

Freedom First

The Liberal Position

THE MAOIST MENACE



Already a Blood-Stained Olympics

The Revolt in Tibet: Ten Encouraging Aspects

THE TORCH RELAY : A SYMBOL OF SUPPRESSION OF TIBETAN FREEDOM

I am sorry. We could have provided you a more “spectacular” protest today if security arrangements were little more relaxed than 17,000 police personnel, including commandos, on their toes. For those of you who couldn’t see us, there was a heart-rending yak dance as our parallel freedom torch was carried through in Delhi, and if that was not enough, one Buddhist nun knelt down in front of a policeman and said, “Please help us, China is killing our people inside Tibet.”



But this was the sideshow.

China has once again proved that with its military power it can even turn the central heart of the capital of a free and democratic country like India into a military zone, throw the city’s roads into gridlock. Even if for a few hours.

I started my day with a protest plan but was unsure of executing it in this maze of security. The aim was to make ourselves heard. With fellow activists, we revisited our plans first thing in the morning and by 11 am, our plans had already changed several times as we got to know more details about the security. Many of our activists got arrested even before they could do anything. By 4 pm, it was impossible for our people to reach the protest site in groups. I was constantly coordinating but the more phone calls I made, I realized that our protests were dissipating in the face of an impenetrable fortress around Rajpath.

We were well aware that the media was waiting for a Paris and London-type torch-snuffing protest, there was even whispered talk of a possible self-immolation, there was a photograph of policemen with a bucket and a blanket to douse the imagined flames.

But the torch has left for Bangkok and we have registered our protest even though it has left one young Tibetan with a broken arm and a monk with a swollen groin thanks to the police lathi charge near Rashtrapati Bhavan. Of course, this isn’t the news, the news is that the torch came, the torch ran and the torch left. Also, the police action happened behind bushes and toilets where activists were hiding. About 300 Tibetans have been arrested and they are being detained in six different police stations across Delhi, they should be released in batches as the torch gets farther and farther away from Delhi.

When the massive state mechanism of control comes into play, it systematically rolls over individual

freedom. Three years ago, the local police created a similar “sterile zone” in Bangalore when Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao came visiting. The Bangalore police not only withdrew our protest permission, they detained all Tibetans in the city. In a desperate measure to vent our voice of freedom, I had to climb up to the high tower of the Indian Institute of Science and shout “Free Tibet”.

Later, people asked whether I was afraid? Of course, I was afraid, spending the whole night in the tower and watching the ground from a height where humans looked like ants. But I was determined to make my voice for freedom heard through the sophisticated hum of India-China diplomacy. What I did was outrageous.

It is this outrageousness that the Chinese state is afraid of; the spirit of the people who are not afraid of consequences that follow their action. When Tibetans in Tibet poured out on to the streets of Lhasa and across the world’s rooftop this March shouting “Free Tibet,” they knew they would be killed or jailed for life. China is afraid of this power.

Tomorrow morning, we resume our march to Tibet. We are 300-odd Tibetans returning to our native land. I know when our country is still under Chinese occupation, this sounds like a fantasy but all of us want to go home and be with our people. In this endeavour, we are willing to face any challenge, be it police beating, prisons or even guns. We are committed to non-violence and we will not resort to any verbal or physical violence. We know with Budhha in our heart and Gandhi in our mind, no power can stop us, we will soon be home. We are willing to die for our cause, but we are not willing to kill. The Dalai Lama has no gun, we fight with truth. Let it be known that our fight is not against the people of China but the continued occupation through brutal control by the Chinese state.

The torch relay will go on but it has already become a symbol of Chinese suppression of Tibetan freedom. Today’s torch run, therefore, was our success.

New Delhi, April 17.

COURTESY: *The Indian Express*, April 18, 2008.

TENZIN TSUNDUE, 33, is a Tibetan activist and author of two books *Kora* and *Semshook*, collections of poetry and essays.



Freedom First

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BETWEEN OUSELVES...

This issue has two main features – the cover feature which focuses on the threat posed by Maoism to the integrity of our country and the other on the forces of Maoism that have already subjugated a nation called Tibet and are now bent on eliminating its culture and breaking the morale of the Tibetan people. The two are connected – the second is a pointer to us Indians of what will happen if we don't realize the danger to our liberty and way of life posed by the Maoists and act before it is too late. Maoists are now in control of Nepal and with another buffer state gone and with Maoist Nepal offering safe sanctuary to their brethren across the borders, Maoist insurgency in India will now be encouraged to develop and further expand the red corridor deeper into India.

In Ancient India kings who had ambitions of territorial expansion performed the 'Ashwamedha yagna' sending a riderless horse accompanied by a small platoon of soldiers through other kingdoms. If the horse passed unchallenged through another kingdom it was taken as a mark of acceptance by its ruler of the overlordship of the king performing the 'Aśwamedha yagna'. The Chinese communists have seized the modern variant of the horse "the Olympic Torch which was accompanied by Chinese communist soldiers sporting civvies, to assert their power. To those who are crying hoarse that politics and sports should not be mixed up, a study of communist 'philosophy' (if it can be called one) makes no difference between the two. Everything is part of their armoury. The Tibetans, a people robbed of their country find the transit of the Olympic Torch, an opportunity to draw attention to their plight. What's wrong with that?

Our Government finds everything wrong with that considering the manner in which they literally closed down India's capital to allow safe passage to the Olympic Torch. Let's be clear - the kind of 'bhai bhai' phase we were lulled into 46 years ago died with the 1962 war. If the Chinese communists still wish to be considered as 'bhais' then they can only be of a different kind – the kind popularised by Dawood and his ilk.

This is a combined April-May issue. We had to skip May so that from June onwards readers can get their copies of *Freedom First* in the first week of June and in the first week of each month thereafter.

- Editor

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MANY VOICES

*"The deep moans round with many voices. Come, my friends
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world" - Tennyson*

We must seek explanations on how the strategic alliance with the United States, which New Delhi made the quintessence of its policy for almost a decade, helped to discourage farmers in Vidharbha from taking their own lives.

M. K. Bhadrakumar, *The Hindu*, April 10

I make no attempt to interfere with your interest or pursuit of any of these therapies. But I shouldn't be compelled to help you do something I find morally unconscionable.

William Buckley Jr. in his column 'on the right'
National Review, December 31, 2007

I think Goa is safe. Foreigners get friendly with local boys, some of who play mischief. Women should also be careful not to go into the remote areas at night.

Digambar Kamat, Chief Minister of Goa replying to question if tourism will be affected as a result of the killings of Stephen Benett and Scarlett Keeling,
Sunday Hindustan Times, March 9

Communist China has no place for any stintly figure. It recognizes only one God: the Party. Can we imagine the Party giving the Dalai Lama the freedom to move around in China, preach his ideals go on pilgrimages address press conferences and participate in inter-faith celebrations?

Sudheendra Kulkarni in his column 'thinking
ALoud', *The Sunday Express*, April 13

As we infidels see it there is no room for religion - any religion - in the public square. Other religions have accepted this and retreated to a more private space. Islam has not.

Taveleen Singh in her column 'fifth COLUMN',
The Sunday Express, April 13

To accuse China's critics of "politicising" a sporting event is nonsense. What has the relay to do with sport? It is not some timeworn practice integral to the games. Rather, the idea of a relay from Greece to the Olympic venue was revived by the Nazis for the 1936 Berlin Olympics, which is hardly a precedent China wants to advertise.

The Economist, April 10

"We haven't turned any corners, we haven't

seen any lights at the end of the tunnel. The champagne bottle has been pushed to the back of the refrigerator. And the progress, while real, is fragile and reversible"

General David H. Petraeus, United States's military commander in Iraq, from a Reuters report quoted in
Open Democracy, April 11

When U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addressed the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland last January, his primary focus was not on the impending global economic recession but on the world's growing water crisis.

Thlif Deen, Inter Press Service, quoted in CC
Newsletter, March 21

"For reasons that need not detain us, I must say farewell. I was under the impression that I might have been able to do so with more grace, but judging from this morning's edition of our paper (*The Asian Age*) it seems I might have overstayed our welcome... India's democracy is a little more powerful than its temporary rulers".

Quoted by Shantanu Guha Ray in his report on the sacking of Asian Age editor M. J. Akbar,
Tehelka Magazine, March 15

"I do not want to run with the torch as a caged woman. Why turn India Gate into a zoo? What is the point of running with the torch? I do not want to participate in a caged environment. If you make the environment so suffocating, then it is better to let the torch travel on wheels or with the Army."

Kiran Bedi, India's first woman IPS officer and Magsaysay award-winner speaking to CNN-IBN.

Every woman wants to be beautiful; every woman wants to be considered sexy as well. But the challenge lies in being beautiful and sexy when you are in your everyday clothes.

Actor Kareena Kapoor, *The Week*, March 16

Strong authority without people's support can be impotent. Putin got support because he identified what people wanted - stability and rebuilding the State.

Mikhail Gorbachev, president of the former Soviet Union and Nobel Peace Prize winner, *The Week*, March 16

National Security

Roots of India's Democracy

N. Vittal

In his book before he was hanged titled 'If I am assassinated' Zulfikar Ali Bhutto wrote: "India survives because of its boisterous democracy". Even in the height of the 'Emergency', there were strong-willed, doughty persons like Ramnath Goenka and C. R. Irani who were able to keep the spirit of freedom and democracy alive.

I am a 70 year old Indian and I am very happy that India has become an object of interest to investors in the newly flattened world. What you see depends on where you sit. I spent 42 years of my life in the public governance of this country, I would like to share my perspectives with you.

This is the 60th year of independence. All of us Indians are proud that while India became independent along with many other countries, in the late 40s, India alone has remained a unique and successful model of a really functioning and vigorous democracy.

This performance of India as an effective democracy after independence was not expected. In fact, Churchill predicted that men of straw may come to power and very soon India may cease to be a single united country. Rajaji anticipated even in the 20s the type of extensive corruption we are likely to have once we became independent. Why has democracy survived in India especially in the context of its uniform failure in the other countries in the neighbourhood?

Different explanations may be given. Here is my take. We are now in the age of information technology and we can look upon the functioning of any country in terms of software/hardware. Before we entered the age of information technology the way to describe the functioning of any organization was to draw an analogy from biology. Anatomy described the underlying hard skeleton of the body. Physiology explained the functioning of the various organs. We may examine the mystery of Indian democracy in terms of software/hardware or anatomy/physiology. Have we been merely lucky or is it just a matter of time before we also join the rest of the countries where democracy has failed and intervention by the military or dictators becomes the norm? It is possible that India may not have been merely lucky to have developed a

functioning democracy for the last 60 years. It is probable that a happy coincidence of a number of factors helped India to realize this achievement. It will be necessary for all thinking persons to be aware of this and not take our democracy as indestructible.

The first of course, is the software aspect. We have adopted a secular constitution. The basic culture that prevails in India is the Hindu culture of tolerance and synthesis. Hinduism or better *sanathana dharma*, has always emphasised two aspects. One is the need

Have we been merely lucky or is it just a matter of time before we also join the rest of the countries where democracy has failed and intervention by the military or dictators becomes the norm?

for open mindedness and tolerance of conflicting news. '*Aanobhadraha kithavoyanthu vishwathaha*' is a vedic invocation. This calls for noble ideas to be welcomed from every side of the world. The second essential principle is the principle of *dharma* or the rule of righteous conduct. There are different *dharma*s for different stages in life and situations. In the *Shanthiparva* of the Mahabharata through Bhishma, Rajadharma or the correct way of organizing the politics of a country have been articulated. This tradition of India for argumentation has been captured in the best seller of Dr. Amartya Sen, 'The Argumentative Indian'. As against this, the countries where democracy did not take root, adopted a different software. Pakistan for instance, was perceived to be the homeland for Muslims. All along religion was the dominant aspect in the political struggle for Pakistan. Unlike the *sanathana dharma*, Semitic religions like Islam, Christianity or Judaism go by the authority of a single book of revelations. The scope for

argumentation theoretically does not exist and a tradition of argumentation was lacking. Perhaps, it is this, unique aspect of India which subconsciously has provided the mental framework for the development of the democratic ethos in the country.

A look at other democracies in the world, will show that at some stage or other they all had inflection points or moments of make and break. It is the acid tests faced at such points, which led to the survival of a particular type of government like democracy. In Britain, the inflection point perhaps came when Oliver Cromwell led the rebels and King Charles I was beheaded. Constitutional monarchy was restored and the parliamentary system of democracy has prevailed over the years since then. In the United States, the moment of catharsis was the civil war in the 1860s when Abraham Lincoln was the President, who provided historic leadership preserving the Union. In India, perhaps the catharsis was the emergency of Indira Gandhi and the nation survived. Indira Gandhi chose to legitimize her position after two years by going in for elections. The impact of the emergency has been such that subsequently, it will be difficult for a future prime minister or a head of the state to re-enact the role of Indira Gandhi.

The great leaders we had at the time of independence like Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajaji and others set high standards in laying the foundation of our democracy

What constitutes the hardware aspect of Indian democracy? It is the vibrancy and the strength of the independent institutions which preserve the democracy. The media is one of the institutions. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto realized this when he wrote in his book before he was hanged titled 'If I am assassinated' that "India survives because of its boisterous democracy". Even in the height of 'Emergency', there were strong willed, doughty persons like Ramnath Goneka and C.R. Irani who were able to keep the spirit of freedom and democracy alive. The institutions like parliament and the judiciary also after the searing experience of 'Emergency', developed conventions and systems to guard against a repetition. For instance, so long as Congress was dominant and the single party rule prevailed, Article 356 for imposing emergency in states for meeting the political needs of Congress party had become very common. With the erosion of the single party

dominance, restrictions on the invoking of the Article 356 like the Bommai judgement have ensured that the essential structure for democratic functioning cannot be so easily tampered with. Institutions ultimately preserve the anatomy of the basic structure of the democracy. The strength of the institutions are derived from the stand they took at critical moments of inflection points.

There is another lucky aspect that has helped Indian democracy. Apart from the strength of the institutions and the prediction of the argumentative liberal spirit, there is another important input which is required for democracy. This is the need for integrity in public life. In this aspect India was fortunate. The great leaders we had at the time of independence like Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajaji and others set high standards. In laying the foundation of our democracy they provided role models though most of them may be forgotten today in the increasingly corrupt set of leadership we have in public life. The miserable record of many African countries which were colonies and became independent can be traced to the lack of honest leaders after independence. The tradition of the 'Big man', who was a freedom fighter becoming totally corrupt was witnessed in many countries.

Is India's democracy a lucky accident? No. It is not merely due to sheer luck that India has reached this happy position of a real democracy. It has the necessary hardware and software to carry on in the future as a vigorous democracy.

The Threat Of Terrorism

One of the major threats for India as a country today arises from terrorism of two types. One of course is the well known *jihadi* terrorism and the other is the Maoist terrorism also called Naxalism. Unfortunately, the democratic culture of India's politics seems to have made our country weak in tackling this danger.

The tragic events in Nandigram in West Bengal in 2007 highlighted dramatically the problems which we are facing in implementing the concept of special economic zones. The idea of carving out areas where the normal red tape and restrictions of bureaucracy will not apply, and an environment conducive to promote economic activities especially in manufacturing and exports is provided is not entirely new. India is perhaps the first country in Asia to set

up the free trade zone in Kandla, way back in 1965.

When Mr. Murasoli Maran was the Commerce Minister, he was impressed with the progress made by China under the Deng Xio Ping's policy of special economic zones. This concept of zones which were exempted from the normal customs restrictions and enjoying tax benefits was crystallized in the form of a law in 2005. A large number of applications poured in from all over the country. There are large players like Reliance, who are literally setting up new cities in Maharastra, near Mumbai as well as in Haryana.

The same idea of a focused zone for tying up an idea and for using it as a nucleus for spreading out is simultaneously going on in our country by another set of players which has also attracted attention. These are the Naxalites. Mr. Jagmohan, a very experienced administrator, thinker and former governor of J&K and Union Minister has drawn attention in a recent article in the *Indian Express* on 22nd March 2007, 'to the rising Naxal threats to security'. He has highlighted two points. The first point is that it must be fully understood by the Indian society and the State that the Naxalite moment is inherently dangerous and destructive. "It sets one class against another class, one caste against another caste and often declares yesterday's comrades as today's police informers and traitors deserving verbal trial and elimination". "Equally nihilistic is the Naxalite attitude towards India's underlying unity and the distinct culture. They advocate the right of the so called nationalities of India, to self determination and session. Knowing full well the exercise of such rights will only lead to unending divisions, discord and ultimate extinction of Indian entity".

