

Batting for Peace

A Study of Cricket Diplomacy between India and Pakistan

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1.0 Introduction

In this thesis I will discuss cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan. I have chosen this topic because cricket has been an important part of the current peace process between the two countries. The United Nations declared 2005 as the International Year of Sport and Physical Education, which saw the national cricket teams of India and Pakistan appointed as spokespersons¹ to promote the objectives of the Year. They were appointed in recognition of their efforts at overcoming regional tension and encouraging peaceful relations between their countries (United Nations, 2006:6). Sport's potential for peace has undeniably achieved an increasing amount of attention in recent years. It is considered as having 'the power to bring people together, bridge differences, and promote communication and understanding,' and not the least contribute to 'lasting peace,' in the United Nations Secretary-General's report *Sport for Development and Peace: the way forward* (Ibid. 20).

Therefore, I will discuss whether cricket has played such a role. Sport, or certain sports at certain times, has a significant place in contemporary social life (Levermore & Budd, 2004:9). Cricket certainly fits such a description in South Asia as I have had the opportunity to experience first-hand while travelling in cricket-crazy India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. Cricket permeates practically every layer of these South Asian societies, including Pakistan, and the game has occupied 'a central place in a range of emerging positions and identities' in the years after the countries achieved independence in the late 1940s (Sengupta, 2004:600).

It is obvious, but often understated, that sport has an important part to play in social life and in relations between states. Thus, the relationship between sport and politics is important, although under-researched. The 'myth of autonomy' that suggested sport should and did have little effect on other human activities has largely been undermined (Allison & Monnington, 2002:106), and Houlihan (in Beacom, 2000:14) refers to this intertwining of politics and sport at different levels, among them the potential of sport acting as 'a vehicle for diplomacy.' Researchers in the field of

¹ Swiss tennis ace Roger Federer was also appointed as spokesperson for the Year.

diplomacy have in fact argued that a transformation of diplomatic practice has taken place, a transformation that has seen ‘the dissipation of diplomatic activity across a much wider range of activities’ (Beacom, 2000:14). As a consequence, ‘sport diplomacy’ has been added to the vocabulary of international relations.

Diplomacy can broadly be defined as ‘the conduct of business between states by peaceful means’ (Satow, 2004:25). Professional sport is conversely inherently competitive. George Orwell (1953:195) famously characterized serious sport as ‘war minus the shooting,’ and argued that ‘sport is an unfailing cause of ill-will between states.’ In other words, the concept of sport diplomacy may seem contradictory to some critics. At the same time, sport is considered to have the power to bring people together and bridge differences, and the appointment of the Indian and Pakistani national cricket teams as United Nations spokespersons highlights the fact that in a world where conflict and war is ‘everybody’s tragedy and everybody’s nightmare, diplomacy is everybody’s business’ (Jönsson & Langhorne, 2004:xiii).

Some might suspect the UN of expecting too much of sport in the way of creating peace where other attempts have failed. Critics would suggest that those who make the fundamental, hard and carefully calculated decisions about war and peace are found in the foreign policy and security establishments of their respective countries, and that the role of cricket diplomacy as a form of soft power should be played down. Nevertheless, even though cricket diplomacy’s exact impact can be difficult to assess, it does not mean that it is not an important and interesting topic for research. Shaharyar M. Khan, former chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board, contends that cricket more than any other sport can help build ‘bridges of peace and harmony both across frontiers as in India and Pakistan or within a country, as in South Africa’ (Khan, 2005:179). This master thesis will build on that statement as well as elaborate on the theme of sport diplomacy in the context of a diplomacy framework, in an attempt to add to an under-studied field of research. The main question is straightforward: *Has cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan been successful?*

In order to assess if it has been successful, two more questions need to be asked concerning the timing and durability of cricket diplomacy:

1. Has cricket diplomacy been used to initiate rapprochement, or has it been used in a climate of gradually thawing relations?
2. If bilateral relations deteriorate, can cricket diplomacy survive and help maintain the precarious India-Pakistan relationship?

The purpose and structure of this thesis is three-pronged. First, I will discuss the connection between sport and politics, and extend this to include the relationship between sport and diplomacy. Furthermore, this involves making an account of the theoretic framework on diplomacy, and how sport diplomacy relates to this framework. Second, having established sport diplomacy as a part of the diplomacy framework, I will situate cricket diplomacy in relation to other cases of sport diplomacy. This provides the context for moving on to the third part, which is directly connected to the main research question. That includes identifying and discussing the particularities of the case of cricket diplomacy, and to discuss whether it has been successful or not.

2.0 Methodological Approach

The discussion about sport and diplomacy will provide the framework for analyzing cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan since 1987. For the purpose of the latter, I will use a case study approach. George and Bennett (2004:17-18) define a case as ‘an instance of a class of events.’ The term class of events refers to

‘a phenomenon of scientific interest, such as revolutions, types of governmental regimes, kinds of economic systems, or personality types that the investigator chooses to study with the aim of developing theory (or ‘generic knowledge’) regarding the causes of similarities or differences among instances (cases) of that class of events.’

Thus, a case study is a well-defined aspect of a historical episode that the investigator selects for analysis, rather than the historical event itself (Ibid. 18). In other words, this case study deals with cricket diplomacy in the time-span from 1987 to 2007. The relationship between India and Pakistan is complex, and a case study approach is therefore useful because the aim is to understand the case in depth, and ‘in its natural setting, recognizing its complexity and context’ (Punch, 2005:144). Using this kind of approach for assessing the success of cricket diplomacy is regarded as ‘an opportunity to learn more about the complexity of the problem studied, to develop further the existing explanatory framework, and to refine and elaborate the initially available theory’ (George, 1979:51).

Case study methods are ‘generally strong precisely where statistical methods and formal models are weak,’ and four strong advantages can be identified, which makes a case study approach ideal for studying cricket diplomacy (George & Bennett: 2004:19-22). First, case studies allow a researcher to achieve high levels of conceptual validity. Case studies allow for conceptual refinements with a higher level of validity over a smaller number of cases. Second, case studies have powerful advantages in deriving new hypotheses, in the course of the research process. Third, case studies examine the operation of causal mechanisms in individual cases in detail. It is therefore possible to look at a large number of intervening variables within a single case. And finally, case

studies have the ability to accommodate complex causal relations such as equifinality, complex interaction effects, and path dependency. This requires process tracing evidence to document complex interactions. Process tracing is something that I will return to later.

There are trade-offs and potential pitfalls of case studies as well, according to George and Bennett (2004:22-33), among them: Case selection bias, which is the problem of selecting relevant cases. In other words, the question is whether cricket diplomacy is the most relevant case of sport diplomacy; identifying the scope conditions and necessity of a case study as case studies remains much stronger at assessing *whether* and *how* a variable mattered to the outcome than at assessing *how much* it mattered. Thus, it may not be possible to determine the exact impact or success of cricket diplomacy; the ‘degrees of freedom problem,’ which means that within a single case there are many possible process-tracing observations along the hypothesized causal paths between independent and dependent variables. That means that cricket could not be the only intervening variable in the India-Pakistan case; and, the sometimes lack of representatives or independence of cases, in this case to a certain extent represented by the overall lack of cases of sport diplomacy.

2.1 Methodological Choices and Limitations

Yin (1994:1) argues that ‘case studies are the preferred strategy when “how” or “why” questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.’ When assessing the contemporary phenomenon known as cricket diplomacy, I will focus on bilateral cricket contests between India and Pakistan as well as their political relationship. Focusing on bilateral cricket matches alone is relevant because these events are directly related to the countries’ political relationship. I will therefore not include cricket matches at neutral venues, because the political relationship between the two states is better measured by looking at bilateral cricketing ties. Furthermore, the time scope I have

chosen is from 1987 until 2007, simply because it was in 1987 that cricket diplomacy was coined and received both regional and international attention.

2.1.1 Limitations

Sport and politics is a relatively under-researched theoretical field. The challenge in writing that part of the theory is therefore to piece together relevant parts of existing literature. Even though it is no longer necessary to justify research on sport and politics, it is still a widely ignored field in International Relations theory. Thus, one aim of this thesis is to rectify this lack of attention towards the role of sport in international relations. Furthermore, in relation to cricket diplomacy, I will use the framework of sport *and* politics, as opposed to politics *in* sport. The former, according to Houlihan (2004:214), relates to ‘the use made by governments of sport and the process by which public policy is made and implemented,’ thus the study of politics *and* sport is ‘concerned largely with an examination of the relationship of politics to sport in the public domain defined by recognized institutions of state. Politics *in* sport, on the other hand, involves a consideration of the ways in which ‘organizations use power to pursue their own sectional interests.’

Literature on diplomacy is a vast theoretical area, with many variations and classifications. I have chosen to focus in the coming chapters on the aspects of diplomacy most relevant for sport diplomacy, specifically those aspects concerning representation and communication, confidence-building measures and multi-track diplomacy. This implies leaving out topics that are regarded as important in other parts of the literature. One strain of diplomacy theory concerns the evolution of modern diplomacy, which can be traced to the fifteenth century (Keens-Soper, 2004:3). The evolution of diplomacy is not important for the purpose of studying cricket diplomacy, however. I have therefore chosen to disregard this aspect. Furthermore, other writers discuss at length the tasks and players of diplomacy. Barston (1997:2), for instance, argues that the work of diplomacy can be broken down into 6 broad areas or tasks, and that even within these there are a number of subdivisions. ‘The players in diplomacy’ then carry out these tasks (Ibid. 4). I

will limit this discussion to the difference between official and unofficial types of representatives because it is the most helpful when using a multi-track framework of diplomacy. I will limit the discussion on broad versus narrow conceptions for the same reason. The distinction between official and unofficial diplomacy naturally entails elements of broad and narrow notions of diplomacy but the discussion in Jönsson (2002a), among others, is not needed in order to answer the research question. Finally, in the literature on confidence-building measures (CBMs), a distinction is made between military and non-military varieties. According to Qadeem (2003:160-1) non-military CBMs usually focus on human interaction. Because I only look at cricket, which is a purely non-military CBM, I will exclude the military versus non-military CBM discussion from the theory chapter.

Finally, there is also the question of how comparable India and Pakistan are as countries. An important distinction between the two is that India is a full-fledged participatory democracy with a secular basis, whereas Pakistan was founded on the basis of Muslim identity, and the country has more often than not been ruled by military regimes (Paul, 2005:19). These domestic settings will obviously have consequences for the respective citizenry's voice on matters of war and peace, and possibly for the success of cricket diplomacy.

2.1.2 Process Tracing

Process tracing is a part of the case study approach. It is well suited to 'testing theories in a world marked by multiple interaction effects' (George & Bennett, 2004:206). The India-Pakistan case is definitely a case marked by such multiplicity, and process tracing will therefore be employed in later chapters in order to uncover the complexities of Indo-Pakistani relations and cricket diplomacy. Furthermore, process tracing is considered an 'indispensable tool for theory testing and theory development not only because it generates numerous observations within a case, but because these observations must be linked in particular ways to constitute an explanation of the case' (Ibid. 207).

Process tracing in this case will involve looking at the cricketing and political relationships between India and Pakistan in the time period stretching from the birth of the term cricket diplomacy in 1987, and until 2007. In short, the process tracing method attempts to identify the intervening causal process – the causal chain and mechanism – between an independent variable and the outcome of the dependent variable (George & Bennett, 2004: 206). In other words, process tracing in the cricket diplomacy case involves searching for the intervening factors between an initial given situation in India-Pakistan relations, and whether it has been successful or not. Process tracing will according to King, Keohane and Verba (1994:227) then involve searching for evidence about the political decisional process by which the outcome was produced.

2.1.3 Sources

Two problems have been most important when it comes to the collection of theory and data. On the one hand, there is the aforementioned lack of research in the field of sport and politics. On the other, the recent nature of the peace process has provided its own set of challenges. My sources have therefore mainly consisted of two types. First, a literary review of different books has provided most of the content for the background and theory chapters, and a few books have even traced the recent cricket diplomacy. Second, newspaper and journal articles, UN documents and Internet sources have provided the additional bulk of collected data. Such sources have been necessary because many of the developments in the India-Pakistan relationship are so recent that they have only been covered by the different news media. In addition, I have used interviews conducted by Crick (2006).

Language has proved no barrier, as all the sources I have consulted have been in English. Furthermore, English is commonly spoken across South Asia, so not much can get lost in translation. Another potential pitfall is grasping the cultural differences between India and Pakistan on the one hand and Norway on the other, both when it comes to understanding the region and cricket. I have lived and travelled extensively in South

Asia, providing me with a basic understanding of South Asian culture. As for cricket, a marginal sport in Norway, time spent in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka has nourished both my interest in the sport and equipped me with some modest knowledge necessary to understand the sport and to consider its impact in the region.

2.2 Case Studies and Generalization

Cricket diplomacy is one of a limited number of cases of sport diplomacy, a practice with many varieties nonetheless. That makes the study of sport diplomacy relatively manageable, but the limited number of cases raises questions about generalization. More to the point, it raises the question of whether just the one case of cricket diplomacy is good enough for generalizing the results to other cases, and how applicable the results presented in this thesis will be to other cases of sport diplomacy?

Punch (2005:146) argues that ‘whether a case study should even seek to generalize, and claim to be representative, depends on the context and purposes of the particular object.’ He suggests two main ways that a case study can produce results that at least suggest generalizability: by conceptualizing, and by developing propositions. Based on the case studied, it is possible to put forward one or more propositions, which links concepts or factors within the case. These can then be asserted for their applicability and transferability to other situations. What is highlighted is the uniqueness of the case studied, and what would be common. Whether the results from my discussion on the success of cricket diplomacy are representative and applicable to other cases of sport diplomacy poses one such challenge. However, in both instances mentioned by Punch, the findings from a case study can be put forward as being potentially applicable to other cases.

Case explanations must in any case always be considered to be of a provisional character (George & Bennett, 2004:90). Therefore, the theoretical conclusions drawn from case study findings will also be provisional. Any propositions posed in this thesis will not be proven facts, but may provide material for future research.

3.0 Circling in Sport Diplomacy

In this chapter I will discuss the relationship between sport and diplomacy. Sport diplomacy has not been established firmly within academic literature on diplomacy, this will therefore be addressed in coming sections. To discuss sport diplomacy implies taking into account how sport and politics are connected, something to which I will turn the attention to first. Then I will move on to give an account of diplomacy, before I commence with the discussion of sport diplomacy. Combined, this will in addition to establishing sport diplomacy as a part of diplomacy theory, provide the framework for discussing the research questions in later chapters in relation to the case of cricket diplomacy.

