Monthly No. 482, July 2007, Rs. 25

Freedom First

The Liberal Position

Chinese Chakkar

Common Destiny, Differing Paths
T.C.A.Rangachari

India -US Nuclear Deal - The China Factor, *P.M.Kamath*

Not Hostile but Unreliable
V.N.Torgal

China's Burgeoning Military Spending, *K.S.Madhu Shankar*

Proximate Adversary and Potential Ally, *B.Ramesh Babu*

Safeguarding India's National Interests
Nitin G.Raut

Plus

Engaging China - Historical Perspectives
Claude Arpi

Statement of Purpose

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 abrogated 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 result of State intervention in the daily lives of our people. The economic reforms of 1991 reduced the State's stranglehold on commerce and industry. Yet, while GDP growth in the last ten years has been impressive, the slide in governance is alarming. The mindset of permanent and elected representatives continues to be meddlesome and suspicious of civil society. This has to change if India is to step out of the quagmire of 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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BETWEEN OUSELVES…

Chinese Checkers is a board game for two to six players. Each player has ten pegs of one colour at one starting point of the star. The objective of the game is to occupy the star point directly opposite. The first player to accomplish this is a winner. Of course if in the same round more than one player reaches the end point all of them are winners.

When inviting contributions to the cover feature we phrased it with a simple (simplistic may be a better word) query: "Is China India's Friend or Foe?" Those of us who lived through the 1962 India-China war experienced the trauma of that conflict hence the black or white mindset. Fortunately the poser was unanimously rejected. However, the writers have come up with a litany of issues involving India-China relations. There were more pegs of many more hues and colours than in a game of Chinese Checkers. Hence the title Chinese *Chakkar* – a Hindi word meaning conundrum – would be more appropriate as you, dear reader, will discover in all the fourteen pages of this cover feature. It is a relationship fraught with danger to India's national interests. Yet this is a common thread that runs through the seven essays. The warning is also there that we should not fall a victim to naïve slogans like *Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai*, which lulled us into a false complacency resulting in a war that cost the lives of hundreds of our soldiers.

The question we raised 'is China a greater threat to India than Pakistan' has been left unanswered. Perhaps we will indulge in a separate cover feature on our relations with Pakistan. On the question 'will China one day draw the bamboo curtain and seek to replace the USA as the world's superpower in the 21st Century leaving India far behind both economically and militarily, our writers have answered by implication that if India does not abandon the curious desire to woo China and begin taking decisive action to defend its national interests, this could well be more than an imaginary danger. One of the essays points out that China does not hold all the aces; India too have some up their sleeve. We must exploit these. What these are have been dealt with in this cover feature, so read on.

Editor

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MANY VOICES

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

Arjun Singh's great personal achievement is that he has succeeded in dividing a great institution such as AIIMS into camps inflicting grave damage to its reputation and imposing severe hardship upon its beneficiaries (patients).

Dr. Anil Sharma, spokesman for the Resident Doctors Association, *Education World*, May 2007

When regulators don't know the difference between regulation and control, one is asking for trouble, especially in a country like India where control mindsets are part of the air we breathe.

Economist Bibek Debroy, *The Indian Express*, May 28

One of the major reasons why ordinary people swell the ranks of Maoist groups is because elected representatives have failed the people in terms of basic governance.

Pamela Philipose, *The Indian Express*, June 28

India is the largest democracy in the world. But it has a lot to learn from the world's oldest one. Political parties conduct leadership elections openly and regularly. There are rules for who becomes PM and they are followed.

Lord Meghnad Desai, a member of the British House of Lords, *The Times of India*, July 3

Iranians' dissent against their government does not translate into suport to their government's critics in the West. It is this paradoxthe West must learn to deal with.

Editorial in *The Indian Express*, June 26

When Sunita Williams spoke about how heavenly samosas and chhhole tasted up there in the skies, we felt strangely validated. We acted as if she was India's brand ambassador in the galaxy of stars.

TV journalist Barkha Dutt, *Hindustan Times*, June 23

For those of us who got so worked up over the attack by right-wing goons on the arts faculty in Baroda, will we speak up as vociferously for Rushdie's right to express his creativity without censorship?

TV journalist Barkha Dutt, *Hindustan Times*, June 23

To have what you don't need, to buy what you can't afford is the test of successful marketing.

Architect Gautam Bhatia, *Hindustan Times*, June 24

Intellectuals often come in packs. Their sense of identity comes from ingratiating themselves with a particular group. Much of what passes as intellectual life on the Left has this character.

Pratap Bhanu Mehta, President, Centre for Policy Research, *The Indian Express*, March 27

Freedom? freedom for citizens like you and me? can only be secured through Courts; not through Parliament or through executive governments.

Jurist Fali Nariman, *The Statesman*, April 29

Was not Emergency endorsed by the House? The same Parliament put MISA in the Ninth Schedule. Is there any guarantee future Parliaments won't resort to similar shenanigans?

Veteran journalisit Inder Malhotra, *The Indian Express*, May 7

The utterly trivial is now the supremely important. Shilpa Shetty makes headlines, as do visits by Amitabh Bachchan and his growing family to sundry temples, functions and the loo.

Columnist Santosh Desai, *The Week*, February 11

Since Prime Minister Manmohan Singh tells us that Rahul is the future, I shudder to imagine what the future holds for the country.

Veteran journalist Kuldip Nayar, *Janata*, April 29

One of the few good things to come out of the disastrous war in Iraq has been the growing number of gays permitted to serve their country.

