipolar system.

## **THE PRESENT ALIGNMENT OF POWER**

### **The Age of Interdependence**

The defining characteristic of modern world is interdependence. It is the age of the inter-connected in security, communication, culture and trade. The great challenge today is to articulate a common global policy based on common global values. With globalization, international security is becoming increasingly indivisible. In absence of effective common global security architecture nation states today make or remake alliance in quest of peace, security and protection. Besides not much active UN, nations make regional, political, security or economic organizations.

### **The Rise of Regional Powers: New Regionalism**

**Emerging Regional Actors.** Since 1945, especially since the 1990s, regionalism and regional cooperation have been growing features of world politics. In the decades after World War II, the cold war and decolonization resulted in the establishment of multilateral regional organizations across the world, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the predecessors of what is today the European Union (EU), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organization of African Unity (OAU, the predecessor of the African Union, AU), the Arab League and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). Presently both India and China have been pursuing trans-regional, super-regional, sub-regional, inter-regional and bilateral cooperative arrangements with enthusiasm.

### **Asia-Pacific Region-the Centre of Gravity of the Emerging World Order.**

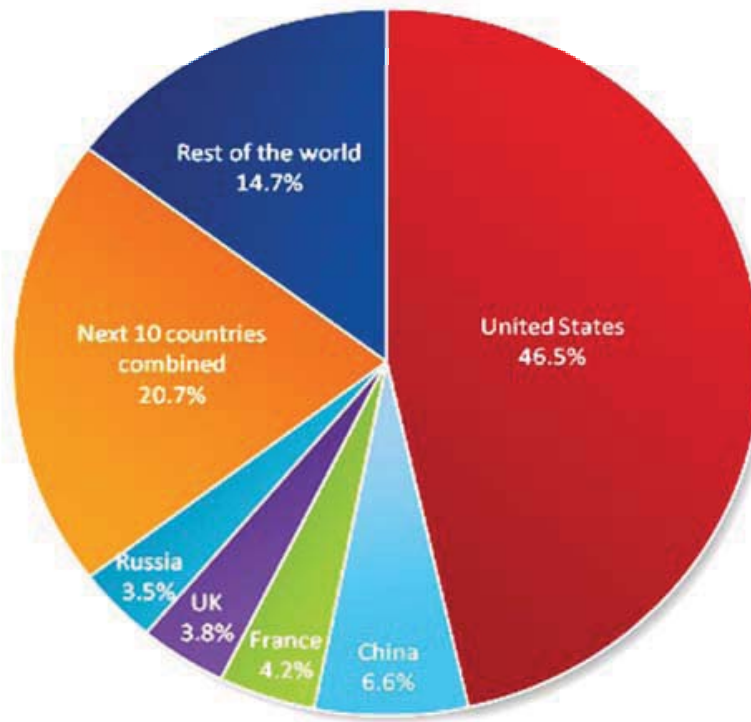
Asia Pacific region is a region that stands on the brink of becoming a major economic and military power. In the coming decades, Asian nations will be the harbingers of change in the global order<sup>7</sup>. However, from the feeling of insecurity, mistrust and intra state rivalry Asia Pacific countries resorted to strengthen their defence - resulting arms race in the region. The increased defense budgets of most of the Asian countries give us enough reason to rethinking the security aspects of Bangladesh.

### **Polarization in the Region: Emergent Regional Actors**

**US Factor.** The US remains the paramount growing military power in Asia, despite the increasing armed might of China and major Asian states. US alliance system in Asia is being extended beyond collective defence to provide peacekeeping to humanitarian operations, plus an ability to exert collective diplomatic pressure. However, it is argued that US has not displayed proactive interest in strengthening political relations with Asian countries (except India and Pakistan). It is a reality that US is now more interested to India, China and Middle East<sup>8</sup> than her old alliance in Europe and ASEAN. In contest, ties between China, India and other selected Asian countries i.e. Australia, Japan, Philippine, Singapore and Thailand are expanding and deepening in areas related to politics, economy, and security<sup>9</sup>. The diagram denoting USA main military security alliance with Asian countries is shown as Annex A.