3.1 Sport and International Relations

Cricket diplomacy is an example of how sport plays a role in relations between states. The relationship between sport and politics as a subject for research has nevertheless long been neglected, especially in theory on International Relations (Levermore & Budd, 2004:6). However, it is no longer necessary to justify the academic study of sport, according to Allison (2000:1). Houlihan (in Beacom, 2000:4) adds to the argument by referring to the intertwining of sport and politics at different levels, and identifies as themes for discussion sport as a vehicle for diplomacy, nation building and access into the international arena. In the following paragraphs, I will illustrate why sport and politics is an important field of study, because of sport's enduring and powerful symbolic value, and it's potential for creating a national identity, thus constituting a potentially powerful diplomatic tool.

Sports are more than just reflections of society. They can also 'create interests, principles and meanings which do not exist if there is no sport and which have an effect on other aspects of society' (Allison, 2000:54). Sport is even to some 'able to sum up life, able to strip it bare and put it under a drama-filled magnifying glass' (Bhattacharya, 2005:17). General definitions emphasize that 'sports are institutionalized competitive

activities that involve rigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by participants motivated by internal and external rewards' (Coakley, 2004:21). Sport is therefore inherently competitive, and could as Orwell so pessimistically put it amount to 'war minus the shooting.' On the other hand, Ronald Reagan once remarked regarding the US-Soviet relationship that 'if we must compete, let it be on the playing fields and not the battlefield,' suggesting more sporting exchanges in the process (Saunders, 1991:55). Furthermore, it is possible to point to a number of significant factors that make sport a potential vehicle for political action, or at least link sporting institutions to political processes, including: the club as a point of congregation for communities; the way in which rivalries enhance ideas of difference; how teams mark out boundaries of who belongs and who is 'other'; politicians' opportunities to exploit the successes and/or failures of teams as symbols of community aspiration; and, that 'imagined communities' become more real, visible and tangible (Dimeo, 2003:379-380). Cricket in India and Pakistan certainly has involved several of these factors to make it a potential and actual vehicle for political action.

Sport and politics have as abovementioned intersected in several ways (Houlihan, 2004:213).² States have used sport principally in two ways: 'to sell themselves and enhance their image and to penalize international behaviour of which they disapprove' (Allison & Monnington, 2002:107). Sport and sporting events have been 'used to propagate everything: from fascist regimes to multi-national commercial interests; from national identities to racial stereotypes; from colonialism to cultural imperialism' (Mills, 2005:3). Government involvement in sport is often linked to promoting the prestige and power of a group community or nation, for example through the participation in or holding of international sporting events. In that respect, sport can be used solely for the promotion of individual state interests, or specific foreign policy goals, in the way certain Eastern Bloc countries sought to use sport in order to assert the superiority of their

² Houlihan (2004:215-219) lists a number of modern forms of policy intervention in sport, both for domestic purposes and on the international stage. I have focused on those forms directly connected to state-to-state relations.

ideology, or to claim regional or global diplomatic leadership. Similarly, Francoist Spain used football both as ‘a diversion from reality and a medium to unite the nation behind the regime,’ as well as a medium to ‘reintegrate the regime into the international community,’ and in Péronist Argentina, football was exploited to ‘mobilize the masses support and divert their attention from the regime’s less pleasant aspects’ (Martin, 2004:215-216). Similarly, sport is also seen in many instances as promoting a sense of identity, belonging and unity, which becomes especially important for governments with diverse populations (Coakley, 2004:449-450), as is the case in India and Pakistan.

3.1.1 Sport, Symbols, Identity and Nationalism

The one aspect of politics that has been perhaps singularly most affected by sport is nationalism and national identities (Sengupta, 2004:586). Sport occupies an important role in relations between people and nations and it has been identified as ‘a very prominent social institution in almost every society because it combines the characteristics found in any institution with a unique appeal only duplicated by, perhaps, religion’ (Frey & Eitzen, 1991:503). In a similar vein, the relationship between sport and national identity has been described as being ‘complex and multifaceted’ (Smith & Porter, 2004:1). Sports have the ability above all to tell us about who we are, and even who we want to be, and as for promoting a sense of national identity, Sengupta (2004:585) claims that ‘sports bring people and nations together’ as they create a shared language and shared passions. International Relations theory has as mentioned earlier tended to pay little attention to sport, but this is true also for theoretical accounts of nationalism (Allison, 2004:351). Nonetheless, sport has an important symbolic function as carrier of national prestige and unity. In addition, the fact that some sports attract a substantial following has the implication that ‘the spectator’s participation converts the game into a spectacle rather than simply a contest between active participants, meaning that the significance of defeat on the field can reverberate far beyond the confines of the pitch or stadium’ (Mills, 2005:3).

Sport takes on symbolic value at different levels. Individuals identify themselves with a team and its individual players, as are cities and regions symbolized by 'their' teams. At the same time, sport also provides a 'number of emotionally charged occasions for citizens to be made aware of and express their common identity within the nation' (Houlihan, 2000:86). In this way, the FC Barcelona football players are not only the point of identification for many an inhabitant of the city of Barcelona, but the team is also a symbol for the uniqueness, and history of opposition towards the old Franco regime, of the region of Catalonia (Foer, 2004:190). More important still is the fact that the national team carries great symbolic value as a metaphor for the nation (Houlihan, 2000:87). Thus, its fate is linked to the fate of the national team since 'athletic prowess is equated with the health of the nation' (Carter, 1999:583). Mills (2005:3) extends on this line of thought, arguing that 'victory at sporting events can be used to carry triumphal messages about the superiority of the group represented by the winning competitors, or more subtle ideas about the benefits of a certain way of life or mode of behaviour.' The national teams in cricket in both India and Pakistan can be said to carry this symbolic value, as they also play the role of national unifier to perfection (Dasgupta, 2004:576).

A symbol, according to Kaufmann (2001:16), is an 'emotionally charged shorthand reference to a myth,' and a myth is 'a belief held in common by a large group of people that gives events and actions a particular meaning.' Some sports it would seem are more effective than others in serving as cultural signifiers of national identity (Smith & Porter, 2004:3). This is evident from the myriad of rivalries in the world of football, cricket, and other sports. One prominent example of sporting rivalry with this kind of symbolic value is known as the 'Old Firm,' the derby matches played between top Scottish football teams Glasgow Celtic and Glasgow Rangers. Their rivalry represents something more than 'the enmity of proximity,' it contains strong sectarian overtones as well as the two clubs traditionally are considered Catholic and Protestant, respectively (Foer, 2004:35).

Symbolic value is inextricably linked to the fact that national self-esteem and prestige can be achieved through sporting success. In many cases, in the 'quest to maintain legitimacy, political officials and ruling government parties may use sports'

(Coakley, 2004:452). Prestige that can be exploited by politicians domestically and abroad can come cheaply, but that does not prevent it from reaping significant benefits. On the other hand, if politicians associate themselves too closely with sports this can have damaging consequences as well. It can result in embarrassment for the politician, bringing identification with failure connected to sporting defeat, evidence of a lack of leadership skills, and at worst gross incompetence (Allison & Monnington, 2002:126-129). Although politicians may be unwilling to risk reputation and status on an activity they are increasingly unable to control, party officials have been known to identify with sports to reap the possible benefits of sporting success. This has also been an aspect in the case of the cricketing rivalry between India and Pakistan, exemplified by the two most popular politicians of the Indian Congress Party travelling to Pakistan to attend the Test series between the two neighbouring countries in 2004, just a few months before the parliamentary elections in their home country (Stoddart, 2005).

Both India and Pakistan are internally divided countries along lines of religion as well as ethnicity. Eriksen (1991:191) points out that virtually every modern nation-state is ethnically divided to a greater or lesser extent, thus emphasizing the importance of developing a set of unifying national symbols. As mentioned, perceptions of the symbolic value of sport are shared by individuals and groups in relation to individual players and club teams. Sport can also be viewed as representing common symbols for the population at the national level as well. Sport in this context is considered to be an important part of the images of nations and states (Allison & Monnington, 2002:106). Similarly, Allison (2004:351) argues that sport can act in a 'catalytic way with respect to nationalism,' while Houlihan (2000:88) writes that 'sport, and particularly elite sport, is used to provide the focus for the definition of national identity.' As with many sports, though, the expression of nationality lies more in the choice of a specific sport than in the support of a specific team. It follows that specific sports can be, and has indeed been, used to build a sense of national identity and national unity. Cricket has been this sport in the case of India and Pakistan.

Sport's potential for promoting national unity involves the notion that sport in general, or one sport in particular such as cricket, 'creates or fosters a sense of nationhood,' which is important, 'not least because international competition generates a seemingly endless number of occasions when nations are embodied in something manifestly real and visible' (Smith & Porter, 2004:1). Particular sports can in this way be considered to 'exemplify the spirit of a nation' (Allison, 2004:348). This sense of identification is at the core of the relationship between sport and nationalism. It follows that there can be a 'collective sense of national humiliation' when the national team is defeated. The defeat is taken to reflect the state of the nation as a whole apart from sport, and as mentioned earlier, even potentially on the standing of the nation's government and politicians (Allison, 2004:345).

On the other hand, sports can provide a 'healthy outlet to nationalism' if, even in defeat, the sporting heroes of other countries are celebrated and if the achievements of these athletes contribute to the replacement of dominant stereotypes on both sides (Goldberg, 2000:66). The nationalist sentiments attached to cricket in India and Pakistan has nonetheless mostly made the game resemble a battlefield between India and Pakistan. This was at least the situation up until the resumption of bilateral test matches between the two countries in 2004. Recently, cricket has proved itself to have a conflict-dampening effect, and if this effect prevails, then a sport with such a powerful symbolic value attached to the national team, can be a very valuable diplomatic tool indeed.

3.2 Diplomacy

The art and practice of diplomacy is considered an institution 'as old as social history' (Eban, 1983:332), and 'as old as the history of mankind' itself (Eban, 1998:27). It emerged from 'the related problems of settling disputes peacefully before they led to blows and of bringing about an end to war,' which have occupied the minds of statesmen 'since the days of Nineveh and Tyre' (Zartman & Berman, 1982:vii). Diplomacy has been characterized as 'the engine room of international relations,' or as the 'master-institution'

(Jönsson, 2002a:212). Furthermore, diplomacy has been described as ‘an essential condition for the existence of a functioning society of states,’ and in the absence of ‘this continuing and pervasive activity, international life as we know it would simply be impossible’ (Melissen, 1999:xiv).

Literature on diplomacy provides an ‘abundance of taxonomies’ and is ‘generally long on typologies’ (Jönsson, 2002a:215). Diplomacy is in essence, though, ‘about the framework in which international relations take place, the medium that is both a necessary condition, and the lubricant, of international politics’ (Melissen, 1999:xvii). The views and definitions of what diplomacy actually constitutes are numerous, and ‘the study of diplomacy displays a variety of conceptualizations rather than scholarly consensus.’ Some definitions are vague and virtually all-encompassing when it comes to relations between states, whereas others are concerned with specific aspects of diplomatic practice or diplomatic method. Thus, ‘the very definition of diplomacy is a bone of contention’ (Jönsson, 2002a:213). Melissen (1999:xvii) argues that a helpful way of conceptualizing diplomacy is to ‘centre its definition around what is traditionally seen as its most important operational functions.’ In short, diplomacy can better be approached through a ‘consideration of its usages, rather than by an attempt to assert or capture a precise, fixed, or authoritative meaning’ (Sharp, 2004a:211).

3.2.1 Representation and Communication

In order to grasp the essence of diplomacy and obtain a workable definition, some writers have moved beyond restricting the concept to specific practices and specific actors, to an understanding of diplomacy in terms of generic concepts, such as representation and communication (Jönsson, 2002a:213). Melissen (1999:xvii) defines diplomacy as ‘not limited to certain purposes, performed by a particular type of agent, or centred around only one of its multiple functions,’ rather it is ‘the mechanism of representation, communication and negotiation through which states and other international actors conduct their business.’ Similarly, Jönsson and Hall (2004:396) points

out that diplomacy is often defined in terms of communication and that for many ‘communication is the essence of diplomacy,’ whereas Sharp (2004a:221) claims that ‘diplomacy is much more about representation than either diplomats or those who study them have yet realized.’ Thus, diplomacy can be defined as a system of representation and communication. This definition provides the best starting point for incorporating sport diplomacy into the main framework of diplomatic thought, something that I will return to in following sections.

Representation, in the sense of ‘acting on behalf of,’ is recognized by most observers as a key function of diplomacy (Jönsson, 2002a:213), and viewing diplomacy in representational terms can provide a richer understanding of what diplomats do (Sharp, 2004a:225). Some claim that diplomacy is the conduct of international relations by representatives who are official agents (Bull, 2004:76). However, this view has been more or less abandoned in favour of a broader definition of who can be classified as diplomatic representatives. Sharp (2004a:222) argues that if instead of equating diplomacy with foreign policy, official agents, and the modern state system, for an understanding of it in terms of representation, then ‘both the practice and context should be seen as responses to a common problem of living separately and wanting to do so, while having to conduct relations with other.’

States establish and maintain representation abroad for four main reasons (Barston 1997:18). First, representation is ‘part of the process of either achieving statehood and identity in international relations,’ or, for established states, ‘essential to being considered a power in the international system.’ Second, representation is an important source of contact with other states, enabling a state to participate in international discourse. Third, embassies are ‘the agencies for promoting, explaining or defending the interests and policies of a country.’ Finally, embassies and other diplomatic representations are a ‘means of acquiring continuous information.’ In addition, states have other representative offices as well, which include development corporations, investment agencies, trade and tourist offices, as well as para-statal agencies such as banks, airlines and large corporations (Ibid. 22). Taking into account these ‘new’ diplomatic actors of

contemporary international relations is an obvious extension when adopting an approach of viewing diplomacy in terms of representation, according to Sharp (2004a:226). Athletes and sport officials can also be added to the list of new diplomatic actors, as in the case of Indian and Pakistani cricket officials and players.

Morgenthau (2004:64) argues that the diplomatic representative fulfils three basic functions of representation for his government – symbolic, legal, and political. The diplomat is first of all the symbolic representative of his or hers country. Diplomatic representatives do not act for themselves as individuals, but symbolically on behalf of their countries. This becomes especially important when considering new diplomatic actors such as sport officials or athletes. The diplomat can also act as a legal representative, in the sense that official agents such as ambassadors can act on behalf of the home government to the extent the home government permits. Finally, the diplomat can to a large extent contribute to the shaping of the foreign policy his country. This was mostly attributed to ‘old’ diplomatic actors, the professional diplomats, but new diplomatic actors such as NGOs or corporations can clearly have an impact on a country’s foreign policy on certain areas. Regardless of who the representatives are, the diplomatic actors and the diplomatic system as such ‘continue to derive their authority from the claim that they represent sovereign states in their relations with one another’ (Sharp, 2004b:58).