Charles Peters, Founding Editor, *Washington Monthly*, May 2007

OF CABBAGES AND KINGS

Much Ado About Nothing

So Mrs. Pratibha Patil is the new President of India. We wish her well and hope she will prove that the apprehensions of all her doomsayers will be proved wrong. In the last many weeks much has been written about her being the dark horse and that her name was suggested by the commies (the tail that wags the UPA dog) and so on. In retrospect it would not be too far fetched to believe that she was *the* candidate all along and the rest of the names thrown about were red herrings. *The Family* had to ensure that they had, in Rashtraprati Bhavan, a person they could implicitly trust, and even manipulate. Remember how Mrs. Indira Gandhi installed two made-to-order Presidents. *The Family's* interests are the first priority of a party that has usurped the name of a Party that is no more – The Indian National Congress. While one cannot help but admire the painstaking work put in by *The Indian Express* in drawing attention to the many alleged misdemeanours of the lady who is now our President, it made little difference to the UPA whose priorities had been programmed and hence well orchestrated. The sad fact is that that there was no shortage of candidates to choose from. There are a number of outstanding personalities, far more eligible who would have done India proud as did the outgoing President Kalam. But then outstanding persons have minds of their own – a dangerous quality in the eyes of our politicians in general and this coalition in particular.

***

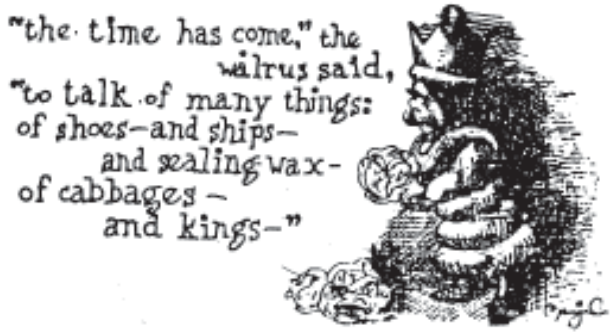
Symptom of a Deeper Malaise

A news report in the *Mumbai Mirror* with the mundane title "250 Automatic Signals for City" bears reading and comment.

According to the report at a meeting presided over by the minister of state for home and senior police officials "it was pointed out that lack of a signal system at various places was resulting in reckless driving, triggering a spate of accidents and loss of innocent lives.

The minister also directed that all traffic signals should be manned to ensure that drivers are not flouting the signals"!

If there are signals why have policemen to ensure compliance? Conversely why have signals if policemen are posted to regulate traffic? The fact of the matter is that we Indians have, over the years, come to believe that laws can be violated with impunity and if we are caught, there are several options to escape punishment. Urinating in a public place or spitting is commonplace in our towns and cities despite laws that prohibit such practices with fines prescribed. How often have we seen policeman looking on and doing nothing.



A law to be obeyed has to be enforced. When a Liberal says that we need strong government he means a government that will not hesitate to enforce the law that has been legally enacted. Civic society will crumble and we will revert to the law of the jungle, which is what happens, when inebriated youngsters drive fancy motor cars over sleeping pavement dwellers.

***

Haneef's Plight

Haneef has been the victim of police arbitrariness. It is Australia's business if they decide to cancel his visa. But it is India's business to ensure that he is treated fairly. Haneef is a citizen of India and the fact that he is a muslim is not relevant. Press reports now clearly state that they really do not have adequate evidence to prove his involvement in the Glasgow terror attack. They could have detained him in prison with access to his friends and or relatives while collecting evidence to prosecute him. But what they did was to treat him as a 'terrorist' shackling him even before they had convincing evidence. The TV picture of his plight should have made every Indian furious. We denounce terrorism in all its manifestations. We also believe that an accused is innocent until proved guilty. Sadly the Government of India's response has been deplorably weak. Even now they should send a strong note of protest and demand that the Australian government apologise to Dr. Haneef a citizen of India.

SVR

The Presidential Elections of 1967 and 2007: Correcting an Untruth

In his article "Electing Pratibha Patil the next Rashtrapati" (*The Hindu* July 4, 07) Mr. Harish Khare takes an uncharitable swipe, to put it mildly, at the "old Swatantra Party" which according to him "was never fully converted to the logic and rationale of a democratic order, and sought to suborn constitutional institutions to frustrate the popular will." Nothing could be farther from the truth.

As the former Executive Secretary of the Swatantra Party at its national headquarters, I would like to underline the fact that no other Party was as devoted to the Constitution and to its institutions as the Swatantra Party was. It could not have been be otherwise for a Party founded by C. Rajagopalachari with men of the calibre of N. G. Ranga as president, V. P. Menon and K. M. Munshi as its vice-presidents and Minoo Masani as general secretary to name just five of its leaders. Judging by the vitriol in Mr.Khare's comment all these persons must have been 'right-wing reactionaries'!

Mr. Khare makes several subjective statements regarding the Presidential elections of 1967. Perhaps he does not know or does not care to know what led almost all political parties in the then opposition to propose Chief Justice K. Subba Rao as their candidate for President of India. *The Hindu* correspondent's ire with Chief Justice Subba Rao is obviously the latter's judgement in the Golaknath case. The bias is so palpable. What is happening now in the current race for the President of India is not even remotely comparable with what happened then. I am deliberately not getting into the role played by Mrs. Indira Gandhi. In fact this was the beginning of events that led to happenings of June 26,1975.

Let me set the record straight in so far as the Swatantra Party's role was concerned. Firstly Justice Subba Rao's candidature was sponsored by the Swatantra Party, the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, the DMK, the CPI, the SSP, CPI(M) and the PSP.