The second point he highlights is the new strategy of the Naxalites. "The new strategy is to pit the police and other authorities against the masses who have rightly or wrongly made to believe that they are victims of injustice and inequities. A red corridor extending the jungles of north Bihar to Jharkand, Orissa, Chattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Maharastra and Karnataka is fast emerging. The object is to establish a compact a revolutionary zone in the heart of India and use this zone and the red corridor for extending the Naxalite movement to the cities and seizing the power structure of the state.

Any patriotic Indian would be concerned about the development of the two types of zones. The special

economic zone which aims at development and prosperity and the central revolutionary zone of the Naxalites. The tale of the two zones is a tale of striking contrasts. By a curious twist of fate, the political system we have in our country has created a situation where while Special Economic Zones are facing problems and it is with great difficulty progress is being achieved. The central revolutionary zones of Naxalites seem to be prospering because of the very same political system. Short term political considerations of parties weakens the will of the State in fighting the real threat of Naxalism.

The government of Chandrababu Naidu in Andhra Pradesh was focusing on eliminating the threats of Naxalities and the dedicated effort of police

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officers like Mr. Dora, the then DGP, succeeded to a greater extent in reducing the Naxalite threat. When Congress came to power in 2004, on political considerations, the whole policy was put in reverse, providing fresh opportunities for Naxalism to thrive. This sort of "stop go" attitude for handling Naxalism has become part of the swings of the democratic politics of the other states where the Naxal threat is present and growing.

The pessimistic conclusion one can draw is that between the Central Revolutionary zone and Special Economic zone, the revolutionary zone may ultimately proved to be more long lasting and successful in destroying the country than the Economic zone. The catalyst of pessimism is the short term political myopia of different parties, thanks to the dynamics of elections and the coalition dharma of present day politics. Is there a possibility that there will be a realization about the long term danger that can be caused to the country and more realistic and consistent stand against the Naxalites, forced by all political parties in the common minimum program? I wonder.

MR. N. VITTAL was formerly Chief Vigilance commissioner, Government of India. (Excerpted from a talk delivered on 8th February 2008 and published with his permission). Email: nagarajanvittal@hotmail.com

The Maoist Menace

Ashok Sahu

“We cannot rest in peace till we have eliminated this virus”

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh

Maoism or Naxalism is a movement, which does not believe in democracy, does not accept the constitutional system and intends to establish a “Peoples Republic” through the use of extreme terror. The target is to hoist the ‘Red Flag’ on the Red Fort in New Delhi.

The Left Wing extremism spearheaded by the Communist Party of India (Maoist) constitutes what Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh rightly described as the “single biggest internal security challenge” confronting the country. The Prime Minister asserted, “We cannot rest in peace till we have eliminated this virus”. The Maoist threat has now overtaken all other insurgencies in the country – at least from the perspective of geographical spread. From March 2006 to August 2007, the Maoist presence has spread from 165 districts in 14 states to 192 districts in 16 states, the total districts in the entire country being 602.

Unlike Jehadi terrorists, the Maoist terrorists are Indians, funded by extorted and looted property from victims. The leadership is indigenous too. Use of state power to control them is not an adequate solution. It is a movement, which does not believe in democracy, does not accept the constitutional system and intends to establish a “Peoples Republic” through the use of extreme terror. The target is to hoist the ‘Red Flag’ on the Red Fort in New Delhi. While trying to control its leadership through penal laws, the root causes that are exploited by the Maoists need to be addressed. The root causes are poor governance, want of social justice, lack of electoral reforms, corruption in the judiciary and bureaucracy, poor state of rural roads, absence of primary health care, education and employment opportunities. So long as the basic causes persist, the Maoists cannot be stopped from expanding in the rural areas and then forming front organisations in urban areas. Their front organisations are the recruitment points for the selection of their future leaders. At present, the district level guerrilla commandos and party leaders get handsome remuneration and are technologically well-equipped. In their perspective plan for urban expansion, technological upgradation and access to the mining

belt and industrial towns in Orissa, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka are given top priority. In order to understand the gravity of the Maoist threat, it is necessary to delve into its immediate history.

Background

The first spark of the movement was witnessed in 1948 in the Telengana region with the rise of farmers under the leadership of T. Nagi Reddy and T. S. Rao. Later in 1967–71, it is traced to the agrarian movement that started in Naxalbari, a small village in West Bengal, led by leaders like Charu Mazumdar and Kanu Sanyal. There were many factions in the movement due to ideological cleavage and differences on tactics and strategy. The Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) was formed under Kanhai Chatterjee’s leadership in 1975. In 1980, Kondapalli Seetharamaiah formed the Peoples War Group (PWG) in Andhra Pradesh. The growth of the MCC in the North and PWG in the South marked an important milestone in the history of Maoist growth in India. During 1990 there was reassessment of their ‘protracted movement’. It was decided to spread it to areas adjacent to a Communist country like Soviet Russia or Peoples Republic of China. Accordingly the MCC group in Bihar trained the Maoists in Nepal. And now, though there were as many as 44 factions in the CPI (ML), they are united since September 2004.

Maoist groups all over South Asia formed a Coordination Committee of Maoist Parties and Organisations of South Asia (CCOMPOSA) in July 2001, which is said to be the first such international conclave. PWG and MCC have joined as its integral parts. The most important development after the formation of CCOMPOSA is the merger of the PWG and the MCC in India to form the Communist Party of India (Maoist) on 21 September 2004.

Ideology

Both organizations share the belief in 'annihilation of class enemies' and in extreme violence as the means to secure organizational goals. Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is the ideological basis guiding its (CPI-Maoist's) thinking. The new entity has reaffirmed its commitment to the classical Maoist strategy of 'protracted armed struggle' for seizure of power. In this perspective, participation in elections and engagement with the prevailing 'bourgeois democracy' are rejected, and all efforts and attention is firmly focused on 'revolutionary activities' to undermine the state and seize power.

Objectives

The new Party pledged to work in close collaboration with the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist). As part of its strategy, the CPI-Maoist would fiercely oppose the Central Government run by the Congress and its mainstream communist allies, the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the CPI (Marxist).

The merger now makes the CPI (Maoist) a pan-Indian revolutionary group, and brings the Maoists closer to their objective of 'liberating' their proposed Compact Revolutionary Zone (CRZ), which extends from Nepal through Bihar in the North to Dandakaranya region (forest areas of Central India) and Andhra Pradesh in the South.

The party secretary, Ganapathi, also announced the formation of a 'People's Liberation Guerrilla Army' and extended support to 'revolutionary struggles' in Nepal, Peru, the Philippines, Turkey and 'other places'.

The whole country has been divided into five Regional Bureaus to suit this strategy. The CPI-Maoist has established "Regional Bureaus across nearly two-thirds of the country's territory. Maoists have articulated a new strategy to target urban centres in their "Urban Perspective Document", drawing up guidelines for "working in towns and cities". Two principal 'industrial belts' have been identified as targets for urban mobilisation: Bhilai-Ranchi-Dhanbad-Calcutta and Mumbai-Pune-Surat-Ahmedabad.

According to official sources, the merger will have serious implications in all states facing the Maoist

threat, and will increase the 'firepower', 'battle ability' and levels of modernization of the two groups. The PWG is estimated to have 5000 armed cadres and around 4500 firearms, including a large number of rifles of AK variety, light machine guns, self-loading rifles, carbines, grenades, and landmines technologies. The MCC is estimated to have cadre strength between 4500-4000, and around 3500 firearms of similar varieties.

The two guerrilla armies of the PWG and the MCC - the People's Guerrilla Army (PGA) and the People's Liberation Guerrilla Army (PLGA) respectively - have also merged under the agreement. The new-armed force reportedly operates under the name of PLGA since December 2, 2004.

Areas of Operation

Following the merger, the outfit, according to current estimates is active in 192 districts of 16 States that include Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala.

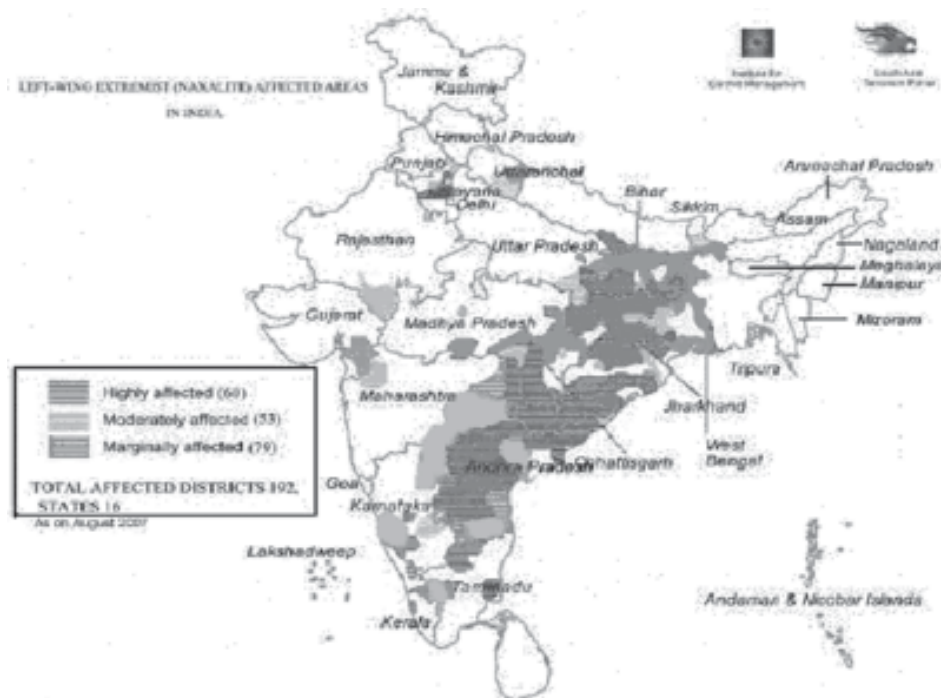
The merger now makes the CPI(Maoist) a pan-Indian revolutionary group, and brings the Maoists closer to their objective of 'liberating' their proposed Compact Revolutionary Zone (CRZ), which extends from Nepal through Bihar in the North to Dandakaranya region (forest areas of Central India) and Andhra Pradesh in the South. The intention is to have a continuous stretch of territory under their control, with the ultimate goal of eventually "liberating" the entire zone. Large parts of this territory have already been brought under the extremist influence with only some link-ups now necessary in the remaining pockets to make the CRZ a reality. Once achieved, the CRZ will virtually drive a wedge through the middle of the country, and would help crystallize linkages with other Maoist groups operating in South Asia, including the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-M) and the Communist Party of Bhutan-Maoist (CPB-M).

As per Intelligence reports, MCC and PWG have established close links with LTTE, Islamic Terrorist groups, Nepali Maoists and Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence to receive arms and training and co-operate

in destabilizing internal security in India. Attacks on police posts, looting of arms, ambush of police parties etc., have become common in the so-called 'liberated areas'. The Maoists have also assiduously built support among the intelligentsia. After the arrests of some cadres in Maharashtra, it was found that 57 NGOs have been helping the Maoists financially and providing medical help to them in the cities. Some of the NGOs were flush with money. As mentioned earlier, the Maoists have been successful in their bid to carve out a corridor through contiguous areas of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhatisgarh, Orissa, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal up to Nepal called the Red Corridor. The map alongside spells out the contours of the Red Corridor.

establishment. The Government has placed great faith on 'developmental initiatives' in Maoist-affected regions. The National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme, Bharat Nirman, Backward Districts Initiative and the Prime Minister's Rural Roads Programme are the measures initiated by the Government. These neglect realities in the conflict zone, where the delivery mechanisms and administrative machinery of the state

'Land reforms' will have little impact in regions where a red flag on a piece of land conclusively alters its title; and the funds flowing in for various developmental schemes have no channels into the rural hinterland, where only the para-military column dares to venture.



cowers under the shadow of violence, with Government officials often paying extortion sums and 'revolutionary taxes' to the Maoists. 'Land reforms' will have little impact in regions where a red flag on a piece of land conclusively alters its title; and the funds flowing in for various developmental schemes have no channels into the rural hinterland, where only the para-military

column dares to venture.

Ground Reality and Suggestions for Solution

Poor governance, increasing corruption in administration, growing unemployment both in the rural and urban sectors and lack of definite policy for settlement of displaced population in the acquired areas for Industries have been some of the ground realities, which are being exploited by the Maoist insurgents to build a mass base against the

The threat perception of the Government in the context of Maoist insurgency has to be reoriented to the bigger game plan of the Maoists designed for the whole South Asia region. In the national context, our approach all along has been, as if, it is the concern of the affected State and the Centre can only extend help on request by sending reinforcement of para-military forces. It is to be noted that the threat of the Naxalites is not limited to the areas of immediate

violence. It is in the complex processes of political activity, mass mobilisation, arms training and military consolidation that the Maoist potential has to be estimated. While incidents of violence and fatalities would be crucial in any threat assessment, they cannot exhaust its entire content. The authority of the law and order within the state, moreover, is an indivisible unit; if it is successfully challenged in one location, it is weakened everywhere.

The Maoist menace continues to expand, except where it has been confronted by coherent use of force – as is currently and substantially the case in Andhra Pradesh, where area domination exercise under the leadership of the local Police, backed by the armed reserve forces and the Grey Hounds, and a well-developed intelligence network has succeeded in beating back the Naxalites to a large extent. The Andhra Pradesh Police has developed its capabilities to engage the Maoists in their 'strongholds', though it has been repeatedly inhibited by political constraints from effective action. These constraints appear, for the moment, to have been lifted.

Other States, however, remain far from prepared. Indeed, a consistent feature across all the major Maoist-

affected States is that they have extraordinarily poor policing infrastructure. The Central Government has to reorganize the State police with requisite funds both in matters of resources and training. State intelligence wings need to be strengthened by introducing incentives to attract capable officers. Village defense organisations have to be revamped to bring the rural population closer to the Police administration, which would also help, in the collection of intelligence. The people in the rural areas need to be educated by way of information on national integration and its enemies within and without the country, at the school level and at the gram panchayat level by gram sevaks and sarpanchs through awareness programmes. The Forest Department has to function in close coordination with the Revenue and Police departments in the states.

The Central Government has also woken up to the need for a centralised force to fight this menace in a coordinated manner and is raising special armed police battalions for the purpose. It will take some time for this force to be functionally effective.

(Edited by Ashok Karnik from the original paper by Ashok Sahu IPS, retired Inspector General of Police, Assam.)






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Insurgency in the North East

T. S. Tanwar

The army and paramilitary forces engaged in counter-insurgency should be given special training which emphasizes respect for human and constitutional rights, and due regard for ethnic and communal sensibilities.

The British, for administrative reasons, had carved India into a number of Presidencies and Agencies; one of these was the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA). It was only during the Japanese invasion across Burma in World War II, that the colonial rulers woke up to the strategic importance of North East India. In the October 2007 issue of *Freedom First*, Bharat Verma in his article 'The Real Danger' has highlighted the importance of maintaining the territorial integrity in North East India and the strategic relevance of the Siliguri Corridor, against the prevailing situation in this area and the Chinese claim over Arunachal Pradesh. The current turmoil in Manipur is a case in point for all Indians to sit up and take note.

North East India

North East India comprises of the seven states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura, and Meghalaya. The location of these seven North Eastern States is itself part of the reason why this area has been a hotbed of insurgency and militancy with considerable trans-border activity. While this region of mountain, rivers and dense forests shares a 4,500 km-long international border with four countries, China to the North, Myanmar to the East, Bangladesh in the Southwest and Bhutan in the

Northwest, it is connected to mainland India by a narrow 20 plus kilometers of land corridor passing through Siliguri West Bengal, commonly known as the 'Chicken's Neck.'

The Ministry of Home Affairs in its Annual Report for 2002-2003 lists 24 active insurgent groups (probably the number must have increased by now) in the North Eastern States. In the chapter entitled 'Security Scenario in the North East', the Report states: "The most serious militant affected states/areas viz, the whole of Manipur, Nagaland and Assam, Tirap and Changlang districts of Arunachal Pradesh and a 20 km belt in the states having common border with Assam have been declared as 'disturbed areas' under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 as amended in 1972."