Diplomacy, in addition to being a system of representation, is also a system of communication (Jönsson, 2002a:213). Diplomacy facilitates communication between the political leaders of states and other entities in world politics. Bull (2004:81) argues that ‘without communication there could be no international society, nor any international system at all.’ Thus, ‘the importance of communication between states which have interests, of one sort or another, in common is shown by the inconvenience which ensues if diplomatic relations are broken off’ (James, 2004:202-203). Diplomacy can in this sense be understood as ‘a regulated process of communication’ (Jönsson, 2002a:214). Communication is considered part of the essence of diplomacy in the same way ‘blood is to the human body’ (Jönsson & Hall, 2004:396). In short, diplomacy exists whenever ‘there are boundaries for identity and those boundaries of identity are crossed’ (Ibid. 397),

through communication. In the case of Indo-Pakistani cricket, the ‘boundaries for identity’ are certainly present, and the game provides opportunities for crossing these boundaries.

One important part of the diplomatic communication process is signalling. Jönsson & Hall (2004:399-405) argue that ‘signalling is as essential to diplomacy as to a busy airport.’ However, there is much more room for ambiguity in diplomatic signalling. There are several reasons for sending ambiguous signals, the arguably most important being the need for communication between political entities, while at the same time wanting to conceal vital information. In addition, ‘ambiguity may be a deliberate means to retain flexibility and make signals disclaimable.’ In sum, Jönsson & Hall conclude, ‘the tension between the need for clarity and the incentives for ambiguity impels diplomats to spend much time and effort on the formulation and interpretation of signals.’ It should be added that not all signalling necessarily is intentional. Even unconscious, non-intentional behaviour or non-behaviour can convey signals in diplomatic settings, as long as there are others who perceive and interpret this form of communication. In protracted conflicts such as between India and Pakistan, this ambiguity provides both leeway in bilateral dealings, but at the same time it can cause misunderstandings. Thus, it is not only the written and spoken word that matters, but also factors such as the choice and timing of venue for meetings, cricket matches, and so on.³

3.2.2 The Advent of ‘Track Diplomacy’

Conceptualizing diplomacy necessitates the identification of the different levels at which representation and communication is played out. The evolution of diplomacy means that what the objectives of diplomatic activity were and who likely diplomats

³ ‘Public Diplomacy’ has become a buzzword among diplomacy theorists, and can be defined as including ‘the efforts by the government of one state to influence public or elite opinion of another state for the purpose of persuading these foreign publics to regard favourably its policies, ideals, and ideas,’ thus it is all about communicating with the ‘demos’ (Jönsson & Hall, 2004:406). Although cricket diplomacy can be viewed as a form of public diplomacy, I will not discuss public diplomacy in this thesis.

would be, have been subject to constant change (Langhorne, 2004:331). ‘Modern’ diplomacy is no longer only considered in terms of relations between states, but ‘must now take account of wider relationships and modes of dialogue’ (Wiseman, 2004:36). As a result, it has ‘become commonplace to note the increasing role of non-state entities in the functioning of the international community’ (Langhorne, 2004:337). To summarize, the conduct of diplomacy has long been identified with diffusion, that is to say ‘the development of a multiplicity of actors and channels in the conduct of external relations’ (Hocking, 1999:26).

The development of a multiplicity of actors and channels has happened in recognition of the fact that ‘individuals and groups other than those whose formal roles are to make peace, can do something to facilitate the peace process’ (Byrne & Keashley, 2000:112). Lederach (2001:843) promotes what he terms a ‘comprehensive framework for peace-building.’ This is an integrated holistic peace-building approach, which includes efforts at different levels of diplomacy, or diplomatic tracks. Such systems of multiple diplomatic tracks can bring together various groups of people that all have their separate approaches to peace-building, which in turn can affect a wider-ranging effort towards reducing conflict (Byrne & Keashley, 2000:104). Most commonly, a three-track paradigm is applied.⁴

These tracks can be described as the following: track-one diplomacy ‘pertains to diplomatic efforts to resolve conflicts through official channels of government,’ thus it involves officially sanctioned dialogue (Behera, 2002:212); track-two diplomacy entails a kind of ‘unofficial, informal interaction between members of adversary groups or nations’ to help resolve their conflict (Montville, 1991:162). Thus, it involves a process of unofficial or informal dialogue between disputing parties, often connected to government agenda and involving government officials or influential citizens who have access to their

⁴ Diamond and McDonald (in Byrne & Keashley, 2000:98) have devised a multi-track paradigm of diplomacy consisting of nine tracks, where they highlight ‘the variety of individuals, activities, institutions and communities that are necessary for building a sustainable constructive peace.’ The three-track paradigm used in this thesis is the most common, though, and Diamond and McDonald’s nine tracks could easily be fitted to the three-track approach.

respective governments (Behera, 2002:212; Waslekar, 1995:1); finally, track-three diplomacy involves grass roots groups that are explicitly separate from governments. Volkan (1991:1-13) has argued that this diffusion of diplomacy into separate tracks entails a distinction between official and unofficial diplomacy where track-one, official diplomacy includes the classic tasks of diplomacy, such as formal representation in the form of ambassadors and accredited diplomatic representatives. Unofficial, track-two and track-three diplomacy, on the other hand, basically denotes the activities in international relationships of individuals who are not official agents or diplomatic professionals. An objective in any diplomatic process between countries objective is to re-establish contact and communication between peoples long separated by conflict (Behera, 2002:215). Unofficial diplomats such as academics or athletes, have a role to play in building bridges between people and bringing people together to interact in 'processes that address the dynamic of the relationship between parties and deal with perceptions, distrust and fears' (Chigas, 2003). These unofficial diplomats thus act as catalysts in the overall relationship between opposing parties.

Nevertheless, track-two and track-three processes cannot 'completely insulate themselves from the political environment in which they are taking place' (Ibid.). Thus, track-two and track-three diplomacy can be considered as complementing and working in conjunction with official, track-one processes, rather than independently or as substitutes of the latter. Multi-track diplomacy encompasses a broad scope of activities such as dialogue groups, citizen exchange, travel and visit activities, and using the media (Rouhana, 1999:113). The list is not exhaustive, and sport-related processes can easily be added as track-two and track-three processes. In sum, such activities seek to 'promote an environment in a political community, through the education of public opinion, that would make it safer for political leaders to take risks for peace' (Montville, 1991:163). This means that initiatives such as the above are backing up the efforts of state leaders and government officials who conduct track-one negotiations. Cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan can be characterized as exactly such an effort, something that will be examined in later chapters. The presupposition of track-two and track-three diplomacy is

precisely that peace must be built from the bottom-up as well as from top-down, and that building social capital is instrumental for attaining peace (Chigas, 2003).

Table 3.1 provides a categorization of the discussion so far concerning the diffusion of diplomacy from a set of traditional practices to wider ranging modes of representation and communication, as well as at what diplomatic level these practices take place. Sport diplomacy can be placed in the category of ‘new’ conceptions of diplomacy, taking place at the track-two and track-three process levels, whereas classic diplomacy involves officially sanctioned representatives and track-one level communication processes.

Table 3.1 Classification of Diplomacy

	Track-one level process	Track-two and track-three level process
‘Old’ conceptions of representation and communication	Classic diplomacy	
‘New’ conceptions of representation and communication		Sport diplomacy

3.2.3 Confidence-Building Measures

The goal of track-two and track-three diplomacy is to ‘prevent or resolve conflicts, or build confidence between the polities they represent’ (Waslekar, 1995:1). In other words, the ‘prerequisite for building peace is developing confidence’ (Qadeem, 2003:159). Man has known conflict ever since recorded history and every ‘individual, religion, culture, and nation state has known and experienced conflict in one form or the other’ (Siddiqi, 2003:34). Traditionally, according to Ahmar (2003:16), ‘the task of conflict resolution has been seen as helping parties who perceive their situation zero-sum to re-perceive it as non-zero-sum conflict, and then to assist parties to prove in the positive

sum direction.’ Rauf (2005:179) argues similarly that confidence-building primarily is a psychological process that involves a fundamental shift in decision-makers beliefs from a basic assumption of hostile intentions to one of non-hostile intentions.

Confidence-building measures (CBMs) therefore occupy an important part in multi-track diplomacy efforts of conflict resolution, as they aim to reduce anxiety and hostility by making the parties’ behaviour more predictable. A constructive definition is provided by Akhtar (2003:49) who says that ‘CBMs can be defined as those bilateral or multilateral measures that help build confidence, arrest the undesired drift towards open hostilities, reduce tensions and encourage adversaries to make contact for negotiations without taxing operative policy pursuits.’ In sum, the intention behind the use of CBMs is broadly speaking to create an environment that is conducive to the initiation of any peace process (Ibid.47). This involves practical measures involving diplomatic representatives to increase openness and communication, to create mutual understanding and break down mistrust between conflicting parties. Representatives of individual governments, non-state actors, third parties such as the UN, regional organizations such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), or other states, can initiate these measures (Maiese, 2003). In every part of the world, CBMs have been used as a starting point for the restoration of trust between nations and groups (Chari, 2002:237). In the South Asian context, too, a number of CBMs have been put in place over the years, with a history of varying results. Most recently, cricket diplomacy has been used to build confidence.

Although confidence-building measures can bring about positive change and contribute to improving relations, there are also those who criticize the effectiveness of these measures. Questions have been raised by some as to whether it is possible to envision CBMs in ‘situations characterized by highly competitive, extremely adversarial political relationships between or among states’ (Rauf, 2005:176). Furthermore, even if CBMs are applied, another line of criticism against the confidence-building paradigm states that these measures are unable to bring about dramatic breakthroughs over the more underlying issues often at the heart of conflicts, such as the Kashmir issue in the India-

Pakistan case (Behera, 2002:226). Even though CBMs are designed as measures to reduce tension and mistrust, critics hold that if they are not implemented fully or not taken seriously, that aim can be negated and even add to the already existing suspicion and hostility (Qadeem, 2003:162-163). This has led some to conclude that CBMs have a better chance of succeeding in times of relative peaceful relations rather than during periods of heightened tensions (Chari, 2002:242).

The timing of track diplomacy and implementation of CBMs is therefore critical to their success (Rauf, 2005:180). CBMs can be helpful at any stage of a peace process in light of their capacity to reduce tension, limit further escalation and build confidence. Pursued too soon, however, the result may well be disappointingly marginal, or even dangerous. By waiting too long, on the other hand, the implementation of CBMs will miss the window during which it could have had a positive impact on the evolution of relations between enemies. Well-timed, such efforts can contribute to the creation of what can be termed ‘conversational space’ (Goldberg, 2000:66), an essential ingredient for conflict resolution and rapprochement between belligerents. This conversational space can if it has a large enough impact on both leaders and citizens help create a momentum for peace, which could survive periods of worsening relations. If leaders make the decision to initiate negotiations, and both populations’ collective psyche are in the right mindset, this can tap a substantial peace potential and bring about the abovementioned momentum for peace through the use of the appropriate representatives and channels of communication. Whether the timing of CBMs comes down to skilful planning or plain luck may not always be that obvious, though. In any case, the introduction of CBMs at the right time in a process of rapprochement can make or break the opportunities for peace, something that is apparent when discussing whether cricket diplomacy has been successful or not.

3.3 Sport Diplomacy

Diplomacy has been defined as a system of *representation* and *communication*, and this holds for sport diplomacy as well. Athletes and sport officials act as symbolic representatives of their home countries. Sport carries great potential as point of identification, and national teams are often considered to be representing the ideals, interests and image of a state. In addition, the fate of a nation is often related to the national team's failure or success. Hence, when cricket players from India and Pakistan put on their national team colours, they not only represent themselves, but carry the expectations of millions of Indians and Pakistanis onto the playing field.

Similarly, sport provides channels for communication. At one level, the athletes and officials communicate directly with one another on and off the field. At the same time, spectator and fans from both sides get an opportunity to meet and talk, to bridge differences and foster mutual understanding. In diplomatic parlance, this is referred to as track-two and track-three diplomacy. Sport is therefore a vehicle for diplomacy, one of the ways in which sport and politics intertwine. In order to discuss the use of sport as a diplomatic tool – sport diplomacy – it must be placed within the framework of mainstream diplomacy theory. The main purpose of diplomacy is 'to enable states to secure the objectives of their foreign policies without resort to force, propaganda, or law' (Berridge, 2002:1), but the evolving nature of diplomacy, meaning that there are shifts from narrow to broader definitions, is a constant theme in diplomatic literature. 'Modern' diplomacy as such is characterized by a diffusion of diplomatic practice and diplomatic activities. A number of 'new' actors have entered the diplomatic arena in their own right. Sport has been introduced to the arena through the involvement of athletes, sport officials, national sport federations, and international sport organizations such as FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) and the IOC (International Olympic Committee), among others. Indeed, Coakley (2004:454) has made the point that 'achieving peace and friendship among nations has been a longstanding ideal underlying international sports,' whereas Levermore (2004:17) states that 'many writers argue that sport actually eases

tensions between contestants and competitors in the international arena, while also unifying often disparate sets of people within a state.’

The links between sport and diplomacy can be related to ‘the timeless essence of diplomacy.’ Three dimensions stand out as central to diplomatic activities: representation, communication and the reproduction international society. Diplomats represent their states or other entities, both by acting on their behalf and as symbols of these. Communication, furthermore, is a precondition for the existence of international relations (Jönsson, 2002b:23). Representation and communication are as mentioned the two basic tenets of any understanding of diplomacy. Sport diplomacy involves both representation and communication, and has the ability to create ‘conversational space.’ Opening of conversational space in protracted conflicts is essential for rapprochement.

3.3.1 Representation and Communication

Diplomacy is a system of representation and communication, and diplomats are first and foremost symbolic representatives acting on behalf of their countries. Sharp (2004b:58) have observed that diplomats derive their autonomy from the claim that they represent sovereign countries. Thus, athletes as sporting ambassadors, act as representatives on behalf of their countries. Particular sports can be considered as representing common symbols for nation as a whole, and as such athletes and sport officials can be placed in the category of symbolic representation. When an athlete puts on the shirt of the national team, he no longer acts only on his behalf, but also carries the hopes and expectations of an entire nation on his shoulders. In every sporting contest, world championship or Olympic game, the athletes represent their respective home countries (Jönsson, 2002b:24). Where a certain sport – such as cricket in India and Pakistan – occupies a pivotal role in notions about national pride and national unity, the athletes and officials of the sport in question make for particularly relevant diplomatic representatives.

