

Freedom First

The Liberal Position

India - China Relations

The Essential Difference



अहिंसा परमो धर्मः
(Non-violence is the
loftiest of values)



Political Power Grows
from the Barrel of a Gun

Otto Count Lambsdorff



(1926-2009)

Freedom First and the Indian Liberal Group mourn the passing away of Otto Count Lambsdorff after a brief illness on 5th December 2009. He was 83.

Born into the Prussian aristocracy Count Lambsdorff was conscripted into the Army in Nazi Germany at the age of 17. Severely wounded, he lost his left leg in an air attack on Berlin in the last days before the War ended. After a brief incarceration as a prisoner of war, young Lambsdorff resumed his education graduated from school in 1946 studied Law and Public Policy receiving his doctorate in 1952. He took up a commercial career to earn a living and around the same time, as a Liberal by conviction, he enrolled himself as a member of the Free Democratic Party (FDP).

Between 1972 and 1998 he was a member of Germany's lower house of parliament, the Bundestag where he distinguished himself as a champion of liberal economic policies, and an outstanding parliamentarian. In the coalition government with the Social Democrats, Count Lambsdorff was Minister of Economics. This liberal-socialist coalition broke up in 1982. The elections that followed saw the emergence of an FDP coalition with the Christian Democrats

under Chancellor Helmut Kohl for the next 16 years. Lambsdorff continued as Minister of Economics until 1984. During his tenure he earned the respect of the German people who considered him next to Ludwig Erhard, the "Father of the German Economic Miracle" as the most influential and respected "Face and Voice of the Market Economy".

He was elected Chairman of the FDP, later Chairman of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation and President of the Liberal International.

He was a passionate advocate of the Tibetan demand for civil liberties and the protection of their culture. In recognition of his support he was awarded the "Light of Truth Award" by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

He had a very special relationship with India's Liberals particularly Minoo Masani, the founder of the Indian Liberal Group (ILG). Count Lambsdorff was in India to participate in a conference of the Indian Liberal Group on 21 November 1985. At this conference he was actively involved in the drafting of a "Manifesto for Indian Liberals." Fifteen years later this Manifesto was the basis for the adoption of the Basic Principles for a restructured Indian Liberal Group.

Freedom First and the Indian Liberal Group convey our deepest condolence to Countess Lambsdorff and her family on their irreparable loss.

SVR

Dilip Chitre

In the passing away of Dilip Chitre on 10th December, 2009, the Indian literary firmament lost one of its most luminous stars. The term 'genius' cannot be used lightly but in the case of Dilip, it is most appropriate. Dilip was cast in the Renaissance mould and like the Renaissance greats, he was enormously gifted and consumed by a passion to understand and master all possible human arts. He was not only a writer who contributed to various genres of writing with distinction but also contributed in other fine arts. A major poet, he wrote short stories, plays, a novel, travel books, columns in journals and also did enormous service as a translator. He put the Marathi saint poet Tukaram on the map of world literature.

He wrote screen plays, was an accomplished photographer and a creative film director. His *Godam*, a feature film won recognition in international film festivals.

He was also a painter whose solo exhibitions were widely appreciated. He was a connoisseur of music and was awesomely informed on Hindustani classical music as well as American Jazz. Few know that he was deeply knowledgeable of cuisines, both native and foreign, and was himself no mean practitioner of it.

Freedom First pays him tribute, above all, for his uncompromising and fearless defense of freedom of expression. He was quick to raise his voice against the censors, be it against Bhau Padhye or a young suburban Marathi poet. A liberal and a humanist, Dilip was ever a generous friend and an ally.

Words cannot describe the vast vacuum which he has left with some of us who knew him and admired him short of idolatory.

Freedom First conveys its most heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, in particular, Viju, his wife and Yohul, his grandson.

V.K.S.



(1938-2009)

Freedom First

A Liberal Monthly – 58th Year of Publication
No.511 January 2010

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Between Ourselves...

Dear Readers,

Freedom First wishes you
A Happy and Peaceful New Year

We enter the 58th year of publication with some anxiety regarding the future of *Freedom First*.

Ironically this anxiety arises at a time when *Freedom First* is beginning to be recognized by our readers as a journal worth reading. Its rather simple production values which invited friendly criticism from its well-wishers is now being seen as a welcome relief from the welter of coloured glossies that have flooded the market. Gone are the days when we had to plead with our contributors for articles. We are now in the happy position of having material for publication for the next two issues. We are also, thanks to our columns, and the many articles on current events getting to be very contemporary; something that has drawn appreciative comment from our readers, not always necessarily in writing but over the phone, more often on the ubiquitous cell.

All this is for the good. They why the gripe? It's because despite these plus points, revenues are receding and costs are mounting. For as long as I can remember (and I recall from my predecessors who alas, are no more also commented similarly) that we have gotten used to a 'hand-to-mouth' situation which never seriously got out of hand. We always managed to pay our printing bills! In a manner of speaking it was easier those days because the costs were less. We were, for the greater part of 30 plus years, a 16-page self-cover monthly. A handful of advertisements managed to bridge the gap between the amount of the bill and the income received. Our establishment cost then, and now is minimal. But the income-expenditure gap is widening because we dared to be a little more ambitious, adding a little more colour to *Freedom First* and tripling the number of pages.

And so the Executive Council of the ICCF (our publisher) and the Advisory Board of our journal met in October to discuss what needs to be done. They felt that *Freedom First* is doing a great a job and deserves to be supported. That we should (a) Make all 12 editions of equal size averaging 32 pages each; (b) price a single copy at Rs.20/-; annual subscription at Rs.200; for two years at Rs.350; and three years at Rs.500/-; (c) Request our 400 odd life subscribers for a donation to the journal considering the fact that their life subscriptions are almost 10-plus years old (d) To seek out 12 well wishers who would be prepared to sponsor an issue each for each of the 12 months at an average of Rs.30,000 per issue; (e) To increase advertisement tariff from the present rather low level to a more meaningful rate per page.

We have run out of space. These are some ideas to begin with. However we have conveyed to you our problem and the solutions.

We now wait to hear from you. You can email the editor at jurasv@gmail.com or speak to him on 022 22843416 / 022 6639 6366 / 9820016392.

Editor

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Publishers: Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom (ICCF), 3rd Floor, Army & Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400 001.
Phone: +91 (22) 2284 34 16 ● E-mail: freedom@vsnl.com
Published by J. R. Patel for the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom (ICCF) and printed by him at Union Press, 13 Homji Street, Fort, Mumbai 400 001. Phone: 22660357, 22665526.
Typeset at **Shubham Print & Web** 59, Dr. V. B. Gandhi Marg, 1st Floor, Fort, Mumbai 400 001. Phone: 2284 2619 ● Mobile: 98929 21277
Single Copy: Rs.25 ● Annual: Rs.150 (Add Rs.50 for outstation cheques) ● Overseas (IInd Class Air Mail) Annual: \$20 or £10
Cheques to be drawn in favour of **ICCF** and mailed to the publishers at the above address.

From Our Readers

On “Freedom First”

You are doing your utmost to maintain timely publication of monthly *Freedom First*. Nowadays it is very costly to bring out any magazine without advertisement and that too without support from political or business house. I am sending my humble contribution to *Freedom First*.

Jagdish Ajmera, Swatantra Senani,
Ex-President & Principal adviser,
Western Railway Employees Union (WREU) and
Editor: *Railway Sentinal*.”

*

The magazine is very much appreciated by our trainers for its frank and forthright views published.

Indian Bank Staff Training Centre,
Vijayawada

*

I had subscribed for life to *Freedom First* several years ago by paying a subscription of Rs.500/-. Obviously this is no longer viable. I enclose a cheque for Rs.5,000/- as my humble contribution to the laudable efforts of the team behind *Freedom First*.

I have always enjoyed reading *Freedom First* and have been profoundly touched by various points of view that are presented. Your issue No.500 of selected articles is a treasure house. I do pass on your magazine to like minded people hoping that they too would subscribe.

Today the entire political leadership has sunk to such abysmal levels that I wonder how long it would take for our system to recover. Sane voices are not heard, lost in the cacophony of hate campaigns. Mainstream media is only interested in highlighting the negative aspects. After all negativity is what sells.

We are becoming more and more intolerant whether it concerns religious beliefs or the mundane, like dress codes. As far as dress code is concerned all that is needed, according to me, is that our attire should befit the occasion.

Religion does not have to be worn on our sleeve. There is space for every religious belief (that includes atheists and rationalists) in our country. Singing *Vande Mataram* and earning money by dubious means is unpatriotic. A person whose conduct is ethical requires no religion and is a true patriot.

We have a wealth of handicrafts, folklore and a very rich cultural heritage. We are losing all this at an exponential rate.

The Vedas tells us that there is no place for hatred in Hinduism. We have to set an example the way Mahatma Gandhi did. Commitment to truth at all times and at all costs is what we should set out to do. For verily “Truth is God.”

Mr. V. V. Nori, vasudevnori@gmail.com

Should Political Fasts Decide Nation’s Destiny?

The political fast demanding separate Telangana State has once again brought the nation’s attention to the blackmailing methods indulged by politicians to gain political advantage and power.

The concept of fasting has been historically practiced in India for several centuries by individuals to purify their thought process and suffer for any misdeeds committed by them in the past as a way of repentance.

Mahatma Gandhi glorified the concept of fasting by putting forth lofty and selfless objectives that would be achieved by his fasting. Mahatma Gandhi’s fasting was a method for improving his own inner self as well as to highlight the concept of peaceful satyagraha as the desirable method of struggle for justice. Mahatma Gandhi never had any narrow objectives or malice towards any one while undertaking such fasting.

In recent times, politicians have used the weapon of fasting to create unrest, whip up passion to settle political scores. Obviously, politicians believe that fasting is the easiest method for getting publicity for themselves in the media and for achieving political positions.

By yielding to the coercive method of fasting on the Telangana issue, the Government of India has seriously erred and has shown that it has no firm principles or policies. It buckled under pressure and threat. The net effect would be that many other politicians would be encouraged to indulge in fasting to achieve their ulterior motives.

Mahatma Gandhi would feel very sad, if he were to see the conditions in the land for whose freedom and welfare, he fought life long and fasted on many occasions.

N. S. Venkataraman,
email: nsvenkat@md4.vsnl.net.in

Madarasas – The Debate Continues

The following is extracted from an article by Lord Meghnad Desai in the *Indian Express* of 22 November, 2009:

“It is the standard ideology of all people who think that whatever their condition, someone else is responsible for it. Get rid of the other and you will be fine.

Alas, this is a fallacy. Prosperity does not come from majority rule even if you can exclude the minority. It comes from the usual route of saving, acquisition of knowledge, enterprise and hard work.”

It is equally true for minorities. Dr. Haque (FF No.507, September 2009) may like to ponder who is keeping the Muslims from prosperity in Pakistan or UK.

Brigadier Suresh Chandra Sharma (retd.)
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The Hindu-Muslim Divide

The Justice Liberhan Report has brought the Ayodhya issue once again to the fore. No actor in the Ayodhya drama has covered himself in glory - neither the Sangh Parivar nor the Secular Brigade. The Hindu-Muslim divide is a historical legacy of Moghul Rule merely accentuated during British Rule. This resulted in the Partition of India as well. While Pakistan became the homeland for the Muslims of the Indian sub-continent, India became a homeland for Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Jains and others. However, Partition only increased the gulf between Hindus and Muslims. The Hindu anguish over the destruction of temples visible all over North India and the Muslim fear of discrimination and the fear of progress left them in a time-wrap. The periodical Hindu-Muslim riots were the most visible manifestation of this hangover with Ayodhya being the most potent expression.

The only way, we as a nation, can leave the legacy of the past behind is to have a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to establish the truth and forgive the mistakes of the past in the same way that the great Nelson Mandela did to unite South Africa. This has to be done not to incriminate anybody but to get at the truth. We have to free ourselves from the feelings of guilt, revenge and fear. We have to face the facts. Truth liberates and prepares the stage for reconciliation and progress. If we don't learn from history, it is bound to repeat itself.

M. D. Kini, Email: mdkini@kini.org

Adding Insult to Injury

The 9th of August every year is observed as Quit India Day. On this Day our President (His/Her Excellency) of India instructs the Deputy Commissioners of the districts to send a few volunteers of the freedom struggle (commonly described as 'freedom fighters') to Delhi to give them a chance of a lifetime to have tea in his/her august presence. This does not disturb the President's other engagements on that day. This is how our President pays his /her respects to the Day that inspired those who fought for the freedom of the motherland.

It was on that Historic Day in 1942 that Gandhiji called the nation to "Do or Die" to press the British to Quit India. This led the way for independence and the British quit India on 15th August 1947.

Perhaps the government is so short of funds that it cannot send personal invitations from the President to these 'freedom fighters' or, perhaps, the government thinks it unnecessary to send personal invitations to these simpletons who risked their all without a thought to their future or the future of their families.

One pities the bureaucracy which is made to play its role in this silly affair of adding insult to injury to the volunteers of the freedom struggle.

Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs)

Even after fifteen Lok Sabha elections and nth number of elections and by-elections, the voting percentage has not crossed the fifty per cent mark. This apathy of more than fifty percent voters has turned our democracy into a government of representatives, for representatives and by representatives, a majority of whom are, in a manner of speaking, freaks of nature.

It is time to give serious thought to devise ways to have genuine responsible and responsive representatives. Many years ago, as far back as the nineteen sixties, Shri Rajagopalachari had suggested that the ballot boxes should be carried to places nearest to the voters. To take a step further our Election Commission which has earned admiration and appreciation for its work should think of carrying the EVM to the doorsteps of the voters via mobile polling booths as suggested by Rajaji.

Both letters are from 'freedom fighter' V. N. Torgal, Shree-Nidhi, Swami Chidanand Road, Gopalpur Galli, Bijapur 586104

India-China Relations : Some Strategic Perspectives

The fourth in the series of programmes on national security organized by Freedom First Foundation was on India-China relations. Held on November 7, 2009, the seminar was chaired by Mr. Ashok Karnik. In his opening remarks, he pointed out that the subject is of current importance because everyday something about China comes up - its demands on India particularly its interest in Indian territory. Generally people feel that the Indian response is weak. We have to examine how weak it is; or are we ignorant about our government's response and the country is not being told about its thinking. The discussions centred around three areas: The first whether we were heading for a repeat of the 1962 disaster; the second on the increasing involvement of Communist China in South Asian affairs; and the third in the light of the impression that our responses are weak, whether we have the political will?

The seminar itself arose from an article by Major General Eustace D'Souza (retd.) published in Freedom First under the title: "Are we heading for a 1962 Repeat?"¹. This explains the (2) in the title below.

Are We Heading for a 1962 Repeat (2)

Maj.Gen. Eustace D'Souza

I met the troops from the corps commander right down to the lowest sepoy and I can assure you that the men, the officers, the JCOs had an air of quiet confidence.

I have had four engagements with the Chinese, the first in 1955 when I was posted to command a detachment of troops, in Gangtok. I received a message from my headquarters to say that a Chinese soldier taken as prisoner during the Korean war had opted to go back to China under the NNRC protocol and he was being sent to me to ensure that he was handed over to the Chinese representative at Natu La. I was also told that I should not go myself. Here was a chance of meeting a Chinese soldier face to face. So I decided I would remove my badges of rank, dress like a sepoy and accompany the escort. Today there is a tarmac road to Natu La which is at a height of 14,400 feet, 35 miles from Gangtok. But in 1955 we had to march from Gangtok right up to Natu La along the old trade route, a mule track. We had no special snow clothing, we were not acclimatized, very few of us knew what high altitude soldiering was all about, but we were given this task. While we had to walk, the Chinese prisoner was mounted on a pony. We did the trip in three stages – the first stage at Karponang, the second at Changgu and the third at Sherabthang where, during the old days were used as stopovers when people walked/rode from India to Tibet. As I was told not to go personally, I instructed my men not to look at me for orders. We were supposed to hand over this prisoner at 10 o'clock in the morning. So,

I thought to myself, let's play a few games, and decided to hand him over at 12 o'clock. And there I saw the Chinese representative mounted on a beautifully caparisoned Tibetan pony, perfectly dressed in his blue Mao suit, while we looked like nothing on earth, having marched for two days, absolutely furious that we were two hours late. That was my first encounter with the Chinese.