Insurgency in North East India

Within 10 years of independence the Indian Government became concerned about the trans-border linkages of insurgent groups in North East India. A case in point is that of the founding father of the Naga insurgency, A Z Phizo, chief of the rebel Naga National Council (NNC), who left the Naga hilly area in 1956, to continue the fight for an independent Naga homeland. He traveled through East Pakistan and



Area: 262,230 km²

States and territories: 1. Arunachal Pradesh, (Itanagar), 2. Assam, (Guwahati), 3. Manipur, (Imphal), 4. Meghalaya, (Shillong), 5. Mizoram, (Aizawl), 6. Nagaland, (Kohima), 6. Sikkim, Gangtok, 7. Tripura (Agartala)

Official languages: Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Manipuri

Population: 38,857,769

North-East India refers to the vast easternmost region of India consisting of the contiguous Seven Sister States (spanning an area about the size of the United Kingdom) and Sikkim. Of these, Sikkim became an Indian protectorate in 1947 and a full state in 1975. The states border Nepal, Bhutan, China, Myanmar and Bangladesh. However they share only a 21 km common border with the rest of India via the Chicken's Neck.

Switzerland, to eventually reach London in 1960, and from there he continued to pursue his dream until his death in April 1990. His daughter Adinno Phizo, became the NNC President, and continues to push their cause from her home in London.

Additionally the activities on the insurgency front in these states have shown that rebel groups have often succeeded in neutralizing their reverses by entering into deals and pacts of convenience with other insurgent groups, and these alliances act as force multipliers. It is linkages such as these and the potential for immense trans-border movement by cadres of these groups that has made the pacts so significant. However successes of our security forces and bold actions by our neighbours such as Bhutan, Myanmar as also a reluctant Bangladesh have destroyed the training and operating bases.

Need to Review Counter Insurgency Strategy

Insurgency in North East India, cannot be solved without understanding the basic causes which are cast into a mosaic of several insurgencies, creating a continuing atmosphere of turmoil and insurgency situations. The demands vary from secession to statehood; regional autonomy for ethnic areas within the states; protection of ethnic areas within the states; and protection of ethnic and cultural identities. What is common to this entire North East area is economic and infrastructural backwardness, unemployment and lack of opportunities. Regrettably successive central governments since independence, have been indifferent to these problems and have consequently failed to tackle the problem of insurgency in the initial stages. There is widespread unemployment and lack of opportunities, a sense of deliberate deprivation among the masses, ethnic discrimination, insecurity and an assumed loss of identity among the minorities.

Each insurgency, needs to be taken up separately, its causes identified with solutions in the long term to ensure political stability and peace in the region.

The Way Forward

Counter-insurgency action must be multi-pronged and across state and central governments to be effective. The numerous ministries in the government have to play a concerted role. Enhanced economic progress can effectively defuse the

What is common to this entire North East area is economic and infrastructural backwardness, unemployment and lack of opportunities.

inclination towards going against the democratic order. Although the areas are getting some attention the pace is slow. The Police establishment needs to be reformed to acquire credibility, accountability, capability and devotion. It is essential that the police forces must be freed from political interference. The judiciary has to be made accountable for timely action. The army and paramilitary forces engaged in counter-insurgency should be given special training which emphasizes respect for human and constitutional rights, and due regard for ethnic and communal sensibilities. When the crisis in governance gets prolonged, common grievances can acquire political overtones. All citizens in insurgency affected areas should also be made aware of their rights and obligations. This could significantly deter the abuse of authority, combined with an effective grievance redress mechanism. Due to better standards of literacy prevailing in the North Eastern states, this educational approach deserves serious attention.

The need of the hour is for education all around, a commitment at all levels, including political, irrespective of party politics for there much at stake in this region that in the long run can make or mar the integrity of India as a nation.

COL. T. S. TANWAR (Retd.) has served two tenures in the North East and one in Kashmir. He is currently a consultant in the field of human relations and administration.

Today's Foreign Policy Imperatives

"I've said elsewhere this simple point, that there is now no longer a clinical divide between the national and the international, the foreign and the domestic, the internal and the external, as the great divide collapses. So much of what we do internationally is an extension of what we do nationally. And to be effective in what we now do domestically, we have to be in parallel terms active externally."

Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd

National Security : The Contemporary Paradigm (3)

The Responsibility of Central and State Governments

V. Balachandran

Mr.V.Balachandran, former Special Secretary in the Cabinet Secretariat of the Government of India, presented a Paper on "A New Paradigm for Indian Internal Security Management" at the Annual Conference of the Maharashtra Regional Branch of the Indian Institute of Public Administration on 12 October 2007. Excerpts from the Paper are being published by Freedom First in four instalments. The first two instalments appeared in Freedom First No.487 of December 2007 and No. 488 of January 2008 respectively. This is the third part.

There is a mistaken belief in certain circles that national security can be ensured with strong defence forces or by effective internal policing system. The desire to upgrade weaponry arises out of this belief. The United States of America was subjected to a humiliating terrorist attack on September 11, 2001 despite having the best weaponry and the largest army in the world (over 14 lakh soldiers). Russia was not able to prevent repeated Chechen attacks on various targets despite having the third largest army (12.5 lakh soldiers). Similarly India could not prevent an attack on our parliament on December 13, 2001 or the earlier Kargil incursion, despite having the world's fourth largest army with almost 12 lakh soldiers.

The US Think Tank Rand Corporation in a recent case study of eight "Ungoverned" territories found the following attributes which led to serious internal security and law and order problems which spilled outside causing turbulence to the whole region. "Ungoverned territories can be failed or failing States, poorly controlled land or maritime borders or areas within otherwise viable states ,where the Central government's authority does not extend":

- (a) Lack of State penetration: Absence of State institutions; lack of physical infrastructure, corruption and the prevalence of an informal economy
- (b) Lack of monopoly of force: Illegal armed groups; criminal networks; population with access to arms

(c) Lack of border controls

(d) External interference

The need for establishing the legal right of the Centre to selectively intervene in situations affecting national security will be all the more important in the days to come with more and more weak and heterogeneous coalitions ruling the states.

In an article in the *Asian Age* (Does the Indian State Exist?- 29 March 2007) this writer had highlighted the grave danger to the integrity of the nation if the Maoist activities are allowed to grow unchecked since, even by official admission, 150-165

districts in over 12 states were under the grip of Maoist violence where they could choose targets within 550 police stations and hit at will. On the other hand a detailed survey by *Frontline* (September 8-21,

2007) found that much of the blame for the growing strength of the Maoist movement is because of administrative lapses by the Central and state governments in not understanding the underlying issues and treating it only as a law & order problem. Mr.D.Bandopadhyay, Chairman of the Expert Group on "Development Issues to deal with Causes of Discontent, unrest and Extremism"(Planning Commission) blamed governments concerned for the present situation since no care was taken to resettle jobless tribal people displaced from Central India due to mega projects. Walter Fernandes, a scholar on the subject, has estimated that between 1951 and 2005 roughly 5.5 crore people have been so displaced. Of these only 28 to 30% have been properly resettled and rehabilitated. In the case of tribal people, it is estimated that only 18 to 20% of them have been properly rehabilitated. He says that the states are not interested in utilizing Central funds in the Maoist belt because

they “are not interested in looking at that segment of the population, which according to them, are not part of the mainstream.” Or is it because of electoral considerations? He compared the present situation with the West Bengal experience of 1967 in putting down the Naxal menace within two and half years by re-distributing a million acres to the landless.

The Present Strategy of Dealing with These Challenges:

The GOM Report (February 2001) conceded that the present security management was unsatisfactory but had tried to shift the blame to the state Governments: “The State Police is the most visible symbol of administrative authority and its failure to effectively maintain law and order has not only eroded the credibility of the Government but has also emboldened criminal elements to persist with their unlawful activities with impunity”. The same trend is seen even now. Union home minister Shri Shivraj Patil told the State Directors General of Police during the annual IB Conference (Oct 3, 2007) that intelligence wings of the State Police were not able to meet the challenges of terrorism. The Prime Minister also expressed similar concern over the growing vigilantism where people took the law into their own hands. After the Naxalite Ranibodli terror resulting in the massacre of 68 policemen, Shivraj Patil said: “Centre, in association with the state Governments, was fully determined to combat the challenge posed by the Naxalite menace”. What exactly was done to convert this into action besides these ritualistic exhortations?

This is ironical since the GOM report had stated: “The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has the nodal responsibility of maintenance of internal security in the country and has to ultimately deal with the consequences of any dereliction of responsibility at the local level and must therefore play a more proactive role vis-à-vis the state governments... Appropriate restructuring of the MHA is called for in order to better equip it to deal more effectively with the problems of internal security”. In fact it had even recommended strengthening emergency provisions under Article 352 and 359. Some of the recommendations were “*suo moto*”(sic) deployment of central forces if the situation prevailing in the States so demands. This is especially relevant when turbulence in some states like UP (Babri demolition) and Gujarat (Godhra riots) had resulted in serious

internal security problems for the whole country. In fact much of the anonymous terrorism that we are witnessing now can be directly attributed to the abdication of constitutional responsibility by these two states in the past. This should not be allowed in a federal set up.

In actual practice nothing seems to have been done to translate the GOM recommendations into action. There is no evidence that the MHA has ever analyzed why the State Police is unable to meet the challenges. On the other hand, the Home Minister’s statement in the Rajya Sabha (March 6, 2006) appeared to point to the helplessness of the Centre in convincing the recalcitrant states to be more cooperative in dealing with this inter-state threat. It seemed that the only role North Block assumed was merely convening such meetings. While the US system effected a major overhaul of their counter terrorist capability within one and half months of 9/11 by passing the Patriot Act, all we have been doing since 1990 is convening meetings.

There are precedents when such Central interventions have been accepted by the state governments without demur. Well before the passing of the Special Protection Group (SPG) Act, all states had readily accepted the supervision and directions from the Intelligence Bureau and later SPG over the Prime Minister’s security. No state had protested that it encroached into their jurisdiction. However it is true that the proposal for inducting a central force (CISF) although offered by Delhi even as early as 1972 to man the airport anti-hijacking units, was not agreed upon by the states till the highjacking of the Indian Airlines Plan IC 814 in 1999. In other words we need a crisis to accept such internal security reforms. It is however ironical that state politicians, when out of power, are the first to seek central intervention as seen recently when the Tamil Nadu BJP demanded a CBI investigation into the September 23rd attack on their Chennai office by ruling DMK cadres or when DMK itself demanded Central protection to DMK leader Karunanidhi when he was arrested by the Jayalalitha regime.

The need for establishing the legal right of the Centre to selectively intervene in situations affecting national security will be all the more important in the days to come with more and more weak and

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Compulsory Military Service in the Army

E. D'Souza

India's army the world's fourth largest, faces a dire shortage of officers because the booming private sector is recruiting the best talent and the army may have to consider conscription ... The recruitment issue has become an urgent priority for the volunteer army after 3000 mid-level commanders sought early retirement on top of an existing shortage of 11,200 officers.

There has been a sudden realization that there is a noticeable shortage of officers in the Indian Army following the Chief of the Army Staff's address at the annual Army Day Parade on 15 January 2008 in Delhi. This calls for introspection as to why we have reached this stage at a time when we can ill afford to do so with our commitments: Ensuring the integrity of our international borders and increasing internal security duties of counter insurgency and counter militancy/terrorism; UN Peace keeping commitments; training with other national armies; training personnel of other armies and in disaster relief.

This problem was best described in an article in the *Straits Times* of Singapore of January 18, 2008: " Indian army faces dire shortage of officers. The report said: "Unable to compete with the private sector, it may have to turn to conscription in the future ...". "India's army the world's fourth largest, faces a dire shortage of officers because the booming private sector is recruiting the best talent and the army may have to consider conscription. Just 86 officer recruits enlisted in the current academic session of the Indian military academy (IMA) which had vacancies of 259...Meanwhile, 62 of the 148 college graduates who passed a separate military entrance test (graduate entry) opted out and sought jobs in the private sector... The recruitment issue has become an urgent priority for the volunteer army after 3000 mid-level commanders sought early retirement on top of an existing shortage of 11,200 officers...The Army needs 46,615 officers...Another worry for the forces is that most of those applying are not the right material. According to army chief General Deepak Kapoor: "Our deficiencies cannot be met by lowering the quality standards of the world's largest volunteer army". He added: "The government and the (three) services cannot compete in matters of salary and perks with the Corporate world. India, which has fought three wars with Pakistan and a bloody border skirmish

with China, since its 1947 independence, has never turned to compulsory recruitment. But Gen. Kapoor warned such a move could be an option compulsory military service could be one such avenue but cautioned that it's not the stage for such a step now".

The report then goes on to say that retired Major General Afsir Karim is of the view that "Conscription to fill the shortage will lead to indiscipline and waywardness...Former army chief Ved Prakash Malik commented on 'Stress, slow promotions and the military's tough life style are a turn-off for young people thinking of an army career....an entry level officer must wait for 10 years before donning the flashes of a lieutenant-colonel...but even at that level the monthly basic salary does not exceed Rs 12,000. Arpratim Ghosh, one of the many who opted out of a military career, says that ' I've not even finished my four year term of business school and we're already receiving offers of 65,000 rupees a month and company cars. This is thanks to the enormous opportunities available'. Retired senior officer Karim adds 'the army must remove promotional bottlenecks... so that they are confident of landing a job on civvy street after retirement...It's not a good feeling to retire at 52 with two children in school and no savings'.

Perhaps this situation prompted the Defence Minister and the Army Chief to recommend that the Army's role is primarily external security, and in emergencies internal security and therefore should not be used in countering the Naxalite, ULFA and Maoists threats. As a result of these over extended deployments, the strain on the officer cadre in maintaining the highest standards of discipline, has resulted in a slight rise in the number of cases of indiscipline, fratricide and other inactions. What is worse, the sharp difference in emoluments and deployment conditions of Service Officers as

compared to their contemporaries in industry and in our Civil Services, and risks an Army Officer is subject to, is certainly making a career in the military less attractive or else how does one explain the numbers applying for premature retirement? As one who has served in the Army for 35 years and has been through four wars and in inhospitable high altitudes for stretches of three to four years, such situations were non-existent because Units were functioning on authorized Officer strength of which more anon.

In the past, an Infantry Battalion of about 1000 all Ranks was authorized 20 to 22 Officers. This strength enabled Officers to be sent on courses of instruction for their professional improvement, on leave and on medical grounds, without affecting the efficiency of the Unit, as there was a back-up within its officer resources. There were sufficient officers to carry out patrolling, lay ambushes and to conduct cordon, search and destroy operations especially in

Why are the Armed Forces treated on par with the Civil Services when the risks encountered and conditions like separation from families, running on an average upto three establishments, serving in the most inhospitable areas bear no comparisons with their counterparts in the IAS or IPS or whatever?

J & K. This is not the case today. The Infantry Battalion today is lucky if it has a posted strength of 12 to 13 Officers. Of these it is not normal to utilize the four core personnel of the Officer Cadre – the Commanding Officer, his deputy, the Adjutant and Quarter Master for operational tasks. Of the remaining eight, at least one will be attending a course, one will be on leave and possible one in hospital on medical grounds leaving the CO just five officers for the increasing officer commitments, especially in counter insurgency, terrorist, Naxal/ULfa and Maoist operations.

A common argument postulated is that JCOs could be used in such emergencies but most senior commanders insist that important patrols and ambushes *et al* must be led by Officers. This explains why the attrition rate among junior and middle level officers is relatively high and there could be no better example than middle officers in Kargil.

Late last year Col Vasanth of the Maratha Light Infantry was killed when leading his men in a counter terrorist encounter in the Uri Sector. Admittedly the Army is seconding young and middle level officers from the other Arms and Services to infantry battalions for a 2-year stretch. But this can only be a temporary palliative. In commenting on this serious impact on discipline, the Army Chief must have had in mind what our late FM Kariappa once remarked: "Good Officers good units".

Recent news that the Government is preparing to raise two more Mountain Divisions to meet the perceived threat to Arunachal Pradesh is all to the good but where are the high quality officers to come from to meet the exigencies of physical and mental fitness, such service in the high mountains and altitudes demands? What then is the answer to meet this officer shortage? There are a number of options as indicated below:-

- (a) Undoubtedly to improve the terms and conditions of service to match those in the Private Sector. It is a glaring travesty of justice that there is no senior serving officer in the Sixth Pay Commission. Why are the Armed Forces treated on par with the Civil Services when the risks encountered and conditions like separation from families, running on an average upto three establishments, serving in the most inhospitable areas bear no comparisons with their counter parts in the IAS or IPS or whatever?
- (b) As a letter in *India Today* succinctly puts it: "The Indian Army, the magic wand to which the country turns in times of crises, has fallen off the list of desirable career options for the youth. In this context whereas the Army tops the list on a nine point scale with a rating of 9 in integrity, in the marriage market it is last!"
- (c) The Army with its varied commitments associated with external and internal security, disaster relief, international duties and even environmental protection cannot afford to lower its standards of selection. Quality is consistent with good living conditions emoluments *et al*. In this context one recalls what a Defence Secretary once said when asked by three senior students at the NDC why the Nation did not have a truly National War Memorial in the capital? The suave reply was

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Interrogation of Prisoners

S. C. Sharma

The right of a small group to kill or abduct cannot be given priority over the rights of the majority to live in peace and without fear. Humanitarian consideration for the culprits is a noble idea but fraught with danger.