Moreover, the contact points made available through sporting contests and sport exchanges provide opportunities for communication and public diplomacy. By creating a sense of shared purpose and common bonds, and by providing venues for people from opposing sides in a conflict to meet, sport can be used to build confidence, and it has been the hope that sports would open communication lines between people and leaders from many countries, thereby contribute to highlighting the shared interests among people from different nations, and demonstrate that friendly international relationships are possible, as well as foster the cultural understanding needed to eliminate the use of national stereotypes (Coakley, 2004:455). The choice of sports in the diplomatic opening between the United States and China in the 1970s – which is elaborated on below – illustrates the use of a constructive aspect of diplomatic communication (Jönsson, 2002b:26). Nelson Mandela, speaking as South African President during a visit to Great Britain in 1996, observed that ‘sport is probably the most effective means of communication in the modern world, bypassing both verbal and written communication and reaching directly out to billions of people worldwide’ (Beck, 2004:77). In sum, sport diplomacy is a system of representation and communication.

3.3.2 Sport as Track-two and Track-three diplomacy

Sport diplomacy is a more recent addition to the diplomatic tool kit, and it provides an unofficial route for discussing official business by providing a ‘low-risk testing ground for estimating the public’s reaction to another country and, ultimately, for moving toward rapprochement’ (Goldberg, 2000:67). According to DeLay (1999) it is the diplomatic amateurism of the sport’s most visible actors – athletes and sport officials – that has given sport diplomacy its enduring power. Athletes and officials are seen as non-threatening because ‘they are not assigned a political agenda and are limited in their capacity to engage in diplomatic repartee.’ The rationale for adding sport to the diplomatic toolbox can be argued for other reasons as well. First, a successful national team is often the focus of attention in both national as well as international media. Second, as already mentioned,

sport functions as an important symbol of national self-esteem and prestige. And, finally, sport is considered a low-cost alternative since a national team and the media attention surrounding it is readily available to government and state leaders without much cost. According to Houlihan (2004:217), the primary attraction to governments in using sport as a diplomatic tool lies precisely in this combination of high visibility and low cost. Thus, sport diplomacy can be considered as being played out on the track-two and track-three levels of diplomatic processes.

It is evident that a 'transformation of diplomatic practice has taken place, which has seen the dissipation of diplomatic activity across a much wider range of activities' (Beacom, 2000:14). Different applications of sport diplomacy have accordingly ranged over a variety of positive and negative sanctions. On the one hand, it has been used to maintain good relations between neighbours and allies. The Commonwealth Games, organized to maintain close relations between the United Kingdom and her former colonies, is an example of this. On the other hand, sport diplomacy has been used as a means of voicing disapproval of states' actions. Typically, this has been achieved through attempting to isolate states from international competition, or by boycotting particular sporting events. The most famous example of the latter is the American-led boycott of the 1980 Summer Olympic Games held in Moscow, following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 (Houlihan, 2004: 217). The absence of the United States and many of its allies from the Moscow Games was expectedly followed by a Soviet-led boycott of the 1984 Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles (Goldberg, 2000:65). At the other opposite, sport can also be used as an effective vehicle for signalling the re-admission of a state into the international community, illustrated by the hosting of the 1964 Olympic Games in Tokyo which marked Japan's return to diplomatic respectability.

In addition, one of the most significant applications of sport as a diplomatic tool is when used as a device for building closer relationships between enemies. This often achieved through the use of sport exchanges, the most famous example to date being the ping-pong diplomacy between China and the United States in the early 1970s. Cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan also falls into this category. Sport diplomacy has

gained attention because athletics is considered to ‘appeal to young people and can bring people together despite differences of region, race or religion’ (Walker, 2006). Thus, exchanges of sports teams or individual athletes between countries serve an important function as they can help break down stereotypes, increase understanding between conflicting parties, and confine battles to the playing field instead of the battlefield (Goldberg, 2000:63).

The most important reason why sport exchanges work is that sports fans everywhere can appreciate and admire the talent and abilities of athletes, both home and abroad. Sport is in that respect seen as ‘the world’s common language’ (Goldberg, 2000:65). Pakistanis and Indians alike have an appreciation of what it takes to reach the level of performance shown by their superstars of cricket. This can explain, for example, the standing ovations received by Pakistani cricketers in India, and Indian cricketers in Pakistan, in recent years. Goldberg (2000:66) claims that as a result of this commonality, sport can by way of communication help to create ‘conversational space.’ At the people-to-people level, this space helps remind those involved that they are more or less all the same by breaking down aforementioned stereotypes. This means that in a sense ‘people have to learn to play together before they can work together’ (Chenabi, 2004:243). Conversational space, as taken to mean here, takes on perhaps even greater importance when moving from the unofficial track-two and track-three level processes, to the track-one government-level arena, as leaders from India and Pakistan have had the opportunity to meet and explore the possibility for opening talks under the pretext of watching cricket.

3.3.3 Cricket as a Confidence-Building Measure

South Asia as a region is characterized by the highly competitive and extremely adversarial political relationship between India and Pakistan (Rauf, 2005:175). Their relationship constitutes what some have called ‘an archetype for an enduring rivalry’ (Geller, 2005:80). Enduring rivalries are often characterized by zero-sum perspectives, which make it hard for the opposing sides to make concessions or reach any

binding agreements (Paul, 2005:4). This tense situation has been further exacerbated in recent years by both nations obtaining nuclear power status. When there exists a relationship such as this, defined by persistent antagonism and distrust, developing confidence between the parties is a precondition for building peace (Qadeem, 2003:159). Thus, confidence-building measures should play – and has indeed done so – an important part in the diplomatic relations between India and Pakistan.

The full list of CBMs that have been in place for some time or another between India and Pakistan in the last 20 years is nothing short of impressive (Ibid. 163-165). When official diplomacy blows hot and cold as it has for the good part of the last 60 years, it is useful to have parallel channels and CBMs that help maintain contact between the two countries (Racine, 2004:131). However, these CBMs have had varied degrees of effectiveness, due to the lack of political will in many cases. In some cases, there have even been attempts of misleading and false information. This was the case with the military hotline established between Islamabad and New Delhi in 1987, which was apparently, used more for ‘purposes of deception than those to defuse crises or build confidence’ (Dittmer, 2001:904).

The introduction of cricket into the arena as a confidence-building diplomatic tool, made famous by president Zia’s unexpected cricket watching visit to India in 1987, is a more recent development. That visit came in the face of a mounting crisis as India conducted its largest peacetime military exercise – called ‘Brasstacks’ – close to the Pakistani border (Ganguly & Hagerty, 2005:68). Byrne and Keashley (2000:112) have argued that ‘individuals and groups other than those whose formal roles are to make peace, can do something to facilitate peace,’ and cricket players and officials clearly fall into this category. Croft (2005:1039) comments on this when he notes that ‘cricket has been an important element in the process of improving relations between India and Pakistan.’ Thus, cricket has in terms of Akhtar’s definition as a bilateral measure that can help build confidence and reduce tensions, entered the diplomatic process as a confidence-building measure between India and Pakistan in its own right.

3.3.4 The Limitations of Sport/Cricket Diplomacy

Critics of track diplomacy argue that it can be difficult to gauge the impact of unofficial dialogues, as they do not produce binding agreements or policy shifts; instead they affect less tangible factors such as attitudes, perceptions and relationships (Behera, 2002:226; Chigas, 2003). This imposes a limit on what sport diplomacy can achieve as well, and it has been argued that sports cannot ‘transcend deep-seeded suspicions, structural impediments and profound disagreements between nations’ that are of too great a magnitude (DeLay, 1999). Sports are perhaps neither a foolproof cure for long-standing animosities nor for conflicts of long duration, such as 50 years or more as in the India-Pakistan case, claims Goldberg (2000:69). Track-two and track-three initiatives have indeed proved harder to establish during conflicts, and they can never be fully isolated from political events (Chigas, 2003). Nevertheless, Byrne and Keashley (2000:116) conclude that for intractable conflicts, such as between India and Pakistan, to take steps toward peace there needs to be an appreciation of the fact that complex situations need to be handled with flexibility and sensibility. There basically is ‘no problem which can be dealt with in bits. You have to try to put all the elements together’ (Montville, 1991:174). In short, successful peace building requires combined efforts at all tracks that can help promote reconciliation in divided societies, such as South Asia (Lederach, 2001:844). The holistic approach that Lederach (2001:842) promotes entails that ‘peace is a process by multiple means,’ a variety of actors, and some co-ordination of the different approaches.

Consequently, sport exchanges can provide – and have done so in the past – an important diplomatic tool, especially in relation to the concept of conversational space. Sport diplomacy can be a necessary tool, but it is not sufficient by itself. Sports exchanges can help to ‘melt the ice between officials on both sides. But sports contacts cannot, in and of themselves, lead to better relations,’ argues Chenabi (2004:249). The ultimate decision to improve relations resides with the political establishments of states. Thus, sport diplomacy can have a positive influence on talks at state-to-state track-one level. But at the same time, the political leaders are the ones that have the ultimate responsibility as well as decision-power for improving relations and making sport diplomacy work.

3.4 The World of Sport Diplomacy

The theory on sport, politics and identity combine to make a claim for sport's role in relations both within and between states. Sport as a tool for diplomacy has been placed in the diplomacy theory framework in that it involves communication at mainly track-two and track-three levels, and athletes as symbolic representatives of their home countries. The conduct of sport diplomacy is far from a uniform practice, and its particular usefulness lays precisely in the multiplicity of meanings and symbols that makes it one of the most ambiguous means of conducting diplomacy (Chenabi, 2004:239). Analyzing the case of cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan properly therefore renders it necessary to contextualize cricket diplomacy in relation to other types of sport diplomacy. History has provided different situations where sport diplomacy in some form or another has been used. For this reason, it is interesting to compare the case of cricket diplomacy to other cases of sport diplomacy in order to highlight similarities and differences between them in terms of representation, communication and diplomatic track, and not the least to discover the particularities and circumstances relating to the use of cricket as a vehicle for diplomacy.

Traditionally, sport diplomacy between states has for the most part occurred in three ways (Selliaas, 2006b). First, it has taken place in form of matches or tournaments in which the opposing parties have an equally passionate relation to the sport in question. This kind of competitions can thus be risky, because both parties can put too much prestige into winning. The purpose of sport diplomacy should ideally be that all parties emerge as winners. Second, it can take the form of single matches or tournaments in at least two sports. The sports in this case are carefully chosen for diplomatic value, so that each country will win at least one each. Finally, sport diplomacy can take the form of annual competitions or championships in several disciplines, such as in track and field, where both parties have the opportunity to win some of the events.

Furthermore, different levels of administering sport diplomacy can also be identified (Ibid.). In other words, that means differentiating between the political and diplomatic levels at which it is conducted. First, an impartial third party can take the

initiative to initiate negotiations and then put pressure on the negotiations to go forward. Second, state governments can take the initiative. Sport could in this case be used a means both for maintaining ties between allies, and for building better relations with perceived enemies. Finally, national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as national athletics federations, can take the initiative to arrange bilateral sport competitions.

3.4.1 Cases of Sport Diplomacy

The categorizations outlined above are ideal types, and often cases of sport diplomacy have cut across the boundaries of what separates one type from another. Nevertheless, the categories provide a valuable framework for outlining the differences and similarities between cricket diplomacy and other examples of sport diplomacy. A selected number of cases will be discussed. These have been chosen because they are some of the most famous examples of the use of sport diplomacy, and because the universe of cases of sport diplomacy is limited to begin with. Furthermore, these cases display the variety of the practice, both in terms of different types of representational and communicational aspects of its conduct, and in terms of diplomatic tracks.

The so-called ping-pong diplomacy between the United States and China in 1971, followed a year later by the visit of an American basketball team, is viewed by Goldberg (2000:67) as the most prominent example of the role sport exchanges as track-two and track-three diplomacy can play in breaking down barriers between enemies. It laid the groundwork for President Richard Nixon's visit to China in 1972 – labelled sometimes as 'the diplomatic coup of the century' – and eventually to the normalization of relations between the two countries (Time Magazine, 1971b). However, the process leading up to the Chinese invitation of the American table tennis players started as a conscious attempt on behalf of the American administration in order to reverse diplomatic signals in an effort to show the Chinese leaders that the US wanted to seek normalized relations (Ibid.). Thus, it was in a climate of changed perceptions and gradual thawing of relations that the Chinese government invited the American ping-pong team to visit China.

Time Magazine (1971a) commented at the time that ‘probably never before in history has a sport been used so effectively as a tool of international diplomacy.’ The sports were carefully chosen for diplomatic value. The US, as opposed to China, was not a highly ranked table tennis nation. In other words, the American team was not expected to win, and its defeat would not result in any loss of prestige for the US. The Chinese basketball team, on the other hand, did not pose any threat to the American team. Defeat at the hands of the American team in the basketball court consequently implied no loss of dignity for the Chinese either (Houlihan, 2004:217). Ping-pong and basketball diplomacy therefore played an important part in the Sino-American rapprochement.

There have hardly been any examples of sport diplomacy surviving tense political relations between states (Selliaas, 2006a). Nevertheless, the dual track and field meet series arranged between the United States and the Soviet Union from 1958 to 1985 provide an exception. The track and field meets started in 1958 notwithstanding the Cold War climate and the strained relations between the superpowers. The competitions survived the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, but experienced a temporary hiatus at the height of the Vietnam War in the late 1960s, when the Soviet Union wanted to state its opposition against the US role in Vietnam, and after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 (Turrini, 2001:434).

Organizing the first USA-USSR track meet was a long and painstaking process, involving years of patient negotiations on a track-two diplomacy level between Soviet and American sport leaders (Ibid. 428). Hence, this form of sport diplomacy was born out of negotiations between athletic federations in the two countries. Internationally, both nations were recognized as leading in track and field, but the scoring system of the meets, for the separate events, ensured that each country could attain a winning score combined. As for the commitment of the participants, one American athlete commented that he ‘would rather die than lose’ (Ibid. 430). Furthermore, these dual track meets were first and foremost athletic competitions, but they functioned as foreign diplomacy tools as well, as they posed a venue for talks between the superpowers (Selliaas, 2006a).