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7. Comment of Dr Jashim Uddin, Director International Relations, BIIS, during an interview on 04<sup>th</sup> August 2010 at his BIIS office.
  8. Former US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice prioritized her visit to Middle East; she did not attend the 14<sup>th</sup> ASEAN ARF held on August 2007, sending Deputy Secretary of State. SEA countries interpreted this US stance as an example of its underemphasizing of the region, and the July 27 issue of the *Straits Times*, for example, interpreted the lack of US presence in SEA as playing into the hands of China.
  9. Shinichi Ogawa, EASR 2008 Editor in Chief, '*Southeast Asia-Expanding Cooperative Ties with External Power*', (Japan: East Asian Strategic Review, the National Institution for Defence Studies Japan, the Japan Times Ltd, 2008,) p. 115

Pie Chart 3



Comparison of US Military Expenditure

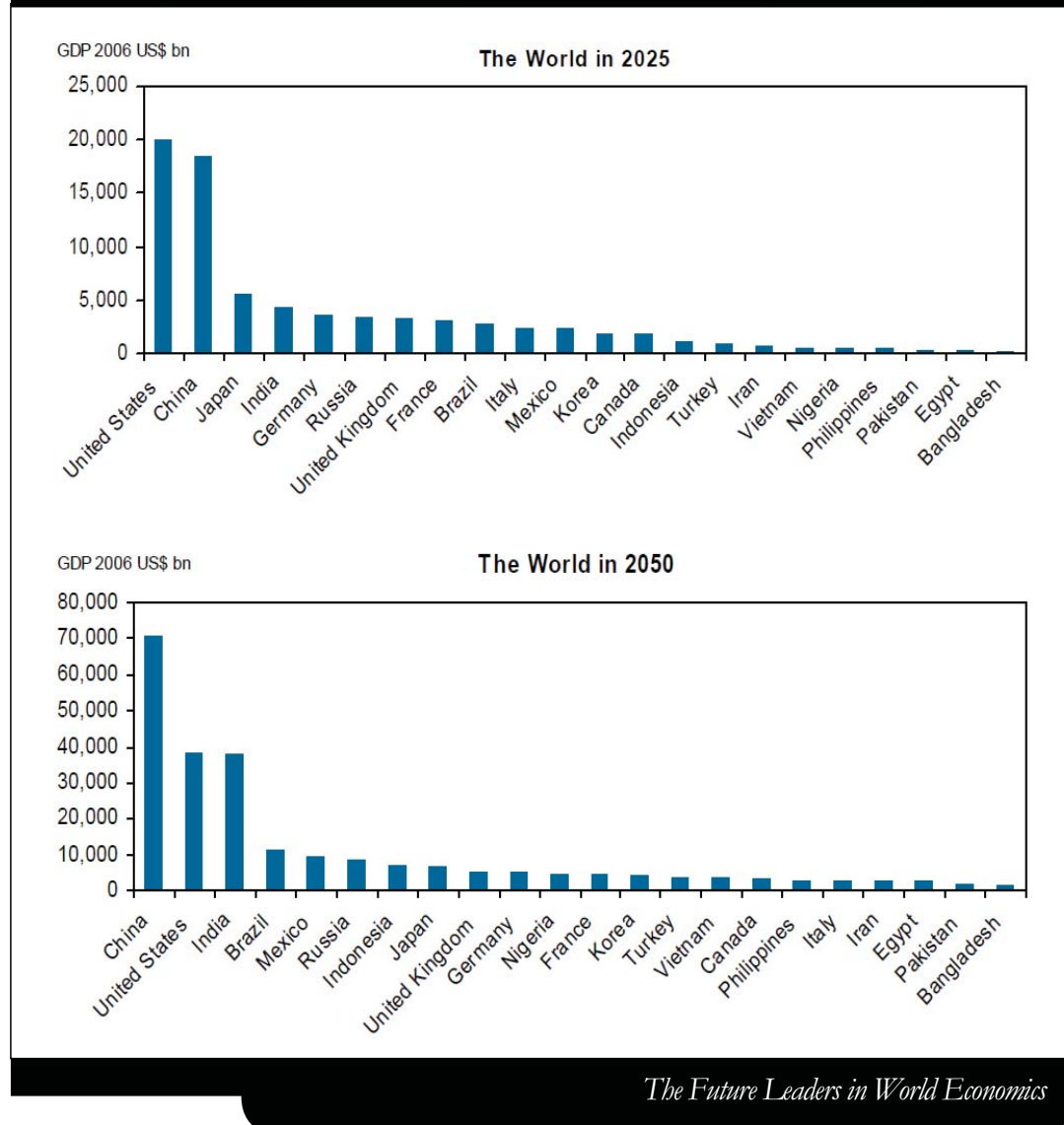
### Comparison of US Military Expenditure<sup>10</sup>

**Impact of a Rising China.** Until 1990s China built its policy in the region on mistrust and suspicion, seeing most Asian states largely as agents of US foreign policy, and US policy largely as designed to prevent China's rise. Today Chinese policy makers see considerable potential for the progression of Chinese objectives in the region, and Chinese economic and security interests are perceived as being best served by engagement and cooperation<sup>11</sup>. Historical China's appeal to harmony, peace and virtue is seen as providing a cultural alternative to western materialism and individualism<sup>12</sup>. In this reality China is