Knowing the enemy is essential to gain victory in a conflict. This is even more relevant in the fight against terrorism where the enemy is elusive. All countries deploy significant resources to obtain information about the activities of enemy and friendly countries. The usual methods are radio intercepts and human intelligence. It is generally experienced that useful information can be obtained by questioning routine suspects when dealing with ordinary crimes. This method does not work in the case of terrorist networks due to ideological and religious indoctrination and the cell structure of the organization. Penetration of terrorist networks to obtain human intelligence is even more difficult.

Security forces have occasionally used coercive techniques of interrogation to identify terrorists, their leaders and operation plans. These activities have been objected to on humanitarian grounds. The objections are noble but may lead to a setback to the safety of law abiding citizens. The right of a small group to kill or abduct cannot be given priority over the rights of the majority to live in peace and without fear. Humanitarian consideration for the culprits is a noble idea but fraught with danger. As observed by Nelson Rockefeller:

We can get so lost in humanitarian concerns as a nation, we can float off into oblivion.

In a war the two sides are expected to abide by the Geneva Convention. Prisoners of War are to be treated humanely. To extend this privilege to the terrorists is fundamentally wrong. They use every possible occasion to kill and terrorize innocent citizens. Coercive methods are effective and routine questioning invariably fails in the case of hard core terrorists. A few examples will show the risks of abiding by humanitarian rules in the war on terror.

In 1976, Aldo Moro was the Prime Minister of Italy and he carried out major reforms in the Intelligence organization. The authority of the officers

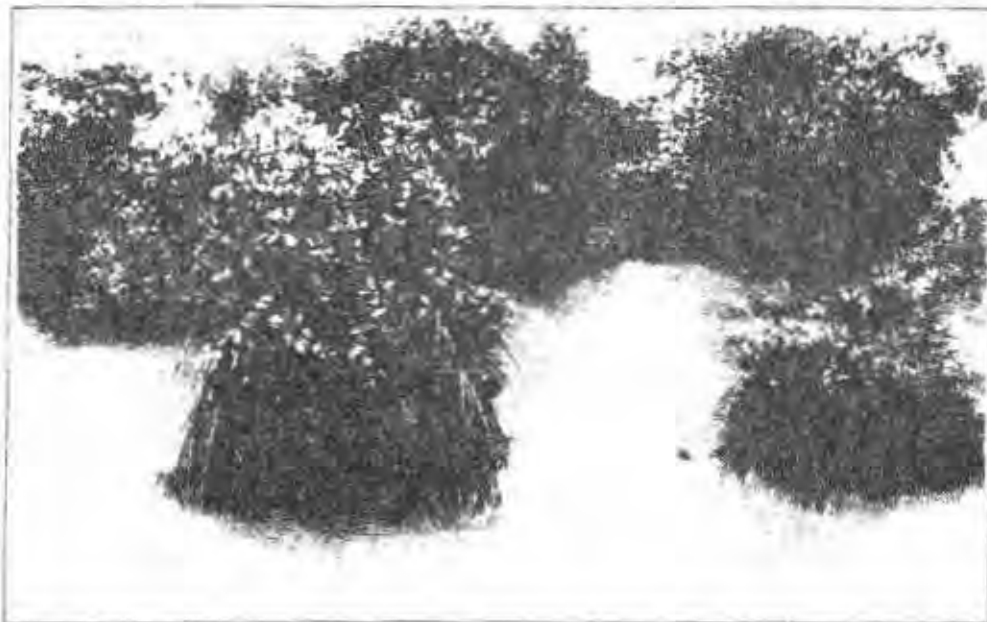
was reduced and some top executives were dismissed. The defence lawyers could demand to see the files of the police. The information obtained helped to identify the informers who were eliminated or harassed. Convictions became difficult. In 1978, when out of office, he was kidnapped by the Red Brigade. A police officer asked for permission to torture a prisoner to elicit information about the hideout. The police chief rejected the idea saying, "Italy can survive the loss of Aldo Moro, but not the introduction of torture." A few days later, the dead body of Moro was found. The incident did spur the Government into action and the authority of the police was restored. The suspected members of the Red Brigade were put under surveillance. It paid off in the rescue of NATO Brig-Gen. Dozier who was kidnapped two years later and rescued unhurt.

In 1995, *Washington Post* recounted the case of a terrorist in the Philippines. He was tortured for 67 days. The threat to repatriate him to Egypt unnerved him and he revealed the plot to assassinate the Pope and to blow the commercial planes parked at the Manila Airport. The torture saved the lives of thousands of innocent lives. Do such terrorists deserve humane treatment? What is valid to save a thousand lives could be valid to save even one innocent life.

In 1969, UK sent the Army to Northern Ireland to fight insurgency. The Army arrested 342 people in the first night, most of whom were released soon. Twelve individuals were questioned with the help of harsh techniques like hooding, standing against the wall, continuous noise and deprivation of sleep. The UK Government called it harsh treatment and not torture. The EU called it torture and it was given up. It is of interest that while the UK treated IRA suspects harshly, Leila Khalid was treated mildly since she was a threat to Israel and not to UK. Similarly, the USA has confined terrorist suspects in Guantanamo outside the jurisdiction of US courts. We should take

(Cont'd. on p.38)

CONCERN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT



A unique feature of the Industrial Garden Township, Pirojshanagar, is a large expanse of swamp, one of the very few such areas existing in the city under original mangrove forests.

At a time when mangroves are being destroyed at an alarming rate in the process of excessive and damaging reclamation... Godrej has taken steps, at considerable care and expense,

to preserve and protect this Nature's gift in the awareness that mangrove destruction leads generally to loss of food, breeding grounds and shelter for numerous forms of life.

It is almost unbelievable that, like the Sanjay Gandhi National Park in Borivli, such a mangrove still exists in the excessively congested and polluted megapolis that Mumbai is.

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WELFARE : ENVIRONMENT / POPULATION NEXUS...

Point Counter Point

Ashok Karnik

Every issue has at least two sides. A wise man studies all sides before deciding what is right. This is an attempt to present different viewpoints for your consideration.

Rahul Gandhi's Security

1) Rahul Gandhi's defiance of security restrictions in Orissa and UP and his declaration that he cannot accept being told where to go and not to go could perhaps be taken as an attempt to establish new norms of behaviour for public figures. If he sticks to his resolve and gets at least half of his party MPs to shed their security cover, he would do a great favour to security agencies, which are spending large funds and using up scarce man-power on VIP security. It is a good sign if a new leadership, given to fresh thinking and a bold approach, emerges in India.

Is Rahul Gandhi's declaration a brave new step or is it bravado to appeal to the galleries. Is it a calculated decision to discard his SPG protection or is it a political gimmick to show that he is a man of the masses? If it is a part of showmanship, he must remember that it is fraught with danger. His father too wanted to mix with the masses but he and the country had to pay a heavy price for it. Rahul's decision appears bold but is it not an invitation for scores of terrorist modules sheltered in this country to target him? Security agencies try to make the task of terrorists difficult, though not impossible. Responsible VIPs should help the security agencies and not make their arduous task even more difficult.

Goa's Infamy

2) The 'murder' of Scarlett Keeling in Goa (February 18) has raised questions about the safety of tourists in Goa and the overall police efficiency in the state. A 15-year old girl was raped and murdered and the police passed it off as accidental death till her mother screamed blue murder and woke up the entire administration. While this was a sensational crime, there are untold number of stories of tourists being molested in this tourist haven. What Ails Goa? Or is it the common fate of tourists all over India? Hippy culture has flourished on the beaches of Goa for decades. Are drug abuse and molestations a fall out of this reckless mode of life? Who is to be blamed for this? The police, the tourists or the culture of permissiveness?

2) Scarlett's 'murder' has given rise to many tangential questions, diverting debate from the 'murder' issue. The British press has pointed out the criminal negligence of the mother in leaving a 15-year old girl alone in a foreign land, as also the mother's own bohemian life style. The girl's drug habit and her willingness to offer herself for drugs, food and shelter is thrown at those questioning the Goa administration. But it is true that Goa need not be singled out for abuse of tourists. Other centers like Jaipur, Pushkar and Agra are not far behind in maltreatment of female tourists. One argument is that if girls move about recklessly, they would suffer a similar fate anywhere in the world. It is necessary to understand the local culture before tourists, particularly women, put themselves at risk. Would an Indian girl be safe if she moved about alone, half-naked in the US? This argument misses the point, which is that the Goa police did not register an offence of murder even when murder was staring them in the face. The cover up by the police is damaging to the Goa administration regardless of what was done later to nab the culprits.

"In the UK, there are adverts everywhere for Goa holidays with women in bikinis enjoying a cocktail on the beach; when you get here, the locals says that foreign women are asking for trouble by showing off their midriffs" said a British tourist.



Tibet's Tragedy

3) Tibet is in the news again after a long time. The forgotten land is stirring once more. The world is disturbed over the plight of the Tibetans but except voicing platitudes, they can do little. India, having accepted Chinese claim over Tibet, can do nothing. It has to tread carefully so as not to be accused of meddling in the internal affairs of another country. India finds itself in a piquant position as it sympathises with the Tibetans but cannot extend support to them. The Chinese are impervious to subtle nudges. They are used to crushing dissent so ruthlessly as to leave no trace of it. A totalitarian system does not have to worry about public opinion and China has shown again and again that it cares naught for international opinion. CPM leaders' defence of China by comparing Tibet with Nagaland and Kashmir shows how low the communist logic can go.

3) This is not the place to go into the Indian foreign policy of the 50s. Without going into the history, international treaties and splitting hair over suzerainty and sovereignty, it can be said that India could have handled the Tibet issue differently. A little caution in the 50s would have saved us a lot of grief. Tactically, there was no need to commit ourselves one way or another on the status of Tibet. Statesmen avoid such commitments in the larger national interests. Even if India held that China had a case on Tibet, India should have acted cagily and not accepted the Chinese claim. The right thing to do was to keep an ambiguous silence so that the Tibet question would have remained open and India would have retained the option to calibrate its responses from time to time. Witness Chinese evasions over the border dispute. It remains silent most of the time but occasionally underlines its territorial claims so that at any given time it is free to raise the ante. India has to learn to keep its cards close to its chest and not feel obliged to declare to the world what it thinks. In the Nehruvian era, India's eagerness to win friends made it forget that there are no permanent friends or foes among nations. The price of Tibet for China's friendship was too high. China's only weakness now is the effect of the Tibetan protests on the August 2008 Beijing Olympics. It cannot allow the Olympics to be tarnished, as the games are its showpiece and China has put its prestige on the line to hold the Olympics.

Readers are invited to send in their points of view on serious issues of the day to avkay@mtnl.net.in

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The Revolt in Tibet : 10 Encouraging Aspects

Claude Arpi

**An event which may look negative at first sight can also trigger positive collaterals.
We have listed 10 encouraging aspects of the recent unrest in Tibet and the subsequent
Chinese muscled clampdown.**

1. Increased awareness

Perhaps one of the most positive aspects of the recent events in Lhasa and other parts of Tibet has been the tremendous increase in awareness about the Tibetan issue in India and abroad.

The Tibet question was buried on November 24, 1950, when the Indian representative to the United Nations told his colleagues that India would directly take up the question of the invasion of Tibet with the Chinese Communist authorities. It would be solved amicably, he said.

Nothing was done, though a few weeks later Nehru declared in Parliament. 'Since Tibet is not the same as China, it should ultimately be the wishes of the people of Tibet that should prevail and not any legal or constitutional arguments.'

But he had already written in a secret note, 'We cannot save Tibet.'

During the following years, not only did Delhi continue to remain silent, but in 1954, it signed the Panchsheel Agreement (or "Agreement between The Republic of India and The People's Republic of China on Trade and Intercourse between Tibet Region of China and India". For the first time in history, India accepted China's claim that Tibet was part of China.

Today everyone in India and around the world can see that the 'wishes of the people' in Tibet have been completely crushed, while the fate of Tibet remains crucial for India's security. More awareness about the issue is therefore most welcome.

2. Shift from Pakistan-centric politics

Another positive fall-out is that the Indian establishment (politicians, bureaucrats, intelligence agencies, think-tanks and the army) are slowly losing their perennial obsession with our western neighbour.

Since Independence, India has had only one enemy, Pakistan. Apart from the periodical declarations of George Fernandes or Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's letter to President Clinton: 'We have an overt nuclear weapon state on our borders, a state which committed armed aggression against India in 1962,' the deciders in Delhi have lived and acted with an Islamabad fixation.

Army exercises such as the recent Brazier Chariots are another sign of this Pakistan-centric attitude.

The intensive coverage of the Tibetan riots and the hundreds of in-depth analysis may bring a new awareness and a paradigm shift in the strategic scenario in Asia.

3. Phenomenal Intelligence failure

It was good news (for India at least) to discover that China is no better at collecting intelligence! Indian spies must have felt rotten about the Kargil episode as they were not able to detect the Pakistani infiltrations in time. But it was nothing compared to the colossal failure of the Chinese spies on the Roof of the World who did not see anything brewing, not only in Lhasa, but also in the other two traditional provinces of Tibet, Kham and Amdo.

Already between 1979 and 1982, when the first fact-finding delegations sent by the Dalai Lama visited different parts of Tibet, the party cadre had thought that the Tibetan leaders' envoys would be received with stones and insults. To their great stupefaction, the delegations were triumphantly welcomed by the local population.

It is strange that the intelligence services of the People's Republic of China are unable to catch the mood of the people! Soon heads will probably roll. Already Danzeng Langjie, a top official and director of Tibet's Ethnic Minority and Religious Affairs Commission has been 'removed' from his post, but how can anything change as long as the intelligence inputs are based on ideology and not on facts? China has a big problem here.

4. China has shown another face

During the last few weeks, Beijing has shown another face. One of the main objectives of Hu Jintao's government had been to project the 'Peaceful Rise' of China. Beijing has invested hundreds of millions of dollars to polish and project its new image. The culmination was to be the Olympics Games, aimed at showing a strong, powerful, harmonious and stable China.

China watchers knew that behind the 'peaceful' show, the tiger (not a paper one) was dozing; ready to jump on its prey should the time come. The megalomaniac investment in the defence sector was an indication of what the tiger China is up to.

The immediate and brutal repression on the Roof of the World as well as the cutting of the telecom lines in Tibet or the censoring of the internet all over China has shown the totalitarian face of the regime. And we don't even have information on what has happened in Xinjiang.

5. Strategic importance of the Tibetan plateau

There has been a tendency to forget the geostrategic importance of the Tibetan plateau. The first train reached Lhasa in July 2006. In 2007 alone, 3.8 million Chinese used the railway line to 'visit' Tibet.

Before the riots, very few in India were ready to look at the demographic changes on the plateau and its consequences for India's security. Also, who cared for the fact that all the majors rivers of Asia had their source in Tibet and that the flow of these rivers could be diverted to arid regions of China?

The present focus on Tibet is bound to trigger more research into the importance of the plateau as a geostrategic and environmental link between India and China. It will be realised that it is impossible to solve an issue such as the border dispute with China until and unless the Tibetan issue is solved to the satisfaction of all. This is good!

6. Definition of Tibet

The Dalai Lama has been insisting that Tibet consists of the three provinces of U-Tsang (Central Tibet), Kham and Amdo.

Today different parts of Amdo are administratively attached to the provinces of Qinghai, Gansu & Sichuan, while most of Kham is incorporated into the provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan and Qinghai.

Central and Western Tibet, together with Western Kham, is today known as the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). It represents less than half of pre-1950 Tibet. When the Chinese government speaks about Tibet, it only refers to the TAR.

The riots have shown that traditional Tibet remains only one entity as far as discontent and demonstrations are concerned. The unrest occurred equally in the three different provinces. Awareness of this historic fact is encouraging.