"Stand Fast"

The second encounter was in 1965. My unit which was just 30 months old and raised by me, was sent up to Changgu to hold the three passes on the East Sikkim watershed – Yak La just over 15,000 feet, Sebu La and Natu La. My troops were from Maharashtra. But thanks to the Americans, who after the 1962 war sent us some snow clothing, we were now well prepared. Having moved my battalion there (you will remember that the 1965 war had broken out in the west), we were told to hold the passes with a strength of a platoon each. In 1965, I was promoted *in situ* to command the brigade responsible for the East Sikkim watershed.

In 1965, when we heard that war had broken out, I ordered my border outposts to be on the *qui vive* and one fine day a young officer I had kept at Natu La reported that he had seen 2000 Chinese troops down in the Chumbi Valley and they were to marching up in stages hoping that we would withdraw as we unfortunately did

¹ Freedom First No. 507, September 2009. Readers who may have missed reading the article can write or email us for a copy. For contact details see contents page.

in 1962. My orders to my troops were to stand fast, but withdraw all the observation posts on the other side. Eventually, the Chinese came up in strength and I asked my battalion to stand fast, but not to open fire until we could see the whites of their eyes. We had four skirmishes with them. One was at Yak La and that's where I learnt about face. They shot the sentry at Yak La and then tried to drag his body from our side to theirs and then send word saying that we could come and collect our soldier's body. However, one brave heart, a Naik from the Marathas, took position behind a boulder and held them up for two hours by firing accurately at them thus preventing the Chinese from pulling the body across. Eventually, they withdrew and we were able to collect all the used cartridges and ammunitions left by them because my superiors would not otherwise believe that this incident had taken place.

A Story of Three Skirmishes

There were three skirmishes at Natu La itself. One night while our troops were patrolling our side, a metal water bottle hit a rock and the Chinese reacted to the noise by opening up with 800 rounds of small arms fire but hit nothing. A few days later, they launched an attack on the south shoulder of Natu La. That attack was repulsed and the bravery of the young officer and JCO who pushed them back, was acknowledged. That was my second meeting with the Chinese and I faced them for two years while I was there. I understood that for the Chinese it was all a matter of face. So we did a number of little naughty things with them. For instance when we learnt that the Chinese troops were not getting fresh meat (pork), whereas we got our meat on hoof all the way from Rajasthan, I asked our men to unload the live goat in full view of the Chinese. This went on for a month and that must have exasperated them. Because one day at 5.00 in the morning the sentry reported that he could hear the squealing of pigs. The Chinese thought that they would be one up on us, little realizing that Maratha troops don't eat domesticated pork. So, we had the last laugh.

Then they put up a huge picture of Mao and when we started playing Indian film music on our side, they started playing the very atonal Chinese music which our men did not understand and we had a good laugh. And the final nail in the coffin was on Diwali. I gave orders that our post should be decorated, with lights and bunting. We prepared three baskets of traditional diwali sweets (we had lots of milk powder and sugar) and placed them under the wire fencing and beckoned them to help themselves. For the first twenty-four hours, nobody came. I advised my men to wait for another twenty-four hours. When the Chinese soldiers still did not come I asked my men to go near the wire fence, open the baskets and eat all those goodies in front of the Chinese to prove that

we were not trying to poison them. So, the final face saving score was three sets to one in our favour.

My last meeting with them was in Manipal at a seminar organized by journalist M. D. Nalapath and in the group of nine Chinese academics there was a major general Li and a senior colonel, of the National Defence University, Beijing. I was pitted against them and when my turn came to speak, I asked this Chinese General, quoting from the famous American magazine *Scientific American* that the Chinese were planning to use nuclear power to excavate a tunnel through the Himalayas to divert the waters of the Tsangpo River into the Gobi Desert, and by doing so they would be denuding the Brahmaputra of all water. Secondly, I said why were they building this railway line in Tibet. What movement is there? Surely, it's for military purposes because that's what one of your senior politicians has said. At the end of it, this Chinese General accused me of being a CIA Agent! But, the Chinese lady interpreter called on me at my residence while in Mumbai and later brought the head of the delegation to meet me. On the second visit, she gave me a packet. In the social conversation with the Chinese at the conclusion of that seminar, I had talked about Peking duck. My Chinese general friend sent me a Peking duck all the way from Beijing to Bandra!! These have been my experiences with the Chinese.

Since then I have visited Natu La thrice and at the age of 85 I went up 18,700 feet in North Sikkim to the famous post called the Finger where the Chinese are causing problems again. I believe, as an old soldier and a World War II veteran, that seeing is believing and that is why last year, at the age of 87, I went up to NEFA, right up to Bomdila; I was advised on health and age grounds not to proceed to Tawang. I went to Bomdila for two reasons – one, to see for myself what was happening and secondly, the battalion that I had raised and was with me at Natu La is now stationed in that sector.

An Air of Quiet Confidence

Let me assure you that we have no plans to attack China. What do we want to attack China for? What we have done (as reported in the media) is that we are raising two mountain divisions for that sector. I met the troops from the Corps commander right down to the lowest sepoy and I can assure you that the men, the officers, the JCOs had an air of quiet confidence, there was no panic. If the threat was what it is supposed to be, do you think we would let our families be in Tenga which is along the main access? We have opened a school there. Our families are living there. I lived with those families for a week and there was no sign of panic. Bomdila is a bustling town now, the infrastructure has been improved

and the Governor, is Gen. J. J. Singh who was from my Regiment. I have seen him grow from second lieutenant to chief of the army staff. He had earlier commanded a Maratha Battalion in NEFA and his appointment as Governor of NEFA is the best thing we could have done. He is now focusing on infrastructure. I think what Gen. J. J. Singh is doing is a step in the right direction. In 1962, when the Chinese came, they employed porters and guides from the then underdeveloped Arunachal Pradesh. If we can give them work now, that situation will not arise. He even visited Pune to recruit teachers. I last went there in 1973. The dirt road from Tezpur to Tawang was terrible. Today, it is a class 9 tarmac road, with heavy earth moving and bridging equipment kept at places where there could be landslides or things like that.

On one stretch of road at Tenga, (and this is where the secular image of the army comes in), there is a mosque, a gurudwara, a mandir and a chapel. This has sent a message to the locals that if we can bring our families and children there, it means we are confident of holding our own. I met two brigadiers who are holding the forward most brigades. Both happened to be from my regiment. The meeting was a chance one at a road block, and when I spoke to them, I came back reassured that we could sleep peacefully at night.

There is a lot of loose talk going on that we are not prepared, that we are not doing this or that, The main issue is that we should be able to hold the Chinese in case they do anything naughty, till winter sets in; that will give us six months lead time to get our act right in re-equipping our troops. Our Prime Minister is now going to America on 24 November and one of the things to be discussed is purchase of American equipment. The equipment we need will help us boost our defense capabilities.

The Chinese claim that Arunachal belonged to them in the old days. We took over whatever the British had, so there is no question of our having moved into Arunachal Pradesh. I believe that we should focus our intelligence acquiring capabilities in Bhutan, Nepal,

Bangladesh and Myanmar and we have got to use the Tibetan diaspora to help us.

A Question of Political Will

In case, the Chinese decide to head for Tawang, we should have a standby plan to go into Tibet from the Chumbi Valley. But the problem is Pakistan. We cannot afford to fight on two fronts; we can afford to hold, but we cannot afford to fight simultaneously on two fronts at the same time. So, this is the big problem. And we have got to bear this in mind. All this talk about sending our troops into Afghanistan is rubbish. How are we going to send them there? The land route via the Khyber Pass is no longer open to us. We don't have the capability of flying divisions into Afghanistan as many Indians believe. This is a wrong premise that we can do that. I faced the Pakistanis in 1971 commanding a division in the Valley, and believe it or not opposing me was Lt. Musharraf who later became the General and President! We can't do two tasks at the same time – hold Pakistan and take on China. So, this is a game where the political will has to come in.

To sum up, we have got to hold fast till winter comes and winter is round the corner. Once winter comes, no major operations can be undertaken, and I know that, because I have spent two winters at 14,000 feet, it's not possible. Let me assure you that the morale of our troops exudes a quiet confidence.

I agree that the Henderson Brooks Report on the 1962 war should be made public. I happen to know Gen. Brooks, we were in the same battalion in Italy. I took over from him as colonel of the regiment. I know Lt. Gen then Brigadier P.S. Bhagat, an excellent soldier and I am sure that if the lessons learnt are brought out, it will help the present establishment to further strengthen our defensive posture. That is one thing we should all agitate for. Sensitive parts that infringe on national security could be kept secret, but the main lessons learnt must be brought out now so that we don't have a repeat of 1962.

MAJOR GENERAL EUSTACE D'SOUZA (Retd.) writes on defence and national security matters and is a regular contributor to *Freedom First*. Email: geneustace@yahoo.com

List of Participants at the Seminar on India-China Relations held in Mumbai on November 7, 2009

Mr. Sunil Bhandare ● Cdr. C. S. Dandekar (Retd.) ● Mr. V. N. Deshmukh IPS (reted.) ● Maj. Gen. Eustace D'souza (reted.) ● Dr. Navasikha Duara ● Mr. Anay Joglekar ● Col. Ravindra Joshi (reted.) ● Mr. C. A. Kallianpur ● Mr. Ashok Karnik ● Mr. A. Kurilko ● Mr. Abhijit Mehta ● Mr. Aspi Mistry ● Mr. V. S. Palekar ● Mr. Aditya Phatak ● Mr. Ashish Puntambekar ● Mr. S. V. Raju ● Mrs. Kashmira Rao ● Vice Adm. I. C. Rao (Retd.) ● Mr. Nitin Raut ● Ms. Meera H. Sanyal ● Dr. Ankush B. Sawant ● Brig. S. C. Sharma (Retd.) ● Brig. A. Thyagarajan (Retd.) ● Mr. Ilya Turin.

China's Relations with South Asia

S. C. Sharma

China has a common border with 16 countries and had border disputes with all of them.

The first thing that strikes us about China is the rapid rise of its economic and military power. The Chinese economy has its weaknesses too like high consumption of raw materials and energy, environmental degradation and social discontent. For each dollar of GDP that China creates, it uses raw material and energy many times more than that by the West or by the United States. Hence there is a rush to acquire sources of energy and raw material all over the world. Their military and economic strength has made it possible for them to make these forays.

Foreign Policy Objectives

China desires integrity of its territory including Taiwan, Tibet, Xingjian and Mongolia and sovereignty over South China Seas. China has made a unilateral declaration that the South China Sea belongs to them even though there is a law governing the sovereignty of the seas. China wants to play a key role in all regional disputes. It demands respect for the Chinese minorities and suppression of anti-Chinese movements in other countries.

China has a common border with 16 countries and had border disputes with all of them. China had three border conflicts – with India in 1962, with USSR in 1969 and with Vietnam in 1979. Thereafter, China probably decided against war which was damaging their economic growth. Their goal now is to be the world's number 1 economy.

China's Border Agreements

China has suggested co-development of the disputed areas in some of the Agreements with countries in the Pacific region but under Chinese sovereignty.

Vietnam: They have entered into an agreement involving Tonkin Bay which was demarcated in 2008. Joint patrolling has been agreed to even though there were some differences over oil exploration and fishing rights in the Gulf of Tonkin. Both the countries are inviting US companies to exploit hydro-carbons.

Philippines: There was a meeting of 10 countries that all

border problems should be solved peacefully. Agreements are sometimes violated by both the parties.

Russia: Russia agreed to hand over some of the islands on the Ussuri River in 1964, but Mao demanded the return of 1.2 million sq. kms. in Manchuria taken by Russia after the Second Opium War. That annoyed Khrushchev and he annulled the agreement. Later, agreement was signed on 21 July 2008 and Russia ceded the disputed islands on the river to China. There is no mention of part of Manchuria taken over by Russia.

Central Asian States: China has made significant concessions to the Central Asian States. 65% to 75% of the disputed areas have been ceded to the Central Asian States. The appendices to the Agreement have not been made public. It is believed that China has kept the option for re-negotiation later. The claim for sovereignty in border areas with the Central Asian States and Russia was based on grazing rights. Historically the nomads were free people going wherever grazing was available.

Japan: There is a long pending dispute over some islands and East China Sea. No agreement has been reached so far. Both the countries have plans to prospect for oil. China has declined to hand over their drilling plans to Japan.

Myanmar: There is no border dispute. Sanctions by USA helped China to build strong relations with Myanmar. China is developing Cocoa Island and is currently engaged in constructing a pipeline, road and railway from Cocoa Island to China for transporting oil from the Middle East. The tribes in Myanmar are opposing the construction of the pipeline. Trade between the two countries has doubled in 5 years. A loan of US\$ 200 million and military aid worth US\$ 1.6 billion has been given to Myanmar.

Sri Lanka : Criticism by the West about human rights has helped China to build good relations with Sri Lanka. China has appreciated Sri Lanka's strong support on sovereignty over Taiwan and Tibet. China has supported Sri Lanka's territorial integrity and has made substantial investments in infrastructure. China is building a port, a highway, and

two thermal plants and is providing assistance for modernization of railways. Sri Lanka has given exploration rights to China.

Nepal: After the overthrow of the monarchy, the present government supported by Maoists is far more favourable to China, though they say that they do not want to create any problems between India and China. The situation there has not settled down.

Bhutan: China had one minor border dispute with Bhutan. India has an agreement with Bhutan for handling their foreign relations. China wanted to deal directly with Bhutan. There was one Chinese incursion into Bhutan, which China said was due to wrong map-reading. Bhutan has a treaty with India for defence.

Maldives: China has signed an agreement for civil aviation flights and Chinese aid is insignificant.

Bangladesh: Bangladesh enjoys good relations with China. China has given financial aid for developing Chittagong port.

Afghanistan: China has an interest in the mineral resources of Afghanistan and has committed 3.5 billion dollars in Afghanistan, of which 400 million dollars is for developing the infrastructure. It is expected that Afghanistan will collect about 200 million dollars in taxes from the Chinese mining company and 500 million dollar from other projects which will benefit not only Afghanistan but also China. India is helping Afghanistan by building roads and hospitals which is good for Afghanistan, but India gets nothing out of it. Another noteworthy feature is the absence of Chinese military or security personnel for safety of Chinese workers and plants. They rely on US troops. Obviously, there is some understanding between the two. China must be concerned about the possible rise of the Taliban but there have not been any comments or move to participate in the security of Afghanistan.

Pakistan: In November 2006, Chinese President while on a visit to Islamabad said: "We can give up gold, but we cannot give up our friendship with Pakistan. China's friendship is higher than the Himalayas, deeper than the Indian Ocean and sweeter than honey."

Pakistan in turn considers China to be an all-weather friend. Gwadar Port is being developed with help from China. Road, railway and pipeline have been planned from Gwadar to China. Friendship is not a one-way traffic. Pakistan has provided F-16 aircraft spares, hand held

anti-aircraft missiles and an unexploded Tomahawk missile to China which they wanted badly for reverse engineering. China considers Pakistan to be a good bet to prevent Indian hegemony. As one Indian journalist put it "*China will fight India to the last Pakistani.*"

One should also look for the cracks in their friendships. The terrorism in Zinjiang Province is a creation of Pakistani madarassas and the core group of these terrorists has a safe heaven in Pakistan. The Al-Qaeda leadership has declared that China too is a target. As a result, the security of Chinese workers in Pakistan has become a source of worry for them. With the kidnapping of Chinese workers earlier this year, China has developed doubts about Pakistan's ability to maintain uninterrupted supply of crude and other materials and to ensure the security of Chinese workers engaged on various projects in Pakistan. Earlier plans for a refinery in Gwadar port have been given up.

India

Prime Minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh has said that neighboring countries should forget the burden of past history. Past history is a key to determining what could happen in the future. While one should not be overburdened with it, to ignore history could be a terrible mistake.

Can China be trusted? During Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit, China agreed that settled populations should not be disturbed. Today, they have changed their stand about Arunachal. China wants boundary problems to be solved on the basis of economic consideration, mutual understanding, mutual accommodation, respect for history and accommodation of history. These are just vague words and cannot be considered as guidelines.

There are two main areas of dispute – Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh. In Ladakh, the ambiguity is based on grazing rights and various changes which occurred in the last two centuries. Initially, Prime Minister Nehru had said that boundary disputes were due to lack of clarity as to where the boundary exists. Later he took a rigid stand that the boundary is clear. It is believed that this stand was taken on the advice of Dr. Gopal, Head of the Historical Division of the Ministry of External Affairs. It may not be correct.