10. *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Yearbook 2010* (US figure from Centre for Arms Control and Non-proliferation May 2010). Available at <http://www.globalissues.org/article/75/world-military-spending>.
11. Breslin Shaun, *Understanding China's Regional Rise: Interpretation, Identities and Implications*, published in *International Affairs*, Volume 85, No 4, July 2009, (London: Chatham House Publications, UK, 2008), p.818
12. David Kang, *China Rising: Peace, Power and Order in East Asia*, (New York: California University Press, US, 2007).

slowly but surely becoming alternative choice in the region. China will continue to make domestic security (economic development and political stability) its priority. In foreign affairs, China will do its best to cooperate with the US, the EU, Russia and Japan<sup>13</sup>.

#### Barograph 4



13. Comments of Moinul Islam, BSS (Hons), MSS (Econs), MA (FAT) Monash, Director General, SEA/EA-P, Bangladesh Civil Service (Foreign Affairs), Government of Bangladesh during an interview at Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 14 October, 2010.
14. Shahid Javed Burki: *Asia in the 'Catch-Up' Game*, published in ISAS Working Paper, No. 106, 09 April 2010, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore), p. 13







**Indian Rise or Regional Hegemony.** Moving itself from an era of “non-aligned” to “poly-alignment” India has emerged as a regional military power<sup>15</sup>. India’s interests have changed over the past two decades from a position of nonalignment to one of having specific strategic interests that lead it to a path of ‘poly-alignment’. India develops ‘strategic partnerships’ with countries perceived as leaders of a global, multipolar order, seeks modern military capabilities from many of those countries and expands its influence in the Indian Ocean and beyond<sup>16</sup>. Since 2000, India has increased the number of countries with which it has defence-specific agreements. At the same time, it continues to modernize its army to deal with potential threats from its immediate neighbors and internal insurgency groups, and to fulfill its goal of being a global leader in UN peacekeeping.

### Asia Centric Global Leadership: the BRIC

International politics and security now focused on BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) countries, which are destined to create a multipolar world. The analyst viewed that by 2050 BRIC will emerge as the most powerful alliance in the world in terms of economy, politics, (perhaps in the area of security) and will challenge US hegemony<sup>17</sup>.

**Table 5**

*A Comparison of BRIC with EU, US and UK<sup>19</sup>*

Countries	Share of world Nominal GDP (%)	Share of world Military spending (%)	Share of world Population (%)	Share of world Landmass (%)	Average share (%)
 Brazil	3.3	1.7	2.8	5.6	3.4
 China	9.3	6.6	19.5	6.2	10.4
 European Union	26	18	7.2	2.9	13.5
 India	2.3	2.4	17.3	1.9	6
 Russia	2.4	3.5	2.1	10.9	4.7
 United States	23.6	43	4.5	6.1	19.3
Together	66.9	75.2	53.4	33.6	57.3

15. Sagar Rahul, *State of Mind: What Kind of Power will India become?* Published in *International Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 4, July 2009, (London: Chatham House Publications, UK, 2009), p. 801

16. Comments of Lieutenant-General Dr Mohd Aminul Karim, (retd), Visiting Senior Research Fellow at the Asia-Europe Institute, University of Malaya, Malaysia, and Visiting Scholar at the Merishon Centre for International Security Studies, Ohio State University, United States during an interview at his residence on 14 October, 2010.

17. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad made a whirlwind visit to the summit to announce that ‘the age of empires has ended’.

18. Available at: <http://gulfnews.com/opinions/columnists/russia-s-fall-as-a-superpower-1.491662>.

## **New Polarization: Options and Possibilities**

**US-China and India: A Delicate Balance.** Perhaps the combined power of US, China and India could make the most powerful alliance in the world. Having understood the future potential of China and India, US is now focusing to engage these two future economic giants. For India, outright confrontation with China would be expensive and pointless as long as China can be convinced to cooperate on key Indian interests such as border dispute resolutions, nuclear and missile proliferation with Pakistan, and Islamic terrorism. Both China and India having more focused on BRIC, may not involve much with US.

**Pakistan-China.** The relationship has been described by Hu Jintao as 'higher than the mountains and deeper than oceans'. Favourable relations with China have been a pillar of Pakistan's foreign policy. China strongly supported Pakistan's opposition to Soviet Union involvement in Afghanistan and was perceived by Pakistan as a regional counterweight to India.

**India-Russia.** India has been described sometimes as client state, a strategic partner or an alliance of the Russia. India's strategic security depended on countervailing China and Pakistan, since each had staked a claim to what India believed was its own sovereign territory<sup>19</sup>. The Russia had its own ideological and military conflicts with China, therefore for Russia India will remain an important strategic ally.