7. Opening a debate within the Chinese Communist Party

Another positive aspect! The Chinese Communist Party does not know the meaning of Glasnost, the policy of maximal publicity, openness, and transparency in the activities of all government institutions in the Soviet Union, together with free-

dom of information, introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev.

However, the Tibet events may force a serious debate among the Chinese apparatchiks. The web site, Intelligence Online, speaks of 'A War Room to Keep Down Tibet' and adds, 'Formed last week by President Hu Jintao to prevent uprisings in Tibet and neighboring provinces, the 'special working group on Tibet' has a second objective: to counter conservative elements in government and the Chinese Communist Party who feel that too much flexibility in the run-up to the Olympic Games could trigger unrest that would undermine the status of the one party state.'

Whether the above report is true or not, an in-depth debate has probably started within the Politburo. It is a healthy (though not spontaneous) outcome.

8. Sleepless nights

One can hope that many world leaders will spend sleepless nights in the weeks and months to come. It will give them time to eventually rethink their respective policies. One can mention President Hu Jintao and his comrades of the Politburo's Standing Committee who will face the music before (and after) the Olympics. If the Games becomes a propaganda failure (they already are), their nights might even be longer.

In India, the prime minister (a regular member of the sleepless nights club), his foreign minister (let us hope that Taslima will also haunt him) and others in South Block will have to constantly walk on a tightrope between the pressures coming from Beijing and political decency. (Needless of course to mention the Indian Am-

bassador to Beijing who will probably be called again in the dark of the Beijing night to meet Chinese officials.)

Nicolas Sarkozy, the President of France who assumes the EU presidency on July 1, will probably have to spend some nights pondering how to give a moral and ethical lead to his 26 EU colleagues.

Unfortunately, the Dalai Lama also will not sleep well (though I believe he prays for the Chinese during his nights). He will have to find the balance between his restive youth and his Buddhist precepts.

9. Olympics in their true context

We often forget that an Olympic year is always a special year for humanity. In reviving the

ancient tradition of the Olympic Games, Baron Pierre de Coubertin's first and foremost objective was to 'build men' and not merely exhibit sporting prowess. The argument that the Olympics are purely a sports event is historically and ethically wrong.

For Coubertin, Olympism was a religion which would 'adhere to an ideal of superior life and aspire for perfection.' He spoke of a quadrennial Human Spring. If events in Tibet could trigger a re-discovery of this 'religion of humanity' across the world, it would be a boon.

10. The Games

In 2001, the IOC's President, Jacques Rogge told the Press: 'We are convinced that the Olympic Games will improve human rights

in China.' Well, he certainly did not have the present scenario in mind; he probably thought that it would be (good) business as usual.

Since then, the wretched of the earth have stood up and invited themselves to the Great Game.

The French Baron selected this beautiful creed: 'The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well.'

Let us pray that it resounds again and again in Beijing and the Flame of the Human Spirit will shine forth in the months to come.

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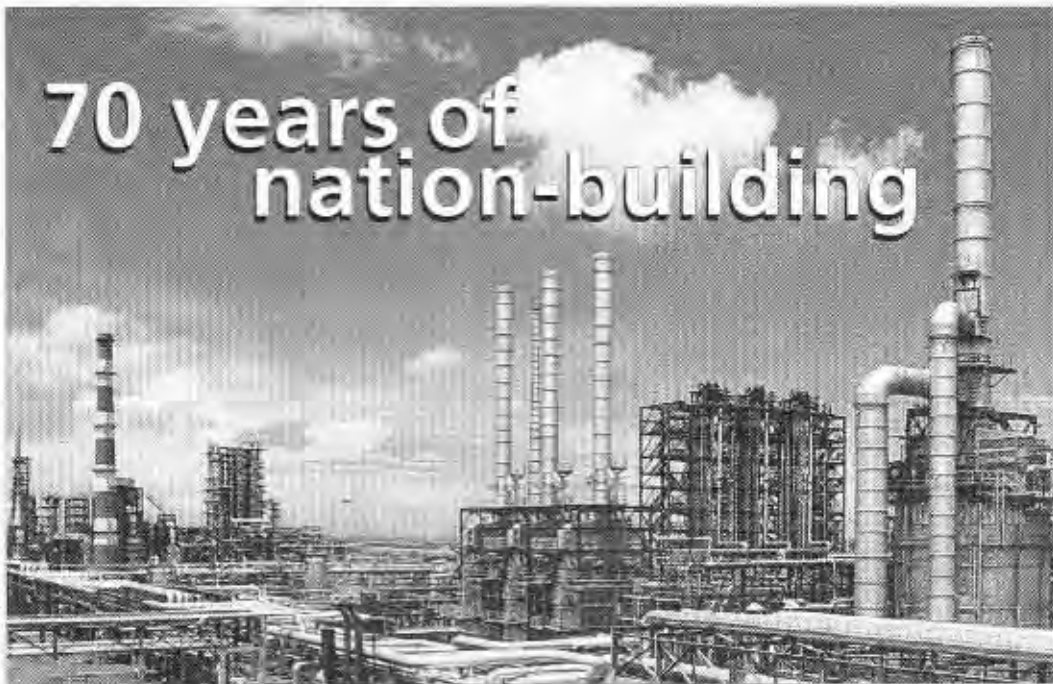
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Already a Blood-Stained Olympics

B. Raman

This is the text of an "Open Letter" to film actor Aamir Khan, one of the bearers of the Olympic Torch when it moves through Delhi. In a reply to a plea by his friends and admirers, Aamir Khan told the press inter alia: "I request those of you who have asked me to stay away from the Olympic Torch relay to understand that when I do run with the torch, it is not in support of China. In fact, it will be with a prayer in my heart for the people of Tibet, and indeed for all people across the world who are victims of human rights violations."

I read with great interest your detailed reply to your relatives, friends, admirers and Tibetan activists in which you have justified your decision to be one of the bearers of the Olympic Torch at New Delhi on April 17.

Berlin Olympics 1936

In 1936, on the eve of the outbreak of the Second World War and at the height of Nazi atrocities, the Olympic Games were held in Germany. The human rights movement was not as active in those days as it is now. Despite this, many advocated the boycott of the Games. Their appeals failed. Those who participated without any qualms of conscience, gave exactly the same reasons as you have in your justification. The Olympic Games do not belong to China, as you have rightly said. The Olympic Games did not belong to Germany, they said.

The question is not what you think and said about your partici-

The importance of your participation and of the participation of Saif Ali Khan to the Chinese was not only because you are both widely-admired film artists. It was also because both of you are widely-respected Muslim personalities.

pation. The question is how your participation is projected by Beijing to the suppressed Buddhists of Tibet and Uighur Muslims of Xinjiang, who have risen in revolt against what they consider as the Han colonisation of their homelands and what the Dalai Lama has described as a cultural genocide of the Tibetans.

Wherever the Olympic Torch is being taken, the Chinese have been keen that some prominent Muslim and Buddhist personalities also participate in carrying the torch so that they can demonstrate to the protesting Buddhists of Tibet, Sichuan, Gansu and Qinghai and to the protesting Muslims of Xinjiang that prominent Buddhist and Muslim leaders in other countries have endorsed the Games.

The importance of your participation and of the participation of Saif Ali Khan to the Chinese was not only because you are both widely-admired film artists. It was also because both of you are widely-respected Muslim personalities.

The importance of the participation of football hero Baichung Bhutia to the Chinese was not only because he is a football hero, but also because he is a highly-respected Buddhist personality. He saw through their game and declined to let himself be used by the

Chinese to serve their psychological warfare agenda in Tibet, Sichuan, Gansu and Qinghai. One hopes he does not change his mind under pressure from our Communists. It is a pity you have not seen through their game.

You have rightly said in your justification that no country is free from instances of human rights violations. Not even India. In this connection, you have referred to Kashmir.

You and others, who have written on this subject, are correct in their references to Kashmir, our northeast, the grievances and anger of Khalistanis and Muslims etc. We too have been having problems with our religious and ethnic minorities just as the Chinese have problems with their minorities. No country in the world is free of such problems.

The question to be asked is not whether we have the same problems as China, but what has been our approach to these problems. Do we deal with these problems in the same way as the Chinese do or do we follow a different approach?

The religious and ethnic minorities in India, who have taken to arms against the government, have accused the government and its policy-makers of rigging elections, political, economic and social discrimination, lack of adequate

political powers to manage their own affairs etc. They have accused the security forces of being prejudiced against the minorities, of excessive use of force against the minorities, of police torture etc. Has any group in India accused our government and policy-makers of indulging in cultural genocide of the minorities as the Dalai Lama and the leaders of the Uighur Muslim community in China have accused the Chinese government?

In India, since we became independent in 1947, no government – whether of the Congress or the Bharatiya Janata Party or any other party – has ever even thought of settling members of the majority community in areas where the minorities are in a majority. Pakistan has systematically settled Punjabi ex-servicemen in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir and in the Northern Areas (Gilgit and Baltistan) in order to reduce the ethnic Kashmiris to a minority in their traditional homeland. It has systematically settled Wahabised Sunnis in the Northern Areas in order to reduce the Shias to a minority. China has systematically settled Hans from mainland China and the Hui Muslims from central China in Tibet in order to reduce ethnic Tibetans to a minority and dilute the majority status of Buddhism. It has similarly settled Hans in Xinjiang in order to reduce the Uighurs to a minority and dilute the impact of Islam. In our country, our laws will not permit such abuses.

In Jammu and Kashmir, no non-Kashmiri has ever been chief minister. Same is the case in Nagaland and Mizoram. Can you cite an instance since the occupation of Tibet by the Chinese in 1951 when an ethnic Tibetan has headed the local party and government set-up?

We have been fairly regularly holding elections in the northeast and Kashmir except during periods when serious insurgency situations did not permit the holding of elections. In Kashmir, there were allegations of rigging of the elections. Because of this, in recent elections, we allowed foreign diplomats and journalists to visit Kashmir before and during the elections to satisfy for themselves that the polls were free and fair.

Has China ever held a single democratic election in Tibet, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia since the Communists captured power in 1949?

We have many insurgent and terrorist organisations purporting to speak for the religious and ethnic minorities, which have

taken to arms against the government. Have you ever seen our political leaders and policy-makers indulge in a campaign of demonisation and personal vilification similar to the Chinese campaign against the Dalai Lama? Beijing calls him 'a liar, a conspirator, a cheat, a terrorist' and so on. Even the Chinese Red Guards, who ran amok in China during the days of Mao, never used such expressions against political dissidents.

Has any group in India accused our government and policymakers of indulging in cultural genocide of the minorities as the Dalai Lama and the leaders of the Uighur Muslim community in China have accused the Chinese government?

Travel restrictions to Tibet

I have just received info on new travel restrictions to China and Tibet. The "China Visa Agency" in Hong Kong writes the following on their homepage:

"We are informed by the China visa office that effective from 28 March 2008 - 17 Oct 2008 there will be no more multi entry (F) visas available. For those who still need visas can only apply single or double entry visas instead (Duration of each stay is 30 days). All this will last till the Olympic games finished."

So much for openness during the Games!

Anders Højmark Andersen
Monday, 7 April 2008.

The leaders of separatist organisations freely interact with our media. They are interviewed by our print and electronic media and invited to participate in our television talk shows. You recently attended the World Leadership Summit organised by the India Today Group. I read in the media that one of those invited to address the summit was Yasin Malik, leader of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front. Can you mention a single instance since 1949 when Beijing has allowed a single dissident leader to similarly interact with the media and foreign diplomats? Have you ever seen a single interview of the Dalai Lama in the Chinese media? Have you ever seen a single statement of his ever published in the Chinese media?

There is an international humanitarian instrument called the Second Additional Protocol to the International Red Cross Conven-

tion. It accords to the Geneva-based International Committee of the Red Cross *locus standi* to provide humanitarian relief in internal conflict situations. India has refused to sign this but, *de facto*, it observes many of the provisions of this protocol. It has allowed the ICRC to have an office in New Delhi. It has permitted senior retired police officers to act as consultants to the ICRC office. It has allowed the ICRC to conduct training classes in human rights for our security forces. It has allowed ICRC delegates to visit jails in Jammu and Kashmir to enable them to satisfy for themselves that humanitarian laws are being observed even in respect of terrorist-suspects. Has China done any of these things in its minority provinces?

The Government of India recently allowed Asma Jehangir, the well-known Pakistani human rights activist, who has been appointed as the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights, to visit Gujarat and J&K to look at the human rights situation. She has come out with a very critical report. Will China allow the UN to appoint a similar Special Rapporteur for Tibet to inquire into allegations of cultural genocide in Tibet?

The way we handle our

problems in the minority areas is totally different from the way the Chinese handle them. We handle them like civilised, democratic people. The Chinese handle them like Hitler and Stalin used to do. It is, therefore, totally unfair and incorrect to project as you have sought to do and as many leftist-minded intellectuals in India have sought to do, as if China is more sinned against than sinning and that its negative human rights record is no different from that of many other countries, including India.

The Beijing Olympics has already become a blood-stained Olympics. The Chinese are frantically trying to remove those blood stains. We should not help them in their efforts to do so.

I have myself been a strong supporter of the Olympics being held in Beijing. I wrote even after the recent revolt in Tibet that we should not support the moves for a boycott of the Beijing Games because by doing so, we will be humiliating over a billion Chinese people because of the misdeeds of their leaders and policy-makers.

At the same time, I have been

of the view that we should not help China in giving a great shine to the Games despite all that has been happening in Tibet, Sichuan, Gansu, Qinghai, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia as if nothing has happened. A lot has happened in the Tibetan-inhabited areas of China. A lot of blood has been spilt. A highly-respected religious leader of the world has been insulted and demonised like no other religious leader of the world has ever been demonised.

The Beijing Olympics has already become a blood-stained Olympics. The Chinese are frantically trying to remove those blood stains. We should not help them in their efforts to do so. By lending your name and prestige to the torch run, you are unwittingly helping the Chinese to cover up the blood stains.

You have millions of admirers as an artist all over the world. You will continue to have millions of admirers whatever be your final decision. But many of them will have feelings of vacuum in their hearts over your failure to distinguish between the right and the wrong.

B. Raman

MR. B. RAMAN, formerly a senior Intelligence Officer with the IB and RAW.

A Promise of Self-Determination for the Tibetan People



After a meeting with President Chiang Kai-Shek in Teipei, Taiwan in October 1963, Minoo Masani, then a Swatantra Party member of the Lok Sabha, addressed a press conference. This is what he recorded in his autobiography *Against the Tide* in so far as Tibet is concerned:

"President Chiang Kai-Shek was good enough to permit me to quote him as reaffirming the declaration made by him in the message to the Tibetan people on March 26, 1959, that the Government of the Republic of China accepts the right to self-determination of the people of Tibet as soon as conditions permit them to exercise that right. It is my understanding that the right to self-determination so conceded involves the freedom to choose complete national independence. It will thus be seen that the position of the Republic of China is contrary to that of the communist regime in Peking and is in accord with the wish of the Indian people to see Tibet free."

Minoo Masani,
Against the Tide, 1981

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Firoze Hirjikaka

If Only India Could Be Ruled By The Judiciary

The reality of India is that it is a nation populated by disparate ethnic groups, many of which have absolutely nothing in common. The only thing holding them together as citizens of a single nation is the secular nature of our Constitution.

The judgment handed down by the supreme court recently, against the Thackerays' jingoistic and blatantly self serving attempts to divide the country along linguistic lines, should be required reading for all patriotic Indians who wish their country well and are distressed at its continuing moral decline. As the Justices put it so elegantly, "India is ...an union of states and there is only one nationality that is Indian." This beautifully sums up the ethos of India; and the reason it has survived without disintegrating - despite pathetic governance for over six decades.

Our politicians, regardless of their political orientation of ideology, have one primary purpose for coming to power – that is to further their personal prospects, which usually translates into amassing wealth. Towards this end, they are willing to do whatever it takes. The welfare and prosperity of the nation they have been elected to govern comes a distant second. The reality of India is that it is a nation populated by disparate ethnic groups, many of which have absolutely nothing in common. The only thing holding them together as citizens of a single nation is the secular nature of our Constitution. And now this very secularism is under grave threat from all directions. Narendra Modi and the VHP want a Hindu kingdom (preferably with Modi crowned King-Emperor), Mayawati is projecting herself as the messiah of the dalits; and now the Thackerays have assumed the same mantle for the Marathi *manooos*. Reprehensible as this attitude is, one could perhaps afford these leaders a measure of grudging respect, if their statements emanated from a deep rooted conviction. They do not. They are merely a blatant attempt to garner vote banks. Observe how facilely our political parties switch sides when it suits their political fortunes. Today's enemy becomes tomorrow's ally. It's all about getting and staying in power.