The use of sport diplomacy has included a range of both positive and negative sanctions. Among the negative sanctions, sporting boycotts have received the most attention. The American-led and Soviet-led boycotts, respectively, of the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow and of the Olympic Games in Los Angeles four years later, are perhaps the most famous examples (Goldberg, 2000:65). These boycotts were largely the result of Cold War rivalry, as sports became a new policy tool in the struggle between communism and capitalism. However, another type of sporting boycott was imposed on the apartheid regime in South Africa. In the 1970s and 1980s, South Africa was an international pariah, and international action included a range of trade embargos and other negative sanctions (Booth, 2003:477). One of these was an international sports boycott starting in the early 1960s, aimed at isolating the South African regime. In 1970, the IOC formally expelled the country from the international sporting community. Following IOC's lead, the international sporting federations began suspending or expelling South Africa from their ranks (Ibid. 480). The sporting boycott by the international federations did not end until the early 1990, after apartheid ended. They claimed that 'the boycott had worked – sport had triumphed over racism' (Ibid. 491). Accordingly, this was a form of sport diplomacy administered at the international, third party level, over a wide range of sports, which was aimed at punishing and isolating the South African regime for its apartheid politics.

In 1988, the Olympic Games were held in Seoul, South Korea. It has been claimed that if their neighbours, North Korea, participate in sporting events at all it is on their own terms, and they often act as 'spoilsports' (DeLay, 1999). Consequently, when South Korea received the bid for the 1988 Olympics, North Korea in due course demanded a venue change, called for a boycott, and then attempted to convince other nations that Seoul would not be safe. In short, the awarding of the Games to South Korea – still technically at war with North Korea thirty years after the end of the Korean War – at the height of the Cold War created a major challenge to the international sporting community and the IOC. Pound (1994) provides a thorough account of the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) role as mediator in the conflict as the organization entered into

negotiations between the Koreans in 1984. In the end, no agreement was reached between North and South (Pound, 1994:258). The decision was taken by the North Koreans not to participate in the Seoul Olympics, but only a few other nations followed their lead. However, the sport diplomacy in the guise of IOC mediation clearly has had an impact for later events, recently witnessed by the North and South Korean teams marching together in the opening ceremony of the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens (Davis, 2004). This will most likely be repeated in the Beijing Olympics in 2008. The International Olympic Committee and its attempts at mediating between North and South Korea in the years preceding the Seoul Olympics in 1988 thus clearly represents a case of third-party intervention (Pound, 1994).

In the late 1990s – perhaps inspired by how the ping-pong diplomacy in the 1970s provided an opening for a new American-Chinese relationship – an attempt at sport diplomacy between the US and Iran was set in motion (Marks, 1999:547). In 1998, the newly elected Iranian president Mohammad Khatami proposed people-to-people contact between Iranians and Americans, hoping that these contacts would gain a momentum that would conduce to the establishment of normal relations (Chenabi, 2004:238). This positive development led to an agreement between the American and Iranian wrestling federations – wrestling is very popular in both countries – for American wrestlers to participate in the *Takhti Cup* in Iran in 1998. This was the first time since the hostage crisis in 1979-1981 that Americans would openly, if unofficially, represented their country in Iran (Marks, 1999:547). This made for a special atmosphere for the football match between Iran and the US in the 1998 World Cup (Selliaas, 2006b). The Iranians won that match, and was invited to play a revenge fixture in California the following year. The wrestling diplomacy was a success, as the Americans were welcomed as friends and the old footage of the American flag being burned was replaced with ‘new pictures of the flag being carried by strong athletes and cheered by Iranian spectators’ (Marks, 1999:547). Football diplomacy was also a success, and the two teams jointly received the FIFA Fair Play award in 1999 (Chenabi, 2004:246). Sport diplomacy between the United States and Iran centred on wrestling and football, two sports seen as ideal for the purpose

(Ibid. 244). In wrestling, both nations are among the world's best, and it is alongside football, the national sport of Iran. In the US, both wrestling and football attract millions of practitioners, but are not particularly big spectator sports. In football both nations are minor players to be reckoned with. This precludes humiliating defeats 'that by hurting national pride might do more harm than good.'

Finally, a less successful instance of sport diplomacy was the baseball diplomacy between the United States and Cuba. The United States has longstanding embargos in place against the Castro regime, and no formal diplomatic relations with Havana (DeLay, 1999). In May 1999, however, the Cuban national baseball team visited Baltimore to play a second exhibition game against the Major League Baseball (MLB) team the Baltimore Orioles, the first match being held in Havana earlier in the year (Carter, 1999:579). The games were also about the nationalist claims of the two countries to one sport, as baseball is considered 'America's pastime and Cuba's passion.' It has even been said that had Fidel Castro chosen a different path in his youth, he could have secured a lucrative contract as a professional baseball player in the MLB (DeLay, 1999). The baseball diplomacy resulted from talks between the MLB and the Castro regime. Carter (1999:579) has pointed out, though, that 'no new political discourse emerged between the US and Cuba as a result of this international exchange.' The exhibition games were an example of a diplomatic gesture, but did not lead to any qualitative changes in the US-Cuban relationship (DeLay, 1999). In other words, the games had no real political purpose in the US, but they did nevertheless account for a great deal of political significance in Cuba (Carter, 1999:584).

Cricket is a sport that invokes fervour and excitement on both sides of the Indo-Pakistani border. Being described as a common language and a secular religion in South Asia, there is no doubt a shared passion for the sport between the states. No other sport can compete with the popularity of cricket, and it is therefore the most obvious choice for sport diplomacy in the region. When arranging cricket matches and tours, the national cricket boards have the formal responsibility for making arrangements. However, in the case of bilateral cricket between India and Pakistan, the government has the final word.

Khan (in Crick, 2006:79) states that the cricket boards of India and Pakistan have had a good relationship whatever the political climate has been, but they still had to seek their respective government's approval for touring each other. He claims that only in the India and Pakistan context do they have to seek the governments' approval as such tours have political ramifications and the tours are seen as political events. The state-to-state aspect of cricket diplomacy becomes even clearer when taking into account that the decisions not to play bilateral matches reside with the respective governments. In 1999, when Pakistan toured India for a limited number of matches, it was the Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif who made the decision to proceed with the tour (Khan, 2005:5). Moreover, it was Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee who himself took the initiative in 2004 to lift the embargo on bilateral cricket and re-start cricketing relations between India and Pakistan (Interview with Shetty in Crick (2006:84); Bhattacharya, 2005:11). In short, although the national cricket boards have the formal responsibility for arranging cricket tours, cricket diplomacy as track-two and track-three diplomacy between India and Pakistan is still administered at a state-to-state level because it is their respective governments that have the decision power concerning whether to engage in bilateral cricket contests or not.

Table 3.2 summarizes the above discussion, and displays the classification of the different types of sport diplomacy mentioned. The cases have been sorted according to the aforesaid categories of how it has been conducted at one hand, and at what level the sport diplomacy has been administered at the other.

Table 3.2 Different Types of Sport Diplomacy

	Shared passion of sport	Two sports chosen for their diplomatic value	Competitions in several disciplines
Third-party intervention			- IOC and the Koreas 1981-2008 - The South African sporting boycott 1963-1990
State-to-state initiative	- India-Pakistan: cricket diplomacy 1987-2007	- United States-China: ping-pong and basketball diplomacy 1971-1972	
NGO/National Federations initiative	- US-Cuba: baseball diplomacy 1999	- Iran-United States: wrestling and football diplomacy 1998-2007	- United States-USSR: track and field diplomacy 1958-1985

Placing cricket diplomacy in relation to these other cases presents a starting point for discussing whether it has been successful or not. The question is more to the point how communication and representation in cricket diplomacy has affected its success in terms of timing and durability, as outlined by the two research questions posed in the Introduction. These questions are further specified for the purpose of discussing cricket diplomacy:

1. Have the Indian and Pakistan national cricket teams as symbolic representatives of their respective countries had any effect on the peace process?
2. Have the channels of communication used and opened by cricket diplomacy helped build bridges of peace between India and Pakistan?

4.0 Cricket Diplomacy

Having placed cricket diplomacy in relation to other cases of sport diplomacy, I will now move on to discussing the particularities of the India-Pakistan case. The first part will cover the history of the conflict which dates back to the countries' independence from Great Britain in 1947, as well as outline the history and importance of cricket in India and Pakistan. With this context in hand, I will then turn the discussion towards cricket and politics, and the main question of this thesis: whether cricket diplomacy has been successful or not.

4.1 Background

In 1987, Pakistani president Zia-ul Haq astonished the world by travelling to India in the face of impending crisis to watch a cricket match between the two countries. The visit caught the Indian government unawares, but it helped defuse a potentially explosive situation, and the term 'cricket diplomacy' was born. The president's choice of a cricket match as a venue for diplomacy was hardly accidental, as the history of the game in South Asia makes clear. The issue of India-Pakistan relations and the history and importance of cricket in South Asia will be the theme of the following sections.

4.1.1 The Most Complex Divorce in History

India and Pakistan gained independence from Great Britain in 1947, as British India was partitioned into two separate states for the subcontinents Hindus and Muslims respectively. Both countries are part of the same geographical region of South Asia, and they share a social, cultural, and civilizational past, but their postcolonial history, mired in interstate conflicts, has deeply divided the region (Behera, 2002:211).

The rivalry between the two remains to this day one of the most enduring and unresolved conflicts in the world (Paul, 2005:3). History of relations between the neighbours is in many ways a history of failure; compounded by the bloodbath accompanying Partition, four wars in sixty years, and the intractable question of Kashmir

(Racine, 2004:112). In short, there has been a climate of suspicion and continual accusation throughout the history of Indo-Pakistani relations.

The relationship between Pakistan and India can best be described as ‘the story of a divorce that went wrong,’ which has given rise to the bitterness, resentment and suspicion that has characterized dealings between the states (Ibid. 113). The most contentious point at the time of Partition in 1947, described by Lapierre and Collins (2006:212) as the ‘most complex divorce in history,’ was the question of Kashmir. Kashmir, in many ways ‘the proverbial powder keg’ (Schofield, 2003:18), has continued to be the focal point of conflict for the good part of the two countries’ histories. The Kashmir conflict is linked to conceptions of identity as the region can be characterized as a symbol of the ‘idea of nationhood on which each of the two states has been founded’ (Racine, 2002:212). Pakistan is the revisionist state in the region, as it considers Kashmir as the unfinished business of Partition. To India, on the other hand, Partition was completed in 1947, they are therefore happy maintaining the status quo (Ganguly & Hagerty, 2005:35; Paul, 2005:8-9; Schofield, 2003:225). The magnitude of the conflict is highlighted by Cohen (2001:221) who argues that ‘the Kashmir problem is so complicated that one is hard pressed to say how the parties involved might ever begin to resolve it.’ Of the four wars India and Pakistan have fought, only the 1971 war was not linked to the Kashmir issue. Furthermore, the stakes in this conflict are now perhaps higher than any other political dispute in the world, as both nations have become nuclear powers (Ganguly & Hagerty, 2005:10).

The conflict born out of Partition has been extremely persistent, and fits the description of what Paul (2005:3) has termed an ‘enduring conflict,’ defined as conflicts between states that ‘last more than two decades with several militarized inter-state disputes punctuating the relationship in between.’ Like other such conflicts, it seems to draw its energy from ‘an inexhaustible supply of distrust’ (Cohen, 2001:199). This makes it hard for any side to offer concessions or compromise on even minor issues because such an act might give the other side an impression of one’s own weakness and risk inviting further demands. Furthermore, easing of tensions can be a tricky challenge when

any triumph over the other ‘in any sphere of life is taken as a cause of celebration; any setback is seen as a national humiliation’ (Chatterjee, 2004:625). Thus, mutual distrust and suspicion fosters only renewed animosity. Breaking this pattern of mutual distrust and enmity must therefore be a key component of any attempt at easing tensions in the Indo-Pakistani relationship. The question is whether cricket can help to solve this conflict.

4.1.2 Origins of Cricket in India and Pakistan

The first to play cricket on the subcontinent were British sailors and soldiers as early as 1721, according to Mukharji (2004:351). They played the game among themselves, and against other British teams, in their bungalows, colonial towns and cantonments (Guha, 1998:158). Cricket started in England, and that was to determine its outreach, as the popularity of cricket is ‘limited almost exclusively to the countries that at one time formed the British Empire’ (Varney, 1999:558). Today, this includes Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in South Asia, all highly ranked and highly passionate cricketing nations.

Cricket watching, as well as playing, soon proved to be an appealing collective and participatory exercise, ‘indulging the Indian taste for chatter and disputation, gossip and debate,’ according to Guha (2002:339). Cricket may just be among the most complex and at the same time subtle of all sports, leaving a lot for discussion (Varney, 1999:558). The leisurely pace of cricket, which originally had no time constraints, has also added to the appeal of cricket to Indians and Pakistanis alike. It has been argued that it is exactly these ‘underlying rhythms and mythic structures of the game that makes it profoundly Indian and that it is therefore appropriate that the game should be most enthusiastically appropriated by those from South Asian cultures’ (Mills, 2005:4).

The first Indians to adopt the game were the Parsis of Bombay (present-day Mumbai), an educated, prosperous, Westernized, and relatively small community, who lived in India after exile from Persia (Guha, 1998:158). The first Indian cricket club – the Oriental Cricket Club, which successor is still going strong today – was founded by Parsi

men in 1848 (Guha, 2002:14). The other communities of Bombay soon followed the Parsis in their taste for cricket. The Hindus started playing cricket in 'a spirit of competitive communalism' because of their long-standing social and business rivalry with the Parsis in the city (Guha, 1998: 159). The Muslims followed not long after, and even Catholic and Jewish groups formed teams along the same communal lines. This pattern was followed all across the subcontinent when teams were formed.

Guha (1998), a prominent historian of cricket in South Asia, provides an account of how these rivalries were played out. At first, the British thought little of their subjects' attempts to take to their national game. After a while, however, the Indians slowly began acquiring aptitude, and in 1877 the Parsis were invited to play a match against the Bombay Gymkhana, the association that represented the Europeans of Bombay. The Hindus started playing the Europeans from 1886, and in 1907 the so-called Triangular Tournament brought the three together in an annual competition. The Muslims, too, joined in to make it a four-way competition. Finally, the competition became the Pentangular in 1937 by adding the other communities under a catch-all category simply called 'The Rest.' The tournament was held in its various forms every year until 1946, and was to 'play a formative role in the development of cricket' in South Asia, argues Guha (1998:160). The Bombay tournament spawned similar tournaments all over British India, thus competitive cricket was organized along communal lines. Sown into this segmented system, no doubt, were the seeds of social conflict (Ibid.165). What had during British rule been a city-specific rivalry turned into a countrywide rivalry between Hindus and Muslims, would after Partition be replaced by a cross-border rivalry of dimensions.