**Russia, China, India: A New Strategic Triangle for a New Cold War?** The idea was first coined by the then Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov, which was later referred to as 'Primakov's Triangle' in Russian journalism. It was conceived in Moscow that the strengthening of ties with China, India and Iran would lead to the formation of a new balance of power in Asia that could be advantageous to Russia. Perhaps this triangle will become more influential once BRIC is successful.

## **IMPLICATION OF NEW POLARISATION TO BANGLADESH**

### **Bangladesh and Third World Countries Security Dilemma**

The New World Order that is supposed to be free from threat of terror, stronger in pursuit of justice, and more secure in the quest for peace. But as rightly pointed out by Mahtir Mohammad, there is no New World Order, only the world where might is right and the devils takes the hindmost. International

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19. Malik Hafez, *the Roles of the United States, Russia and China in the New World Order*; (US: St Martin's Press Inc, US, 1997), p. 105

organisations are unable to protect the interests of small powers<sup>20</sup>. In addition to traditional military and non military threats small powers like Bangladesh needed to be prepared to deal with the emerging threats from the effects of globalization, insufficiency of resources, economic disparity, influence of non-state actors to countries own affairs, coupled with environmental degradation, new emerging diseases i.e. SARS virus, Bird Flu, Anthrax and many more. Developed countries are smart to understand the issues but small powers still remain vulnerable and exposed to those new emerging threats.

### **Bound to Survive: Imperative for Strategic Alliance**

In the 'age of interdependence' developing and developed countries now increasingly depending on their strategic alliances. In the context of global and regional security alliance Bangladesh simply does not have the economic, political and military strength to act alone; it is therefore imperative for her to look for strategic allies to ensure her safety, security, survival and future development. Among many China, US, India are going to be the key actors to influence the world politics and security affairs<sup>21</sup>. Therefore Bangladesh needs to be involved with all of these three either strategically, economically, politically or diplomatically.

### **Challenges Threatening the Strategic Relations**

No countries want a friend who is economically frail, politically unimportant and militarily ineffective. To remain important in the international arena, external credibility is essential. Bangladesh's image in the international politics so far is not very encouraging. Democracy, rule of law and good governance of the country is a far cry. Bangladesh's relations with key global players were asymmetric, both in terms of state and non-state actors because of missing direction and lack of consensus among political parties<sup>22</sup>. There are allegations of human right violation and rise of extremism.

### **Strength of Bangladesh**

Bangladesh is a small country but 'big nation'. As a hub between China and India, Bangladesh offers great potential for future trade to China and India through

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20. Dr Mahathir Mohammad, *speech given at Diners Club, Malaysian armed Forces Staff College Course*, 11 May, 2004.

21. Comments of Dr Delwar Hossain, Ph D (Japan), MA (Japan), MSS (DU), Professor and Chair, Department of International Relations, Faculty of Social Science, University of Dhaka, Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh during an interview on 09 August 2010 at his University Office.

22. Comments of Professor Syed Anwar Husain, Department of History, University of Dhaka during *Independence Day Commemorative Seminar on Bangladesh Foreign Policy: Continuity and Change* organized by BIIS, Dhaka on 05 April, 2009 on the occasion of commemorating the 38<sup>th</sup> Independence Day of Bangladesh.

access into the Bay of Bengal<sup>23</sup>. American's India imperative, makes Bangladesh as a neighbour, an important factor in the regional politics. Bangladesh is also a bridge between the eastern and western part of India, therefore a stable relationship between India and Bangladesh is a factor in the harmonious coexistence of these two physically distant parts of India. In SA, the rise of India or the influence of China can be negotiated effectively through Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's geostrategic location could be an important factor for booming Chinese economy. China could be benefited from deep sea port of Bangladesh, for the restarting its age old 'silk route'<sup>24</sup> through Bangladesh to China.

**Illustration 6**

*The Silk Road extending from Southern Europe through the Arabian Peninsula, Somalia, Egypt, Iran, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Java-Indonesia and Vietnam until it reaches China. Land routes are red, water routes are blue*



Bangladesh stood firm against radicalism and showed her commitment in war against terrorism. Bangladesh is a country which has good relations with Arab and diplomatic acceptance to Arab (including Palestine, Turkey, Iraq, Iran with

23. Comments of Dr Delwar Hossain, Ph D (Japan), MA (Japan), MSS (DU), Professor and Chair, Department of International Relations, Faculty of Social Science, University of Dhaka, Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh during an interview on 09 August 2010 at his University Office.

24. Vadime Eliseeff, *the Silk Roads: Highways of Culture and Commerce*, (Paris 1998, UNESCO, Reprint, Berghahn Books 2009), Pp. 1-2

whom many countries do not have good relations), Western and Third World. Most importantly its successful role in UN Mission has credited its security and diplomatic capabilities both in UN and African nations. In this reality Bangladesh could be an important factor for Big Powers to mend its relation with Arabs or Muslim World, China (capitalizing its traditional relationship and future strategic relations with China) and even with Africa.