The Supreme Court justices have also expressed anguish at the increasing tendency of some sections of society - with the active encouragement of their

leaders - to indulge in violent protests on the flimsiest of pretexts. A book, or a film, or a painting is manipulated into a spark for igniting a wholly disproportionate conflagration. The apex court opined that such tendencies are leading to the Balkanization of the country; and should be curbed with an iron hand. Who could disagree with such a noble sentiment; and a self-evident truth?

Alas, that is precisely what our country's political leaders have a tendency to do. They pay lip service to the judiciary; then merrily carry on their infamous practices. The reason for this is that the legislative branch of our government knows that it is immune. The judiciary can fulminate and pass strictures, but in practical terms, they can do nothing. In tandem with other mature democracies, our founding fathers separated the legislative and judicial branches of government; so that neither can misuse nor usurp the privileges of the other. The separation works in civilized democracies, because the pronouncements of the judiciary - particularly the Supreme Court - are taken very seriously by the legislature. An adverse criticism is regarded as a matter of shame - and one that would not be tolerated by their citizens.

It does not work in India because, for one thing, our politicians have no shame. They have hides thicker than those of rhinoceri. As long as the judiciary cannot touch them; they care a hang about moral rectitude and fancy ideals like that, which sound grand but contribute nothing towards their material prosperity. And that is the heart of the problem. One cannot alter the Constitution without destroying the essence of parliamentary democracy. And unless one redefines the powers of the different branches of government, there is little hope that things will improve.

It's a Catch-22 situation we Indians are doomed to live with. It makes me wonder sometimes: why can't we be ruled by the judiciary?

Has The White Man Had His Day?

Asians may already be the *de facto* top dogs, but it is going to take them some time to grasp this new reality. They have to overcome a mindset forged by centuries of history and tradition.

I recently read a fascinating article by Roger Cohen, in the *New York Times*, where he postulates that the white man's era is virtually at an end. In support of his theory, he contrasts the booming economies of Asian countries, like India and China, with the economic decline of the United States and many countries in Europe.

I would not go so far as to state that centuries of world domination by the white man has ended, but it is heading there; and at a far more rapid pace than he realizes. Those who scoff at this absurdity may not, perhaps, be aware that in the 17th century, India and China did indeed account for more than half of the world's economic output. The pendulum is now accelerating back.

Those who believe that it is the inherent destiny of the fair-skinned races to be superior to their darker counterparts would probably point to Africa as justification. I admit that there is some truth in this assertion. Until fairly recently, virtually the whole of Africa was ruled by white colonial powers; Britain, France, Holland and Portugal. After these nations were bled dry by World War II, they were forced to surrender their possessions. Rhodesia and South Africa were the last holdouts. Rhodesia, now called Zimbabwe, is the most glaring example of black mismanagement. A country rich in natural resources, which once had the second highest standard of living on the African continent, is now a basket case; with runaway inflation eerily reminiscent of the Weimar Republic in Germany. South Africa may have rid itself of the scourge of apartheid, but it is a country where crime is rampant.

The other side of the coin is to be found in countries like India and China; and the Asian tigers like South Korea, Singapore and Vietnam. Yes, that's right, I said Vietnam. A country, a good portion of which the United States tried obliterate with napalm bombs – and expended tens of thousands of American lives in the process – now has one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Ironically, it is also a major trading partner of its former enemy. China is already the world's second biggest economy, after the United States; and with its economy rapidly

accelerating to meet America's down-spiraling one, it is only a matter of time before it gains the number one spot.

Some Americans would scoff that America remains the world's sole superpower. In terms of military muscle, perhaps it is – and will probably remain so because of its huge lead. But history has shown us that, in the final analysis, money is always the trump card. Take the American Civil War, for example. It is generally acknowledged that the South had better soldiers and generals superior in strategic and tactical planning. Yet, it lost because the North had more money.

If many white men have great difficulty in acknowledging the new world order, I can understand and sympathize with their bewilderment. The white man and his tribe have been the big guns of the world for so very long, that they do not remember it being any other way. As a citizen of a country which was dominated by the British for almost three centuries, I cannot claim to have experienced their arrogance first hand (I am old, but not *that* old), but I have heard enough stories from my grandfather to make it seem almost real.

The Imperial British did not just rule India, they subjugated it. Even the most illiterate, ignorant white Englishman was considered superior to the most educated, erudite Indian. And it was not just an attitude, it was state policy. Except for a few privileged Maharajas, many clubs and fancy hotels were barred to even wealthy Indians; and no Indian could head a police force, for instance. The British cloaked their arrogance in benevolence, of course and, in truth, they did not display any overt cruelty towards their subjects. At the same time, they never let them forget who was boss. The British still regard India as a Third World country – and in some respects, it is – but the reality is that India's economy has far outstripped Britain's. As Cohen mentions in his article, by 2030, India will probably overtake Japan as the world's third biggest economy – behind the United States and China.

(Cont'd. on p.39)

The Rural Perspective



Sharad Joshi

The Sinking Flagships of the UPA

For the last three years, the Finance Minister has been claiming that agricultural credit has been expanded from Rs.60,000 crores to more than Rs.160,000 crores. The increase claimed far exceeds the sum to be waived under the Debt Relief and Waivers Scheme. The question arises, naturally why did the debt waivers scheme become necessary if the supply of credit had multiplied so rapidly.

The current session of Parliament opened with the President's Address to a joint session of Parliament. The Address contained the word "inclusive" 22 times in the first eight pages. When the Common Minimum Programme was drafted, the word "inclusive" was supposed to mean a programme that includes the wish-list of all the members of the alliance. Little by little, it has come to assume an entirely different meaning. The word "inclusive" now means any programme that excludes the majority groups in the country, like the farmers and the Hindus. The "inclusive" programme has turned highly exclusivist and 'minorityist.'

The President emphatically mentioned that the task of constructing the infrastructure of inclusive growth has been mostly completed. What did she mean? She left no ambiguity on this point. She made an inventory of certain programs, which have now come to be called the flagship programmes of the UPA. These include:

- The Bharat Nirman,
- The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme,

- The Rural Credit Expansion Scheme
- The National Child Development Programme
- The National Health Programme.
- The National Food Security Mission.
- The National Agricultural Development Scheme.

Not surprisingly, these paragraphs have been cut-pasted in the Finance Minister's budget speech. These flagship programmes have become the "Holy Cows" of the 'secularist' UPA. Nobody, not even the opposition, cares to examine the sea-worthiness of these flagships. The budget 2008-09, attended a certain celebrity status on account of its Debt Relief and Waiver Scheme. There was ample discussion in the media, both print and electronic, about the details of the scheme. Was the figure of Rs. 60,000 crores deliberately inflated? Where will the money come from? Was it politically correct to exclude from the ambit of the scheme farmers with their holding between two and six hectares? Was it wise to exclude loans given by the money-lenders from the scheme?

Even the UPA's crown prince, not known for his expertise on the subject, suggested that the scheme be amended to make it more local-specific. In this entire hullabaloo about the debt waiver scheme, the UPA performance on the flagship programmes attracted little attention.

Hardly a day passes when the newspapers do not carry some juicy bit or an extensive story about the mismanagement and corruption in the implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS). The Minister for Rural Development has a remarkably high lung power and is able to drown out all skeptical expressions about the scheme. The discontent, however, is seething like a volcano and it would possibly erupt at the electoral hustings. A comprehensive review of its working at the National level is urgently called for.

- ♦ At the commencement of the implementation, the NREGS worked at tandem with the Work for Food Programme. The food allocation has been coming down rapidly and now will represent barely 10 per cent of allocation in the initial year.

- ♦ In the year 2007-2008 the scheme was implemented in 200 districts. It was extended to 330 districts and now it has been further extended to all the 596 districts in the country. Surprisingly, however, the actual allocation for the scheme has gone down from Rs. 18,406 crores in 2005-06 to Rs 15,000 crores this year.
- ♦ It is claimed that the average employment provided to each registered household was 180 days. In fact, it was only 18 days (probably a case of a shifted decimal point!).
- ♦ Hardly 3.2 % of the registered households got more than 100 days work.
- ♦ The work was supposed to be started in areas where the wage levels are low. In fact, no exercise was carried out for identification of such areas.
- ♦ In practice no measurement of works is done, no record is kept as to who presented personally for work.
- ♦ In most cases, the workers are getting wages that are lower than the minimum wages.
- ♦ Workers have been paid only Rs. 8/- per day/head.
- ♦ In case the government could not provide work on the scheme the worker was to receive compensation. This has not been done.
- ♦ The incidence of tampering the musters with the use of white fluid and marking absent as present and present as absent by pencil and of overwriting the number of work days was almost universal.

All this is documented in the Report of the Auditor and Comptroller General.

The story of the Integrated Child Development Programme is not any happier. The Auditor & Comptroller General observes that the records of weights, vaccinations were filled in with pencil and showed that there was a decrease in the incidence of malnutrition when it is universally known and reported, even in the United Nations' documentation, that India has the largest number of malnour-

ished children.

For the last three years, the Finance Minister has been claiming that agricultural credit has been expanded from Rs.60,000 crores to more than Rs.160,000 crores. The increase claimed far exceeds the sum to be waived under the Debt Relief and Waivers Scheme. The question arises, naturally why did the debt waivers scheme become necessary if the supply of credit had multiplied so rapidly.

Another surprising aspect is that the quantity of fertilizers, pesticides, water, electricity used does not appear to have gone up commensurate with the increase in credit. Where the money went is a moot question.

Nobody can deny that politically the UPA has outmaneuvered the NDA. Their members can outshoot the opposition. That does not mean that during the last four years, particularly as regards agriculture, the UPA has brought about any historic revolution that all their henchmen appear to claim in unison.

The Debt Relief and Waiver Scheme – Effective Only if it is Total

Relief for *Some*, but what of the *Others*?

Every year, soon after the Budget, there is a debate about the relative merits of various indices of popular reaction to the proposals. The stock market has often been discounted as being susceptible to manipulation. Popular demonstrations can also be manipulated.

This year I was witness to crowds of farmers being brought into the vicinity of 10 Janpath jointly by the Congress and the UNPA leaders. Whether the

crowds were to hail Sonia or denounce her was to be decided at an appropriate time.

Finally, the crowd drove in on tractor-trolleys under the leadership of the young Deepender Hooda to felicitate the President of the Congress party.

Having slept two nights over the initial euphoria with the Debt Relief and Waiver Scheme (DRWS) of the Finance Minister,

Mr P. Chidambaram, farmers are waking up to the devious character of the whole mechanism, which will do more harm than good to the farm community.

Genesis of Indebtedness

There is a general agreement that the basic cause of the farmers' inability to repay loans is the uneconomic character of agriculture as a whole. There is little dispute that this is a consequence of the negative subsidies imposed by the

government through market interventions. It is generally conceded that the loss inflicted on the farmers far exceeds the pittance of input subsidies the government feigns to give.

The most dependable estimates of the loss caused to the farmers from negative subsidies between 1981 and 2000 is Rs.300,000 crore.

Against this, the estimate of indebtedness of the farmers, according to the Radhakrishna Committee, is only Rs.1.3 lakh crore and the total quantum of input subsidies reaching the farm sector is barely Rs.80,000 crore. If one draws up a tally sheet, it is clear that the farmers owe the government nothing.

The justification of the farmers' organisations demanding total waivers of all farm loans was that these loans are both illegal and immoral. Illegal because the government, which is itself a party to the contract of the loans, frustrated the honouring of the contract by the borrowing farmer, which renders the contract void. And immoral, because on balance, the government owes much more to the farmers than the other way round.

The debt relief had to be total in order to be just and moral. There is no scope for making any differentiation between the givers of loans, such as private moneylenders, formal sector banks, and so on.

There is no basis for making any differentiation between the borrowing farmers either. Differentiating between farmers who hold less than five acres is good politics but bad economics that could prove to be disastrous for agriculture in near future.

Meaningless discrimination

The smallness of the holding has very little economic significance. If agriculture is a losing proposition, the small holder should logically be a smaller loser than the larger holder. There is abundant evidence to show that the cost of production in small holdings is less and the prices obtained slightly higher. It should not be forgotten that it is not the small and the marginal farmer who made the country self-sufficient in food-grains.

Having slept two nights over the initial euphoria with the Debt Relief and Waiver Scheme (DRWS) of the Finance Minister, Mr P. Chidambaram, farmers are waking up to the devious character of the whole mechanism, which will do more harm than good to the farm community.

The more crucial section of the farming community is the surplus producer. If Mr Chidambaram's DRWS frees four crores of farmers from the burden of indebtedness and makes them eligible to receive fresh loans, this community can make very little contribution to the solution of the problem of food security, particularly in the epoch of climate change.

Similarly, there is no justification whatsoever for discriminating between loans taken from the formal and informal sectors; the indebtedness of a farmer is an integral entity. He borrows from banks and then, to repay those loans, borrows from the moneylender. It follows that, at any given point of time, whether

a farmer owes money to the moneylender or to the bank is entirely a matter of accident.

Three-fold Division

Any differentiation between short-term crop loans and long-term development loans is equally invidious. The Finance Minister himself does not explicitly say that his scheme will cover all kinds of loans; however, the criteria for eligibility that he lays down effectively rule out long-term loans becoming eligible for the DRWS relief or waiver.

The Finance Minister has thus created a three-fold division amongst the farming community. It is rather remarkable that the UPA government, which does not accept the theory of 'creamy layer' for the backward classes, is trying to use the same doctrine for farmers who are, as it is, in such desperation that they prefer death to the ignominy of living.

Even the friends of the Finance Minister would not claim that the DRWS was motivated by any serious concern for the farmers. If that were so, the Finance Minister would have first tried to correct market imperfections so that the farmers are not driven to the trap of indebtedness once again. It is exactly the opposite.

Last year, the Finance Minister imposed a ban on futures marketing of wheat and paddy. That was a rather cruel blow for a nascent marketing system. This year, he has delivered an even more cruel blow. Not only did he not lift the ban, but he has also imposed a tax on commodity market transactions, which could be crippling for the development of the futures market.

(Cont'd. on p.39)

Global Warming And Climate Change

– Is there Political Will to Avoid a Catastrophe

Sadanand B. Kumta

A one-metre sea level rise would mean loss of 7.5 million houses and consequent displacement of population.

World issues today are centered around HIV AIDS, destruction of forest cover, depletion of ocean fisheries, extinction of species etc. But we humans have been colliding with ecological systems for long and lately the threat of global warming and climate change is impinging on our consciousness due to the recent media focus.

It is important to understand the meanings of these terms and also the difference between them. Global warming is related to gradual increase in the average temperature of earth's near surface air and also of oceans due to build-up of green house gases (GHGs). These gases are mainly carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxides. Climate change refers to significant variation in the mean state of the climate and in its normal variability persisting over a decade or longer. It refers to changes in temperature and precipitation and changes in seasonal variability. UN defines climate change as attributed to human activity that changes the composition of global atmosphere and its natural variability. There are people who are still skeptical of this threat.

It is now more or less widely accepted that the so-called "development" involves cutting down trees, polluting water bodies and, in short, degradation of the earth's environment.

All of us are aware that India's nearly 700 million rural population is dependant on climate sensitive sectors of agriculture, forests and fisheries. They mostly depend on natural resources such as water, biodiversity, mangroves, coastal zones and grasslands for livelihood. Now farmers, used to traditional farming are complaining that rains have become erratic, that is, unpredictable weather patterns. They cannot decide when or what to plant and what will thrive.

It all began with the industrial revolution. As of now, carbon dioxide, methane and N₂O have increased by 31%, 151% and 17% respectively according to the IPCC. We are likely to see permanent rise in temperature by 6° centigrade by end of this century that can lead to extinction of species by 50% (Alok Jha's prediction). Water shortages at one end and catastrophic floods at the other will displace human population. IPCC Chairman Mr. R. K. Pachauri, (Nobel laureate, along with Al Gore) has warned that wheat, rice and pulse production would be adversely affected, as 2/3rd of India's land under agriculture is rain-fed.