The entire history of cricket in India and Pakistan has as a result been fraught by communal rivalries. From its earliest introduction by British sailors and soldiers to the subcontinent, cricket teams were formed along communal lines with Hindus and Muslims having their own teams. Guha (2002:428) argues that the history of cricket relations between India and Pakistan thus almost exactly mirrors the history of cricket relations between Hindus and Muslims in British India. The post-independence years have been marred by a search for identity and conflict off the field, and this has of course had

repercussions for the cricket rivalry with the attachment of symbolic significance to the winning or losing of cricket matches against the archenemy, either it being India or Pakistan.

4.1.3 Cricket, Identity and Unity

As much as relations on the cricket field has been considered almost a proxy for the conflict between India and Pakistan, mimicking the tensions off it, the game is also the common love for the subcontinent's people. Cricket permeates practically every layer of South Asian society, and has occupied 'a central place in a range of emerging positions and identities in the years after Independence in 1947' (Sengupta, 2004:600). All over South Asia – not the least in India and Pakistan – cricket has to some 'assumed an all-consuming hold on people from every walk of life' (Khan, 2005:Vii). In order to appreciate the standing and meaning of cricket for Indians and Pakistanis, one has to imagine it being something like 'football and pop music rolled together,' where the top player – especially in India – are megastars (Windor, 2004). According to observers of sports in South Asia, cricket seems to have assumed this role because it is 'the game in which sportspersons from this part of the world have given innumerable impressive performances at the international level with some degree of consistency' (Chatterjee, 2004:613). Cricket has been characterized as the subcontinent's secular religion, uniting Indians and Pakistanis in the intensity of their passion for it (Pennington, 2004; Thakur, 2004).

After the British left in 1947, the South Asian passion for cricket consequently lived on, maybe to even a greater extent than during the Raj (Stoddart, 2005). In the years following Partition, cricket would be seen to contribute to shape post-colonial identities and provide a sense of national unity in newly independent India and Pakistan (Sengupta, 2004:601). Cricketing prowess soon came to be identified with patriotic virtues in the newborn countries. Thus, cricket has, in terms of Kaufmann's (2001:16) conception of a symbol as an 'emotionally charged reference to a myth' held in common by a large group

of people, come to mean something more than just an athletic activity for Indians and Pakistanis. In other words, it has been firmly established in the collective psyche of Pakistanis and Indians alike as a symbol of unity, identity and national pride.

Identity did not play such an important part in India's attitude towards Pakistan in the post-independence period, as did identity in Pakistan (Nasr, 2005:192). This is not to say, however, that Indian identity is uniform. India, a nation as multi-faceted as perhaps no other faces its problems and internal divisions. However, cricket is for many like a religion uniting a nation of so many religions. Cricket has additional importance for Indians since it is often considered 'the only realm where Indians can flex their muscles on the world stage; it is the nation's only instrument with which to have a crack at world domination.'⁵ It is, to put it simply, much more than a 'game' for Indians' (Majumdar, 2004:128).

Pakistan, like other postcolonial societies, has struggled to define its national identity. The successful struggle for a homeland for the subcontinent's Muslims meant that people from 'disparate ethnic backgrounds, following different cultures, and conversant in different languages, were thrown together' (Nasr, 2005:182). Thus, Pakistan after Partition was by no means a united entity, composed as it was of different ethnic groups that displayed various degrees of support for the new country (Sathasivam & Shafqat, 2003:119-121). Cricket serves as an important symbolic determinant of national identity in South Asia. Thus, especially in a country as ethnically divided as Pakistan, cricket serves as one of the major components that bind society together (Shahzad, 2002). Khan (2005:Viii) claims that cricket is the 'strongest unifying force amongst its people, young and old, rich and poor, man or woman, Shia or Sunni, Pathan or Sindhi' as it brings 'a unity in peacetime only achieved in times of war.' Bhattacharya (2005:51) argues in the same vein, quoting a former high-ranking PCB official as saying that 'cricket is *the* great leveller in Pakistani society,' and that there are only two things that 'run right through this country, through all regions, through all sections, through everything – one is

⁵ There is one more realm of international significance in which India, as well as Pakistan, has entered as an actor to be reckoned with, though: the realm of nuclear weapons.

Urdu, and the other is cricket.’ Thus, the fate of the national cricket team can be considered the main factor that unites Pakistan (Khan, 2005:179).

Sport provides a sense of identity, belonging and unity for many, and this is of particular importance to governments with diverse populations (Coakley, 2004:449-450). Cricket is the only sport in South Asia that has this capacity to unite diverse populations into separate entities. Eriksen (1991:191) remarks that virtually every modern nation-state is ethnically divided to some extent, and both India and Pakistan are countries divided along lines of ethnicity, language and religion. The choice of a particular sport, as with the institutionalization of football as a Fascist game in Italy, has been instrumental for building a sense of national unity and identity. In India and Pakistan, cricket has by presenting something of a common symbol for the nation, arguably been ‘one of the few things that can unite at all’ (Crick, 2006: 27).

Sport can occupy an important role in relations between people and nations. Close ties between sport and conceptions of national identity have been identified, as something that is complex and multifaceted. Furthermore, sport possesses the ability to provide people with notions about who they are, and can promote a sense of national identity and unity (Smith & Porter, 2004:1). Houlihan (2000:87) has argued that the national team carries enormous symbolic value as a metaphor for the nation. Therefore, the fate of the national team becomes linked to the fate of the nation. Nowhere is this more evident than in cricket-mad South Asia, as the national teams in cricket in both India and Pakistan are seen as carrying a vital symbolic role, as well as playing the role of national unifier to perfection, according to Dasgupta (2004:576).

4.1.4 Is Cricket an Appropriate Diplomatic Tool?

The traumas of Partition, the outbreak of war over Kashmir under a year after independence, as well as the very foundation for the state of Pakistan as a Muslim homeland in South Asia, meant that the relations between the two neighbours were strained from the outset, a relationship characterized by layered complexity. Cricket, as a

unifying force in two countries beset by diversity, has taken on such importance for Indians and Pakistanis, and in a way so that the underlying rivalry off the field has virtually been projected onto the field. Thus, cricket matches has to some extent come to mimic the conflict that is taking place in the sphere of politics and diplomacy. The cricketing rivalry, which was once played out between Hindu and Muslim teams within British India, has simply been transferred to an inter-state competition between secular – albeit overwhelmingly in the Hindu mould – India and Muslim Pakistan. Thus, the antagonism has in a certain way been centralized and strengthened, adding to and feeding off the complexities of the strained relationship between India and Pakistan, the ‘terrible twins of world politics’ (Khwaja, 2004).

Cricket, to use Allison’s (2004:348) words, is considered to ‘exemplify the spirit’ of the nation. It follows that a defeat for the national team can be considered to reflect the state of the nation. Defeat for India or Pakistan at the hands of their rivals has been felt as a collective sense of national humiliation, followed by public outrage. In the case of Indo-Pakistani cricket, the nationalist sentiments attached to the game have mostly made it resemble a battlefield since as early as the 1960s (Lal, 2003:207). Using a sport that both nations are passionate about can therefore be risky business for the involved parties as too much prestige can be put into winning (Selliaas, 2006b). Nevertheless, the case has been made for cricket to contribute to an improved relationship between the two countries on account of it being their common love, thereby providing a possible ‘bridge of peace.’

Coakley (2004:454) points out that a longstanding ideal underlying international sport has been achieving peace and friendship among nations. Sport has therefore been added as a tool for diplomacy, for possessing the capacity to help ease tensions and contribute to rapprochement between enemies. However, events such as the Football War in 1969 (Kapuscinski, 1992), and the fervour and nationalist passion often considered part and parcel of competitive sports, somewhat negates this positive outlook. In some cases, sport functions as a vehicle for rivalry. This may not lead to war, but it stirs up a lot of emotion and enmity towards the ‘enemy.’ Chenabi (2004:239) similarly argues that ‘the idea of improving people-to-people relations through athletic competition seems

somewhat counter-intuitive, as international sports events more than not crystallize nationalistic passions.’ On the other hand, Chenabi notes, when sporting contests take place ‘that are accompanied by mutual signalling of goodwill and friendly cheering spectators, a shift in attitudes can be inferred from that.’

Considering the history of cricket in South Asia, one would hardly consider it the most appropriate of means with which to promote peace and rapprochement. Varney (1999:560) has observed that ‘the clashes between India and Pakistan, whose politics pitches them close to war across their shared border, often take on an extra and quite heated dimension in the spectator stands if not on the cricket ground itself.’ Thus, in the past cricket has sometimes come close to igniting a state of hostility between the parties. On the other hand, cricket is close to being the only real unifying force, both within and between India and Pakistan. As mentioned earlier, cricket is the common love of the subcontinent, and hence a powerful diplomatic tool.

In addition, making peace is a process by multiple means, according to Lederach (2001:841). This implies that conflict resolution and diplomatic efforts should not be confined to the official level, known as track-one. Peace building must be undertaken at different levels of society, Lederach argues. In other words, the activity of peace building ‘has multiple activities, at multiple levels, carried on by different sets of people at the same time’ (Ibid. 841). In the case of India and Pakistan, cricket has constituted such an avenue for conflict resolution. The cricket tours of recent years have provided venues for ‘conversational space,’ and have helped the easing of tensions and reduction of mutual mistrust between Pakistanis and Indians. As such, cricket diplomacy has followed the second and third tracks in the multi-track diplomacy paradigm, complementing and backing up the developments at the official, track-one level. The efforts at the second and third tracks of diplomacy are ‘supposed to feed into official diplomacy by serving as a “testing ground” for new policy initiatives and in creating a public peace constituency,’ and the varied range of such initiatives over the years trying to build bridges between India and Pakistan is extensive (Behera, 2003). Thus, there is no

doubt that cricket has been an appropriate diplomatic tool for easing tensions between India and Pakistan.

4.2 Cricketing Ties between India and Pakistan

Relations between India and Pakistan have been troubled from the start as their history demonstrates. Their cricketing relationship has throughout this period reflected their political relationship, and bilateral cricket has as previously mentioned been treated as a political matter. Cricket has contributed to communal and regional divisions in South Asia, and high levels of passion are often incited when matches are played. At the same time, it is the common love of the entire region, and has contributed to a feeling of unity for diversified populations. Therefore, the idea that cricket can function as a ‘bridge of peace’ (Khan, 2005:180) between Indians and Pakistanis will be the starting point of this discussion, which will deal with the Indo-Pakistani cricketing and political relationship from the advent of cricket diplomacy in 1987.

4.2.1 Politics and Cricket from 1987 to 2007

Since President Zia’s cricket diplomacy raised the hope of a more forthcoming Pakistani policy in 1987 (Cohen, 2001:208), India and Pakistan have engaged in bilateral cricket contests on six more occasions (Cricinfo, 2007). India toured Pakistan in November-December 1989 for a full Test series, but after the Kashmiri uprising in 1989 and ensuing crisis in 1990 led to soured relations between the two countries (Ganguly & Hagerty, 2005:78), bilateral cricket relations suffered. Relations between India and Pakistan then deteriorated further after the demolition of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya, India, by Hindu extremists in 1992 (Guha, 2002:400). The destruction sparked communal violence in large parts of India, and put Hindu-Muslim relations to the test. Thus, the political climate that prevailed between India and Pakistan after 1989 put an effective stop to bilateral cricket.

Racine (2004:131) argues that president Zia's 1987 version of cricket diplomacy was purely cosmetic, and that nothing had changed ten years later. India had not toured Pakistan due to wretched political conditions since 1989, but in September-October 1997, they played a limited number of One Day International⁶ matches in Pakistan. This was the first bilateral cricket contest on Indian or Pakistani soil in eight years, but the following year both states exploded nuclear devices, contributing to heightened tensions and a growing fear of what escalation of the conflict could lead to. In other words, Indo-Pakistani tensions were put to the test once more, and bilateral cricket suffered as a consequence.

After the nuclear tests in 1998, there was a realisation at the government level that tensions needed to be eased (Schofield, 2003:207). When the prime ministers of India and Pakistan met at the SAARC meeting in Sri Lanka in July, they both agreed to resume formal talks. The culmination of these talks was Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee's historic and symbolically significant visit on the inaugural run of the Delhi-Lahore bus service on 20 February 1999 (Ganguly & Hagerty, 2005:151; Talbott, 2006:153). The Lahore Summit in 1999 between Prime Minister Vajpayee and his Pakistani counterpart, Nawaz Sharif, represented a considerable thaw in Indo-Pakistani relations (Nasr, 2005:195). This thaw in the relations was rooted in mutual interests of the governments and was directed at measured steps towards de-escalation of tensions. In the region, Vajpayee's trip resulting in the Lahore Declaration was even hailed as comparable to Richard Nixon's trip to China in 1971, which followed the successful ping-pong diplomacy.

With relations warming once more, the two countries' Prime Ministers played an important part in the decision to resume cricketing ties in 1999. This was the first Pakistani tour of India since 1987, and it came only the year after both countries conducted tit-for-tat nuclear tests that had created yet another crisis in Indo-Pakistani relations (Ganguly & Hagerty, 2005:116). There was some controversy in both countries

⁶ This is the short-version of the game, lasting only one day. A Test match can last for as much as five days.

over whether the tour should be undertaken or not. In India, the tour faced strong opposition from the Hindu extremists of the right wing party Shiv Sena, who threatened the Pakistani team if they travelled to India. They even went to the step of digging up the cricket pitch in Delhi (Bhattacharya, 2005:11; Khan, 2005:3). In Pakistan, on the other hand, the debate saw opinion divided between the pro-tour lobby who felt that a successful tour could help reduce cross-border tensions, and those who feared that a tour of India would ‘unnecessary risk a deterioration of relations’ (Khan, 2005:4). The cricket players as symbolic representatives in other words carried the worries and expectations of their home countries on their shoulders.