## **CHOOSING THE RIGHT STRATEGIC PARTNER: OPTION FOR BANGLADESH**

### **Sino-Bangladesh: A New Equation in the Diplomacy**

The evolution of Bangladesh-China relations over time and seeks to demonstrate that it symbolizes an emerging equation in Asia's diplomatic calculations. Sino-Bangla amity is not designed as a traditional 'balance of power' counterpoise to India, unlike the Sino-Pak strategic relationship. Rather, in this case Bangladesh can be seen as a conduit or bridge connecting China with the other rising power in Asia, India. Bangladesh can think of establishment of a 'quadrilateral' grouping, comprising Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar (BCIM). This 'quadrilateralism' could have a very positive impact in the reduction of tensions in the region. Paradigmatically, it reflects a new type of grouping being created in a rising Asia to enhance interstate collaboration. Bangladesh could also play an important role to secure an understanding between China, India and Bangladesh on the Brahmaputra<sup>25</sup>. The Sino-Bangla relations could, therefore, be a new equation in the diplomatic calculations in Asia.

In the post cold world, culture is a both divisive (Ukraine, Nigeria, Sudan, India, Sri Lanka) and unified force (Germans, China, Korea)<sup>26</sup>. If Huntington is correct, Islam and China embody great cultural traditions very different and infinitely superior than that of west (Huntington's emergent alignment of civilization is shown at Annex B).

### **US-Bangladesh: Partnership for Progress**

Bangladesh is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country. Islam has been embedded with local customs and traditions. Many customs observed by Muslims in the country seem strange to Arab Muslims. It is a country where

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25. Comments of Moinul Islam, BSS (Hons), MSS (Econs), MA (FAT) Monash, Director General, SEA/EA-P, Bangladesh Civil Service (Foreign Affairs), Government of Bangladesh during an interview at Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 14 October 2010.

26. Samuel P Huntington, *the Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, (USA: Simon & Schuster, NY, 1996), p. 185

all the religion coexists happily without any fear. Over the years Bangladesh showed achievement in annihilating extremists. The government of Bangladesh has shown real concern to eliminate fundamentalists. In this respect, the US and Bangladesh have a common interest to curb and gradually eliminate Islamic extremism in Bangladesh. This commonality has acquired a new dynamics between the US and Bangladesh<sup>27</sup>. There were various statements made by the top leaders of both countries to demonstrate a common concern and attitude towards threat to security from non-state actors. With all these credentials, Bangladesh should pursue US to engage and support her for progress and development.

### **Bangladesh's Consideration with India**

Indians rise in the world has elevated the situation of South Asia and as immediate neighbour; Bangladesh would also be focused with the events related to India. India is militarily and economically more powerful than any combination of its immediate neighbours except for China. The changing security architecture of South Asia, especially due to the rising Chinese profile in the subcontinent, has become a major concern for Delhi for which India would be needing constant support from its neighbour especially Bangladesh<sup>28</sup>. Both Bangladesh and India have had their relations shaped by history, culture, geography, economics and, above all, geopolitics.

It is a reality that Bangladesh and India needs to have excellent relationship for their peaceful coexistence; therefore Bangladesh should accept Indian supremacy in the region and support India for the good cause. Both nations need to undergo a change in mindset, particularly at the political level. There is a need for greater understanding, dialogue, diplomacy, regional cooperation and less interference in each other's internal affairs<sup>29</sup>.

### **Preserving the Multilateralism**

Connectivity is the order of the present diplomacy. It is likely that there will be future regional security problems requiring effective response from groups

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27. US Congressman Curt Weldon commented during his visit to Bangladesh on 22 April 2010 commented that, "this is an exciting country with exciting people; we are overwhelmed with the emotion of the people of Bangladesh". "Bangladesh is also important to the US because it is probably the only country in the world that has democracy with a Muslim majority population," he noted. "Bangladesh is now a booming economy and we are here to help you to boost it further and also want to work with you to develop your private sector," he said.
  28. Comments of Professor Muhammad Shahiduzzaman, MA (California), Professor of International Security and Foreign Policy, Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka, Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh during an interview at DU Cafeteria on 10 August, 2010.
  29. Lieutenant-General Dr Mohd Aminul Karim, (retd), *Bangladesh-India Relations: Some Recent Trends*, published in ISAS Working Paper, No. 96, 12 November 2009, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore), p. 1

of Asian states; it is therefore necessary for Bangladesh to maintain flexible coalition with other states. It is also imperative for Bangladesh to stay focused and connected with SAARC, BIMST-EC, D 7, SAGQ and other regional and international organization for the benefit of economy, trade and security.