The Chinese claim on Arunachal is unfounded. For similar reasons, India could claim Mansarovar. China believes that territory represents power. China is firmly in control of Aksai Chin and India cannot dislodge them by

military action. A major military weakness of India is lack of offensive capability. In a war China would be vulnerable to disruption of oil supply, reaction of people in Tibet and damage to surface transport in Tibet. There are third channel reports that China is prepared to bargain Arunachal with Aksai Chin. No political party in India has the strength or vision to implement such a decision.

India's Options

- India should improve relations with countries not friendly to China. The Russian Ambassador observed that in spite of our friendship, the Indian trade with China is four times that with Russia. We should improve that as it used to be earlier.
- We have to depend on our own strength and we should not expect the world to come to our rescue. We have the capability and the manpower to do so. We require the political will and the necessary equipment. Both USA and Russia have developed friendly relations with China and there is no reason why they should not, because nobody wants to have a confrontation for no reason.
- We should analyze the costs of a conflict or confrontation with China. If there is some truth in the third channel reports that China is not serious about a war in Arunachal, and as long as we are prepared, there is no reason for alarm or hasty responses.
- There is also talk emanating from Russian sources of a Russia-China-India axis. It is a plan worth pursuing. For one thing, it will neutralize any mischief

from Pakistan.

- We should develop an offensive capability, this defensive attitude is ruinous. We don't have to say that we never invade other countries. The fact of history is when it suited us, we did, and if it suits us, we will do so again, as long as we have the capability and it is in our interest. To expect others to invade you and then to react is ruinous by itself – we have lost half the battle.
- It is a welcome feature that we are now paying attention to our border states and treating them as part of India. Earlier nobody could travel to NEFA without a government permit, or to Sikkim or Ladakh for that matter. These are part of our country and we should develop them as we would develop other parts of India up to the last border post. That is the way to tackle the enemy and govern our own country.

I recall a comment from a NEFA tribal. After 1962, he said *"You have made these roads for yourself, not for us. When the Chinese came you left us to our fate, and ran away. If you made it for us, you should have stayed on."*

My last comment is about Kabul. I have a question. *"If America withdraws from Kabul, there would be Taliban resurgence. It is obviously bad for India. What steps should we take now?"*

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Political Will in India vis-à-vis China

Ashok Karnik

When our government is talking tough, our intellectual lobby should stop advising the government to give up its determined posture.

In diplomacy or international relationships, political will cannot be displayed very easily. In fact, our intentions towards other countries need to be kept secret. The press may go to town on various things or people may talk about what the government should do, but the government cannot reveal its real intentions. It can give hints of what it aims to do, but it cannot make a policy pronouncement as to what it intends to do in the future. So we must be really cautious about coming to a conclusion about what the Indian government intends to do vis-à-

vis Chinese claims on our territory. We should really bend over backwards to accommodate the belief that the government may really be planning something different than what is known to us. It is in this context that I intend to go into the background of political decision-making and the problems that we face vis-à-vis our boundary disputes with China.

Chinese Duplicity

In the early 1950s, when the Tibet question came

up, we took China's words for granted. We were victims of China's duplicity. It is now believed that Chou en lai had promised Nehru that Tibetan autonomy was uppermost in their minds and when they laid claim to Tibet, due to the historical facts of conquest of Tibet in the earlier dynasties of the Chinese emperors, they did not intend to disturb Tibetan culture. In retrospect, we can say that Nehru fell for it. In 1954, when the world was opposed to the Chinese acquisition of Tibet, India agreed to Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. In 1954, we signed the agreement handing over Tibet to China. In retrospect again, it was a serious mistake on our part as we should have been skeptical about the entire deal. Militarily or otherwise, we may not have been able to do much, but had we just kept that issue pending, perhaps, we could now have told the Chinese that we have nothing to discuss with them about the border; we would discuss it with Tibet. We gave up that trump card. There is no point in talking about that particular issue now because we then went on to persuade the world to accept Communist China in the Security Council replacing Taiwan which was then described as the Republic of China. India pleaded on behalf of the Chinese at that time because we were enamoured of the idea of forming a Third Bloc to solve the World's problems. The Non-Aligned movement built around India, China, Indonesia, Egypt came up with 'Panchsheel' and believed that international disputes could be resolved amicably. Those were the heyday of great hopes and Nehru pioneered that hope. Chou en Lai backed that idea and we believed whatever the Chinese said publicly.

By 1958, it would appear that Pandit Nehru realized what China was really up to and the assurance by Chou en lai that Tibet's autonomy would be respected, had come to naught. The Chinese captured Tibet militarily. Chou en lai had also assured us that once Tibet Autonomous Region was recognized as part of China, China had no problems with India at all – all this was verbal. Nehru realized that he had been taken for a ride. This is clear because when G. Parthasarathy, posted as Ambassador to China, called on Nehru before leaving for Beijing in 1958, Nehru asked him not to believe the Chinese! He asserted that in spite of the talk of China-India bhai-bhai relationship, China did not consider India as its friend.

Though Nehru had realized that China was not a friend, he did not come out openly for two reasons: China had started laying claims to various areas which lay on the Tibet border from Ladakh, Uttar Pradesh, Sikkim, Bhutan to Arunachal Pradesh. The Chinese always talk of customary and traditional boundary which means anything and everything. China always had that kind of mindset:

whatever they could claim, they would never give up. It was for the others to accommodate their claims. Whenever pushed, they would keep the issue on the backburner, but never concede anything to any other country, whether it is Russia, or America, Taiwan or Hong Kong. So if India was hoping that China would ever concede any part of the so-called disputed boundary, it was an unrealistic hope.

When Tibetan representatives were found collecting revenues from Tawang and other areas of Nepal after 1947, India pointed out to the Tibetan Government that this was wrong as Tawang was Indian territory, the then Tibetan administration headed by the Dalai Lama, apologized and stopped sending their officials to collect revenue. However grazing rights, on both sides, continued to be exercised. Nehru realized that this was our weakness that the area we claimed to be ours did not have Indian presence. The British had not cared to establish their presence in those areas. Nehru therefore decided it was incumbent on India to establish its presence in this territory and ordered the establishment of check-posts along the border we claimed to be ours.

Nehru's Forward Policy

From 1959 onwards, the so-called Forward Policy of Jawaharlal Nehru was set in motion. When Nehru asked the Defence Forces, if the Army could establish Indian check-posts on the McMahon Line, the Army said that it was not possible because these were militarily indefensible positions. It was then decided that it had to be the civil administration. Since nobody was available, B. N. Mullik, the then Director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) said that the IB would do the job. The IB was given the task of opening posts all along the Indo-Tibet border to establish Indian presence on the border areas claimed by us. There was hardly any administration in that area, so IB officers had to beg the Collector or the Deputy Collector to give mules to carry men and material, walk about eight to ten days and establish a check-post; there were no helicopters to service these posts then.

This was the manner in which our check-posts were established. Now armchair critics blame Mullik and Nehru for their Forward Policy. They argue that because of this Policy, the Chinese took offence and attacked us in 1962. It is not realised that we had to do it because the Chinese were claiming these territories. Despite the difficulties, at least now we are present in those areas, which we were not prior to 1959. Therefore, it is for history to judge whether it should be considered an achievement or it should be

considered foolish adventurism. This is how the political will to establish these check-posts should be judged. Whether it was foolish adventurism of Pandit Nehru or it was his foresight – perhaps delayed – to mark our presence there, is for history to decide. For despite the 1962 battle we continue to be present at these outposts.

Chinese Intransigence

Having come down to Tawang, having pushed Indian presence down to the inner line of NEFA, why did the Chinese withdraw? Now they claim that the customary and traditional boundary with India is the inner line of NEFA, that is south of Tawang, north of Brahmaputra. The establishment of the inner line was born out of the concern for protection of the lifestyle of the tribals there. It had nothing to do with the international boundary. The Chinese now assume conveniently that the Indian territory is the inner line, not the McMahon Line. China will always take advantage of the inner line argument to stake their claim to Tawang.

One of the reasons why the Chinese withdrew after the 1962 war was to demonstrate that they are not interested in conquest of territory but they will claim what is theirs even if it takes time. They will wear out their opponents to get what they want. They will keep the military option on the backburner, keep repeating their claims; that is why there have been so many incursions into Indian territory. They want to establish the fact that the infringed areas are disputed territory not Indian territory. China's stance is that what is theirs is always theirs and what is yours is also theirs.

Who will win in this battle of wills? Being a totalitarian dictatorship, China has greater capacity to withstand this battle of attrition; India with its democratic set up has less capacity to do so. Indian expenditure on defence, development of the border area etc will always be questioned. Since 1962, there was a lot of talk in our country about not surrendering an inch of land. The situation in intellectual circles has changed. Our scholars have started arguing why India should not adopt a legalistic, jingoistic, nationalistic position vis-à-vis China or the boundary. Is it not possible to settle it amicably? China is waiting to exploit this kind of weakness. They will keep discussing; they will not close the issue for decades if necessary and will continue negotiating till you are tired, fatigued and will say stop, let us now decide. Meanwhile they will strengthen themselves militarily. This is what Chinese civilization means; while they are prepared to wait for a thousand years, we are not prepared to wait for even ten

years. We are keen to solve the dispute today itself, going by statements of various scholars. The argument that India should be more reasonable, adversely impacts government's policy making.

The Deng Package

In 1980, when Deng Xiaoping came to power in China, he declared that developing countries cannot afford to enter into military conflict, and should therefore learn to settle all disputes through peaceful negotiation. It was an attractive proposition which formed the basis for what came to be known as the Deng Package. Nobody really knows what the Deng Package is. It got publicized after Deng gave an interview to an Indian journalist suggesting some kind of a deal between India and China. At that time, it was hinted that if the Chinese claim to Aksai Chin was accepted by India, China would give up its claim in Arunachal Pradesh. What the Chinese really wanted was made clear by Chinese publications such as the People's Daily and New China News Agency that the Deng Package meant that the present Line of Actual Control should be accepted by both the countries and the border issue can be sorted out later. It was not a proposition of give and take – we give in on Aksai Chin and they would give up their claim to Arunachal Pradesh. It is being misinterpreted by some intellectuals that India made a mistake in not accepting the Deng Package. In effect, the Deng Package remained a mystery as many Chinese pronouncements become unclear. These are generally trial balloons. It has not been spelt out thereafter.

As already mentioned, the Chinese don't give up territory. They will continue to talk about customary and traditional boundary in NEFA and say that the customary and traditional boundary is the inner line. The only good thing is that we are negotiating, and not fighting. But let us not indulge in wishful thinking that China will concede any territory to India. If we had kept the Tibet card open, as mentioned earlier, we would have said no there is nothing to discuss with you, since we don't have any border with you.

There is no difference between Deng's policy and Chou en lai's policy on the international boundary. On one side, Indian intellectuals who were opposing Nehru and criticizing him for the debacle in NEFA, are now saying that India should not be dogmatic, should not be legalistic, i.e. we should not talk of the McMahon Line as those are mere legal arguments. If we give up that legality, where do we stand? If we don't stand on legal arguments, if we don't stand on traditional boundary, where

do we stand? The intellectuals keep recommending that we accept the Deng Package without knowing the implications of the Deng Package. These are debilitating arguments when finally our government seems to have decided that we play the same game as the Chinese are doing. Negotiate peacefully.

On the other hand, our Government seems to have decided to talk tough. For instance, it has made it clear to the Chinese that visas stapled to Indian passports (given to people of J&K and Arunachal Pradesh origin) are not acceptable to India. When the Chinese expressed their disapproval of the Dalai Lama's visit to Tawang, India's Prime Minister made it absolutely clear that the Dalai Lama was an honoured guest in India and has the right to go there. The third strong message by India's external Affairs Minister is that if the Chinese talk of Arunachal Pradesh, we can ask the Chinese about their development activities in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir which is part of

India, and Pakistan has no right to cede that area to the Chinese. These are welcome signs of toughness on the part of the Government of India.

There need not be any jingoistic talk about going to war. That is not diplomacy. When our government is talking tough, our intellectual lobby should stop advising the government to give up its determined posture. We should not cede our territory to any other country through fatigue, or arguments that economically or militarily it is unviable to keep the border issue pending. We must welcome the fact that at last the Government of India is taking a firm stand; we must welcome its present posture and not expect it to come out with public statements showing bravado. It does not matter as long as we do not cede any ground.

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Discussions

A lively discussion followed the three presentations. This was not surprising considering the fact that participants were not only from different disciplines and professions but also age-wise ranging from those in their seventies to the young in their thirties. Almost everyone had something of interest to say. Here again as in the case of the presentations, we had, reluctantly though, to summarise the proceedings. The attempt of the seminar was not to arrive at a consensus let alone an agreed conclusion, but to bring to the fore the many perspectives on the subject. No wonder that in his intervention when the discussions were almost concluding, Mr. V. S. Palekar a senior corporate leader observed that "after listening patiently to all the things which have been said, what it brings out is that at this point of time, there is total confusion, not only in this room but also in the country, as to what we should be doing." And of the many things said during the discussion, considering the constraints of space and conscious of the need not to try the readers' patience, here are some perspectives that ought to be taken into account – Editor.

Political Officers and Border Checkposts

Brig. A.Thyagarajan (Retd.) asked Mr. Ashok Karnik: Before 1955, did we not have political officers in Bomdila and certain other places. It is not that we had nobody there other than locals and their tribal community heads. I thought we had some kind of Political Officers there.

Replying, **Mr. Ashok Karnik** said that he was talking of the border check-posts. The Political Officers were at the headquarters of the area, but right on the border that we claimed, the watershed, was where we were posted, where there were none before.

McMohan Line and Panchsheel

(a) The McMohan Line is the Indo-Tibetan boundary and

not Sino-Indian boundary, China not having signed the 1914 Simla Convention. The British had signed the Agreement – the Annual Tibetan Declaration - on July 3, 1914 - directly with the Tibetans.

(b) Many people think that the 1954 Panchsheel Agreement where India agreed that Tibet was a region of China foreclosed all options. What is forgotten is the fact that this Agreement was basically a trade agreement only for eight years and has thus lapsed. Today, India can take the stand that we agreed to Tibet as a region of China only for the purpose of trade and nothing more.

C. A. Kallianpur

Responding, **Mr. Karnik**, said: (a) That's a very interesting observation, but we do not know whether it holds legally. I would like to draw attention to the Chinese Agree-

ment for trade through Sikkim. At that time, Brajesh Mishra then the National Security Advisor declared that the Chinese had accepted Indian control over Sikkim through the Trade Agreement. It was revealed later that in the Agreement there is a provision that this Agreement is made only for the purpose of trade and not for territorial control. What we presume to be Chinese acceptance of our claim on Sikkim was not true. We got carried away by the euphoria that they had signed a trade agreement, implying that our presence in Sikkim was recognized or accepted by the Chinese, though the Agreement itself made it clear that this was not so.

(b) Panchsheel is a Declaration of Intent and the Tibet Agreement is separate from Panchsheel.

Aksai Chin

The Chinese will never give up Aksai Chin because they have opened that route into Pakistan. Why are they building railway lines, why have they developed Aksai Chin a place where, according Pandit Nehru, not even a blade of grass grows.

Somebody asked why did the Chinese come up to the Sikkim watershed in 1965 when we were at war with Pakistan? They came there hoping they could stop India from moving troops from the East to beleaguered Pakistan in the West. That is why we said all we got to do is to stand fast. Which we did.

Maj. Gen. E. D'Souza (Retd.)

Changing Power Equations and Perceptions

We are acting in this world of real politics as if we are the only gentlemen in the world, confusing personal morality with public morality. In a world where America invades Iraq because of oil interests, where people break their promises from day to day, how is it that we think we are bound to keep our position on Tibet? Why shouldn't we flip-flop, why should we not take a different stand on Tibet altogether. If you look at the Chinese stand on Kashmir, they have done lots of flip-flop. When it is convenient to them they forget previous international agreements. On the other hand India has developed a lot of soft power in the world. An Australian Report on 2035 Strategy says that India is emerging, but they see India as a potential partner, not a threat and the emerging China as a threat. That's a big advantage we get with all this posturing. However, this is at the cost of not gaining any hard power. We need to change the equation between soft power and hard power. China has given up on soft power;

now they want to come back to the table, sit like gentlemen, because it suits them now, as they have got requisite power.

Secondly we take it for granted that China never gives up its position. This is not so. When it suited their interest as in their disputes with central Asian States when oil and energy interests were involved, as Brig. Sharma pointed out, they gave up their claims and got the Shanghai Corporation Organization(SCO) working. What this means is that only when they know that it is in their interest to give up claims, they talk turkey.