Secondly, in a letter dated April 26,1967 to Mrs. Indira Gandhi the then Prime Minister from Mr. Minoo Masani, who was then Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, wrote *inter alia*:

> "It is our considered opinion that, in the difficult days that lie ahead of us, the President should not only be a non-party man but one who is not associated with any political party as unfortunately your candidate has been and continues to be. Mr. Subba Rao has, in our view, the appropriate background and is free from association with any political party whatsoever. There would therefore be no danger of his acting as a rubber stamp for whatever may be in office now or later. In our view, Mr. Subba Rao is exactly the kind of man who is wanted as President in these changed conditions. The fact that he has been an outstandingly good judge shows that he does not lack the judicious temperament essential for this high office. The robust dedication he has shown to fundamental freedoms provides assurance that he can be expected to remain a champion of the people's rights."

Later, in a public appeal dated May 3, 1967 to voters in the Presidential elections, Mr. Masani responded to two bogeys propagated by the Indira Congress. The first was that if Dr. Zakir Hussein was defeated in the Presidential election this would have resulted in the fall of the Congress Government in New Delhi a fear which Mr. Masani dismissed as a *non-sequitur*). "The second bogey", he wrote,is that the Swatantra Party wants the President of the Republic to overrule the Cabinet and Parliament and become a dictator. This of course is fantastic nonsense. We are firm believers in parliamentary democracy. That does not however, mean that the president of the Republic should be a mere rubber stamp. The current political situation is marked by two news features: The first is that in more than half the States of the Union there are governments of political colours different from that of the Union. The second is that the Congress Party at the Centre has only a slight edge over the Opposition in the Lok Sabha. In these conditions, we believe that only an independent, non-party man can do justice to the functions of the President."

Needless to add this letter, correcting an incorrect statement by their own correspondent, was not published by this venerable Chennai newspaper.

S. V. Raju

Cover Feature

Chinese Chakkar

India-China Relations – A Review

T. C. A. Rangachari

In a few weeks, India will be commemorating 60 years of Independence. These 60 years have been an eventful period in the life of our nation and peoples as we have gone from an impoverished, colonial possession whose future, even survival as a nation, was a matter of continuing wonderment to a country that is hailed as the largest democracy, a rapidly growing economy that might be in the front ranks of the world before we commemorate our centenary.

China is the only other country that has similarly risen from the depths of ruination to riches. Today, China is proving Napoleon right and the sleeping giant, now awakened, evokes fears in the developed world of not just being overtaken economically, but also of becoming so dominant as to pose a security threat.

India : From Scarcity to Plenty

India has gone from a chronically food shortage country with a begging-bowl image, import dependent and ship-to-mouth food lines, Non-Cereal Days to being the largest or second largest producer of all food items. There was a time, not long ago, when baby food was being rationed one tin per family. Today India is the largest producer of milk in the world, having overtaken the US. For several years after Independence, books written on India had titles like Who After Nehru and Whither Indian Democracy; today books on India are morale boosting with titles like: The World is Flat. The skepticism regarding the future of democracy in India has given way to approbation and admiration as Indian democracy is held up as a model for study and emulation. At the height of Bangladesh's War of Liberation, the then US National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger was telling the Chinese that the US would look the other way if China chose to take military action against India. Today, the US wants to build India into a Super Power, bestow a nuclear status, even if somewhat '*Trishanku*' like, upon India, and bring India - and China - into the group that would shape the world. From being a closed economy with a 'Hindu' rate of growth straining to reach 4%, India's rate of growth, today, whether still 'Hindu' or 'secular' is galloping to reach double digit. India and Indians are sought after, Indian companies are becoming global players and India is even cited as a possible threat to future prosperity of the developed world.

India has gone from a chronically food shortage country with a begging-bowl image, import dependent and ship-to-mouth food lines, Non-Cereal Days to being the largest or second largest producer of all food items.

China, till it closed the chapter on the 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution' was in chronic short supply of food and other items ... Today, China is the factory of the world, the vacuum cleaner of global FDI.

So, as India approaches the 'senior citizen' status, India and we prepare ourselves for the '*Shashtiabdapoorti*' we can consider ourselves doubly blessed – for being Indians and for living in an India that is resurgent and enroute to prosperity!

China : From Poverty to Prosperity

The China story is not different. China, till it closed the chapter on the 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution' was in chronic short supply of food and other items and what was available in the '*Bai Huo Ta Lou*(s)' and the 'Friendship' stores - as the Super Markets were then called - was basic and shoddy in quality. Men, women and children in cotton padded blue jackets and trousers waited endlessly in queues, the streets were crammed with bicycles and the odd bus would trundle along at unpredictable intervals. When the first five-star hotel - the Peking Hotel - was constructed, not far from the Tian An Men square, in the mid-seventies, there were long lines of people outside the compound waiting to se the doors open

automatically! Today, China is the factory of the world, the vacuum cleaner of global FDI. Beijing has three ring roads with no red lights and which are forever full of cars causing traffic jams that would make peak hour traffic in Mumbai seem free flowing. Luxury good makers are opening stores at break neck speed and complaining of product shortages to service a growing Chinese consumer market. All the hotel chains of the world operate establishments in different cities in China as China attracts some 50 million tourists annually; Japan, Korea and Singapore provide the patronage for the globally famed golf courses including Pebble Beach Golf Course in Liaoning in the North East that has weekend ferries bringing in South Korean golfers! Inter city roads rival the autobahns; China has the first MagLev train in the world and is preparing for TGVs; and in an engineering marvel as well as tribute to human endurance, built a rail line to Lhasa. There are nearly a million foreign funded enterprises in China. The Chinese have really taken to heart Teng Xiao Ping's exhortation " To be rich is glorious." They have discarded Mao's dying dictum "Class struggle is the key; rest is secondary."