### **Road Ahead: Towards A Credible Bangladesh**

To have the credibility and to remain important in the international arena, Bangladesh needs to accomplish the following objectives:

- a. **Continue War against Terrorism.** Bangladesh cannot afford to be labeled as the progenitor of conflict on religious or other extremist lines under globalization process that purports to cement the ties of interdependence by negating the myth of ‘the Clashes of Civilization’. Anti terrorism campaign should be undertaken at national and international level by professional security forces, backed by strong political will and supported by government mechanism.
- b. **Fight Poverty and Corruption.** In the Transparency International published Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) Bangladesh is among the most corrupt nations. Enough has been said by the scholars and policy makers, now it is time to implement, if required little hush way taking example from Singapore and Malaysia.
- c. **Economic Emancipation.** Obstacles to growth includes frequent cyclones and floods, inefficient state-owned enterprises, mismanaged port facilities, a growth in the labour force that has outpaced jobs, inefficient use of energy resources (such as natural gas), insufficient power supplies, slow implementation of economic reforms, political infighting and corruption. “Among Bangladesh’s most significant obstacles to growth are poor governance and weak public institutions.”
- d. **Political Stability.** No nation can prosper without strong political will. The political leadership must develop the culture of tolerance, mutual understanding and respect. Political leaders must establish and maintain a favourable political environment where development is ensured through democracy.
- e. **Combat Viable Credible Deterrence Capability.** Bangladesh must strive for a balance between the Armed Forces, command and control structure and logical training and material procurement policies<sup>30</sup>. In outline, the strategy should aim at a credible deterrence and, should deterrence fail, the aim should be to make aggression costly for the intruder and delay the pace of advance of a strong adversary, allowing time to mobilize international support.

30. Brig Darshan Khullar, *Security, Peace and Honour*; Manas Publications, New Delhi, India, 2000, Pp. 77 – 85

- f. **Good Governance and Establishment of Rule of Law.** Governments of the small powers often failed to ensure; democracy, economic openness, development and security, transparency<sup>31</sup>, in their regime. To ensure the implementations of government policies and objectives good governance and rule of law must be ensured.

## CONCLUSION

Polarization is not new in the international politics and security system. Pages of history revealed that various alliances and treaties like 'Auld Alliance Treaty, Treaty of Munster, Treaty of Westphalia, Duel Alliance, Triple Alliance' etc were made to protect weaker states and to deter attack or any kind of aggression. WW I and WW II divided the world in two poles. Again, during the Cold War period, international politics were heavily shaped by the intense rivalry between two great blocs. Now there is only one superpower (or hyper power); much debate goes on as to whether today's world is unipolar, multipolar, bipolar or something else. Contemporary international politics does not fit either of these models. Instead it is a mixture or hybrid of one superpower and several major powers; it might be called a uni-multipolar system.

The defining characteristic of modern world is interdependence. It is the age of the inter-connected in security, communication, culture and trade. Countries all over the world are increasingly involving into multinational, regional or bilateral organization. Besides UN system, nation states resorted to security, political, economic or diplomatic alliance notable amongst are NATO, EU, ASEAN and SAARC.

Asia Pacific region stands on the brink of becoming a major economic and military power. In the coming decades, Asian nations will be the harbingers of change in the global order. Asia Pacific Region countries, which traditionally suffer from intrastate rivalry, mistrust and misunderstanding, are now responding their threats with a mix of bilateral and multilateral approaches encompassing both US and China. This could be a model for Bangladesh in searching for suitable strategic alliance or alliances.

The new world order is radically different than the perceived one - international organisations like UN, WTO, ICRC are unable to protect the interests of small powers like Bangladesh. In the context of present global and regional security alliance Bangladesh simply does not have the economic, political and military strength to act alone; it is therefore imperative for her to look for strategic allies

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31. Simon S C Tay and Jesus P Estanislao, *The relevance of ASEAN crisis and Change*, from the book *Reinventing ASEAN*, (Singapore: Institute of South East Asian Studies, Pasir Panjang, Singapore, 2001), p. 5