The third point is regarding the Chinese civilization question. It has been rightly observed that the Chinese are very dogged, they don't let go. But a difference has happened after the Maoist revolution. India has always preferred survival to honour. If you see the total number of deaths that occurred in India fighting the British regime, and how many lives Afghans are prepared to give up for their cause, it will tell you how easily we allow people to walk all over us. What has happened in China is that starting from a similar position, when they talked about the hundred years of western humiliation of China, they decided that something's got to change. That something does not seem to have happened in our case. We need to do something about it.

Col. Ravi Joshi

China's Objective is to Stymie India's Power

China will undertake a military exercise in Arunachal Pradesh if only to undermine India's emergence as a regional power. What they want to prove is that India cannot be even a regional power, leave alone world power. Apart from that, we have to consider the emerging internal threat to India from Maoists and Naxalites including the Communist Party-Marxist (CPM) and the Communist Party of India(CPI). We should not differentiate between Maoists and Naxalites who work outside the constitutional system and the CPM and the CPI who work ostensibly within the constitutional framework. All of them are one and the same insofar as the threat from China is concerned; they are Communist China's Trojan horses, and will always promote the Chinese position. Such a stand is consistent with their ideology. For instance on Arunachal Pradesh they are not asserting that Arunachal Pradesh is a part of India.

As for Nepal, there are a number of intellectuals in India who say that the disappearance of the Hindu kingdom of Nepal is good for secularism. But we do not realize that royal Nepal was a strategic ally of India. With the

fall of the monarchy in Nepal we have lost Nepal as a buffer state. It would be right to say that the Chinese have, diplomatically speaking breached our borders further.

Then there is this loose talk we have about disputed territory and occupied territory as though the two terms are interchangeable. They are two distinct identities under international law. That is why when the Chinese Ambassador said that Arunachal Pradesh is a disputed territory, it is surprising that the Government of India did not refute it, because disputed territory is territory where there is no sovereign authority. India has always exercised sovereign authority over Jammu & Kashmir and Arunachal Pradesh.

Nitin Raut

Deterrence Not Enough, India Needs to Gain Prestige

Everyone recognizes that a military war between China and India cannot be won. So we have to have purely a deterrence to prevent any action which could be termed military. Our deterrence should be strong enough to make sure that it is effective. Having done that, we now come to settling the boundary dispute. But when you go for a discussion on boundary dispute, any deal-maker will tell you that it requires compromise. If anybody approaches a negotiation saying that we cannot cede a single inch of Indian territory, we have already made sure that there will be no agreement for all time to come. Patience is not a virtue in these matters and if we were to say that we are going to be patient and wait for long enough to solve this dispute, what we are losing out is our own economic development. Because there are no boundary disputes between France and Germany, look at the economic development they have had and the improvement in the quality of life they have been able to achieve because they have used politics to get rid of some problems like boundary disputes. Look at the Schengen Visa system for instance. So it is definitely a better place to live because they have solved disputes with a timeframe in mind. We should also have timeframes and not be stoic about these issues.

What is the action that is required of us to gain in prestige. For example, Nepal, when it was a Hindu kingdom, we were complacent. We put up a power station in Nepal, that power station was very inadequate and in 1981 it failed and India was blamed for it. Whereas, there was in Kathmandu a Chinese tramway system which advertised the fact that the Chinese were there. We should be more forthcoming in having high profile activity in Nepal.

It does not matter if the regime has changed there, it still should be a country to country relationships.

On the question of soft power, military power is purely a deterrent, it will not give dividends day to day, whereas soft power will. This is where I feel soft power should be exercised in making sure that Indian engineering technology goes to Nepal and help build good power stations in Nepal, roads etc. It is so much easier for us to do than for China. We must take advantage of this not only in Nepal, but also in Myanmar. We only have to allow our own entrepreneurship to take effect by making sure that our government becomes a facilitator. And this is where I blame the very mindset of our Indian foreign service in not helping Indian industry to project itself. Now in Afghanistan, we are building roads, but with so much difficulty which is created by our own government. If an entrepreneur wants to supply machinery to Afghanistan, he will have to go via Bandar-e-abbas in Iran, Why should these exports to Afghanistan not be facilitated by our government.

Similarly, with Central Asia, they were very willing to take the help of India, if only our government and our foreign service facilitated the relationship. Now we have taken non-issues in many cases to prevent our own expansion of the economy.

Vice Adm. I. C. Rao (retd.)

China Cannot be Trusted

I have read that the Chinese have trained insurgents from the north-east by taking them to Lhasa. If citizens of India are taken to Tibet for training for insurgency then Tibet becomes an internal issue for India.

Secondly, a question which Brig. Sharma raised – can we trust China? My answer is an emphatic No. This is not an emotional response, for I can give reasons for my answer. First we look at the lineages as we do in Buddhism. Who is Hu Jintao? He comes from Mao tse Tung, Chou en lai, Deng Xiaoping – all of them were liars. See what they did to their own people and then decide whether we should trust them. The Tibetans complain that one million people were killed during and after the invasion. During that same period, 35 million Chinese were killed by Mao Tse Tung. So, we have to look at China's human rights record though the world, today, does not want to look at China's human rights record. There are concentration hospitals functioning like concentration camps where people arrested from the Falun Gong movement

which is a peaceful, religious movement, have their organs harvested when they are living by ward-boys not by trained doctors, because all that the Chinese Communists are interested in is the international organ trade and not in the life of the person whom they are anyway condemning to death.

The Deng Package - Deng told the representatives of the Dalai Lama, other than Tibetan independence anything can be negotiated. Now we see what the situation is with Tibetan autonomy and how they are dealing with those talks. Mao tse Tung clearly said China is the palm, Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal, NEFA and Ladakh are the fingers. So when you tell, China restrict yourself to China, you are cutting off China's fingers. Even today, if they put in writing that they give up their claim on Arunachal Pradesh and we give up our claim on Aksai Chin, there is nothing stopping their lineage, thirty years down the line to say, this was not disclosed, or this was in the fine print or this was in the appendix.

Regarding our own political will, we have made some strong statements now, but we have neutralized them by doing some other weak things. Why were foreign correspondents not given the right to visit Arunachal Pradesh during the Dalai Lama's visit. Let the foreign correspondents go there and report to the world that Arunachal Pradesh and Arunachalis regard themselves as Indians and that there is an anti-China sentiment. Instead of exploiting that, we are keeping journalists out. This is something that the West does not like and that's exactly what China is doing in Tibet. China does not allow foreign correspondents into Tibet. Since we are so confident that China is not going to declare war on us, the next best move that our government could do is to recognize the Tibetan Government-in-exile as the sole representatives of the Tibetans.

Aspi Mistry

The Economic Perspective Adverse Impact of the Global Meltdown

No Analyst has commented on the geopolitical impact of the immense forces that have been set in motion by the collapse of the US housing market. No one for instance has pointed at the direct link between subprime and the problems within the Chinese economy today. The *Economist* magazine for instance is looking at China separately and is discreetly suggesting that "if China fails to turn its US\$ 279 billion trade surplus into a US\$ 486 Billion trade deficit within the next year, its stimu-

lus package will fail."

We need to understand that the US stimulus package is fundamentally different from China's stimulus package and the outcomes from the two will be fundamentally very different. While the US recapitalized the banks, it did not put money back into the hands of the people. They only gave out food coupons and tax breaks to provide support. China has had a fundamentally different problem, they already had 120 million unemployed people, in addition, the economic downturn led to 20 million plus job losses and another 6 million new graduates had no jobs, so they gave away money, almost a trillion dollars, in the last nine months. They were therefore literally forced to follow a loose and dangerous monetary policy.

Now, out of the trillion US dollars, a 170 billion dollar yuan equivalent has entered the Chinese stock market, and it has created an asset bubble. The balance of about 800 US billion dollars is still floating around in the Chinese system creating bubbles in real estate markets for example. To ensure that there was no consumer inflation, the Chinese brought in price controls. As a consequence of this, a yuan equivalent of US \$ 800 billion is now working itself backwards and carpet bombing the Chinese supply chain and causing "factor of production inflation." Further, within the manufacturing sector, the Chinese system has entire towns arranged into a kind of division of labour. For instance, if one town manufactured zippers; another manufactured bags; yet another trousers. So, when the trouser market failed, the zip town went bust and the bag making town which was also dependent on zippers also went bust as a result of supply chain failure. This is happening in toys, electronics, etc.

So there are very huge problems within the Chinese financial and manufacturing sector. Also, inflation is going to increase dramatically leading to instability. The price of food and more specifically pork will decide a lot of things. All in all, we are going to see a dramatically different situation within six months.

Ashish Puntambekar

The Economic Perspective China Needs the Indian Market

Over the last 25-30 years, there has been a structural shift in the global economic structure. The share which China is enjoying in terms of its economic power has increased manifold and this is precisely the strength which is currently being exploited by China. In terms of the GDP China is 2.8 times the size of the Indian economy. China's in-

take of resources is very much more than India's. If China continues to sustain its present growth momentum, probably it will overtake the US by 2025 or 2035 with about 12-15% of the global GDP. Together with China, Asia is emerging as a major economic power. And within Asia, India becomes the second largest. China is going to dominate Asia and its economic power has to be recognised. India is now trying to catch up with the Chinese. Perhaps this is the reason why China would like to put pressure on India so that India's economic aspirations are levelled down. In such a situation what kind of role is India going to play? Will it get bogged down by the current problems with respect to China or will it take a more strategic view? I don't think a confrontationist approach is going to be of much help to us. It has to be a diplomatic, accommodative strategy. And within this framework, India needs to carve out its position as a powerful economic power emerging during the next 25-30 years as a significant player in Asia. That's my view of the current situation.

How long can China depend on the US market which at present takes a large part of the Chinese exports. The US is changing its stance, towards its consumption led economic growth. With the US changing its stance China obviously has to find other big markets because China's economic growth is powered by exports. In recent years, two way trade between India and China has expanded significantly. In fact, China is already has becomes the largest trading partner with India with 60 billion US\$ worth of two-way trade. China will obviously look at India as a major trading partner. And therefore, while posturing is one part of its strategy, its intention also would be to see that its economic and trade relationship with India is stimulated even further. Because China has to find a market for the huge capacities it has created. So this particular aspect of a global restructuring in economic power has to be taken into considerations, while reflecting upon the kind of policy strategy on the border border issues.

Sunil Bhandare

Let's Play our Strengths, not our Weaknesses

While we have talked a lot about the military and the economic aspects, what is missing in our discussions is the moral dimension. There was a time, if you look back into history, India benefited with its moral authority. We have lost that respect with regard to Tibet and the Dalai Lama; and we are doing the same thing with respect to Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar. These are issues on which this country needs to take a firm stance. There is a genocide happening in Tibet and India is silent. There is no

reason to do that. We are not so weak that we cannot stand up for what is right. We have to look at what is right and not merely what is expedient.

India has big operations in China and there is a great fear in the Chinese about the Indian IT's superiority. I have met many Chinese who have come to India and told me that they were so worried of India before coming to India to see for themselves. And then when they saw our airports, our roads they realize there is nothing to worry about. In that I think they are making a mistake. Because, in turn, we have gone into China, into Beijing, into Shanghai, into Guanghang and have seen their BPO activity, their offshoring activity.

While we must not under-estimate the Chinese machinery, its extraordinarily efficient infrastructure, the fact that a lot of young Chinese are learning English etc and the fact that they have moved very quickly into becoming, in their own minds, a global superpower they have done so perhaps without the necessary adjustments in one generation. Which is also a weakness. Equally I think a great concern among Chinese businessmen is keeping their people employed.

There was this CEO of a very large State-owned Chinese enterprise which employed 2.8 million people last year laid down 700,000 people this year. Now imagine that. We are talking of companies which have a scale larger I believe than the Indian army. So China has large scale growth but they have large scale problems as well. Those problems are their strengths as well as their weaknesses. It depends on how they deal with them. I think we need to play to our strengths, not to our weaknesses.

Meera Sanyal

Economic Development of the North East Crucial

Just as Pakistan has created and fostered terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, China can similarly create and foster terrorism in Arunachal Pradesh to accomplish its goal. In Assam, inspite of a Congress government, there is a sense of deprivation. The GDP in the entire North East region, is lower than in the rest of India; and this can be exploited by China to foment internal turmoil in the region particularly in Arunachal Pradesh. Arunachal Pradesh which as of now is free of violence and terrorist activities unlike other states in the north east could well become a fertile ground if the centre does not pay more attention to development of this Arunachal Pradesh.

As for trusting China let us now forget Chinese displeasure over the Indo-US Nuclear Deal and the fact that they lobbied to prevent India's entry into Nuclear club. We need to keep this in mind while we carry on a dialogue with the Chinese to resolve the boundaries issue.

Dr. Navasikha Duara

India is Competing with China Worldwide

It is the official policy of the Chinese government since the 1990s to fortify its defences in all its border regions be it Mongolia, Russia or Kazakhstan. So the roads they have created along the Indian borders are similar to the structures across their other borders too. The difference

is that India and China are contesting not only the borders of Arunachal Pradesh but are also in a contest in the Indian Ocean, in Africa, in Latin America. China is way ahead of us particularly its involvement in Africa. It has been rightly observed (by a participant at this seminar) that we can make better use of our soft power in all these continents where Indian companies are competing with the Chinese for raw materials. In my view the Chinese have committed several mistakes in Africa, one of them being the fact that have not created local jobs there and so they are finding it difficult. We can learn from those mistakes and get ahead of them.

Anay Joglekar

Homage to the Victims and Martyrs of the Terrorist Attack in Mumbai on November 26, 2008

On the eve of the first anniversary of the terrorist attack in Mumbai on November 26, 2008, the Delhi-based Foundation for Non-violent Alternatives and the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom, the publishers of *Freedom First*, held a meeting at the Alexandra Girls' English Institution in Mumbai on November 25, 2009 to pay homage to the victims and martyrs who perished on that tragic day.



In a hall packed to capacity, the programme commenced with the pupils of the Alexandra School enacting a poem written by their Hindi teacher on the tragic happenings of the brutal terrorist attack on November 26, 2008.

The Meeting was addressed by former President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, Kalon Samdhong Rinpoche, the Prime Minister of the Tibetan Government in Exile, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Mr. J. S. Verma, former Attorney General of India Mr. Soli Sorabjee.

Children from the Manohardas Street Municipal School, the Lord Harris Upper Primary Municipal School, the Colaba Municipal Secondary School, the Convent of Jesus & Mary, Fort, the J. B. Petit High School and the

Alexandra Girls' English School responded enthusiastically to Dr. APJ Kalam administering to them an oath promising that they would be good students, good citizens and work for the peace and prosperity of mother India.



Mr. Soli Sorabjee, Justice Verma and Kalon Samdhong underlined the importance of human rights and

non-violence in providing the right environment for the development of the human being with dignity and self respect.

The Foundation for Non-violent Alternatives, an institute for Developing Peace Studies is founded in the belief

that every cultural and religious tradition has appropriate non-violent methods for positive, political, economic and social change. For more details about this Foundation email: office@fnvaworld.org



Why Fixing Drains Will Help Counter Terrorism

Nitin Pai

India cannot be competent in internal security without being competent in overall governance

“If 26/11 is not to become another one in an endless series of fatalities,” Pratap Bhanu Mehta writes “we need to keep asking the question: how can a people who have much to be proud of, be endowed with a state that has much to be embarrassed about?” The answer is in a guest post I wrote on Dilip D’Souza’s blog last December. Here is the post, in full:

Since those Pakistani terrorists attacked Mumbai in the last week of November, I received innumerable emails and phone calls from nice people expressing righteous anger against two targets: the incorrigible Pakistan and our own arrogant, self-serving and incompetent politicians. Shouldn’t we just bomb that place Muridke, where the ISI trains jihadis? Shouldn’t we punish politicians and bureaucrats who failed to prevent these attacks from happening? It was difficult to reason with them: no, we can’t just bomb Muridke, because, you know, that would start a war with a wretched, broken country that has nothing to lose. And besides, that’s exactly what the Pakistani military-jihadi complex wants us to do. Now, I didn’t think that I would have to defend myself against the charge of being a “dove”. But let that be for now.