China, Too, Has Come a Long Way

China is far ahead of India in growth, reforms, infrastructure, FDI, scale of productivity, foreign exchange reserves, nuclear, space and military prowess. They have had a double digit growth for several years, hold a trillion $ foreign exchange reserve, (India's is $200 billion); have attracted some 750 billion $ in FDI cumulatively (India has attracted $ 55 billion FDI); have put a man in orbit and are working on a manned moon mission, (India's Chandrayan project is just getting off the ground); demonstrated anti-missile capability and acquired capability to project military power well beyond their borders. An argument is made that China is ahead of India because of a head start of 10 years. This is feel-good and is self-serving. It detracts from the single-minded determination and commitment of the Chinese to modernize and develop. It does not do justice to their hard work of three decades. Remember in 1980, China set the goal of doubling its GDP in twenty years by 2000; it achieved that goal in fifteen years and then set a new target of redoubling the 1995 GDP in the next five years and achieved that too. And there has been no let up since. So let us be fair give them credit for their success. Let us learn from what good they have done for themselves.

The Chinese positions on issues of interest to India – J&K, nuclear weapons, permanent membership in the UNSC etc – have changed with the vicissitudes of China's relations with India. India, on the other hand, maintained its position on the admission of China into the UN and UN Security Council seat, even after the Chinese aggression in 1962.

China's Foreign Policy Pragmatic ...

In foreign policy, as in economic policy, China has followed pragmatism and not allowed itself to be constrained by ideology or, for that matter, even principles! At the time of the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, Mao Tse-tung had declared that China would follow a policy of *Yi Mian Tau* (Lean to One Side) – to the side of the Soviet Union. Within ten years, China had broken away from the Soviet alliance and was in an open confrontation that nearly led to war in 1969 over the Ussuri river clashes. Since then, China has 'leaned' to the other side as it developed a close relationship with the US even if there has, periodically, been coldness. If it was hostility to, and of, the US that motivated an alliance with the USSR, it was hostility to, and of, the USSR that motivated an alliance with the US! National interest, pure and simple.

... India's Beyond National Interests

In contrast, Indian foreign policy has been more consistent. It has been rooted in a world-view that promotes but goes beyond considerations of national interest alone. This is nowhere more evident than in the conduct of India-China relations. The Chinese positions on issues of interest to India – J&K, nuclear weapons, permanent membership in the UNSC etc – have changed with the vicissitudes of China's relations with India. India, on the other hand, maintained its position on the admission of China into the UN and UN Security Council seat, even after the Chinese aggression in 1962. There are other examples of Indian willingness to set aside its national position in order to evolve a consensus within the international community.

In 1940, Nehru wrote that India China friendship "is very precious to us not only because of the thousands of golden links that have bound us in the past but also because of the future that beckons

both of us." That still holds good. As two large neighbours, as home to two fifths of the world population, as two fastest growing economies, it serves mutual interest for India and China to have friendly, co-operative relations. It suits China's interest too, at this juncture, to have good relations with India. But we have to be mindful that China maintains contrary positions on a number of issues of interest to India that could be brought to the fore should China's interests demand a relationship of a different kind.

Should India be a clone of China? No. Our freedoms are too precious. So much so that even though India and China have many of the same problems – poverty, unemployment, internal migration, rural-urban divide, income inequality, corruption, alienation – it is China's long-term stability that is more often in question.

China & India : The Essential Difference

Should India be a clone of China? No. Our freedoms are too precious. So much so that even though India and China have many of the same problems – poverty, unemployment, internal migration, rural-urban divide, income inequality, corruption, alienation – it is China's long-term stability that is more often in question. Forty year ago when comparisons were made between India and China, it was smart to say that China has distributed its poverty much better than India! No longer so. According to one report, nearly two-thirds of the GDP was in the hands of less than half a percent of the population. China's National Development and Reform Commission has reported that the poorest 20% of urban population received only 2.75% of urban income while the richest 20% took 50%. The income of the rural population is one third that of the urban population. At the regional level, the eastern region was five times as prosperous as the western region and two and a half times as prosperous as the central region. Not very different from our BIMARU phenomenon! The Chinese themselves are partly responsible for bringing long-term stability into question since they take recourse to the argument of social instability whenever the question of political freedoms is raised.

Indian democracy provides a mechanism for dialogue and accommodation that China has yet to develop. The Indian state, even at the highest levels, is open to dialogue with the Hurriyat, Nagas, Mizos, and various others with a sense of alienation. With varying degrees of success, no doubt, but dialogue nevertheless. Does China have the will for a similar dialogue with the Dalai Lama? Or the Fa Long Gong? Would China's stability be eroded or enhanced if it were willing to have a multi-party system like India? Would the Taiwan problem not be easier to resolve if China carried forward the economic reform process to the political front also and instead of seeking to make Taiwan one Small China transform China into one Big Taiwan? Democracy with a market economy.

The Indian state, even at the highest levels, is open to dialogue with the Hurriyat, Nagas, Mizos, and various others with a sense of alienation. With varying degrees of success, no doubt, but dialogue nevertheless. Does China have the will for a similar dialogue with the Dalai Lama?