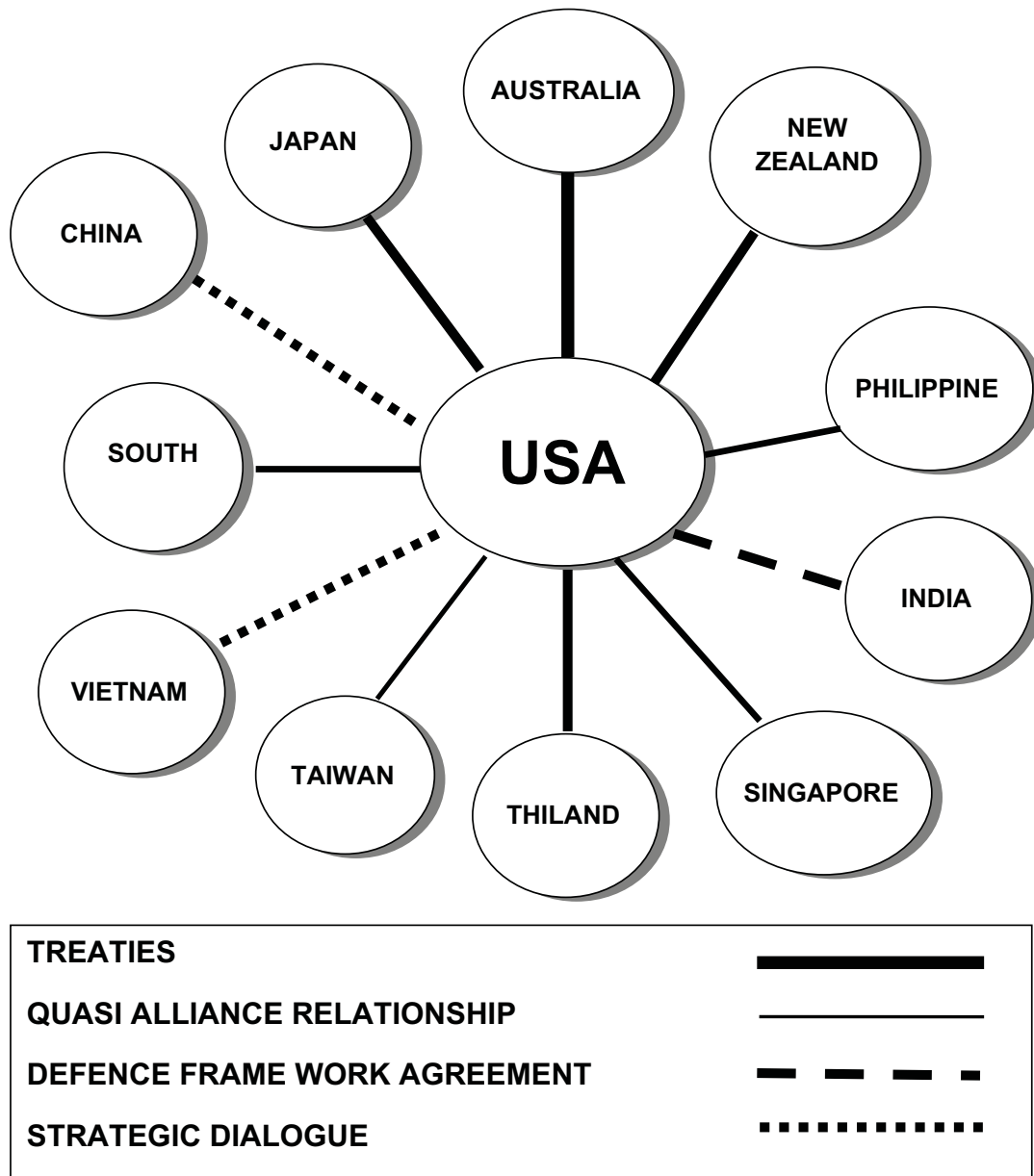
to ensure her safety, security, survivability and future development. Among many China, US, India are going to be the key actors to influence the world politics. Therefore Bangladesh needs to be involved with all of these three either strategically, economically, politically or culturally.

The Sino-Bangla relationship could be a new model of strategic ties in the sense that it is designed to be a conduit, or a bridge connecting China to India. At the same time Bangladesh should try to become a strategic partner of US by showing her initiative in curbing radical groups, promoting secularism and supporting war on terrorism. Having strategic ties with China will give leverage to US in the sense that Bangladesh could be a factor to foster good relationship with China. On the other hand, Bangladesh should keep on engaging India for the benefit of both. Before that both nations need to undergo a change in mindset, particularly at the political level. The Selection Matrix is given as Annex C.

The question now remains whether Bangladesh would get enough importance from the possible alliance. Bangladesh has already earned good reputation in UN and other regional, international organization. The government of Bangladesh has shown real concern to eliminate fundamentalists and over the years the country showed achievement in annihilating extremists. Economically, politically and diplomatically she is slowly but surely making progress. Yet many things need to be done to reach desired standard. In this reality, politicians, diplomats, bureaucrats and military personnel have important roles to play.