Reports are pouring in that ice and Himalayan glaciers are receding and sea levels are rising steadily. The late Shri Anil Agarwal, that visionary on environment and founder of Centre of

Science and Environment (former editor of Down to Earth) wrote a provocative article "Global warming in an unequal world – a case for environmental colonization". Though Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) is established to make the developed North to provide cleaner technologies to the South, very little progress has been made on this front. It is well known that USA which produces 25% of the world's GHG has not signed the Kyoto protocol. It is therefore a pity that two superpowers like USA and China have shown little concern for global warming.

How is warming caused? When infra red waves of the sun are radiated back into the atmosphere, it is the GHGs that trap the radiation.

A one-metre sea level rise would mean loss of 7.5 million houses and consequent displacement of population. Himalayan glaciers permanently lost would mean (WWF 2005, IPCC 2007) water shortage for 500 million people, as it will reduce flows in the Ganga, Sindhu and the Brahmaputra. Agriculture will suffer, and the most to suffer will be the rural poor.

Three major factors affect us. The most important is the dramatic rise of the world population to 670 crores at present. This has to be

(Cont'd. on p.39)

Affirmative Action Policies: The Continuing Divide and Rule Strategy

Arvind. A

Reservations based on caste have benefited our 'democratically' elected rulers, it is time now for something that benefits those who need it, affirmative action based on the lowest common denominator of the 21st century – money.

Year after year *ad infinitum*, ruling parties have promised development of those who are deprived. 'The deprived' should logically mean those with inadequate financial means. This makes sense since in the present context; money (or the lack of it) is the great equalizer. However, successive governments have, motivated largely by their own Machiavellian machinations, defined the needy, based on caste.

The proponents of caste based reservations would argue (rather forcibly at times) that the protected groups were discriminated against in the past and must be allowed every opportunity to catch up with the others. These laudable intentions however have not borne fruit in the light of the fact that there are many in this country who are yet to benefit from affirmative action. Considering the 60+ years of continued affirmative action efforts, this record is a dubious distinction indeed. Reservation politics have wreaked untold havoc on the collective psyche of the country and have caused deep, everlasting cracks in the integrity of the nation. It is worth considering the effects of caste based reservation on the people who have and still are benefitting from them vis-à-vis those who were supposed to be the beneficiaries.

In the present globalized, networked world, caste and reli-

gion asre footnotes to be ignored at leisure on the pages of an India aiming for the stars. As society progresses economically, feudal distinctions are blurring and the only true division is in our minds. In the present progressive context, mediocrity is intolerable, excellence paramount. Therefore, as we move towards a more globally integrated India, future oriented policies are essential, policies that would develop the country proactively, not only statistically but palpably. However, as visible in a number of corners of our country, instead of fostering unity in diversity, many leaders (elected or otherwise) are busy highlighting the diversity, hoping to gain votes and power. The avarice and political ambition of all rulers/would be rulers has similarly distorted the affirmative action policy ensuring that it has also a vote bank capturing tool.

Each new ruler includes new categories under the umbrella of affirmative action merely to acquire support from that section of society. This is all the more galling considering the fact that many of the individuals protected by affirmative action do not need any protection to begin with. A more telling fact that highlights the mis-asma that affirmative action has become is that there are no exit clauses from affirmative action. Many families are enjoying the benefits of affirmative action through multiple generations almost as a perverse heirloom not

allowing the benefits to trickle down to the truly needy.

Seen in this light, one can rationalize that providing affirmative action benefits to those who do not really need/deserve them, is akin to unfair discrimination against the 'open' categories. Such rationalization is justifiable considering that many 'backward' category individuals have not only caught up with society in general but are getting ahead, not on their own steam but by riding affirmative action policies. Such a scenario is visible in many educational institutions, where candidates belonging to otherwise educated, well to do families utilize their caste to gain entry into coveted streams. This compromises the quality of the output of these institutions and breeds resentment towards the beneficiaries of these reservations. At the same time, most would not object if the truly needy, the poor who lead a hand to mouth existence are given a chance to progress and catch up with the mainstream.

Therefore, in the present scenario, affirmative action may be perceived as reverse discrimination, which does not allow the cracks of the past to heal and at the same time prevents the truly needy from progressing. Caste based reservations highlight and emphasize the

(Cont'd. on p.39)

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From Our Readers

On Tibet

This has reference to the news items and comments on the pro-independence protests at Lhasa published in *The New Sunday Express* of 16.03.2008. In our times of globalization and liberalization, it is condemnable that China should choose to suppress a non-violent protest with disproportionate force.

When His Holiness the Dalai Lama climbed down from the demand of complete independence to genuine autonomy for Tibet, what does China loses conceding the same? Mr. S. J. Sorabjee aptly mentions in his *Soliloquies* columns, that India should not needlessly needle China but at the same time, need not bend over backwards to please China contrary to India's tradition of tolerance.

I welcome the comments from Japan, Taiwan (ROC), Sweden and the US presidential aspirant Mr. Obama Barak condemning China's brutalities on peaceful protesters. Here I find the conspicuous absence of Indian Human Rights busybodies. I shall go one step further by demanding Indian style multi-party democracy in China ending one party dictatorship and helping solve the Tibet and other problems in a just manner.

S. C. Panda, Bhubaneswar

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Freedom First?

I was surprised to read the letter of Mr. S. C. Panda. Does he mean that one should not speak what one thinks is truth, if it goes against one of the many Hindu beliefs? Is this restriction on speech to be followed only in India and Nepal, or is it of worldwide application? All other religions-followers will also say that no body should speak any thing against their religious beliefs, and, why not, the communists and socialists will say nobody should write any thing which goes against their beliefs. The freedom of expression will then be confined to a very narrow lane, with "no entry" boards in every direction.

Regarding Sir C. V. Raman taking a bath at the time of an eclipse, we should follow the great men only in their good and rational behaviour. Lokmanya Tilak was a great man, and had a habit of betel-nut chewing. That does not mean we all should start chewing betel-nut!.

Regarding the issue of the U.S. Scientist Mr. Watson: Shri Panda has totally missed what Mr. Watson said: (1) A little bit of difference in I.Q. should not be called as mental retardation; (2) Colour people of Africa should not be equated with untouchables in India. Coloured people of Africa differed from the white people of the U.S. in many important aspects – race, religion, place, culture, environment. The untouchables in India did not differ from the touchables in any of these important aspects; (3) Exceptions like Dr. B. R. Ambedkar or Mr. Nelson Mandela do not prove anything, nor do these exceptions say anything about the general level of intelligence of their respective communities.

Dr. Subhash Athale

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A Serious Threat to National Integration

With reference to the article, 'A Serious Threat to National Integration' in the *Freedom First* issue No.490, Mr. Mohan Dharia has dealt with a problem with much insight, the significance of which has not yet been appreciated fully, not to speak of the question of addressing it.

He has aptly pointed out migration to flourishing cities with all its attendant ill-effects cannot be checked unless employment opportunities are created in local areas. Only rural-oriented programmes can ensure a solution to halt the creation of ever-increasing filthy slums sporting the cities.

K. Vaithinathasamy, Kumbakonam.

National Security : Contemporary Paradigm (3) *(Cont'd. from p.13)*

heterogeneous coalitions ruling the States. Even at the Central level this is necessary to safeguard the integrity of the nation by enacting laws, as there is a tendency to take shortsighted political decisions for reasons of political expediency. The country's integrity should not be sacrificed at the altar of electoral gains. The right of the Centre to intervene, short of taking over the State administration, may become necessary in future when State politicians or even bureaucrats flout legal obligations with impunity for personal gains or for their party. A striking example is the refusal of the Orissa government to trace an absconding rapist Mohanti, son of a Director General of Police. The example of the FBI raiding Washington

DC Mayor Marion Barry's premises in January 1990 for smoking crack cocaine in a hotel may be cited. In this particular case Barry was immensely popular with grassroots political support and the local police under him did not dare take action. In fact Barry's armed bodyguard was with him throughout the process of arrest and release on bail. Such selective intervention could help checking criminalisation of State politics, which is increasing by the day with the Centre watching helplessly.

To be continued.

MR. V. BALACHANDRAN can be contacted at:
vappala.balachandran@gmail.com

Compulsory Military Service in the Army *(Cont'd. from p.17)*

"Whatever for, they are only doing their duty"! This reinforces the proposal that the Armed Forces be treated as a separate service.

- (d) With globalization in full cry and the emancipation of women in all spheres of public life evident, the intake of women officers may be increased, not so much in the fighting arms just yet but in the many administrative posts that exist like adjutants, quartermasters, signals officers, military transport officers and intelligence officers, a view expressed by many management gurus.
- (e) Selective conscription at the graduate level where those graduates who are selected for a three year compulsory period including 9 months training at the appropriate academies are given the option at the end of the third year to continue as regular officers. This selective conscription may be based state wise. Teams will visit each college or university, interview all graduates due to graduate, put them through the selection tests and those

found medically fit are given commissions.

No graduate will be given a degree if he has not appeared before a selection board.

- (f) Singapore for instance has laws whereby all those who have passed their A levels are conscripted for two years and if found suitable are absorbed in the regular cadres. But a similar scheme in India would not be financially viable and hence the proposal for selective conscription. This would include recruitment from the current National Cadet Corps Scheme.

In conclusion it may be stated that the serious officer shortage existing today needs to be addressed on a war time footing in view of the problems the country is facing on its international borders in the North and East, the ever expanding terrorist activities and internal security and international commitments.

GEN. E. D'SOUZA (PVSM) is a Defence Analyst and a much sought after speaker on Defence and Military matters.

Interrogation of Prisoners *(Cont'd. from p.17)*

the criticism of the Western countries with due caution.

We all respect human life and human dignity but law and common sense permit us to shoot a villain who is trying to kill us or a dear one. By resorting to coercive questioning, we are only holding the assailant's hand back.. What Einstein said about the Nazi atrocities equally applies to the terrorists of today:

"They deliberately used the humanity of others

to prepare for their last and most grievous crime against humanity."

Non-lethal interrogation should be legitimate to deal with suspects against whom prima-facie evidence exists. This will save innocent lives which should be the foremost concern of a government.

BRIG. (RETD.) S. C. SHARMA is an advisor to the telecom industry and a freelance journalist. Email: brigsc@bom9.vsnl.net.in

Cornucopia (Cont'd. from p.30)

Asia still has a long way to go; and it is still a continent of stark contrasts. A considerable proportion of its population remains mired in poverty. However, at the other end of the scale, an increasing number of Asians are flaunting their wealth. This is borne out by the fact that almost all Western luxury brands – from Armani to Louis Vuitton to Rolls Royce – are scampering to set up shop in Asia. They are enjoying far better sales than in their home countries.

Of course, there are also booming economies in the Arab world – notably Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates – but their prosperity is inextricably linked to the price of oil. Right now, they are riding a wave; principally because misguided

policies by some Western leaders have raised the price of oil to stratospheric levels; but the bubble has to burst some day.

While I largely agree with the views expressed by Cohen in his NYT article, I am not holding my breath. I do not expect to see a new world order in my lifetime, at least. Asians may already be the de facto top dogs, but it is going to take them some time to grasp this new reality. They have to overcome a mindset forged by centuries of history and tradition. It won't be easy.

MR. FIROZE HIRJIKAKA can be contacted at leonardo8_99@yahoo.com

The Rural Perspective

The Debt Relief and Waiver Scheme (Cont'd. from p.33)

He could not be unaware of the fact that a liquid and buoyant futures commodity market could resolve most problems of farm credit and investment. Whatever gesture has been made by the Finance Minister has been forced by the suicides by about 200,000 farmers that amounted to a near genocide.

The Finance Minister had to do something. He, evidently, prepared the package in a last-minute hurry without carefully examining even the basic statistics relating to farm loans. The veracity of the claimed figure of the Rs 60,000 crore has been questioned in various circles. Even providing for the fact that some banks that may hope to use a part of the waiver money for face-lifting their balance sheets, the bloated figure appears to have an eye on gaining political advantage.

The Finance Minister has demonstrated that economists can be very astute politicians, exactly like

his mentor, the Prime Minister. In one single stroke, he has managed to expose all the parties that jumped into the arena of debt relief and caused fissures in the hope of claiming the resultant credit. At the same time, he has neutralised the non-political farmers movement, which is threatening to be a potent political competitor because of the suicides of so many farmers.

Budget 2008-09 aims at the approaching elections, not in the sense that it provides bonanzas, but because it attempts to expose the hypocrisy of all the opposition parties and tries to cause divisions among the ranks of the farmers.

MR. SHARAD JOSHI, Founder, Shetkari Sanghatana and Member of the Rajya Sabha. Email: sharad.mah@nic.in; sharadjoshi.mah@gmail.com.

Global Warming and Climate Change (Cont'd. from p.34)

controlled through education of girls, fertility control and family planning, women's empowerment and assurance of child survival. The second factor is technological revolution and we have to make the best use of it. The third factor is relationship of mankind and mother earth. This has to improve.

What are the remedies to combat climate change?

We are to realize that we are all one people and we have only one planet that is our home. Al Gore wants carbon pollution levels to be brought down through carbon tax. He also advocates worldwide use of green technologies (eco-friendly).

What we need to do in India is outlined below:

- Protect our environment
- Practice water harvesting; conserve water through ground water recharge.
- Practice water shed development through soil and water conservation and afforestation.
- Use cleaner technologies.

Al Gore has stated that what we really need is political will and it is to be considered as a renewable resource.

MR. SADANAND B. KUMTA, former Director, Technical Education, Gujarat.

BOOK REVIEWS



POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND THE POLICE IN INDIA by K. S. Subramanian ● Published by Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd, B1/11, Mohan Co-op. Industrial Area, Mathura Road, New Delhi 110 044 ● Year of Publication: 2007 ● No. of Pages: 235 ● Price: Rs.350.

Reviewed by Ashok Karnik, formerly Deputy Director, Intelligence Bureau, Government of India.

The book is more an enlarged research paper than a book. It is strewn with citations from dozens of sources in every page, which does not make it easy reading but that should not detract from the painstaking scholarship of the author. In the plethora of citations are some hidden gems:

"Under Nehru's leadership, Indian nationalism constituted itself into state ideology and state building took place at the cost of nation building".

"Wars between states have given way to conflicts within borders".

"Poverty needs to be recognized as social breakdown and civil conflict is the core component of global security threat".

"State preoccupation with order & peace rather than law & justice".

After unloading such profundities, the author comes to more mundane subjects like police corruption, dangers of expansion of Central Police Forces, Intelligence Bureau's political role, agrarian violence etc, which are of greater interest.

Police Corruption

The author states that there is a perception that the police are the "single largest lawless group" and that politicisation, criminalisation, corruption, brutal-

ity and human rights violations are eating into its vitals. Strong words indeed, coming from a police officer himself. Not content with this, he quotes the British view in 1859, "Police were all but useless for the prevention and sadly inefficient for the detection of crime – had generous reputation for corruption and oppression" and 'many believe that this is true of the Indian police today'.

In another report quoted by the author, the police are perceived as a 'Hindu' force during communal riots and the inimical relationship between the police and the Muslims make them over-react in confrontation-like situations.

The condemnation of the police is hurtful but it is the bald truth that must be faced.

Misuse of the Intelligence Bureau

The book brings out exhaustively how IB has been made a political tool by the ruling party. Since IB is not governed by an Act of Parliament, its charter of duties is drawn up conveniently by orders of the Director of IB or the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). Under the guise of protecting national security, the IB is authorized to keep tabs on all political activities, including those of dissidents in the ruling party, labour and student activities, agrarian agitations, election prospects and even mar-

ket prices of essential commodities. After the Emergency, serious efforts were made to define IB's duties through the Shah Commission and the L. P. Singh Committee reports but it all came to naught once Indira Gandhi returned to power. The author needs to be congratulated for delving deep into such a delicate but much needed reform.

Other observations about IB's functioning are rather one-sided. It is claimed that the all-powerful IB Director B.N. Mullik and Nehru's confidant, persuaded Nehru to induct the Army into Nagaland in 1955, leading to widespread conflicts in the North East, which we are facing even today. Again Mullik was responsible for the Forward Policy on the Indo-Tibetan border, inviting the wrath of the Chinese. This has been the argument of several defence experts but Subramanian, who was in the IB, could have examined what would have happened if these steps had not been taken. Would the Chinese not have occupied the posts India established because till then India had no presence anywhere on the borders? Aksai Chin was lost without a ripple because "not a blade of grass grows there". At least elsewhere, India could scream that it was violated. There can be difference of opinion on the issue but a charge of provoking the Chinese can be made only after examining why Mullik/Nehru established these

posts at great cost to the IB. Mullik is also blamed for the dismissal of the Communist Government in Kerala in 1959. There is no doubt that the political role played by the IB needs to be circumscribed but the good work done by it also needs to be recorded.