The tour went ahead in January-February 1999, and Shaharyar M. Khan (2005:vii-viii), manager of the Pakistan cricket team during the tour and later chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board, describes how cricket diplomacy provided communicational opportunities and conversational space wherever they travelled. In every Indian city the team visited, they were greeted with genuine goodwill, and everywhere the message was the same: to let bygones be bygones, that there was so much to gain, so much in common. After the first test match of the tour in Chennai, the victorious Pakistanis even received a standing ovation from the 40,000 Indian spectators in the stands. Such ‘positive waves of goodwill’ that the crowd emitted surpassed in Khan’s view anything that had happened at the popular level in the history of India-Pakistan relations. The sum of these unexpectedly warm welcomes by the people of India to the ‘enemy’ team was the sentiments that, Khan contends, encouraged Prime Minister Vajpayee’s famous bus-journey to Pakistan and the Lahore Summit. Khan (2005:72) claims that the public relations success and good spirit surrounding the cricket tour helped pave the way for this ‘diplomatic milestone.’ Cricket players as symbolic representatives therefore had an important part to play when it came to bolstering the fresh peace process by providing a channel of communication between the populations of the nuclear neighbours.

All good things can’t last, however, and despite the apparent success of cricket diplomacy in 1999, the Lahore Summit did not live up to its goals and failed to contribute to a significant amelioration of Indo-Pakistani tensions (Ganguly & Hagerty, 2005:151).

Much of the goodwill created by the 1999 tour was washed away by the Kargil war and the Indian Airlines hijacking by Pakistan-based 'Islamic radicals' in 1999 (Cohen, 2001:207; Talbott, 2006:185). After these incidents, the Indian government decided a renewed ban on bilateral cricket until Pakistan changed its stance and stopped supporting the insurgency in Kashmir (Bhattacharya, 2005: 10; Chatterjee, 2004:613; Sengupta, 2004:605). It has even been argued that 'Kargil destroyed any sub continental solidarity that had existed previously' (Sengupta, 2004:606). General Musharraf's assumption of power in Pakistan in 1999, as well as the attack on the Indian parliament, the Lok Sabha, in December 2001 contributed to renewed tensions that damaged relations even further (Ganguly & Hagerty, 2005:167). In consequence, cricket diplomacy succumbed once more due to deteriorating political conditions.

War seemed imminent throughout 2002, and as a result India refused to play Pakistan at cricket or any other sport (Khan, 2005:103). The diplomatic process between the two countries was re-established once again in 2003 with the resumption of the bus service between Delhi and Lahore in May, and the agreement of a ceasefire in Kashmir in November (BBC News, 2005b). The peace process had in this way received a new lease on life, and cricket was considered by the two governments as a vehicle for developing mutual trust between their populations. In the first week of January 2004, Vajpayee and president Musharraf met in Islamabad on the margins of a SAARC summit. Vajpayee agreed to talks on all issues, including Kashmir, and a roadmap to peace was agreed upon in principle (Talbott, 2006:219). In addition, it was agreed to re-establish bilateral cricketing ties. This meant that India would undertake the first full cricket tour of Pakistan since 1989, despite some of the same debate as in 1999 regarding whether the tour should be undertaken or not (Bhattacharya, 2005:193). In the end, Prime Minister Vajpayee himself took the decision that India should tour (Ibid. 9). The Indian tour of Pakistan in any case represented the thawing of a 14-year freeze in bilateral full test series (Windor, 2004). Ramiz Raja, chief executive officer of the Pakistan Cricket Board commented on the breakthrough, saying that 'until people from both sides meet and develop trust, these things cannot be resolved and cricket can be a major vehicle for this' (CNN, 2003). The

thawing of relations between India and Pakistan therefore provided the perfect timing for cricket diplomacy.

The Indian cricket team's tour of Pakistan in March-April was labelled 'the Friendship Series,' and the tour lived up to its name. While previous series had been marred by occasional riots, mob violence and murders, this time around things were different. There was something new happening, one reporter observed: 'Pakistani fans draped in the Indian flag, Indian fans celebrating among them, in the heartland of Pakistani extremism' (Astill, 2004). Even Imran Khan, one of Pakistan's greatest cricketers of all time and a member of parliament, observing this feeling of friendship, said that 'I've never seen an Indian-Pakistan game with an atmosphere like this ... it is if we're saying, "War is no longer an option – we need something new"' (Ibid.). Others joined in, saying that sporting exchanges such as this were 'good therapy' for the relations between India and Pakistan. But, at the same time, such exchanges can also inflame passions and carry the risk of cutting both ways (Pennington, 2004). This did not happen, though, as the friendly atmosphere prevailed.

The Friendship Series worked wonders for building confidence between Indians and Pakistan. Even though it was the first time India had won at cricket in Pakistan, there was no violence or trouble. On the contrary, the Indian team got standing ovations at more than one occasion during the tour (Bhattacharya, 2005). Vajpayee's farewell message to the Indian cricket players had been: 'Win not only matches, but hearts too' (Ibid. 30). Not only did the Indian cricketers get a good reception in Pakistan, but those tens of thousands of Indian fans and journalists who also crossed the border, went back to India remembering a hospitality and welcome they had not imagined possible from their 'enemies.' Thus, they had gone back to India 'acting as Pakistan's ambassadors' (Khan, 2005:187).

The Indian cricket team's 2004 tour of Pakistan can be considered both a track-two and track-three initiative. It provided the athletes with an opportunity to play each other in an atmosphere of friendship and unity. These symbolic representatives of their states engaged in friendly competition on the field, which mirrored the developments in the

political arena. This meant that the cricket tour had positive effects for the peace process in the sense that it provided unprecedented visibility and publicity. Additionally, thousands of Indian supporters visited Pakistan during the series, and encountered for the most part the same atmosphere and friendship, as they rediscovered that Indians and Pakistanis share the same culture and history. The series provided the single biggest window there had been in almost fifty years for a people to talk to another, and it took place in the name of a cricket contest (Bhattacharya, 2005:309). This is one of the benefits of sport exchanges highlighted by the UN report *Sport for Development and Peace*, and an important aspect of the term conversational space. The channels of communication provided by cricket diplomacy therefore played an important part in the further strengthening of the peace process and its popularity in the minds of ordinary Indians and Pakistanis. Sporting contest therefore also constitute a sort of barometer of the public or collective psyche of a population, and provides crucial input for state leaders on how to proceed with the process. Finally, cricket matches also present state leaders with an opportunity to meet under the auspices watching the game, in order to have talks over the opening of negotiations or to continue with other measures of rapprochement.

With the success of the 2004 Friendship Series fresh in mind, it was decided to carry on the momentum with another cricket series. Pakistan subsequently undertook a full tour of India in February-April 2005. This time around, the series played an even more significant diplomatic role as it gave the leaders of both countries a ‘new momentum’ for the opportunity to meet (Cherian, 2005). Pakistani president Perwez Musharraf expressed his wish to travel to India, much like president Zia-ul Haq had done in 1987, virtually inviting himself ostensibly to watch cricket but mainly to discuss political issues. By making his arrival known through a media interview, the Indian government was left with little choice but to extend a formal invitation to the Pakistani president. Musharraf’s attempt at cricket diplomacy came at a time of an ongoing peace process, but it still caught New Delhi with nearly as much surprise as Zia had in 1987. As the talks were to begin, Musharraf let it be known that ‘the core issue’ of Kashmir was more important than cricket, and that it would be the most important topic for the talks

with the Indian leadership (Reddy, 2005). The Pakistani Information Minister remarked on this saying that: 'The president will watch cricket for some time but he will play more on the political pitch' (Daily Times, 2005).

The Delhi match provided Musharraf with an opportunity to speed up the official dialogue process, which the Pakistanis felt India was stalling (Croft, 2005:1055-1056). Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh watched the match in Delhi side by side, and pictures of the two leaders were broadcast throughout the world (Crick, 2006:46). Furthermore, in a joint press conference after their talks, they announced that now 'the peace process was irreversible' (Croft, 2005:1041). Cricket thus provided the conversational space for Indian and Pakistani leaders to meet and discuss on political conflict areas. This added to the success of unofficial cricket diplomacy and people-to-people contact that had been the hallmark of the two foregoing series, showing how these earlier efforts contributed to backing up talks at the official level. Unofficial in nature as cricket diplomacy is, it has an added official level as well. Moreover, cricket diplomacy had now really found its pace, and in April the same year the first passengers from either side of the border crossed divided Kashmir as the landmark bus service across the ceasefire line dividing Indian- and Pakistani-controlled Kashmir got underway (BBC News, 2005b).

The normalisation of political and cricketing links between India and Pakistan led to the third successive instalment of bilateral cricket in January-February 2006 (Marqusee, 2006), with India this time touring Pakistan. This can be seen as good news for anyone concerned about the future of peace in South Asia. In short, the recent cricket tours exemplify the claim that 'sports bring people and nations together' as they create a shared language, shared passions and highlight our ways of interacting with one another (Sengupta, 2004:587). 2007 marks the twentieth anniversary of the birth of the term cricket diplomacy. The peace process re-ignited in 2003 has survived so far, and leaders in both countries have showed their commitment to the process. India and Pakistan both participated in the World Cup of cricket in February-April 2007, which meant that the annual fixture was not held, but cricket has nonetheless been an important part of the

current Indo-Pakistani peace process. On the one hand, cricketers as symbolic representatives of their respective states provide the peace efforts with high visibility by engaging in friendly competition on the field. Bilateral cricket matches would not have come about without official sanction, however, but once employed it plays a significant part in strengthening the process. Cricket diplomacy has also provided channels of communication, which provided at the right time, can help shape a better understanding between Indians and Pakistanis.

4.3 *Batting for Peace*

Khan contends that cricket has acted as a ‘bridge of peace,’ and the nature of the current Indo-Pakistani relationship lends him support of his claim. In order to assess the success or failure of cricket diplomacy as a specific case of sport diplomacy, it is necessary to return to the two research questions posed in the introduction. The first question relates to whether it is the timing of cricket diplomacy that is the crucial factor behind its success, or lack thereof. It is necessary, in other words, to consider the prevailing political climate when cricket diplomacy is initiated. Second, the durability of cricket diplomacy also needs to be taken into account. This means more precisely if it once underway can survive periods of deteriorating relations, and if so, maintain a vital line of communication between India and Pakistan. These questions will be the focus of the following chapters.

4.3.1 *Timing of Cricket Diplomacy*

Cricket has functioned as a confidence-building measure between India and Pakistan, and its success in recent years is evident. However, a factor relating to its success concerns the timing of cricket diplomacy. In what sort of climate does it actually occur? Successful conflict management in enduring rivalries has proved to be a rare occurrence (Geller, 2005:81). One thing is for certain, Paul (2005:20) contends, and that is for an enduring rivalry such as the Indo-Pakistani variant to end, then ‘both favourable

general conditions and imaginative leaders are needed.’ In other words, even if conditions for rapprochement are ripe, leaders who are willing to translate this potential for peace into action are needed. Similarly, leaders may be genuinely interested in reaching some sort of agreement, but the background conditions that would allow them to reach one may not be present.

Sporting ties are an ‘important bellwether of bilateral relations’ and they have often suffered in the Indo-Pakistani case as a result (BBC News, 2005a). The cricket series and president Zia’s visit to India in 1987 came at a time of heightened tensions. Nevertheless, some attempts at conflict de-escalation and negotiations were already being discussed (Ganguly & Hagerty, 2005:75). Thus, cricket diplomacy took place in a tense situation where diplomatic initiative was present at the official level. Cricket diplomacy contributed to speeding up the process to resolve the conflict, as well as making it publicly known to the public that a peaceful resolution of the conflict was sought after. In other words, cricket as a tool of track-two and track-three diplomacy contributed to results at the official level, and seemed to strengthen this process. In 1989, the timing proved worse, as the Kashmir insurgency effectively put a stop to bilateral cricket. The timing did not turn out to be the best in 1997 or 1999, either. Cricket diplomacy this time was short-lived due to the nuclear tests in 1998, and then the Kargil war and subsequent events from 1999 until 2002.

The initiatives for cricket diplomacy in 2004 came at the right time, when several developments combined to make the time ripe for rapprochement. Willing political leaders, receptive public opinion, and thawing relations, all combined to make the timing just right for cricket to make a difference. However, it was only a little over a year before that the two countries came close to war, so evidently, cricket diplomacy had a significant impact when it was launched. It nonetheless benefited from the prevailing political and social climate at the time. Croft (2005:1039) supports this argument, claiming that the cricket diplomacy of 2004 and 2005 would have been inconceivable in 2002.

It can seem like the test series in 2004 and 2005 would never have come about at all, had the political relations not showed prior signs of improvement. But the

question of timing can work both ways, and successful sport diplomacy can indeed strengthen and provide momentum for a peace process. As mentioned earlier, it has been argued that sport, especially competitive spectator sports like cricket, is a very useful barometer of collective psychological sentiments. Marqusee (2005) argues that South Asian cricket remains this kind of ‘a reliable barometer of the society in which it is played. In the Indo-Pak series, it has provided a vehicle for the expression of a hunger for south Asian harmony that has been gestating for years.’ Cricket has thus provided for the most effective form of people-to-people contact touted so long through various types of track-two diplomacy, and in addition it has backed up the efforts at the state level. The series presented just such opportunities for the important middle-tier in Lederach’s holistic approach consisting of politicians, industrialists, businessmen, and so on, to meet with their counterparts in the two countries (Bhattacharya, 2005:163). Had the latest peace initiatives not come at the right time, the current situation could have been another.

By appropriating the important space in civil society and popular culture that cricket through its symbolic power has, the game has thus provided ‘a window on to mass psyche in India’ (Sengupta, 2004:608). It is this role as a barometer of collective sentiments and opinions that offers one possible way to measure the effect of cricket diplomacy. Several sources have referred to the resumption of cricket relations on the background of thawing general relations between India and Pakistan, claiming that ‘relations between India and Pakistan have never been better in decades’ (Cherian, 2005). Based on this, some would perhaps claim that it is nonsensical to talk about cricket diplomacy in the formal sense at all, since the resumption of cricket matches between the terrible twins of world politics could be seen only to follow breakthroughs in the sphere of traditional diplomacy. I claim the opposite, however. Sport in general, and cricket in particular, indeed functions as a barometer for the views and opinions of the wider population, but at the same time society and cricket is arguably so tightly knit that it proves hard to separate the two. Improved sporting relations do reflect improved political relations, but as for causal linkages the one is not easily separated from the other. Even

so, well-timed opening of channels of communication related to contests between cricket players, who are seen as symbolic representatives of their countries, is vital.