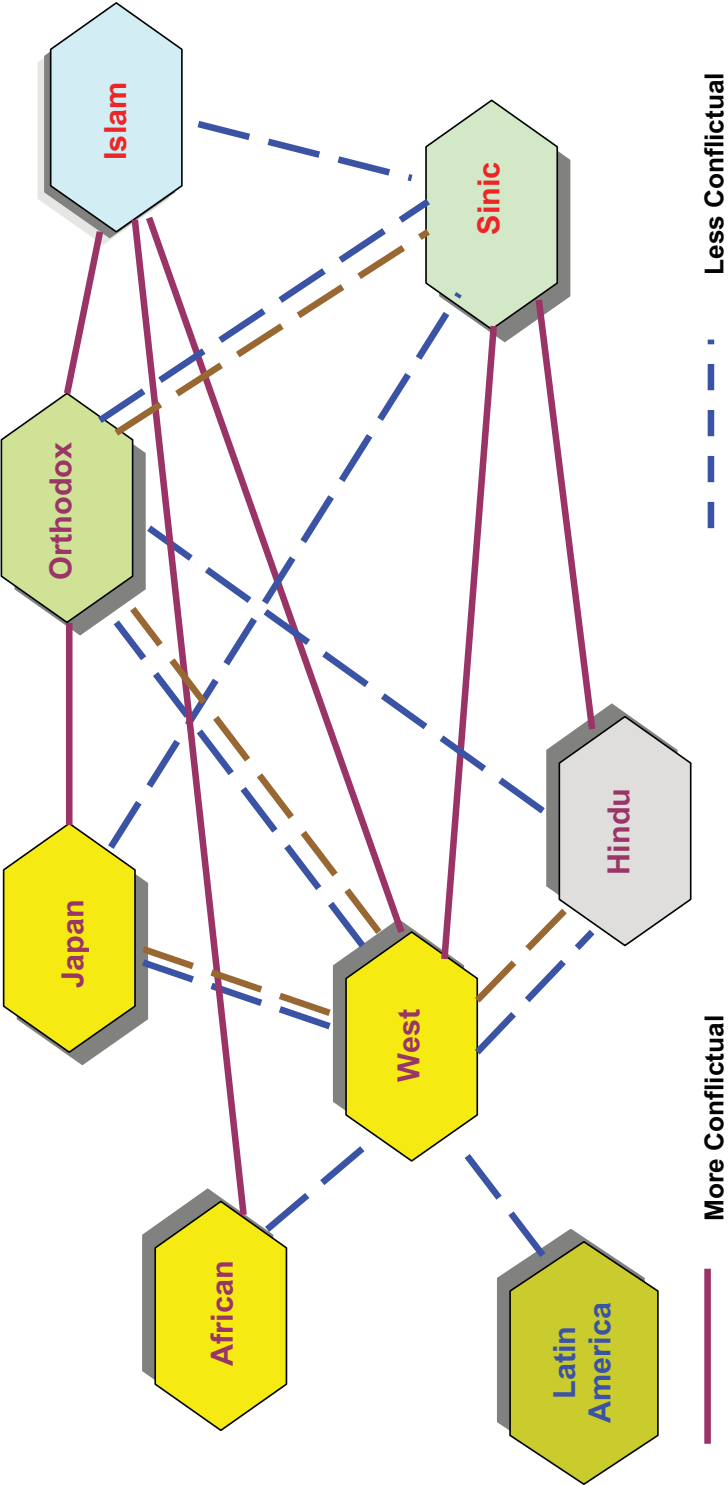
## ANNEX A

### MAIN USA MILITARY SECURITY ALLIANCE



ANNEX B

HUNTINGTON’S EMERGING ALIGNMENTS OF CIVILIZATIONS



Source: Samuel P Huntington, the Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order, (USA: Simon & Schuster, NY, 1996).

**ANNEX C**  
**SELECTION MATRIX**

Selection Criteria	Weight	China	India	USA	Russia	Japan	Remarks
Military Cooperation	10	9	5	7	7	6	Bangladesh Armed Forces is highly dependent on China for material and technical support.
Economic Potential	10	10	7	9	5	8	Bangladesh has good trade potentials with USA, India, China and Russia. However, Bangladesh need to avoid too much dependence on India and should try to maintain balance of payment in own favour.
Security Potential	10	9	5	9	7	5	USA will remain the key actor in the world and regional security affairs.
Diplomatic	10	9	6	9	8	8	Diplomatic relation with India not always consistent.
Political	8	8	6	7	5	6	As BRIC countries China, India, Russia will dominate world economy.
Humanitarian Support	8	7	5	8	5	7	
Cultural	7	6	7	4	3	5	Culturally Bangladesh is more close to India.
Historical	6	5	6	5	5	5	
Religion	4	4	3	3	2	2	Huntington suggests that Islam and Sini will have less conflict.
Total Value	72	67	50	61	47	52	

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