Agrarian/Naxalite Violence

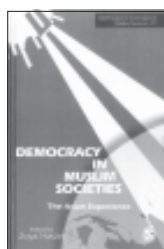
This again is an area where half-baked, scholarly solutions abound. The author's theme is that naxalite violence is a form of retaliatory violence against violence perpetrated against the dalits and adivasis. He stresses that large-scale industrial, irrigation and infrastructure projects are leading to mass disorganisation, displacement and destitution of the dalits and adivasis. Development is the bugbear and the cause of all the

problems! The author rightly argues that Government's policy of dealing with these as law and order issues will not succeed but he ought to recognise that the problem is being handled on multiple fronts but without much success. After all, development is a strategy to uplift the poor and benefits of development need to be appreciated for any meaningful discussion on the agrarian problem. He could have suggested a more concrete line of action to tackle rural unrest but scholars are meant to analyse problems, not solve them. There lies the rub.

The author takes care of other national concerns similarly through deep analysis but readymade advice. He observes that the enforcement of the Armed

Forces (Special Powers) Act 1958 has destroyed the democratic process in the North East, accompanied by serious human rights abuses; that the Gujarat riots were state sponsored and the police generally act out of their inherent biases.

The quick fix is that the Central Police Forces should not be allowed to impinge on the states' authority, police should be humanized; IB and MHA be reformed, agrarian violence should be juxtaposed with violence against the dalits and adivasis and appropriate solutions found. In short, use of force is not the answer to anything. True and obvious. It is said that too much analysis leads to paralysis of action. How true!



DEMOCRACY IN ISLAMIC SOCIETIES – THE ASIAN EXPERIENCE
 edited by Zoya Hasan ● Published by Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd,
 B1/11, Mohan Co-op. Industrial area, Mathura Road, New Delhi 110 044
 ● Year of Publication 2007 ● No. of Pages: 266 ● Price: Rs.550.

Reviewed by Justice (Retd.) S. M. Daud of the Bombay High Court.

'Fundamentalism' says an unlikely source – the Sultan of Oman 'is the language of religion to further political careers'. This is true of politicians of all hues, and the world over. It is certainly not restricted to Muslims as foes of Islamic Resistance like to portray the defence of the Muslim mind, culture and so-called backwardness. That label or description is not applied to resistance favoured by the Western Imperialists or their advocates elsewhere. The I.R.A and ETA or the pro-Serb politicians have never been described as 'Catholic' or 'Orthodox Church' fanatics and rightly so. Significantly, the predominantly Muslim movements

of Kosovo and Bosnian separatism have been spared a linkage between religion and their urge for independence. This needed a forceful mention which unfortunately is missing in "Democracy in Muslim Societies" brought out by Sage Publications under the sponsorship of the Observer Research Foundation. The book purports to be an appraisal of governing attitudes in six Muslim majority countries in Asia. The States chosen are Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey. The State-wise appraisals are poor stuff, certainly so in comparison to the well crafted Introduction penned by Prof. Zoya Hasan .

The first essay begins with a look at Bangladesh. As everyone knows, the country suffers from scarce resources, a huge population that keeps growing, bitterness in human relationships in all fields, corruption and widely prevalent proneness to violence. One would expect the rulers or those aspiring to rule to address themselves to these handicaps. Unfortunately, all that the rulers seem interested in is feathering their own nests pandering to base extremes like communalism. The present regime, civilian with military backing, seems to have brought about much needed peace and calm. But perpetuating itself, whatever be the excuse is a sure recipe for 'an end'

like that of Ershad & Zia Ur-Rehman. A sorely needed remedy is to end for all times persecution of Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, Qadianis and Biharis. It is only these groups that can, at least for the present, handle the much needed economic and administrative reforms. This aspect has been virtually ignored by the duo of M/s. Amena & Meghna who are the authors of the essay. If a country requires democratization- and every developed or underdeveloped country requires that – the precondition is a resurgent distributive economy and an impartial & responsive administration. What is keeping Bangladesh backward is the false belief that the extremes in religion and partisanship in all spheres can solve the problems that exist or even be successful in diverting the people's attention.

The second experience analysed is that from Indonesia. Here, the Dutch who welded the different islands into a single country appear to have left untrained in governance even the surfeit of doctors who came into prominence after the State got rid of colonialism. Neither religion nor ethnic affinity provides glue to establishing a nation if there be other factors dividing the people. Indonesia has experimented with dictatorial and democratic regimes. Sukarno, seemingly all-powerful, was over- thrown by a CIA-backed coup. He is forgotten though his successor the far more repressive and corrupt Suharto lives on clutching his millions and his extended family. Sadly enough the democratically elected presidents of the republic have been equally notorious for nepotism and corruption. One of them, Abdurrahman more famous for his presidential foreign tours than governance, was known as Gus

Dur (Elder Brother). No one has contributed anything memorable to the country. Suharto joined the Golkar party whose idea of a good polity was that every Indonesian had to believe in State-recognized religions. Atheism and Agnosticism were prohibited. The essayist Adriana Elizabeth does not tell us whether conversion from one recognized religion to another was permissible. Jihadism is raising its head in the State and this is the result of connivance by the rulers. Having read Ms. Elizabeth's piece we don't get an answer to the extent of local self government permitted. The apparent failure of democracy may well be on account of its total omission. Democracy at the centre without its extension to the units is a sure recipe for cronyism with all the attendant evils. Bad as the democratic regimes have been, they are certainly an improvement on the dictators. Sukarno's role in the struggle for Indonesia's independence is over-shadowed by his gross misrule and Suharto will be remembered not for the idealistic mantra of Pancasila, but the massacre of more than a million Communists. A telling comment on the nefarious role of established religion by the author is why Islam and democracy are incompatible: First, besides the peaceful aspects all religions including Islam have the seed of conflict such as intolerance, arrogance, exclusivity & coerciveness. Fundamentalists use the characteristics to preserve their religion, which also brings about clear and strong gaps within their own communities or with other communities.

The Iranian experience has been ably analysed by Sadegh Zibakadam. It has periodic elections to the Presidency and Majlis. But the candidates wanting

to offer themselves to these posts are subjected to scrutiny by the Guardian Council and the Expediency Council. These are under the exclusive control of the Supreme leader (Ayatollah Khomeini & his successors). These bodies also have control over legislation, appointments to the elected and administrative bodies, foreign relations and defence. Human rights are blatantly violated & normal freedoms relating to expression and assembly are virtually non-existent.....all in the name of preserving the purity of Shia Islam!

The Malaysian experiment examined by Abdul Rehman Embong is the most encouraging. In the sense it is a guided democracy with a slight overdose of Islam. Thanks to the presence of a strong minority population (nearly 40 %) & succession of able and moderate prime ministers, the country has been spared the ordeal of a religious Inquisition and Persecution. The compensatory discrimination in favour of the Malay Muslim majority has rightly given rise to an agitation and one hopes effective ameliorative measures will be taken soon before the situation gets out of control.

Mohammed Waseem's assessment of the fate of democracy in Pakistan suffers from the vice of meaningless verbosity. In the face of four military interventions- Ayub, Yahya, Zia, and Musharraf - it has to be accepted that such interventions will occur in the future also. The jackboot and the ballot box have not gelled & the political parties suffer from the dominance of the feudal and salariat. Quite a few of the politicians and not only them, hanker for what is termed 'Nizam-E-Mustafa', i.e. principles underlying

the Prophet's Rule. Divisions within Islam abound. The Indian subcontinent which includes Pakistan and Bangladesh, is too familiar with these differences.

And where there are serious rifts over Hadiths how can one expect uniformity in what constitutes Nizam-E-Mustafa? And as is common to all Orientals, religious differences are settled by shouting degenerating into assassinations and massacres, which is what is happening with alarming frequency in Pakistan.

Korel Goymen examines the Turkish interaction with democracy. A unique feature of the country's polity and society is the important role assigned to the armed forces viz. that of curbing any signs of religiosity straying into social and political fields. Beyond a very small limit, the Islamic revivalists dare not go. The other check on the march of the Islamists is the near unanimous aspiration of the Turks that their country gets admission to the European Union. The rulers will have to loosen all existing illiberal laws and practices. Once again, geopolitics will play a conflicting role. The biggest imperial power today viz. The United States of America will check EU's tepid unwelcome to the Turkish moves. And this will be to drive a wedge between pro and anti American powers in West Asia as also to check an increasingly hostile and powerful Russia.

The introduction by Prof. Zoya Hasan is gripping. She observes and correctly so, that despite the claim to be supra-national, most Islamist movements have been shaped by national contexts & peculiarities. According to her, Muslims of the south Asia account for 40 % of the Muslim world and

yet are qualitatively different. Being in the Third World, the majority of Muslim countries share its problems of poverty, corruption and misgovernance. She notes with rare insight that the destruction of the Communist parties in Iran and Indonesia is largely responsible for the filling up of the vacated space by the fanatics of Islamic resurgence. This repression had the backing of the United States which now professes to be baffled by the rise of what President Bush calls 'Islamic Fascism'. As to Islamic militancy, the role of Zionist extremism in the creation & expansion of Israel, the American use of Pakistan, Taliban, and al Qaeda for getting rid of Soviet Army and their protégés, proved to be role models for the former. The misdeeds of Western Imperialism beginning with the capture of slaves from African countries (almost wholly Muslim) and ending with threats to Iran based wholly on false assertions have contributed in a large measure to Muslim alienation from what is wrongly perceived to be the Western model for modernization.

And this takes us to the wrong perception – fake or real – by the advocates of democracy rightly so understood and its adherents. To begin with there is no truth in the assertion that democracy is limited to periodical polls to ensure a responsible legislature and executive. A set of what may be described as conventions, underlying all democratic societies are more important. These are being flouted in all countries and continents – not only oriental or Islam. This is largely due to the clout of money power and criminal syndicates over political parties and individual politicians. Examples of these are the rise of the American Right, the spin doctors of the New

Labour in Britain, Al Qaeda in the Islamic world, Zionist lobbies in Israel, America and European countries and the Saffron surge in India, now also infecting the upper castes settled in foreign countries. It may well be asked why these forces cannot be checked?

Countervailing agencies like a free media and independent judiciary can do wonders. Their absence in the six countries appraised in the book is noticed but not sufficiently emphasized. In fact all these countries urgently require written Constitutions, ensuring separation of powers, a Bill of Rights and an independent and effective judiciary. The media with the electronic segment seems bent on sensationalism & trivialisation. Injecting a huge dose of liberating humanism in public attitudes appears to be the only antidote to check the excesses of wolves in the garb of sheep. A free but impartial and responsible media is as much needed as are strong and impartial judges. More important is the need for all theocracies -more so Islamic- to drop the label of adherence to religious creed. Whatever the preferences & pretences of the bigots, they cannot curb the large scale migrations taking place all over the world. This will effect changes and not only in demography or culture. And it is not only Muslims who are flooding the western countries. In fact large chunks of the Gulf and West Asia are host to non-Muslim populations who have perfect freedom to practice their own beliefs. The thoughtful heir apparent to the British throne put it correctly when he described his desire to be known as the 'Defender of Faiths' rather than 'Defender of the Faith'. Even Saudi King Abdulla Bin Abdul Aziz has urged Muslims the world over to uphold the principles of

tolerance, mutual respect, equality & protection of the honor of the fellow humans (in a speech delivered at the annual reception attended by the visiting dignitaries at the just concluded Haj Pilgrimage).

There is an urgent need to inculcate skepticism in the minds of common folk vis-a-vis devious spiritualists & in particular politicians like Bush claiming God urging him to invade Iraq. He should have been ridiculed year in and year out. Unfortunately, not

one commentator on public affairs has reminded him of the same in recent times. In fact Tony Blair has recently converted to Catholicism. Is this atonement for his cleverness at 'spin' while in power or a cosmetic change of apparel?

The book under review said to be supported by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) carries a price tag of Rs. 550. Shouldn't the ORF do something to at least halve the price?

Every right thinking Muslim

in India should thank his stars for being spared the 'privilege' of having been born and originating in a Muslim country and this despite Modi, Advani, and the Singhals. They and also non-Muslims need to know that diversity amongst the Muslim community is as numerous as that amongst Hindus, though possibly a little less than Christians and Jews. Loyalty to diverse beliefs and practices is on the rise and this is permissible only in a secular and tolerant India.

Affirmative Action Policies (*Cont'd. from p.35*)

significance of caste and prevent society from evolving towards a cohesive whole. Simultaneously, caste politics deflect popular attention from more pressing issues such as poverty, community health, sanitation and grass root education policies, to mention a few. Our beloved leaders are quite logical after all, it is easier to rant endlessly about caste and the discriminations inflicted in the past rather than take charge of the future proactively.

As a nation, it is high time we realized that any affirmative action policy must carry the seeds of its own obsolescence within it. After a logical time line, there must not be anyone who needs the sanctuary of affirmative action. As it stands, the laudable aim of equality has been commandeered to meet political ambitions. The panacea of reservation has not uplifted the poor and they still think of their next meal rather than what qualification their children must receive.

Reservations based on caste have benefitted our 'democratically' elected rulers, it is time now for something that benefits those who need it, affirmative action based on the lowest common denominator of the 21st century; money. Affirmative action for the poor should logically replace our obsolescent caste based system.

MR. ARVIND. A is a young Research Scientist. Email: arrindno1@sify.com

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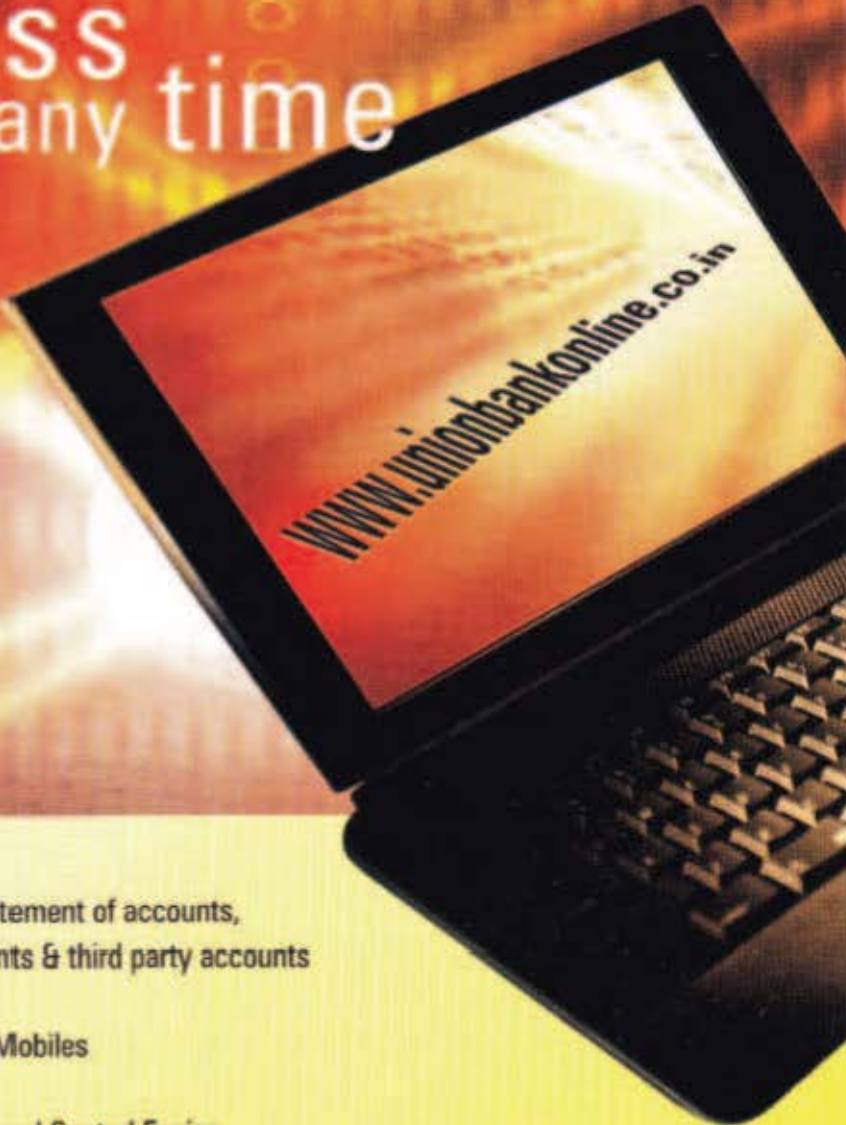
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