What about our politicians and our security agencies? Shouldn’t they be punished for ignoring the terrorist threat until it was too late? Sure. But first, let’s ask when was it that we gave them a credible signal that we think this was important. And let’s ask ourselves why it should be surprising that our intelligence and security apparatus failed to prevent a sophisticated amphibious assault mounted by both the might of a powerful intelligence agency and a well-organised organised crime network.

Mumbai Didn’t Complain

South Mumbai is one of India’s richest constituencies. It also has the lowest voter turnouts. The Maharashtra state government routinely fails to protect its citizens from the ravages of the monsoon. Mumbai didn’t complain. The Maharashtra government failed to put uppity political goondas in their place. Mumbai didn’t complain. The state government shelved plans to invest Rs 2000 billion to modernise the city. Mumbai didn’t complain. Plans to transform it into an international financial centre disappeared into another black hole. Mumbai didn’t com-

plain. The good citizens of India in general, and Mumbai in particular had seceded from the nation—choosing to provide for themselves the basic public goods that the government ought to have.

It is unreasonable to expect competent policemen and intelligence agencies when the public works, healthcare, education and environment departments are characterised by non-performance, corruption and worse. Unless the overall quality of governance improves, one cannot expect India to battle terrorism and other lesser threats to human security. And you can’t expect law enforcement to comply to the civilised norms we expect. In this context, it is just as unreasonable to expect the Indian state to be effective against terrorism as it is to expect it to show regard for human rights of suspects. The upshot is that overall governance must improve. How?

By voting; by giving money, legitimately, to politicians to support their election campaigns, and by holding them to account. I’m stopped at this point by people who say it won’t work, and we need to do something “stronger” to change politics. I find this amazing; because despite being one of the simplest instruments available to Indians, it is dismissed as being ineffective by people who have not even tried it. If the vote is empowering the historically downtrodden segments of the Indian population, won’t it empower the middle class too? No, it’s not a quick fix, but our politicians are a smart lot—they are bound to notice a bank of votes and notes when they see one.

It doesn’t matter if the choice on the ballot is between a criminal and a person who has broken the law, between a former and current member of the same party, between a candidate of this party or that. Voting is the most credible signal we can send to our politicians—both to fix the drains and to secure us from terrorists. It’s time we send it loud and clear, above all the noise we make.

MR. NITIN PAI, editor ‘Pragati’. Reprinted with permission from his post on acorn.nationalinterest.in

Bad officials are elected by good citizens who do not vote.

- George Jean Nathan

Self-reliance : the keynote of our independence

Long before we won our freedom, self-reliance was the goal of those of our people who could think for themselves and shed the shackles of dependence: men of foresight and determination, like Ardeshir and Pirojsha Godrej, who had confidence in the country's capabilities and shared the same ideals with Tilak, Tagore, Gandhi and Nehru who practised self-reliance.

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Point Counter Point

Ashok Karnik

*Every issue has at least two sides. A wise man examines all sides before coming to a conclusion.
This is an attempt to present various sides of an issue so that a considered opinion can be formed.*

Liberhan Commission – Lessons

1. The Liberhan Commission delivered its load after 17 years of labour. It is a prime example why Commissions of Inquiry have lost relevance in this country. Commissions are supposed to help us arrive at the truth and show the way out of problems. Unfortunately, the history of Inquiry Commissions here proves that the Commissions outdate themselves by taking too much time. Commission Reports which are supposed to add to our collective wisdom and be useful for the foreseeable future are a lost cause by the time they are finally delivered. The Liberhan Commission suffers from these fragilities and more – apart from the controversies over its findings. The concept of Commissions is sound. Their utility can be gauged in the context of 26/11 for which no Commission was appointed (only a Committee – Pradhan Committee - was appointed) leaving behind unanswered questions like who failed and why, who are accountable, was there a delay in sending help, what happened to Karkare's bullet-proof jacket, were the jackets ineffective? etc. This omission has encouraged speculation about lack of response from the Control Room and, worse still, publication of a distasteful book called 'Who killed Karkare?' Of course, no Commission can stop people from writing sensational sounding garbage for lucre! The Pradhan Committee Report, even if it is published, will not help much as it did not have authority to go into the working of Central Government organisations like the IB, R&AW, Coast Guard, Navy etc

1. It is commented often that the Liberhan Commission took 17 long years to tell us what we already knew. The criticism about waste of time and money is justified but it must be realised that the Commissions are not expected or intended to dig out new facts; they are expected to examine the known facts and put them together after eliminating rumours and speculations. In short, they are meant to put the record straight and make recommendations to resolve similar problems later. In the present instance, the Commission failed to set the record straight and in fact added to the confusion. It has jumped to too many conclusions and indicted too many people (68) for a conspiracy which must have been hatched by a few. Supporting the Ram Janmabhoomi agitation is one thing and illegal demolition of the Babri Masjid quite another. BJP/VHP/RSS leaders can be held morally responsible for the end result of their agitation but all of them could hardly be indicted for criminal conspiracy to pull down the masjid. The Commission is silent on what the then PM was discussing with VHP leaders till the last few days and why the talks failed. The Commissions make themselves irrelevant or the Government refuses to use their recommendations because of political or administrative constraints. The Liberhan Commission left us with more questions than answers but that does not render the concept of Inquiry Commissions meaningless.

India vs. Pak-China – Referee US

2. President Obama's visit to China caused a stir in India, particularly in the context of increasing strains in India-China relations. The joint statement issued at the end of the China visit led to further doubts since it asserted that "the two sides are ready to strengthen communication, dialogue and cooperation on issues related to South Asia". This sounded like the US was welcoming China's intervention in the Indian sub-continent. PM Manmohan Singh's state visit to US in the following week assumed the role of a damage control exercise. There was speculation that the pomp and show of the *first* state visit in Obama's presidency was just that and nothing more. The developments thereafter were not disappointing. However, it is still debated whether the visit was a 'fizzle' or a 'sizzle'.

2. There is no need to juxtapose Obama's China visit with our PM's visit to US. Each is independent of the other. The US assured India that it had no intention of intervening in the Kashmir dispute, that the nuclear deal, which appeared to have been stalled by the Obama administration, would go through and "India is indispensable for the 21st century that the US wants to build." Later, Obama issued a warning to Pakistan not to use terrorists like the LeT as a strategic tool to hit at India and further declared that the US would use any means if Pakistan was not able to control the terrorists. This is perhaps more than what the Indian security establishment would have expected. In diplomacy, one cannot expect one country to be critical of another's policies, particularly during well

We expect the world to appreciate our problems, which is at the root of our disappointment most of the time. Every country looks after its interests and is least bothered about others' concerns.

orchestrated state visits. India should be ready to reconcile itself to the US getting cozy with China and Pakistan. It is naive for us to expect the US to act as an arbitrator in our disputes with Pakistan or China. The US will act in its own interest – not necessarily India's; we should act in India's interest without worrying about anybody's approval.

Shiv Sena's Travails

3. The sight of Shiv Sena's senior leaders deserting the Sena has become a common spectacle; it exposes the absence of ideological cohesion in the Sena. Bhujbal, Rane, Raj Thackeray and Smita Thackeray all climbed on the shoulders of the Sena and ditched it when they felt that there was nothing further to gain in the Sena. Their anguish over denial of 'rightful' place in the sun is not only pitiable but also shows Balasaheb Thackeray's poor judgment in the selection of leaders; in his old age he is shown how greedy and unscrupulous his favourites were. The bond of loyalty, which was supposed to be the byword in the Sena, is conspicuous by its absence.

3. Politics being the last resort of the scoundrel, it is unrealistic to expect moral conduct from politicians. No political party has escaped desertions in bad times but in an autocracy like the Shiv Sena, revolt is a death knell. 'Leaders' who were nobody outside the Sena are now claiming the right to rule. Outright ingratitude and the haste in biting the hand that fed them is disturbing; disturbing because the very same leaders are likely to rule us in the future. Turncoats do not invite the people's anger in this country. They glorify themselves as martyrs and are accepted at face value. Shiv Sena's sorry plight does not evoke sympathy but the spectacle of one deserter after another being rewarded as our saviour, is worrisome.

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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Why Fighting The Iraq War In Afghanistan Won't Work

Firoze Hirjikaka

The Afghans are not Iraqis. This statement, though obvious, may seem superfluous to average Americans. Sure they're different countries, but they're all Arabs, aren't they?

President Barack Obama's speech at West Point last month, where he outlined the new United States policy on Afghanistan, has drawn conflicting reactions. Almost predictably, Dick Cheney lambasted Obama, saying that setting a deadline for withdrawal for American troops gave a green signal to Al Qaeda and Taliban to sit tight till the soldiers left; and then get back to the business they know best. Others opined that sending 30,000 additional troops was a good idea. After all, the surge worked in Iraq, didn't it?



der the Taliban, it was the women who were subjugated. The men, while paying lip service to their new masters, pretty much continued to do their own thing.

It is this independence and contempt for authority that makes the majority of Afghans virtually ungovernable. Take the present rul-

ers. To the Western mind, Hamid Karzai is a crook who turns a blind eye to widespread corruption and poppy cultivation in his nation. But perhaps he is a realist who realizes that it is the only way he can remain in power. Corruption, in the conventional sense, is not regarded as criminal activity by the average Afghan; it is a legitimate source of income. So is the cultivation of poppies for opium. This attitude was fostered by successive rulers and feudal lords who had neither the means nor the inclination to pay a fair wage to those who served them. The serfs were expected to make ends meet by any means available. Morality was a luxury they could not afford.

It can't have escaped the notice of the American think tank that the Pakistani army has been more successful in dealing with their home grown Taliban than the US army – for all it's state-of-the-art weaponry and superbly trained soldiers – has been in containing the Afghan variety. It is precisely because Pakistanis are fighting their own kind and know the way they think. For a while, they tried the American strategy of dealing with the "good" Taliban, as opposed to the bad guys. That was a spectacular failure. There are no good and bad Taliban; and the only thing they respect is brute force. It is only when the Pakistani army utilized overwhelming force that they started tasting success.

When the Americans Depart...

President Obama's timetable for withdrawal of American troops is predicated on the surmise that Afghan soldiers, by then, will be sufficiently trained and equipped to take over security responsibilities. This is a very tall order. The proposed "surge" may indeed be effective in

Flawed Logic

And therein lies the catch. The generals and politicians who are framing the strategy in Afghanistan probably reckon that it's always safer to emulate tactics that have been tried – and worked – in some other theatre of war. In my not-so-humble opinion, this is flawed logic. The Afghans are not Iraqis. This statement, though obvious, may seem superfluous to average Americans. Sure they're different countries, but they're all Arabs, aren't they?

Well actually they are not. The Iraqis and Afghans may share their Islamic faith, but culturally and ethnically, they are quite distinct. The majority of Afghans are Pashtuns and they are culturally distinct from Iraqi Arabs. They even speak a different language. But perhaps the most striking difference between the two groups is mindset; and it has a lot to do with their recent history.

The Iraqis, under Saddam Hussein's iron rule, were a tightly controlled and regulated people. Yes, they now have a sort of democracy, but it takes time to erase the effects of decades of conditioning. There is still an ingrained respect, even fear, of authority. The Afghans, on the other hand, even though their country was conquered and occupied many times, have always been fiercely independent and individualistic. They have contempt for authority, even if they don't always display it. Even un-

curbing the insurgency – *as long as the Americans remain in Afghanistan*. Once they depart, it is very likely that things will fall apart. The Afghan troops will make private arrangements with the tribal chiefs or the large landlords, or even the Taliban – whoever offers the best deal. The millions of dollars worth of light weapons they have received from the Americans will quietly disappear; to be used for individual protection or private militias – or even extortion. Some might argue that, having experienced the repressive regime of the Taliban, there is no way ordinary Afghans will allow them back. The reality is that most Afghans don't really care who nominally rules them. As long as they are left to their own devices – and free to make money any way they can – they are quite content. The women, of course, would be sorely dismayed

at the prospect of the Taliban returning, but women have never had much say in that country anyway.

So what can America realistically do? Unfortunately, there appears to be no permanent solution. If they hope to keep the Taliban and Al Qaeda in check, they have to stay in Afghanistan indefinitely. If that is a price the American people are unwilling to pay – and they probably are – the US will probably need to cut its losses in the near future and leave – and redouble their efforts at home to make as sure as they can that the bad guys are kept away from American shores.

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

Romanticising Stalin

The memory of Stalinism in contemporary Russia raises problems which are painful and sensitive. There is a vast amount of pro-Stalinist literature on the bookshelves: fiction, journalism and pseudo-history. In sociological surveys, Stalin invariably features among the first three “most prominent figures of all times”. In the new school history textbooks, Stalinist policy is interpreted in a spirit of justification.

Stalinism is a system of state rule, the totality of specific political practices of the Stalinist leadership. Throughout the duration of this system, a number of characteristic features were preserved. But its generic feature (which arose from the very beginning of Bolshevik rule and did not disappear with Stalin's death) is *terror as a universal instrument for solving any political and social tasks*. It was state violence and terror that made possible the centralization of rule, the severing of regional ties, high vertical mobility; the harsh introduction of an ideology which could be easily modified, a large army of subjects of slave labour, and many other things.

Thus, the memory of Stalinism is primarily *the memory of state terror as the defining feature of the age. It is also what links it in so many respects with today*.

Victims, not Crimes

Is that really what the memory of Stalinism means in today's Russia? I'd like to say a few words about the key features of this memory today. Firstly, the memory of Stalinism in Russia is almost always the memory of victims. Victims, not crimes. As the memory of crimes it does not register, as there is no consensus on this.

To a great extent this is because popular consciousness has nothing to hold onto from a legal point of view. The state has produced no legal document which recognizes state terror as a crime. The two lines in the preamble to the 1991 law on the rehabilitation of victims is clearly insufficient. There are no legal decisions that inspire any confidence – and there have not been

any trials against participants of the Stalinist terror in the new Russia, not a single one.

There are other reasons too.

We killed Our Own People

When popular consciousness has to come to terms with historical tragedies, it does so by assigning roles of Good and Evil. People identify themselves with one of the roles. It is easier to identify oneself with Good, i.e. with an innocent victim, or better still with a heroic battle against Evil.

It is even possible to identify oneself with Evil, as the Germans did (not without help from the outside), in order to distance oneself from this evil: “Yes, unfortunately we did that, but we're not like that anymore and we'll never be like that again”.

And one more thing: unlike the Nazis, who mainly killed “foreigners”: Poles, Russians, and German Jews (who were not quite their “own” people), *we mainly killed our own people, and our consciousness refuses to accept this fact*.

In remembering the terror, we are incapable of assigning the main roles, incapable of putting the pronouns “we” and “they” in their places. This *inability to assign evil* is the main thing that prevents us from being able to embrace the memory of the terror properly. This makes it far more traumatic. It is one of the main reasons why we push it to the edge of our historical memory.

Memorial, the Russian Human Rights Organisation, was awarded the *Sakharov Prize*, Europe's most prestigious award for freedom of thought. In honour of that occasion *Open Democracy* republished an important essay by *Memorial's* co-founder Arseny Roginsky on December 16, 2008, in which he explores why Russia is now romanticising the memory of Stalinism, whose defining feature was the use of terror. *Freedom First* in turn has republished this excerpt courtesy *Open Democracy*

Commissions of Enquiry

What an Enormous Waste of Time & Resources!

Keshav Rau

It is not that the Chagla or Liberhan Commissions alone have not been able to unravel the truth or come to firm conclusions based on incontrovertible set of evidences or circumstances. This has, generally, been true of all Commissions of Enquiry.

In the middle of February 1958, retired Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court, Mohammed Currim Chagla, submitted his report on the country's first financial scam after Independence – the purchase by LIC of shares of Companies owned by Hari Das Mundhra. Justice Chagla submitted his report after conducting a public hearing lasting continuously for just 24 days. A little over 51 years later in the middle of 2009, another Judicial Commission's report was submitted to the Government of India – the Justice Liberhan Commission's on the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. However, unlike Justice Chagla, who did not even take a month to submit his report, Justice Liberhan required 17 long years to complete his task.

While there is a glaringly sharp contrast in the time taken by these two Commissions, there is a similarity also. Neither of them has been able to unravel the whole truth. As the Vivian Bose Commission, set up as a follow-up to the Chagla Commission's findings, recorded: "We regret we have not been told the whole truth, and some at least of what we have been told is demonstrably false." Similarly, the Liberhan Commission's conclusions as to whether the demolition of the Mosque was a pre-planned and pre-meditated act, with the principal leaders of the BJP and outfits of the Sangh Parivar conniving in it or whether the demolition was as a result of spontaneous outburst of merely the *kar sewaks* are hardly convincing.