Democracy is not simply a theory of statecraft in the abstract. It is the freedoms that we enjoy in our daily lives. We do not run the risk, ordinarily, of being uprooted from our homes to be re-located in distant places because, say, 600 square kms of rice paddies in Pu Dong has to be redeveloped to help make Shanghai the financial capital of Asia or the Three Gorges Dam has to be built. However irksome Medha Patkar, Arundhati Roy, Sunder Lal Bahuguna and others might be, they are heard, not muzzled or exiled, when big projects are taken up. A former CM of Maharashtra once remarked, in response to a question regarding why India lags so far behind China, 'Get rid of the Parliament, the Judiciary and the Press and India will progress even faster'! It is unlikely that we will see the lively debates on the Executive's populism vs Judicial Activism in China. Having said that, one should also note that China has the will to sentence even very senior communist party functionaries to death for corruption – and charge the family for the bullet used for the execution. Do we really believe that the fact that no political leader or even senior government official has even been sentenced to a jail term for corruption in India is a testimony to our honesty? Or take the economic side. Do we want Indian industry to be predominantly in the hands of Indians or would we prefer to be a manufacturing base for foreign funded firms? Do we want FDI mainly

to develop and expand domestic demand or for purposes of export earnings? Learning from China is a definite yes; emulation questionable.

If India and China are to regain their place and play the role they played in the global hierarchy before the advent of imperialism and colonialism when they, together, accounted for nearly half of the global output and trade, they must empower and enrich their peoples, work together and learn from each other, and be friendly competitors rather than hostile rivals. If India and China can agree upon that as their common destiny, they would have done all of humanity – not just the two-fifths that constitute Indians and Chinese – a service, they would be lauded by history and blessed by the Gods.

MR. T. C. A RANGACHARI IFS (Retd.) was Ambassador to Algeria, Germany and France. He has served in China and spent long years dealing with China at India's Ministry of External Affairs. He can be contacted at tcrangachari@gmail.com

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Proximate Adversary and Potential Ally

B. Ramesh Babu

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Hu Jintao met on the sidelines of the G-8 Summit in Germany early in June 2007. The occasion was promptly used by both sides to indulge in mutual praise. Jintao extolled Manmohan Singh's vision, insight and positive attitude that have contributed to a better understanding between the two nations. On his part Manmohan Singh declared that "Our Government and all people irrespective of their political affiliations want the strongest relationship

The India-China equation today - bon homie in general, convergence of interests and views on many global issues, and deep seated differences on the vital border issue and a few others. It is an extremely complex relationship and simple binary formulations like friend or foe simply will not do.

with China." He described the country as "our greatest neighbour" and added that "to cement" that relationship has been "the constant endeavour" of his Government. Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon said that the two sides exchanged views on climate change and other issues of mutual interest. He added that there was "an identity of views on most of the issues" between the two nations. However, in response to a question, he said that neither side raised the Arunachal Pradesh issue. That about sums up the India-China equation today - *bon homie* in general, convergence of interests and views on many global issues, and deep seated differences on the vital border issue and a few others. It is an extremely complex relationship and simple binary formulations like friend or foe simply will not do. Right now China is not an active foe and far from a friend. The same denouement holds good from our side, I think.

Arunachal Pradesh

A quick word on the Arunachal Pradesh issue is called for at this juncture. As most readers may recall, China has recently refused to give visa to Ganesh Koya, IAS, a Secretary in the Arunachal Pradesh Government. He was to be part of a 107 member delegation of IAS officers scheduled to visit China on a mid-career training programme. Chinese Embassy in New Delhi deleted his name from the visa request list because he was a "Chinese national" since he was from Arunachal Pradesh, which China claims to be an integral part of its territory. The Chinese, thereby, once again reinforced their claim for the entire state of Arunachal Pradesh – not merely the disputed tract of Tawang. By cancelling the whole trip and also the three other scheduled visits of IAS officers to China, India has sent a strong signal to Beijing. But, that is not enough. A lot tougher stand was in order. Sooner we learn to deal with China without illusions the better for us.

The latest Chinese action of visa refusal goes against Article VII of the "Guiding Principles" India and China agreed to in 2005, which lay down that "in reaching a boundary settlement, the two sides shall safeguard populations in border areas". Reiterating

the Guiding Principles in his recent meeting with the Chinese President in Germany, Manmohan Singh said that the two countries should reach a "pragmatic solution" on the border issue. While saying that he is in general agreement, President Hu Jintao harked back to "fair and reasonable agreement." This latest flip-flop on the Chinese part means that they are going back on the "settled populations" principle agreed to earlier. The Chinese have always indulged in platitudes and high sounding generalities in talking about the border issue and never hesitated to go back on their promises. This will not be the last time for them to do so. Eternal vigilance is the watchword for us in dealing with China on the Himalayan border.

Chinese Double Dealings

Since 1987, when the current round of border talks began, China has thrown around differing but nice sounding concepts "just", "fair", "reasonable and mutually acceptable" and the latest was "mutual understanding." However, the purpose behind the parade of nice phrases is to lull India while her "cartographic aggression" followed by effective occupation on the sly goes on – an established Chinese trade mark. Let us also not forget the long standing Chinese collusion with Pakistan on many fronts, especially in the areas of nuclear weapons and missile development. Let us also remember that Pakistan had "gifted" away thousands of square kilometres of Indian territory to the then enemy state of China. In return Pakistan was accorded a special place in the Chinese scheme of fishing in the troubled waters of South Asia. Pakistan was, is, and will continue to be a tool in the Chinese armoury to contain India. Similarly, Nepal, Burma, and more recently Bangladesh are used by China to cut India to size, which is an enduring policy purpose of our proximate adversary.

Shared Interests and New Convergences

Be that as it may, in recent decades, India and China (as the leading countries in the developing world) are finding themselves on the same side of the aisle in dealing with the advanced industrial countries of the West. Be it trade, tariffs, FDI, labour laws, ecology, global warming or issues of equity and social justice, the two countries share many common interests. In the North-South or rich vs. poor global divides, India and China are on the same wave length. The same is true of Brazil, South Africa and Mexico (BICSAM). However, this fundamental convergence of interests could not come into full play during the half-century of the Cold War. The emergence of America as the lone Super Power and the ever growing hegemonic excesses of President Bush are triggering a complex process of re-alignment and re-re-alignment in the post 9/11 world. Since the Bush led war against Iraq, all the major powers are forging new linkages and cross connections with one another even as they are taking every care not to disturb their extant bilateral relations with the mighty United States.