4.3.2 Cricket Diplomacy's Potential for Survival

Timing has as aforementioned had an important part to play for the success of cricket diplomacy, but what about its durability? The ping-pong diplomacy of the 1970s helped to substantially improve relations between The United States and China. The Football War between Honduras and El Salvador is on the other hand a poor example of mixing sport and politics. What then, can be said of the Indo-Pakistani case? Sport is everywhere a major carrier of national identity, but cricket between India and Pakistan has tended to promote a specific type of national identity, one defined – and even sharpened – by its traditional focus on ‘the enemy’ (Marqusee, 2004). Any triumph over the other in any sphere of life is taken as a cause for celebration. Similarly, any setback is seen as a national humiliation (Chatterjee, 2004:625). National sport both reflects and moulds national character (Sengupta, 2004:586), and sporting nationalism has always been most intense where there is a general feeling of insecurity or inferiority, according to Guha (2002:350). Preceding the initiation of renewed cricketing relations, many Indians argued that ‘India should not play cricket with Pakistan as long as cross-border terrorism continues,’ and that ‘our nation’s prestige comes first. Cricket can be secondary because what matters is the country’s prestige’ (Chatterjee, 2004:617). The general agreement seemed to be that India should play Pakistan regularly if the government felt the atmosphere is right, again showing the importance of timing. The argument for this kind of ‘embargo on sporting relations until such time as political and diplomatic relationships between the two countries improved,’ was justified by what was seen as practices that were ‘both regular in occurrence and constituted standard diplomatic bargaining counters in international politics’ (Ibid. 619). Therefore, it is relevant to ask, in light of cricket’s role in India and Pakistan, whether cricket diplomacy can survive periods when the political climate between the two countries deteriorates.

The process of cricket diplomacy started in 1987 and continued in 1989 was short-lived as the Kashmiri insurgency froze off bilateral cricket relations until 1997. Thus, once relations got worse, political considerations took the upper hand and cricket suffered as a result. Resumption of cricketing ties did not last long in 1997 either, with both countries conducting nuclear tests in 1998 instead of cricket tests. However, a perceived need at the government level in the two countries for easing of nuclear tensions led to a new rapprochement that resulted in cricket diplomacy in early 1999. Once more, several factors conspired to make this another failed attempt. In other words, no try of cricket diplomacy between 1989 and 1999 survived periods of worsening relations in some form of the other, implying that communication between India and Pakistan through cricket diplomacy was cut off. Symbolically, the poor relationship between Delhi and Islamabad was reflected in the absence of contests between their representatives on the cricket pitch.

Unlike previous attempts of rapprochement between India and Pakistan, however, the current peace process has not been allowed to derail. It has survived thus far despite some setbacks since its inception in 2003. Two events in particular have posed a challenge to the nascent development, and both have been train bombings. The first incident was the Mumbai bombs of July 2006, which killed about 200 persons. India blamed Pakistan for the attack, and temporarily suspended the peace process (BBC News, 2006). Despite this setback, representatives of the two governments renewed their commitment to the peace process, thereby continuing the communicational aspect provided by cricket diplomacy. The second incident occurred when two bombs planted on one of the two train links between India and Pakistan, the Samjhauta Express,⁷ sparked a fire that killed at least 66 people. Officials said that the attack was designed to disrupt the peace process between the two neighbours, but leaders on both sides were quick to condemn the attack and declare their desire to move forward with peace efforts (Ramesh, 2007). In short, cricket diplomacy has since its re-emergence in 2004 survived periodical worsening of relations.

⁷ Commonly called the 'Friendship Express.'

4.3.3 Cricket Diplomacy between India and Pakistan

Adolf Ogi, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace, has said he believes that ‘both national cricket teams are pioneers in the quest for peace and stability in South Asia and can serve as role models for other countries and regions around the world’ (United Nations, 2005). Ogi thus acknowledges that cricket diplomacy has been successful, as have several others. Timing and durability has been important factors in this equation, as has been discussed. It is therefore important to consider whether cricket has been the driving force behind reconciliation initiatives, or a confidence-building measure used in a climate of thawing relations, and what this has meant for the survival of cricket diplomacy and the peace process. Table 4.1 presents an overview of the previous discussion, in which different events are sorted according to conditions at the time of the start of cricket diplomacy, and if it survived deteriorating relations.

Table 4.1 Success of Cricket Diplomacy by Year of Initiation

	Cricket diplomacy continued after relations worsened	Cricket diplomacy stopped after relations worsened
General thawing of tensions when cricket diplomacy started	2004, 2005, 2006	1989, 1999
Strained relations when cricket diplomacy started	1987	1997

From table 4.1, it is clear that the experiences with cricket diplomacy have been mixed. It has been most successful when a general thawing of bilateral relations precedes it. This is the case with the current process, illustrated by bilateral cricket contests in 2004, 2005 and 2006. The 2005 and 2006 series took place in a climate of amicable Indo-Pakistani relations, following directly from the success of the 2004 Friendship Series in

Pakistan, demonstrating the durability of the current process. The two other instances where thawing of relations preceded cricket diplomacy, severe deterioration of bilateral relations ensured its non-survival. Both the Kashmir insurgency in 1989 and the Kargil War and its aftermath in 1999 meant that security and political considerations took precedence over cricket. Furthermore, cricket diplomacy does not seem to survive periods of worsening relations if it is initiated in a period of already tense relations, as the 1997 case show. The only case where cricket diplomacy has survived in this sort of climate is the 1987 case, but this case too was preceded by at least some form of negotiation at the official level. In short, the political climate determines the cricketing ties between India and Pakistan. When used in the right climate, cricket as a confidence-building measure is an effective avenue for tracked diplomacy and people-to-people contact.

Marqusee (2006) cautions the optimists by arguing that it is important that not too much should be asked or expected from the game of cricket. At most, he argues, cricket between India and Pakistan 'can serve as a confidence-building measure, one of various forms of people-to-people interaction that sustain pressure on leaders in both countries.' Confidence-building measures are, as mentioned earlier, in essence 'steps taken mutually by the adversaries to build an atmosphere of trust for resolution of conflicts' (Qadeem, 2003:159). DeLay (1999) similarly argues that while a sport is unable to 'transcend deep-seeded suspicions, structural impediments and profound disagreements between nations, it can have the salutary effect of offering fresh opportunities to comment, inform and educate athletes, fans and governments on policy matters.' This obviously depends on the political climate in which sport diplomacy is carried out, as the abovementioned cases show. A general thawing of relations has been necessary before successful cricket diplomacy was put in to effect. If on the other hand tensions are too severe and no form of dialogue is in motion, cricket could at worst cause movement in the opposite direction by increasing hostility and suspicion, as witnessed in the El Salvador-Honduras football war in 1969. Cricket diplomacy has nonetheless once under way sped up the reconciliation process, and provided new momentum for the leaders to act. Moreover, although some sort of negotiations or thawing of relations is

necessary for cricket diplomacy to commence, it rarely comes into effect for presumably no reason. Cricket diplomacy is as a tool for reinforcing or adding new drive to the India-Pakistan peace process. In addition, it is a very visible way of introducing and making visible a peace process to the world, and for providing feedback on their efforts to the countries' leaders. Hence, cricket diplomacy provides impetus for progress through competitions between the Indian and Pakistani national cricket teams acting as representatives of their respective states, thereby backing up and adding to official talks by creating communication and conversational space at several levels through people-to-people contact.

Cricket is an implicit and inherent part of Indian and Pakistani societies. Thus, cricket matches might be of secondary importance when compared with the threat of war between the neighbours, but they are nonetheless 'cut from the same cloth of social and international relations and inscribed within the same framework of ideas and social practices' (Levermore & Budd, 2004:9). The leaders of the two countries are the ones who decide whether to engage in bilateral cricket, so the ultimate responsibility for making peace resides with them. Hard security considerations have too often taken precedence over the soft power of cricket diplomacy with these leaders, but the cases show that once the decision is taken to ease relations cricket becomes an inevitable part of the puzzle. Cricket diplomacy is therefore a necessary part of peace initiatives between the India and Pakistan.

5.0 Conclusion

Sport can contribute to lasting peace; that is the contention of the United Nations Secretary General's report *Sport for Development and Peace: the way forward* (United Nations, 2006:20), and in 1987 cricket was introduced as a diplomatic tool between the nuclear neighbours of South Asia, illustrating that some sports have an important part to play in social life and in relations between states. The India-Pakistan conflict is fraught with a level of complexity known to few other regional conflicts across the globe. This conflict has contributed to at least four wars and numerous crises since the two states achieved independence in the wake of the collapse of the British India Empire in 1947. Diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict have in the past have nevertheless not made significant headway (Ganguly & Hagerty, 2005:21). Thus, the main question remains: has cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan been successful?

5.1 Has Cricket Diplomacy been Successful?

Cricket has been an important part of the current peace process dating back to 2003, and in that sense it clearly has been successful. To discuss the case of cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan means assessing whether and how cricket matters, rather than how much it matters since cricket clearly is not the only intervening variable in the relationship. That involves taking into account the questions of timing and durability as success criteria in the discussion.

On the account of timing – whether cricket diplomacy has been used to initiate rapprochement, or if it used in a climate of thawing relations – cricket diplomacy as track-two and track-three diplomacy has been most successful when used as a confidence-building measure as part of a peace process, as illustrated by table 4.1. One of the most significant uses of sport diplomacy has been as a means of improving relations between enemies, and this normally comes about in periods where the political climate is conducive to rapprochement. Chari (2002:242) argues that confidence-building measures such as cricket indeed have a better chance of succeeding in times of relative peaceful

relations rather than during periods of heightened tensions. Furthermore, cricket with all its potential for inciting rival passion and nationalistic fervour, is at the right time a uniting force in South Asia. Cricket provides the state leaders with a powerful tool for making the peace process visible, and for gauging the public's attitude towards their efforts. In other words, there is a great potential for peace in cricket as it is perhaps the only real unifying force on the subcontinent. What matters is the timing of bilateral cricket contests, and cricket diplomacy as confidence-building has been instrumental for strengthening the current peace process.

The second success criterion concerns the durability of cricket diplomacy. It is clear from table 4.1 that fortunes have been mixed when it comes to cricket's ability to survive periods of deteriorating Indo-Pakistani relations, making it difficult to come to any final conclusions on this question. Nevertheless, it seems that cricket diplomacy has not been able to survive when state-to-state relations have worsened significantly. President Zia's visit to India in 1987 averted an impending crisis, but the Pakistani-supported Kashmiri uprising in late 1989 put a lid on bilateral cricket between the two neighbours for several years. It was in this period the Indian government that sanctioned the freeze of bilateral cricketing ties, not the national cricket boards. The renewed efforts due to easing of tensions in 1997 and 1999 were also short-lived. Cricket diplomacy was not an issue in those periods. In other words, from 1989 until 1999 cricket not only succumbed to deteriorating relations between India and Pakistan, but was deliberately excluded from their bilateral relationship. Bilateral relations experienced a shift in 2003, and cricket diplomacy was resumed with the Indian cricket team's Friendship Tour of Pakistan in 2004. This time around, cricket diplomacy has survived despite some setbacks in the Indo-Pakistani relationship. Cricket diplomacy has become an annual fixture, and has contributed in large parts to strengthening and preserving the peace process.

5.1.1 Can Sport Create Peace?

Examples of sport diplomacy are far between, but they show a great deal of variety as table 3.2 illustrates. Cricket diplomacy, involving a sport both countries are passionate about and administered at a state-to-state level, is but one of seven cases mentioned in this thesis. Add to that the particularities of the India-Pakistan relationship, and the question whether the findings here are applicable to other cases materializes. Case findings must in any case always be considered to be of a provisional character (George & Bennett, 2004:90), and Punch (2005:146) therefore suggests two main ways in which a case study such as this can produce results that ‘at least suggest generalizability:’ by conceptualizing, and by developing propositions. Based on the case studied, is possible to put forward propositions that can be asserted for their applicability and transferability to other situations.

Two general propositions emerge from the discussion about cricket diplomacy from 1987 to 2007. First, a thaw in relations between adversarial states seems to be a prerequisite for successful sport diplomacy. In other words, sport diplomacy when applied under circumstances conducive to rapprochement will have the greatest chance of succeeding. Second, sport diplomacy’s ability to survive deteriorating state-to-state relations can be vital for maintaining channels of communication even in periods of dire political climates. The question is however how severe a deterioration sport diplomacy is able to withstand, something that probably will vary from case to case. This could and should be a question for future research.

5.2 Future Prospects

In the past, the role of cricket could have possibly been best described as a mock battleground for India and Pakistan to play out their grievances, even adding to these in some cases thereby fulfilling Orwell’s gloomy view on sport as ‘war minus the shooting.’ With all the emotion and notions of national pride and prestige attached to winning against the old enemy, what chance has cricket of continuing to help the cause of peace?

The above discussion might seem to suggest that cricket merely plays an ameliorative role in the Indo-Pakistani relationship – that cricket is not what really matters when it comes to war and peace. Dasgupta (2004:577) argues that cricket matches have provided ‘a quick, albeit temporary, resolution to this face-off where there are no victors in real life.’ What’s more, it is not the Indian and Pakistani cricket players as symbolic representatives by themselves who can bring about détente between their nations, but the two countries’ leaders decision to improve relations (Chenabi, 2004:239). In other words, the governments of India and Pakistan carry the ultimate responsibility for making the peace process work.

But if the playing field ‘can provide a stage for political grievance and conflict, certainly it can also facilitate cooperation and understanding’ (Goldberg, 2000:65). Across South Asia today, there is ‘a fanatical following for cricket which no other sport has known’ within its shores (Khan, 2005:179). All this combined makes for a potent role for cricket to play as perhaps the only real unifying force and national identity marker for Pakistanis and Indians alike. As sport can divide, it also has the potential as the world’s common language to unite people both within and across borders. Imran Khan, a former Pakistani cricketer, spoke of his hopes for the Friendship Series in 2004, saying that: ‘When the two countries are trying to become friendly, trying to ease tensions, then cricket plays a healing role, cricket becomes a cement in bonding the countries together’ (Jawad, 2004). Shaharyar Khan, chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board, added his voice to this positive outlook when asked if cricket diplomacy has succeeded in advance of the Pakistani team’s return tour of India in 2005: ‘Of course it has. Look at the amount of goodwill the two teams generated during the series played in Pakistan. If the Indians won the hearts of the Pakistanis in Pakistan, we are here to achieve the same goal in India. Cricket diplomacy has worked. I have no doubts on that score’ (Rediff, 2005). It seems therefore that cricket diplomacy has the potential to stick around for a while. Nothing is certain when India and Pakistan are involved, though, and it is still too early to tell if cricket will contribute to lasting peace between India and Pakistan.

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