Commissions Galore

It is not that the Chagla or Liberhan Commissions alone have not been able to unravel the truth or come to firm conclusions based on incontrovertible set of evidences or circumstances. This has, generally, been true of all Commissions of Enquiry. Of course, there have been some exceptions when conclusions of impropriety have been reached. For instance, Justice Chagla pinning constitutional responsibility on Finance Minister, T. T. Krishnamachari, resulting in his exit from Nehru's Cabinet or Justice S. R. Das's findings on Punjab Chief Minister Pratap Singh Kairon and Minister for Mines and Fuels K. D. Malaviya, both of whom had to quit. While TTK was brought back into the Cabinet following yet another

probe ordered by Nehru, Kairon was murdered soon after he quit and Malaviya went into political oblivion. (It is quite likely that Kairon would have come back into active politics had he survived.)

The inability – or unwillingness – to take any action on the reports submitted results in a few more Commissions – or Committees – being set up to probe further in the matter. The classic example is the anti-Sikh riots following the assassination of Mrs. Gandhi which has already seen as many as nine inquiries being set up. The circumstances under which Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose went missing or died became the subject matter of an inquiry, first, by the Shah Nawaz Committee and then by two Judicial Commissions of Enquiry – of Justice Khosla and Justice Mukherjee. The demand for continuing with the probe still persists, even though it's not clear what purpose such an exercise would help serve. To put it bluntly, is it of interest to anyone now after over six decades to know the circumstances under which Netaji died? All the hype, melodrama and expectation associated with the Shah Commission to inquire into the excesses committed during the 19-months of Emergency ultimately ended in a whimper.

40 Commissions of Enquiry in 60 years

Since Independence, over 40 Commissions of Enquiry have been set up to inquire into communal riots in various parts of the country, but no tangible action has been initiated on any of the reports submitted by these Commissions. One such Commission – the multi-member Justice Nanavati Commission on the 2002 Gujarat riots – has yet to come out with its report.

Meanwhile, in his inimitable style, Lalo Prasad Yadav set up a Committee under Justice Banerjee to inquire into the circumstances under which several bogies of the Sabarmati Express went up in flames at the Godhra railway station killing 59 persons and seriously injuring several others. This Committee timed its report to coincide with elections. Its conclusions: the fire was accidental emanating from within one of the bogies; the bogies were

not torched from outside. The setting up of the Committee was clearly suspect *ab initio*; more so, its conclusions. Promptly, the Gujarat High Court struck down the appointment of the Committee as unconstitutional.

The setting up of the Banerjee Committee, the manner in which it conducted its enquiry, the timing of its report – all these lead one to another major issue: the credibility of persons heading Commissions of Enquiry. It has by now become common practice with all political parties to immediately demand a judicial probe the moment any act of dismeasour on the part of a politician/official, scam, series of deaths, communal violence, police firing etc come to light. It's now being made out that an Enquiry under the Commissions of Enquiry Act by a serving/retired judge of the Supreme Court/High Court is the only way of nabbing the culprits. The government of the day is also too willing to oblige by acceding to the demand – knowing fully well that this is the best of way of a lucrative post-retirement benefit, defusing the storm raised by the Opposition.

With increasing demands being made on the Judiciary for providing the services of judges for heading Judicial Enquiries, serving Judges are no longer drafted for the job, leaving in the field only the retired ones. When a Commission of Enquiry is set up and the person to head it is named, a definite time frame is given by the government for submission of the report of the Commission. Generally, the time frame is given in terms of months, but experience of several past years has shown that extensions after extensions are sought (and given, too) and the reports produced after a few years only. However, if the government of the day wants a quick-fix job to be done, the persons heading the Commission in question are too willing to oblige. In effect, the entire exercise of setting up a Judicial Enquiry has become an extremely lucrative post-retirement benefit for judges of the Supreme Court as well as the High Court. In such circumstances, the reports submitted also become highly suspect and – at times – subject matter of ridicule also. The end result: faith in the independence, impartiality and incorruptibility of the judiciary is shaken, causing immeasurable damage to the country's democratic system.

Commissions Have No Teeth

It's not that the pronouncement by a Commission that a person was guilty of a criminal offence would automatically result in the conviction of the person concerned. For that to happen, the entire process laid down in criminal law has to be followed, and at the end of it, the person may well get a clean acquittal or acquitted by benefit of doubt. Depositions made before a Commission or evidences placed before it have no evi-

dentiary value before a Court of law. Such depositions/evidences have to satisfy the provisions of the Evidence Act before they could be accepted as admissible evidence. A Commission has no authority to recommend the nature of action to be initiated against the person/persons concerned. The findings of a Commission could be quashed also. A High Court or the Supreme Court could pass strictures, too, on the Judge heading the Commission or impute motives to the Judge.

Notwithstanding the limitations under which Commissions of Enquiry function, some of the justifiable conclusions that could be reached on the basis of experience with various Commissions set up after Independence are: (a) the selection of Judges for such jobs leave much to be desired (b) rules and procedures for the conduct of the proceedings are bent and framed to suit the government which has set up the Commission (c) frequent extensions are sought so that the pomp, power, monetary benefits and perquisites which are associated with the position could be enjoyed to the maximum duration possible (d) arriving at conclusions which would find favour with the government which appointed the Commission.

Making Commissions Effective

Surely, the legislature had very laudable intentions while framing the Commissions of Enquiry Act. However, as things stand today, no useful purpose is being served by the setting up of a Judicial Enquiry. A drastic step like scrapping the Act may not be acceptable. Yet, it will be accepted by all – except, perhaps, the politicians – that amendments to the Act are urgently called for so that: (a) a procedure is evolved for sitting judges alone to head Commissions of Enquiry (b) the life of the Commission be not extended under any circumstance (c) the procedures are changed so that a Commission's findings could be enforced with the required degree of effectiveness.

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A Friendly Warning

We have heard of the phrase 'Eggs on your face'. This one is about eggs on your car's windshield.

If you are driving at night and were attacked with eggs on your car's windshield, do not operate your wiper or spray any water. Eggs mixed with water become milky and block your vision up to 92.5%.

You are forced to stop at the road side and become victim of robbery. This is a new technique used by robbers. A number of such robberies have happened in Rajasthan, Delhi & Haryana recently.

(Circulated on the Internet)



Cornucopia

Firoze Hirjika

The Liber-Yawn Report

In India's Establishment, inefficiency and sloth are expected and often rewarded.

Arun Shourie has been accused of being controversial, eccentric and quixotic, but one has to give him credit for not mincing words when the occasion demands it. According to media reports, Shourie's pithy comment on the Liberhan Report was that it was "idiotic" and a complete waste of resources. I couldn't agree more.

It is quite apparent that the learned Justice has taken the entire country for a royal ride. To start with, he managed to stretch out the preparation of the report to an agonizing 17 years; all the while enjoying perks like a fully staffed office and an official car with driver - not to mention wasting countless crores of tax payer's money. And after all that, his report has not revealed a single fact that has not been known to the whole country since 1992. If the objective was to exonerate the ruling Congress Party, that has been achieved, but did it require 17 years? The

conclusion that Vajpayee was a party to the Babri masjid demolition is being played up by the media as a sensational revelation, but common sense would have arrived at the same result. The Babri masjid fiasco was orchestrated by the Bharatiya Janata Party; and it is inconceivable that Vajpayee, as the party chief, would have been unaware of what was being planned.

Truth be told, in this age of instant reporting of events on television, it makes no sense to prepare such voluminous reports in the first place. A picture is worth a thousand words; and the public can see the events unfolding live in front of their eyes. There is very little scope for ambiguity. It follows, then, that these inquiry commissions and reports are a colossal waste of public resources. I'm not really surprised, though. In India's Establishment, inefficiency and sloth are expected and often rewarded.

Water Riots in Mumbai

Past experience has shown that when a mob reaches a point of frenzy, the only thing they will respond to is brute force.

The television news channels last month were almost uniformly condemnatory of the police reaction to the demonstration in front of the BMC headquarters, to protest against the water supply cuts imposed after the monsoon. The consensus was that the police had used excessive force in lathi-charging the 'peaceful' demonstrators.

In my opinion these kinds of situations are never as black and white as they seem. The majority of the demonstrators may indeed have been ordinary law-abiding citizens expressing a genuine grievance, but as often happens in such situations, they were hijacked by hooligans who saw this as one more opportunity to commit mayhem. The breaking point came when the mob jumped the police barricades and tried to forcibly enter the building. At that moment, a peaceful demonstration was transformed into a law and order situation; and the police had no option but to respond. It could be argued that the police could have tried to reason with the crowd, but past experience has shown that when a mob reaches a point of frenzy, the only thing they will respond to is brute force. The death of one of the protestors was very unfortunate, but the blatant attempt by the media to characterize it as a

result of police brutality - even though the doctors could find no external injury marks - did not do it credit.

And what did the protestors hope to achieve anyway? It's easy to shout that the water cuts should be revoked, but the fact remains that they have been imposed out of necessity. That the last monsoon was less than adequate is an established fact. It cannot be wished away. For once the BMC is acting responsibly, instead of giving in to popular sentiment. The water cuts no doubt impose hardship on Mumbaikars, but it is nothing compared to their unimaginably plight if the water in the lakes was completely exhausted one or two months before the next monsoon.

The one aspect of this episode that left a bitter taste in my mouth was a picture of the ringleader of the demonstrators, Nitesh Rane, being escorted into the BMC headquarters by fawning senior policemen. In most civilized countries, he would have been the first to be arrested and booked, but this is India, where the police remain firmly under the thumb of undeserving politicians. It is a shame and a disgrace.

Gateway of Shame

The SRPF jawans' real handicap is that, in our VIP-obsessed nation, they are virtual nobodies.

By now, everyone in Mumbai has read about the fiasco of the SRPF jawans stationed at the Gateway of India, purportedly to guard the monument and the Taj hotel opposite against future terrorist attacks. Underwear and pajamas hanging on clothes lines strung between nails hammered into the walls of the iconic heritage structure has become a lasting image of the importance given to those who are meant to guard us against a repeat of the horrendous tragedy of 26/11. I happen to visit the Gateway every morning during my walk and I have seen this first hand. I have seen these jawans lying on makeshift cots in their vests and *chaddis*, their rifles stored casually some distance away. If some terrorists were to creep up on them, they would probably be shot dead long before they could get to their weapons.



Picture Courtesy: *The Times of India*

This whole sorry episode of the SRPF jawans at the Gateway of India is a pathetic, if predictable, comedy of

errors. The most ridiculous aspect is the ignorance now being feigned by all the authorities concerned. A senior official of the archaeology department, under whose direct jurisdiction the Gateway lies, has complained that the police should have informed the department about the SRPF presence at the monument. What ivory tower are these gentlemen living in? Don't they ever move about the city? The gateway is hardly tucked away in some obscure lane. Moreover, I am willing to bet that more than one bigwig from the department has visited the Taj hotel which is bang opposite. But of course, everything remains invisible to these worthies until an official memo is received. The same applies to our honourable chief minister and esteemed

police commissioner - whose office, incidentally, is literally a stone's throw from the Gateway. It took media exposure of the jawans' plight to wake them up and galvanize them into just a promise of swift action. When that "action" will actually materialize is anybody's guess. A case in point is the tents promised by the State Home Minister "on a war footing".

The SRPF jawans' real handicap is that, in our VIP-obsessed nation, they are virtual nobodies. The police are indifferent to them, because they have no clout and do not even provide a source for *hafta* (bribe). They, along with our politicians, believe they have done their duty by merely depositing them at the monument. How and where they slept or bathed or ate was not their problem. The media exposure may have shaken them out of their lethargy, but they are hampered by the common affliction suffered by all government officials - apathy and lack of decision making. Even if there is a genuine desire and determination to provide the jawans better accommodation and facilities, by the time the necessary memos are shunted around between various departments and passed, it may be weeks. Till then, the jawans will just have to grin and bear it. Right now, I believe they are being housed in a cramped room at the Colaba police station.

An important function of the police force is to inspire a sense of confidence in the general public that they are being adequately protected. Perception does count for a lot. Those of us who watch American police serials are familiar with their SWAT teams with helmets, flak jackets and advanced weaponry. One does not know how good they really are, but their fearsome appearance does provide a sense of reassurance to the people observing them. Unfortunately, one cannot say the same for these jawans. However, I don't blame them. The way they are treated by the government and their own superiors is hardly a motivating factor.

It's Time for Balasaheb to Retire

It is possible that Thackeray has become so convinced of his god-like status that he believes whatever he says will be accepted as gospel.

There has been speculation in the media that Bal Thackeray's recent aggressiveness - manifest in fiery editorials - is a signal that he intends to take over the reins of the Shiv Sena from his son Uddhav. Following the party's reverses in the Lok Sabha and Assembly polls, the pundits surmise that it has finally dawned on the patriarch that his loving son does not have what it takes

to deliver results. Some say that it is an attempt to match Raj Thackeray's brand of rabble rousing politics.

The immediate provocation for this speculation was two editorials penned by the senior Thackeray in the Sena mouthpiece, *Samna*. The first one, just after the poll debacle, accused the hitherto sacrosanct "Marathi *manoos*"

of stabbing the Sena in the back. The second one took offence in cricketering icon Sachin Tendulkar declaring that Mumbai belongs to all Indians. That both statements were ill advised was evidenced by the party's desperate attempts at damage control immediately after they were published. In the first case, Bal Thackeray was said to be misquoted; and the *Samna* editor obediently fell on his sword for his chief. In the second instance, the attack was clarified to be "grandfatherly advice."

For me, the most telling aspect of the two editorials was that they were politically naïve; and the last thing one would expect from a master of political timing like Thackeray. Thackeray sounded like a petulant child throwing a tantrum because someone took away his favourite toy. The statements were counter productive and the proof of that is that his own party scrambled to give extenuating circumstances.

Bal Thackeray is well into his eighties. It is an age when parts of the human body start to shut down, including the mind. Some would argue that independent India has a long tradition of octogenarian political leaders. That

may be true, but no one can argue that some of the political decisions taken by these relics have been grossly incompetent, sometimes bordering on the bizarre. Arjun Singh springs to mind. A younger Thackeray would have been far less intemperate; and weighed the political odds before issuing public statements. Even his inflammatory ones had a definite political purpose behind them.

It is possible that Thackeray has become so convinced of his god-like status that he believes whatever he says will be accepted as gospel. This was actually true some years ago, when most Shiv Sena members belonged to a generation that grew up with him. However, to the succeeding generation that is now coming of age, he is nothing more than the Grand Old Man, still revered as the founding father of the Shiv Sena, but becoming increasingly less relevant. Bal Thackeray has had a long and glorious innings. Maybe it is time for him to turn his attention to family, may be religion, and spend out his remaining years in peace and contentment. He has certainly earned that right.

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Minerals

Calcium, Ca	37	mg
Iron, Fe	6.68	mg
Magnesium, Mg	292	mg
Phosphorus, P	593	mg
Potassium, K	660	mg
Sodium, Na	12	mg
Zinc, Zn	5.78	mg
Copper, Cu	2.195	mg
Manganese, Mn	1.655	mg
Selenium, Se	19.9	mcg

Vitamins

Vitamin C	0.5	mg
Thiamin	0.423	mg
Riboflavin	0.058	mg
Niacin	1.062	mg
Pantothenic acid	0.864	mg
Vitamin B-6	0.417	mg
Folate, total	25	mcg
Vitamin E	1.458	mg_ATE

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Lysine	0.928	g
Methionine	0.362	g
Cystine	0.393	g
Phenylalanine	0.951	g
Tyrosine	0.508	g
Valine	1.094	g
Arginine	2.123	g
Histidine	0.456	g
Alanine	0.837	g
Aspartic acid	1.795	g
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The Proper Role of Government in Health

Sanjeev Sabhlok

Provision of healthcare is bedeviled with serious problems that need to be understood, isolated, and overcome.

A government has three core functions: defence, police and justice. These are vital for ensuring our life and liberty. After these are provided for, we must take on the responsibility, as citizens, to look after our health through appropriate diet, exercise, and risk management – such as by taking health insurance and steps to prevent accidents. There does remain, however, a small (second-order) role for the government in ensuring our health. This month I explore this role and suggest its proper boundaries.