The USA Factor

On its part America is making strategic moves to meet all possible contingencies in view of the transformational changes underway around the world in recent years. For example, India has been pursuing a policy of all round improvement and enhancement of its relations with China. Fascinatingly this has gone beyond the traditional arenas of trade and commerce. Surprising as it may seem there was the talk of closer military ties (May 2005), which flowered into joint naval exercises and (believe it or not) into a "defence dialogue" in less than two years! India is also participating in the Shanghai Cooperation Council, which was launched by China and Russia with a view to counter the growing global hegemony of the US.

In the process India is also improving its political, economic and military relations with Japan and Australia, the leading strategic allies of the US in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. The quadrennial linkage of US, Japan, Australia and India is seen as a contingent strategy to counter the Chinese down the line.

At the same time, India has been successfully edging closer to the US on every front. We are now "a strategic partner" of America and are in the process of clinching the historic Deal in civilian nuclear cooperation. Such a paradigm shift in the US-India bilateral relationship was inconceivable as recently as four years ago. In the process India is also improving its political, economic and military relations with Japan and Australia, the leading strategic allies of the US in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. The quadrennial linkage of US, Japan, Australia and India is seen as a contingent strategy to counter the Chinese down the line.

India is taking every care to ensure that all these cross-connections and new linkages do not in any way affect our old and time tested and extremely close relationship with Russia (and the Soviet Union earlier). Infact, keeping this vital relationship intact continues to be the bedrock of our foreign policy. All this is going on along with greater initiative in nurturing better relations with our neighbours in South Asia, including Pakistan. India has given up the sterile policy of "mathematical reciprocity" in dealing with our immediate neighbours in the region. We have moved forward to a policy of "unilateral" concessions. Similarly, there has been a vast improvement in our relations with the ASEAN as well as most of the countries in Southeast Asia.

Containing India's China's Policy

All major powers in the world are doing the same thing – establishing new linkages and cross connections with old allies as well as former enemies. The US wants India to be on her side in any future confrontation with China, a contingency it foresees in the not distant future. China and even more so Russia want to rope in India into a Trilateral Strategic Triangle against the U S. India wants to keep Russia wedded to her and at the same time bring in Japan to counter balance China. On her part China wants to work with India closely in the economic and commercial arenas so as to deal effectively with the entrenched global domination of the West. China also wants to cooperate with India to contain terrorism in Central Asia and piracy in the Indian Ocean. At the same time however, China is also determined to "contain" India in all possible ways. Despite all the *bonhomie* and vague pronouncements on the vital need to improve relations with India, China has been going back and forth on the border issue. It consistently uses the Pakistani axis to contain India at every turn. China militarily and politically does not want an independent rival power to emerge in Asia. Hence the reluctance to support our entry into the Security Council. China has been putting in place "a string of pearls" in the form of ports, listening posts and naval agreements stretching across Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Burma.

China understands the language of power and countervailing linkages. When China does her flip-flop next time on the border issue or drags Pakistan in, we should not hesitate to re-examine and revise our policy of restraint on Tibet.

India's Multiple Options

To "engage and contain" India is the established policy of China. She does not want any other power to emerge as its rival in Asia. Our response should be equally unsubtle and based squarely on the realities on the ground. We should continue to make common cause with China on all economic, trade, environment and farm issues, especially vis-à-vis the rich countries of the West. On strategic and military cooperation we should move cautiously and confine it to the limited and mutually agreed goals (to contain piracy and terrorism). We should go along with Russia and China in the Shanghai Cooperation Council. But, we should not rush into any anti-US coalition they may want to float. We should build bridges to Japan in the economic and political arenas. We should also go along with her, Australia and USA in securing the sea lanes in South and Southeast Asia. Strategic naval cooperation among the four nations should be nurtured with the future in mind, the possible need to contain China militarily and politically. We should not let our link with Russia become weakened at any cost. We need Russia as a check from the north, if and when the Chinese dragon wags its tail again in the Himalayas. China understands the language of power and countervailing linkages. When China does her flip-flop next time on the border issue or drags Pakistan in, we should not hesitate to re-examine and revise our policy of restraint on Tibet. We should reciprocate with a flip-flop of our own on Taiwan, an issue of great strategic and emotional significance to China. The US and Japan will be with us in such a contingency.

We need not actively seek to contain China at this time. That task should be left to USA, Japan and Russia globally. We should be on the side of Vietnam and Indonesia if and when they need us in dealing with Chinese hegemony in the region. This does not mean that we should invite trouble on this score. There is a lot of diplomatic room between standing up to blackmail and provoking a country. We are not the India of 1962. We can and should deal with China more firmly than in the past. We should never return to the fatal illusion of the *Hindi-Chini bhai bhai* and also keep an eye on the pro-China elements on the

Left in our country! History tells us that they cannot be trusted on the China front!

So far as India is concerned the bottom line is to settle the border dispute as amicably and as early as possible; enhance trade and technological cooperation; work closely with her and the G-5 countries in dealing with the G-8 countries on the economic front and above all watch out for the ruthless and uncanny dragon at all times. Eternal vigilance is the golden rule in dealing with China that has and always had hostile designs against the Indian nation state. It takes a great deal to transform the proximate adversary into a potential ally. The needed Herculean effort has to come forth from both the sides and that calls for the Himalayan dispute to pass into history. And that is not likely to happen in the near future.