Emergencies and poverty

It is possible that despite our best preventative efforts, we can become involved in a severe traffic accident that makes us unconscious. The free society must ensure that under such circumstances, all of us are able to receive the best treatment without demands being placed on us (when unconscious!) to show our insurance documents. Indeed, the free society cannot turn away even those who have not insured but who land up in critical condition on the doorsteps of a hospital. Other life-threatening events such as natural calamities require a similar emergency response. Indeed, even foreigners injured in accidents should be treated till they recover their senses and can make the necessary payment through their travel insurance.

Then there is the matter of poverty. In my May 2009 article in *Freedom First*, I showed that the state should ensure reasonable equality of opportunity. That would include the elimination of poverty. But providing money for food isn't enough. To ask the poor, who can barely purchase enough food, to buy their own medicines will force them to go to the village quack and receive dangerous concoctions, or worse: witch-doctor 'treatments'. They may also sell themselves or their children into bonded labour. No free society can countenance that. Lastly, the government has a role in vaccinating citizens against communicable disease and in providing succor (including healthcare) during natural calamities.

We therefore need a social insurance scheme that would do the following:

- a) pay those below the poverty line a small additional sum (as part of the negative income tax payment) to empower them to bear the routine costs of minor healthcare;
- b) ensure universal emergency hospitalization, including healthcare in natural calamities; and
- c) vaccinate every citizen against dangerous pandemics where such a vaccine is available.

Beyond these interventions, the state clearly has no role in healthcare. Everyone must take out private health insurance, self-insure or depend on charity, for all other health requirements.

The minefield of healthcare

Provision of healthcare is bedeviled with serious problems that need to be understood, isolated, and overcome. Medical ignorance is frightening: doctors and scientists don't have the correct answer for many serious health problems, and test results suffer from Type I and Type II statistical errors. As a result, doctors can differ dramatically on their diagnosis. Even where they agree on a diagnosis, their approach to treatment can vary significantly. To compound this confusion is the multi-faced problem of asymmetrical and incomplete information. People don't disclose the necessary information to health and insurance professionals from ignorance, inability: or worse – they sometimes tell lies.

To this game of blind-man's buff that is known as healthcare we should add normal human error and bad decision-making. In the end, while doctors manage to cure most patients (or rather, the body cures itself in most cases), in some cases they actually exacerbate health problems. This happens through misdiagnosis – which allows simple things to grow into dangerous proportions – or by passing on dangerous germs to their patients, or by operating on the wrong organ or even on the wrong patient! Finally, there is human greed. Health practitioners (like all 'normal' humans) have strong incentives to squeeze out profits from others. They may do so by asking patients to purchase irrelevant medical tests and treatments.

If to this mix of utter confusion we add a government bureaucracy, we are certain to get huge cost blowouts and corruption – a Frankenstein that will eat up its creator. Indeed, that is typical of most Western country health systems today. The entire West is now creaking under the weight of its badly designed health systems. Never empower a bureaucracy, and remain focused on the precise outcome at all times: that is the key message.

Delivering universal emergency hospitalisation

The design of universal emergency hospitalization must take into account these insidious incentives and undercurrents of human nature. The right way to ensure this objective is to give this task to the private sector, calibrate its incentives to ensure that it delivers the desired outcomes; and monitor it independently, punishing it for non-delivery and rewarding it for exceeding the requirements.

In my book, *Breaking Free of Nehru* (Anthem Press, 2008, <http://bfnsabhllokcitcity.com>) I suggested an effective model that I will also outline here. As a first step, India's geographical area should be carved into reasonably sized regions. A contract for the provision of universal emergency hospitalization should then be put out for tender. Emergency coverage during routine floods, minor earthquakes and ordinary cyclones should form part of the contract (vaccination coverage can be added but it is better to do so through a different contract). Private health consortiums capable of providing the prescribed services *to everyone who needs such treatment in the region* should then be requested to quote a flat (i.e., per capita) price. This per capita price would effectively become the social insurance premium, to be collected through the tax system.

In making their bid, these consortiums would need to consider the local costs of living, local disease patterns, predictable natural calamities, the difficulty of appointing doctors to remote areas, etc. The lowest (or fittest) bid must be awarded the long term (say 30-year) contract. The agreed amounts would be paid annually, indexed to the population size and inflation, and subject not only to agreed outcomes but to a productivity improvement factor.

A long-term contract will allow the successful bidder/s to establish low-cost, innovative hospital networks or to otherwise negotiate with service-providers to ensure the delivery of the contracted services. Making a per-head payment (i.e. not a reimbursement payment) will avoid wasteful debates about actual expenses, and eliminate unnecessary transaction costs and mindless bureaucracy.

Independent private bodies (more than one, each specializing in a different area of health specialisation) should then be funded to assess, monitor, and certify the delivery of the prescribed services. Financial penalties must be imposed on hospitalisation providers for non-compliance with delivery standards.

The administration of the system will, of course, need to be done well. For instance, migration flows (including part-year migrations) will need to be monitored, since these impact on the payments. After the system is fully operationalised, the current government machinery of hospitals and primary health centres can be shut down, and its assets auctioned off.

Freedom Team of India

The Freedom Team (<http://freedomteam.in/>, or FTI) has now completed six months of its formation as a legal entity. It is, however, well short of its target of leaders. Finding genuine citizens in India continues to be a major challenge. I seek your active involvement in helping the team find good leaders. The Team has now opened a bank account. Please donate liberally to FTI if you are not yet in a position to become a leader yourself. Let's work towards a successful 2010 for FTI and for India.

MR. SANJEEV SABHLOK can be contacted at sabhllok@yahoo.com.

Books for Review

Dear Reader: As you are aware, we have a very lively book review section. After we became a monthly the long list of reviews pending publication have been exhausted. We are now looking for more reviewers. Reviews should not exceed 1200 words. Ideal length: between 700 and 1000 words. Reviews should, preferably be emailed to us, or at least typed in 1.5 spacing and broad margin and sent by post mail. A one line note on the background of the Reviewer should accompany the review. The deadline for submission of review is 60 days. The book can be retained by the reviewer who will also be paid a nominal honorarium. Some recent arrivals awaiting review are listed below:

1. Economic Reforms in India and China – Emerging Issues and Challenges
2. Power Realignments in Asia – China, India and the United States.
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Editor

Life During the Nehruvian Socialist Regime

– The Days of the Permit-Licence-Quota Era

T. H. Chowdary

When a person in the queue asked the old man with an infant why so old as he was, he was applying for a phone as he might die before getting one, the old man replied, “the application is not for me; it is for this infant. Maybe when he grows up, he might get one”.

Those of us who were born in the 1930s, saw the British Raj, experienced the euphoria of gaining independence in 1947, got enthused by the Five-Year Plans, and were inspired by Jawaharlal Nehru’s vision of a socialistic pattern of society in the country. When we compare and contrast the life before 1991 with that after 1991 when the late Sri P. V. Narasimha Rao, bade goodbye to the Nehruvian socialist permit-licence-quota raj, liberalized the Indian economy, and allowed free play for Indian enterprises, we wonder how we lived in the pre-1991 period. Just look at some of the amazing things we lived with:

- ❖ For a 2-wheeler Bajaj or Vespa scooter we had to register, pay some amount in advance and wait and wait. If we managed to get a recommendation from an MP we could get one out of turn. One could sell it in the open market and make a tidy profit.
- ❖ The situation with respect to telephone was, “apply apply: no reply”. I recall an R. K. Laxman’s cartoon showing a very old man with an infant in tow standing in queue at a telephone office to apply for a telephone. When a person in the queue asked the old man why so old as he was, he was applying for a phone as he might die before getting one, the old man replied, “the application is not for me; it is for this infant. Maybe when he grows up, he might get one”. As the waiting lists were getting longer, the government decided to scrap all pending applications unless they were re-submitted on a printed, Rs.5/- priced prescribed applicants form. When the waiting list – again built up enormously and unable to cope with it, the government decided to scrap those waiting lists; unless each applicant renewed it by paying Rs.1,000. Thus half the *gareeb* applicants were *hataoed*! that is, removed from the waiting list. The OYT (Own Your Telephone) deposits were increased from 2,000 to 5,000 and a new scheme of *Tatkal* for getting a telephone within a few weeks by paying Rs.40,000 was introduced! That is, how the *gareeb*s of telephone were dealt with. The *gareeb*s were being *hataoed* removed from the ugly waiting lists!

Contrast this with the 6 million telephones being added per month now-a-days and half a dozen competing companies soliciting, advertising, enticing people to take a telephone.

- ❖ When one wanted a car, there were only three brands available. Ambassador, the Fiat Padmini and the Standard. The Standard disappeared after some time. There were huge waiting lists and there were quotas for government servants; and if there was a recommendation from an MP, we could get one out of turn and by selling it one could make a handsome profit. Now, more than a dozen brands of indigenous and foreign cars are available, on demand. The automobile companies are running after citizens, enticing them to buy the cars.
 - ❖ If we wanted a gas connection we had to wait and wait after paying a deposit. Go to an MP or MLA get a recommendation, we would get a connection but for refill, again we had to wait and wait. Get a recommendation from an MP or an MLA, you could get the refill immediately.
 - ❖ The socialist economic policy of Jawaharlal Nehru prohibited the making of any telephone equipment by private Indian telephone companies. Only the State companies ITI, HCL, HTL could make them. But the indigenous production was always short of what could be ordered within the limited funds allotted for expansion. But the same socialist government had no qualms in importing all types of telecom equipments from multinational companies of imperialist and capitalist countries like the US, UK, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Sweden and Japan.
- The Indian capitalist was shunned in preference to multinational companies. That was Nehruvian socialism which wanted the State to occupy the commanding heights of the economy.
- ❖ If we wanted to go abroad to attend a conference. We were allowed \$10 of foreign exchange. People would

surreptitiously buy dollars in the black market. Companies invoiced their imports, to pay more than the real cost to the foreign suppliers. They kept the difference between the over-invoiced amount and the real cost in Swiss Banks in secret accounts. Criminality was built into the system of permits.

- ❖ Imports of essential appliances and aids to professionals were forbidden. They were forbidden to be brought even when gifted. I was returning from a UN assignment after a year in the Republic of Yemen. While returning I brought a fax machine in 1991. I had a UN passport. They imposed a heavy penalty and since I did not have rupees with me I paid in dollars at the official exchange rate; whereas if I had sold the dollars outside I could have got lot more rupees. Imports were banned. Smuggling was permitted.
- ❖ Government of India permitted State Electronics Development Corporations to produce TV sets. Each permit was for 10,000 sets a year! One had to wait and wait to get a TV set from ECIL. Of course, recommendations from an MLA or MP or Minister you could get a TV set earlier than if you had to stand in a queue.
- ❖ There was only one airline, domestically Indian Airlines; internationally Air India. Getting a ticket was very difficult, you had to go to government secretaries to get reservation from the government quota. Today nine companies are competing domestically and the price of a ticket is some times less than the tax that the government is levying on that ticket. The share of the state-owned Indian Airlines has fallen to 25% from 100% the last seven years.
- ❖ Communication satellites began beaming TV programs to earth stations which would receive them and distribute them over cables to homes. It was prohibited. However thousands of small street area individuals put up satellite dishes, received the programs broadcast by foreign companies and distributed them to homes through overhead wires strung on electricity telephone poles. It became such a large scam that government just could not deal with them. Again the principle: imports banned, smuggling permitted.
- ❖ As cable TV proliferated, private Indian companies sought to produce TV programs by leasing bandwidth from international satellite companies and broadcast their programs to Indian cable TV operators for distribution on cables. Nehruvian socialism would not allow it. So Indian private companies produced the programs, put them on tapes and video cassettes, flew

them to Nepal and Sri Lanka and from there uplinked satellites from whence they were received by cable TV operators and broadcast to homes as India wouldn't allow up-linking from India. This was Nehruvian socialism. Today anybody can uplink from within India.

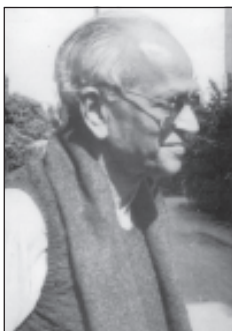
- ❖ Private Indian TV companies were not allowed to broadcast news. They could only broadcast entertainment. This was considered socialism. But the rule was broken with impunity. We now have 24-hour news broadcasting TV channels.
- ❖ When telecoms were demonopolised the government department DOT retained monopoly over the NLD and ILD dialing. These are the segments which involve a capital outlay of less than 20% but produce 67% of the revenues on STD calls over Rs.36 per minute and an international call Rs.72 per minute. Now an NLD call is less than Rs.1 per minute and international call is less than Rs.3 per minute.
- ❖ Nehruvian socialism implemented by Indira Gandhi gave birth to the Urban Land Ceiling (ULC) Act in 1976. Very few persons holding urban land in excess of what was prescribed lost their land. They bribed the government and escaped from confiscation of the excess they were holding. Thus the ULC act became an instrument of extortion and corruption.

Today the staunchest defenders of Nehruvian socialism are government servants because the permit-licence-quota raj gave them power and patronage and rent i.e corruption money. The other defenders are the Stalinist-Marxist, communist parties. Globalization is undermining Nehruvian socialism. Socialism smuggled into the Indian Constitution during Indira Gandhi's Emergency in 1976 still requires that every political party should swear allegiance to socialism (and secularism). Every political party swears by socialism - as required by the Election Commission. It is as foul or as unapprehensible as air itself. Everything that is gas is air, everything that is indescribable is socialism. The Swatantra Party is committed to bury socialism; promote free enterprise under statutory regulation by state organs. The Swatantra Party is not able to function because it refuses to swear by socialism. It filed a case in the Mumbai High Court for deletion of the word socialism. This is pending for over a decade and it may be there permanently.

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Prabhakar Padhye (1909-1984)

R. Srinivasan



***Freedom First* commemorates the memory of Prabhakar Padhye whose centenary falls this year. Not many readers of FF might know this eminent litterateur was closely connected with the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom, publishers of *Quest and Freedom First*.**

A journalist of standing, he began as Assistant Editor of *Chitre* and later became editor of *Dhanurdhari*. What was unique about these was the ample space given in their columns for contemporary European literary figures and he educated a generation of Marathi readers in new awakened literary sensibilities.

Though well established as a journalist, he was to prove his mettle in other fields too. Along with S. R. Tikekar he edited a volume on Maharashtra covering different dimensions of the region. The book *Ajkal Maharashtra* (1935) remains important even today, an important milestone in Marathi cultural history for its pioneering comprehensive coverage and in mapping out the contours of Maharashtra. It was prescient in assessing them the revolutionary potential of the message of Jotiba Phule. It is still cited as an important study.

He was appointed editor of *Navashakti* in November 1945 which he raised to high standards and many Marathi men of eminence and literary figures contributed to it. At a time when most members of the Indian intellegentsia were seduced by the siren voices of Marxist Communism and “the new civilization” that was ushered in the USSR, Padhye became distressingly aware of the totalitarian dimensions of this new civilisation as the Webbs called it. He was a steadfast critic of the system and battled against it. This was even before the American establishment began its sedulous attempts to lay bare the fangs of Communism and years before the publication of *The God That Failed*.

Padhye was scheduled to lecture under the auspices of the Democratic Research Service on the World after Stalin, but with the Communists creating disturbance in the meeting, the lecture could not be held. Sadanand, the proprietor of *Navashakti* took the stand that none of his editors should participate in public meetings. Also, with Dr. A. V. Baliga (President of the “Friends of the Soviet Union”) and Nayar getting control of the newspaper, it took a pronounced communist stand. All these surely compromised the independence of the editor and as one

who valued freedom, he resigned his position.

Soon he was to move to Delhi to become the Secretary-General of the Asian Division of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. The sojourn to Delhi was to be fruitful for Padhye. A number of books were edited by him, all relating to the problems of strengthening democracy in the new states. He made friends with many intellectuals in different fields from different countries. He travelled widely. His address at Delhi became famous for the seminars and conferences held there. Eminent men in different fields from all over India attended them. Nehru attended his seminar on Tolstoy and this dispelled from the statesman’s mind many canards about the Centre. Besides public discussion, it was also a cultural centre where performing artists in music participated, as did visual artists. It was at this time that the struggle for the unilingual state of Maharashtra was at its height and many Maharashtrians of eminence who went to Delhi to press for the case found his Centre hospitable. Besides he invited creative writers like Uma Shankar Joshi and Ananta Murthy to lecture and initiate discussions in his Centre.