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India-US Civil Nuclear Deal – The China Factor

P. M. Kamath

During the twenty years of Cold War since 1971, China was an acknowledged strategic partner of the US against the perceived power of the Soviet Union. However, with the end of the Cold War, the strategic ends of major powers have changed and the connecting ends of a strategic triangle – US, China and Russia have been loosened.

Nations, like the individuals have their economic and strategic insecurities. In the light of their insecurities, they cultivate new regional and global friends. In this perspective, Bill Clinton was the first US President elected in the post-Cold War era when the US enjoyed unparalleled power in world politics. But in relation to China and India his was a split perception. This is nowhere so clear as on US nuclear policy particularly after India's nuclear tests in May 1998.

He went out of his way to cultivate China. He wanted China to take the lead in disciplining India on nuclear issue. He wanted China to chair a UN meet on Indian nuclear weapons; he advocated China playing a major role in resolving the India-Pakistan dispute over Kashmir! In his first term he cultivated a strategic relationship with China. However, he course-corrected before the end of his tenure in the White House in January 2001 by making his historic visit to India in March 2000 and laying the foundation for strong ties between the two democracies.

But it is George W. Bush who really tried to change the course of India-US relations even from his early days in the White House. While there are many cases, which could be advanced to prove the point, one case outshines all others. And that is India-US nuclear deal. It is also a case that brings out an unstated political purpose that is equally if not more important than the stated goal of providing energy security to India.

The unstated political purpose underlying the deal is US perception of India as a counter weight to the ever growing – military and economic – clout of

It is George W. Bush who really tried to change the course of India-US relations even from his early days in the White House. While there are many cases, which could be advanced to prove the point, one case outshines all others. And that is India-US nuclear deal.

China. The Republicans had already made clear, that they were against Bill Clinton's pampering of China since 1997 and were determined to scuttle Clinton's strategic partnership with China. The Bush foreign policy advisers were concerned with the growing Chinese security threat emerging from its super power ambitions, galloping economic power and its territorial expansionist policies in the Far East.

Thus the Secretary of State designate, Colin Powell in 2001, even before he was confirmed, had spoken of a strategic partnership with India; an idea

" THE SECRET OF SUCCESS IN LIFE IS FOR A MAN TO BE READY FOR HIS OPPORTUNITY WHEN IT COMES "

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which he or the others did not apply in relation to China. On the other hand he specifically said that China cannot be a strategic partner but characterized it as a competitor and "a potential regional rival." [1]

The Bush administration saw India as a potential balancer against China in international relations. It is "more than a relationship between two great nations. It is the case for institutionalising a certain kind of international order: what President Bush has called "a balance of power that favours freedom."[2] Bush repeated a similar idea during his India visit. In his speech at Purana Qila he said: "India in the 21st century is a natural partner of the United States because we are brothers in the cause of human liberty."[3]

The governments of India as well as the US, of course, deny this. However, it is this perception of India, which made US to carry forward the positive steps taken by Clinton in improving India-US relations. After 9/11 China's support for the global war on terrorism was needed which postponed further positive developments in India-US relations. During his second term Bush took a conscious decision to improve relations with India by signing the India-US nuclear deal – a basic demand made by India during the nuclear dialogue between Jaswant Singh and Strobe Talbott.

China has a long history of abetting nuclear proliferation, most particularly through Pakistan. Yet the US has an arrangement to share civilian nuclear technology with Beijing."[7] Eventually, the US will have to recognise the fact that a democratic India on their side is a better bargain than a Communist China.

During his visit to New Delhi in the first week of March 2006, President Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh signed an agreement taking forward the US-India Civil Nuclear Deal of July 2005. Under this, India agreed to place 14 out of its 22 nuclear reactors by 2014, six of which are already safeguarded, under the IAEA inspection regime, retaining only 8 for its military programme. Safeguarded ones will not be used for any military purposes and will be away from the military ones.

However, "India will have second class status compared with China, Russia and other major nuclear powers. In all those countries not one reactor is under any inspection regime whatsoever...."[4] Yet one country that has vociferously opposed the US giving special treatment to India in getting access to civil nuclear technology is China, after India's traditional opponent – Pakistan.

The Chinese opposition is further aggravated by the fact that a majority of American supporters of the Nuclear Deal have extended their support from the perspective of looking at India as a counter weight to China. Selig Harrison, for instance, brings out the basic discriminatory nature of the NPT as the root cause for US double standards so far which allowed China to share US nuclear technology despite its proliferation to Pakistan just because it exploded a nuclear device before the NPT was signed while India did it six years later.[5]

Anti-China sentiments run prominently amongst those who support the nuclear deal. Stanley A. Weiss, founder and chairman of Business Executives for National Security, Washington says "If Washington shares nuclear technology with Beijing, the great nuclear proliferator, why not India, with its solid record of preventing proliferation?"[6] Fareed Zakaria, editor of *Newsweek* pointed out that the "inequity with China is particularly galling to New Delhi. China has a long history of abetting nuclear proliferation, most particularly through Pakistan. Yet the US has an arrangement to share civilian nuclear technology with Beijing."[7] Eventually, the US will have to recognise the fact that a democratic India on their side is a better bargain than a Communist China.