He now travelled widely to countries as divergent as Japan and Brazil as a representative of the PEN. And these resulted in travelogues. He was developing new interests and a three months’ study leave at Princeton gave him the leisure and privacy to formulate new ideas.

Even when he was active in the field of journalism, honours came his way – the Presidentship of the Gomantak Sahitya Sammelan (1950) and Presidentship of the Marathi newspapers’ editors Conference (1952).

He returned to Poona and settled there but was in demand here too. The Poona University had started a course of study for journalists in the making and for ten years from 1970 he was active in guiding and participating in its programme. Besides, he started in the city a Centre for Indian Writers which became a forum for public discussion on matters relating to literature, public issues which were well patronised by intellectuals.

The crowning honour was the Award of the Sahitya Akademi Prize in 1982 for his book on aesthetics. Over

the years this subject preoccupied his leisure years.

He remained a prolific writer of stories, novels, essays and reminiscences and recollections of famous men and critical assessments of men and movements. A beautifully edited volume of his Marathi writings was published a few months back to commemorate his centenary.

(*Augusthiche Angan*, edited by Vilas Khole and Rekha Inamdar-Sane, Mauj Prakashan, 2009). His English writings may be worthwhile reprinting.

DR. R. SRINIVASAN is retired professor of Political Science, Mumbai University, and Associate Editor, *Freedom First*.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment on Cooperatives: A Fraud on the Constitution

Rama Reddy

It seems that the Union Government is in the process of resurrecting the Constitution (106th Amendment) Bill 2006 that lapsed with the completion of the tenure of the 14th Lok Sabha in May 2009. The Bill was touted as a piece of constitutional protection to the autonomous character of cooperatives. The text of that Bill made the Government's intention clear: it was meant to tighten the stranglehold of the politicians and bureaucrats on cooperatives.

The 106th Amendment Bill was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Cooperation for thorough examination of its contents. The Committee, in its report to the (14th) Lok Sabha, stated:

- ❖ The Committee is of the unanimous opinion that a comprehensive amendment to the Constitution on cooperatives, as envisaged by the Union Government in the Constitution (106th Amendment) Bill 2006, is not necessary.
- ❖ The Committee examined the scope of Article 19(1)(c) of the Constitution that says "all citizens shall have the right to form associations or unions". The Department of Legal Affairs in the Ministry of Law and Justice informed the Committee that the word "associations" in Article 19(1)(c) includes "cooperatives" also. However, a view has been expressed in the Committee that the word "associations" may not include "cooperatives". The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Government should examine insertion of the word "cooperatives" after the word "associations" in Article 19(1)(c), to clear all doubts in this regard.
- ❖ The Committee further recommends that a new Article 43B, as under, may be added in Part-IV of the Constitution that contains the Directive Principles of State Policy.

"43B Empowerment of Cooperatives: The State shall endeavour to promote voluntary formation, autonomous functioning, democratic control and professional management of the cooperatives."

According to a UNI report the proposed amendment to be introduced in the current winter session of Parliament envisages insertion of a new Article 43B in Part IV of the Constitution. The main features of the

proposed amendment are:

- incorporation of cooperatives on the principles of voluntary formation, autonomous functioning, democratic member control, member economic participation and professional management;
- conduct of cooperative elections by the State Election Commission or by any other appropriate and independent body as may be provided by a state law;
- fixed term of five years for directors and other office bearers of a cooperative;
- the number of directors in a cooperative not to exceed 21;
- co-opted directors on the board not to be elected as office-bearers of a cooperative;
- supercession of the board of a cooperative for a period not exceeding six months;
- audit of the cooperatives to be carried by the auditors from a government-approved panel of auditors or auditing firms;
- convening of the annual general meeting of a cooperative within six months of the close of the financial year;
- filing of returns by a cooperative within six months of the close of the financial year; and
- access to every member of a cooperative to the records and books of accounts of the cooperative.

While briefing the media on the decisions taken by the Cabinet, the spokesperson said that the proposed amendment to the Constitution is intended to ensure (a) professional management of cooperatives; (b) free, fair and impartial elections in cooperatives, (c) independent and professional audit of the accounts of cooperatives.

Unless and until the text of the Constitution (110th Amendment) Bill 2009 comes into public domain, it will be difficult to analyse various aspects and consequences of the proposed enactment.

From a circular issued by Mr. RAMA REDDY, Mentor, Indian Cooperative Union, Hyderabad.

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1984 to Now: The Ongoing Bhopal Tragedy

The gas leak triggered a disaster that is now widely recognized as the world's worst industrial catastrophe. More than two decades on, over 20,000 people have died and 100,000 more still suffer severe, chronic and disabling illnesses

In the early hours of December 3, 1984, an immense cloud of poisonous gas began spewing out of the Union Carbide pesticide factory in Bhopal, India. Methyl isocyanate (MIC) and other deadly gases moved quickly through the city, overwhelming masses of people.



The Dow/Carbide Factory at Bhopal: In 1984 (top) and in 2008 (bottom)
(Photo Credits: BBC, S. Bouillet)



For fear of compounding their legal liability, Union Carbide would not identify the chemical agents that fueled this catastrophe, leaving doctors to treat victims without an answer to their agony. Choking, with violent convulsions, many Bhopal residents drowned in their own

body fluids. Thousands died that night.

More than 27 tons of MIC and these other poisonous gases turned Bhopal into a gas chamber. It was soon revealed that none of the six safety systems at the Union Carbide plant were functional, and Union Carbide's own documents demonstrated convincingly that the company designed the plant with "unproven" and "untested" technology, cutting corners on safety and maintenance in an effort to save money.

The gas leak triggered a disaster that is now widely recognized as the world worst industrial catastrophe. More than two decades on, over 20,000 people have died and 100,000 more still suffer severe, chronic and disabling illnesses: victims are plagued by breathing difficulties, damaged eyesight, reproductive complications, rising cancer rates and a range of other ailments that affect nearly

every system of their assaulted bodies. Further, a 2003 study in the highly-regarded Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) confirmed that children of gas-affected parents are themselves suffering the effects of Union Carbide's poisons.



Leela & Amir - Victims of Bhopal: From 1984 (top) and 2007 (bottom)
(Photo Credits: R. Rai, Bhopal.Org)



Union Carbide left Bhopal without cleaning up the factory site, leaving thousands of tons of highly toxic chemicals in sheds,

The Indian Liberal Group represented by human rights activist Ch.Narendra participated in a meeting in Hyderabad on December 3, 2009 as part of the International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal (ICJB) to mark the 25th anniversary of the Bhopal disaster. Other organisations participating in the meeting included Jana Chaitanya Vedika, Amnesty International-Hyderabad, Association for Promoting Social Action, and the People's Union for Civil Liberties.

Speakers warned that many cities in the country, including Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam were on the verge of similar disasters as chemical factories are not treating solid waste, but depositing it in the soil. As a result, for instance, 80 per cent of water in and around Hyderabad is contaminated. Alleging that corrupt Pollution Control Boards in the country had resulted in industrial pollution becoming rampant, speakers demanded that an independent Pollution Control Authority should be created on the lines of the Election Commission of India.

storerooms and solar evaporation ponds. These chemicals have leached into the earth, contaminating the groundwater source for 25,000 Bhopalis who live nearby. A 2002 Greenpeace Report documented the presence of chloroform, lead, mercury and a series of other chemicals in the breast milk of nursing women who live near the factory. Union Carbide is still killing innocent people in Bhopal.

The Dow Chemical Company, based in Midland, Michigan, USA, acquired Union Carbide's assets and liabilities when Dow purchased the company in 2001. In the years following, and to this day, Dow-Carbide has refused to:

- Clean up the factory site, which continues to contaminate the soil, water and much more
- Provide just compensation to victims made ill by these poisons
- Fund necessary medical care, health monitoring regimens and research studies
- Reveal decades of the company's research on the effects of MIC and related toxins
- Offer alternate livelihoods to victims who cannot pursue their work because of exposure-related illness
- Stand trial before the Chief Judicial Magistrate's court in Bhopal, where Union Carbide faces criminal charge of culpable homicide (manslaughter) and has fled these charges for many years

Based on an Amnesty International report

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BOOK REVIEWS



MANAGED CHAOS – THE FRAGILITY OF THE CHINESE MIRACLE by Prem Shankar Jha
Published by Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., B-1/1-1 Mohan Co-op Industrial Area, Mathura Road, New Delhi 110044 • Year of Publication 2009 • Number of Pages 186 • Price: Rs.495.

Reviewed by Brig. S. C. Sharma (Retd.), Adviser to the telecom industry and a freelance writer.
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The book is an attempt to understand what propels China's extraordinary growth. In the last 30 years China's per capita income has increased 11 times. The income status of 400 million people has been lifted above the poverty line. Shift from a controlled to a market economy commenced in 1978. By 1990 China had graduated from producing labour intensive goods to sophisticated consumer goods. In 2004 it had a large trade surplus with Japan and the Asian tigers that had moved the labour intensive part of their industries to China and continued to manufacture components which require a high level of expertise. It is for this reason, as mentioned by Dr Subramanian Swamy in a talk, that while exports from China to USA have increased, there was a corresponding decrease in exports from the Asian tigers and Japan to USA.

Some doubts arise about the Chinese miracle. The author has shown from official data and reports from the World Bank that the growth figures have been exaggerated. An official census in 2005 revealed that GDP was inflated by 3.9%. In 1997 L Zhang officially provided evidence of statistical fraud. In 1998 the provincial growth rate had exceeded that of the national economy and the growth rate of regions and cities had exceeded that of provinces. Claims that China never suffered any recession are not reliable. In the period 1997 to 2002 there were indicators of recession like decline in power consumption, fall in prices, lower rents for property, office spaces lying vacant and stock piles of unsold manufactured goods. In 1998 delivery of 43 Boeing aircraft was postponed due to a fall in air traffic. Thomas Rowski of the University of Pittsburgh pointed out that during 1997 to 2000 the national economy could not have grown by 24.7% as claimed when power consumption had declined by 12.8%. There was similar decrease in other inputs like steel, cement, soda ash and labour. The reasons for fraud in statistics are political and not economic.

Another feature of the double digit growth has been the large consumption of raw materials. For an increase of 73% in GDP, the consumption of steel increased by 167% and that of cement by 81%. To produce goods worth

US\$ 10,000 China's consumption of raw materials was 7 times that of Japan, 6 times that of USA and 3 times that of India. This has led to a massive degradation of the environment. The rivers have become highly polluted much to the discomfort of the rural population. The author has identified two main reasons for the wasteful use of raw materials and energy. First is the legacy of non-viable State Owned Enterprises [SOEs] which were not closed down because of likely social disruptions. Second is the use of obsolete technology by a large number of units. Reforms began with the delegation of State power from the Central Government to tiers of local administration, resulting in increase of SOEs from 83,700 in 1978 to 1,13,800 in 1996. This increase did not come from entrepreneurship but by State power. Overwhelming sale of SOEs was to managers and their relatives. In many cases workers were forced to buy shares in loss making units. The cadres extract profits from the units but do not run the risk of truly private owners. These units are free from social obligations but not from State ownership. The private sector is different from what is commonly understood. There are twenty forms of ownership.

Party cadres and the administration acquired control over economic resources. They had the authority and control over banks for cheap loans. Land was taken over without adequate compensation. Contemporary technology and economies of scale were thrown overboard while starting new units. These events occurred during the economic boom in USA. The perennial shortages faced as a result of the controlled economy were overcome by rapid industrialisation. The developments were welcomed by the Central Government.

Social discontent has risen due to diversion of farm land for industry without adequate compensation, corruption and absence of social security in non-state units. The working conditions for labour are poor. Can social discontent lead to political instability? Can the economy based on extravagant use of raw materials be sustained?

The slowdown in the economy led to a fall in profits from 28% in 1985 to 3.3% in 1995. A crisis developed in

the banking and social security systems. The Central Government took half-hearted measures and closed down some loss making units. Projects worth USD 40 billion were cancelled in diverse sectors and 40 million workers were laid off. Budgets for agriculture, transport and social justice were not curtailed. Real estate projects kept on being funded by the local administration in spite of a ban by the Central Government. Leaders of the Shanghai administration were asked to step down since they undertook unviable projects. Land was taken over by paying only token compensation. Loans were cheap and easily available. Industrial units were started not as a part of market demand but by local authorities to enrich themselves. The Party cadres got their share of commission and hope for profits without running any risk of loss. There was uncontrolled overproduction. In 1996, there were 8000 cement plants in China as against 110 in USA, 51 in Russia and 101 in India. Steven L. Solnick has shown that statistical fraud and usurping of resources by officials led to the collapse of USSR. These symptoms are present in China. The difference is that the Central Government is aware of it and is trying to remedy the situation.

The reason for China doing well in exports is that most of these units have foreign collaborators and are subject to international market conditions. These constraints are absent in the domestic market. Bribery and fraud have become commonplace. In 2005 the number of public demonstrations protesting against inflation and unemployment rose ten times than in 1993. It is reported that fifty percent of the 8 million graduates could not get employment for wages. Highly regarded intellectuals have warned that it had become impossible to combine economic growth with social justice. The Central Government is aware of the discontent amongst the masses. President Jintao and Premier Jiabao have abolished all taxes on agricultural farming and have taken steps against illegal seizure of land by the local administration. A drive has been launched against corruption. The conduct of several senior cadre members was investigated. 1252 Party workers committed suicide and about 1500 absconded. The Central Government has wrested control of resources from local

bodies but have not trimmed the size of the bureaucracy.

The author has explained the genesis of defiance by local governments which is something alien to an autocratic system. Beijing had lost a good deal of hegemony due to the failure of ill-conceived schemes of Chairman Mao. Hardships due to a succession of natural disasters in the provinces of Anhui and Szechuan during 1977-79 gave courage to the people to break the rules. The Central Government encouraged development of rural industries in an attempt to remove shortages of consumer items. In the agricultural sector family holdings for farming was accepted in place of collectives. The initiative came from the local administrations and not from the Central Government. The first in command was the head of the local government and not the Party Secretary. President Hu Jintao is trying to bring about a change and has declared that he wants to build up a harmonious society, rule of law and open elections. A book by Central Party School calls for cautious and controlled process of reform to usher in rule of law, a greater role for NGOs and acceptance of religion in the society. The emphasis on caution and control over reforms shows that this is not going to be easy. Perhaps the example of break up of the USSR creates a speed breaker on the pace of political freedom.

The performance of the export sector of the economy shows that China can become the world's largest economy. The author is of the view that "this cannot be taken for granted due to its oppressive political system". The social conflicts due to hardships of rural peasantry and migrant labour would sharpen in any recession. There is talk of open elections but so far the Government has relied on force to deal with any political dissent. Unless the public is free to air grievances, corruption and extortion cannot be reduced. China has to win against its own fears of political upheaval.

The book gives a balanced view of China's political economy and is highly recommended for China watchers.

Road Dangers Faced by Indian Pilgrims

Religious leaders in India are calling for a vast network of pedestrian paths to be laid alongside the country's notoriously treacherous roads after a surge in the number of holy men and pilgrims being knocked down.

India leads the world in road fatalities, with about 114,000 traffic accident deaths – one every five minutes – last year, according to official figures.

Few groups are more at risk than the millions of religious devotees who travel the country by foot, often covering hundreds of miles on roads without proper footpaths, competing for space with bullock carts and speeding buses.

Most recently, a string of fatal traffic accidents involving Jain monks, who are under oath to avoid motorised transport and often travel between monasteries on foot by night, has added weight to demands for pukka pavements.

From an article in the *London Times* by Rhys Blakely in Mumbai cited in www.timesonline.co.uk

Freedom First

Freedom First speaks for the silent majority - the majority that wants to be left in peace to pursue its goal of improving its quality of life, but has been suffering in silence, the indignities heaped on it by insensitive governments who have arrogated to themselves the right to decide what is good for the people. In the process, the whole country has been turned into a cesspool of corruption. Public morality and character have reached an all-time low.

Freedom First affirms that much of the unrest and ferment in our society is a direct result of excessive State intervention in the day-to-day lives of our people. While the people's initiative has been stifled, the economy is in shambles. The Journal believes that while India needs a strong government that ensures the rule of law what India does not need is a meddlesome government – the system so far that has led to impoverishment, insecurity and instability.

Freedom First therefore stands for minimum government and maximum freedom, tempered by a sense of individual responsibility, in which the people's genius has a fair opportunity to develop and grow.

Freedom First rejects any ideology, movement or policy that sets one group of citizens against another, be it based on class, caste, religion or envy.

Freedom First

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