Samuel P. Huntington, long before the US-India civilian nuclear deal, had stated this very aptly. In his *Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* he wrote that "their common interests in containing China are likely to bring India and the United States closer together. The expansion of Indian power in southern Asia cannot harm U. S. interests and could even serve them." [8]

In the post-Cold War period, the US during the Clinton years tried to improve US-India relations in economic, political and strategic areas without loosening the stranglehold of the NPT regime. But the civil nuclear deal offered by President Bush is a half way recognition that it is impossible to speak of India as a strategic partner even while trying to permanently to chain her with non-proliferationist efforts. [9] There

are risks; as the Prime Minister said, "those are calculated risks, they are worth taking."[10]

The China factor becomes crystal clear if we look deeper into Indian domestic politics. The BJP has found fault with the agreement, more to play its role as the opposition party than anything else. But the Indian left has opposed the nuclear deal obsessed as it is with anti-Americanism, and to advance pro-China policy. Earlier, CPI (M) leaders were discreet in indirectly acting as a pro-China lobby. But ever since they became a part of the UPA government, they have openly advocated Chinese causes in the country.

In reality, India without signing the NPT not only gets acceptance by the major powers as a "responsible" nuclear power but also access to nuclear technology to achieve energy security. This is recognition of India as a *de facto* nuclear weapons state. At the same time, as Prime Minister Manmohan Singh assured the nation: "It preserves our autonomy of the weapon programme…."[11]

Why is China against our nuclear deal with the US? Chinese leaders are apprehensive of US aiming to use democratic India against it in International politics. Additionally, China considers the Bush plans for a National Missile Defence (NMD) system as being aimed at it.[12] If the US deploys the NMD in its defence, the Chinese think the US would be strengthened to intervene in its dispute over the independent status of Taiwan. If ever Taiwan declares independence, and China threatens to intervene, the US can threaten to use nuclear weapons, effectively debilitating China, because if a US strike materialises and China retaliates with a defensive second strike against the US, the NMD could destroy its second strike capabilities without US cities being affected.[13] This will force China to increase its numerical strength of nuclear warheads and delivery system against the US. Professor Dingli Shen a physicist by training and deputy director of American Studies at Fudan University in Shanghai says "While it is not certain that a U.S. national missile defence system would work, it is certain that China would not remain idle while the effectiveness of its deterrent force is undermined." [14]

This would certainly lead to an arms race. Such an arms race is not conducive to peace and security in South Asia or the world. Threatened by Chinese increase in minimum deterrence, India would be forced to increase its strength. This in turn could also force Pakistan to increase its nuclear strength.

On the other hand, critics are told by the US that NMD is a defensive shield to protect the US and not aimed at any other state. It is this US argument that was accepted by India. Former Prime Minister, Vajpayee had spoken of it approvingly. As a matter of fact India was one of the first developing/non-aligned countries to back the NMD stating that "there is a strategic and technological inevitability in stepping away from a world that is held hostage by the doctrine of MAD to a cooperative, defensive transition that is underpinned by further (nuclear) cuts and a de-alert of nuclear forces."[15]

There is a congruence of national interests between the US and India. Hence, a developing mutual perception of a security threat from China.

There is a congruence of national interests between the US and India. Hence, a developing mutual perception of a security threat from China. The Chinese themselves see the US as the only power that is going to act as an obstacle in their pursuit of super power status.[16]

India, has since the 1980s, been on the march to big power status. It is in keeping with her size, population and quality of human resources. Indian reluctant nuclear weaponisation has helped a great deal in achieving that status. India-US nuclear deal signed in July 2005 would further strengthen India's march to play a major role in international relations.

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2 Tom Donnelly & Vance Serchuk, "Ink the India Deal: The Pact with India is too important to Derail," *Weekly Standard*, Vol.11No. 37(12 June 2006) http://www.weeklystandard.com/utilities/printer_preview.asp?idArticle=12294&R=ECBD2A…

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5 Selig S. Harrison "How to Regulate Nuclear Weapons: The U. S. Deal With India Could Be a Good Starting Point," *Washington Post*, 23 April 2006, http://www.Washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/article/2006/04/21/AR2006042101627.html

6 Ibid. See also Stanley A. Weiss, "Recognizing reality,"

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[8] (New York: Simon & Schuster, 19960, p.224.

[9] Cf. "Ashley J. Tellis, "U.S.-India Atomic Energy Cooperation: Strategic and Non-proliferation implications," Prepared Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, April 26, 2006 http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2006/TellisTestimony060420.pdf

[10] PM's reply to debate on his official visit to the US on 4 August 2005

[11] "Prime Minister's reply to the Rajya Sabha debate on his US visit," August 4, 2005,

[12] See Dingli Shen, "China's Concern over National Missile Defence,"http://www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2000/06/00_shen_chinas-concern_print.htm

[13] Cf Michael Krepon, *Cooperative Threat Reduction, Missile Defense, and the Nuclear Future* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp.138-42.

[14] Dingli Shen adds: "China may be forced to make a worst case assumption – that the system could achieve an unbelievably high inception rate of 90 percent. In that event, it would be easy to respond by simply increasing the Chinese arsenal by nine times. That would retain the same level of deterrence and cost the equivalent of about a few billion dollars over a span of 10-20 years. It would not be difficult for China's economy to absorb the cost, if it has to do so." http://www.thebulletin.org/article.php?art_ofn=ja00shen

[15] Cited in C. Raja Mohan, "No First Use and India's Nuclear Transition," http://www.pugwash.org/reports/nw/rajamohan.htm

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Engaging China : Historical Perspectives

Claude Arpi

When President Hu Jintao landed in Delhi last November, India and China forgot to celebrate a memorable event: fifty years earlier the Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai paid three state visits to India in less than two months. It was the zenith of the brotherhood relationship. Premier Zhou was in India from November 28 to December 10, 1956, December 30 to January 3 and again from January 24 to 26, 1957. Worth an entry in the Guinness Book of Records, isn't it?

The reason for these frequents jaunts was simply the nervousness of the Chinese government: the Dalai Lama was in India and Beijing did not trust Delhi. Zhou was concerned: Could Nehru come to an agreement with the young Lama on the status of Tibet?

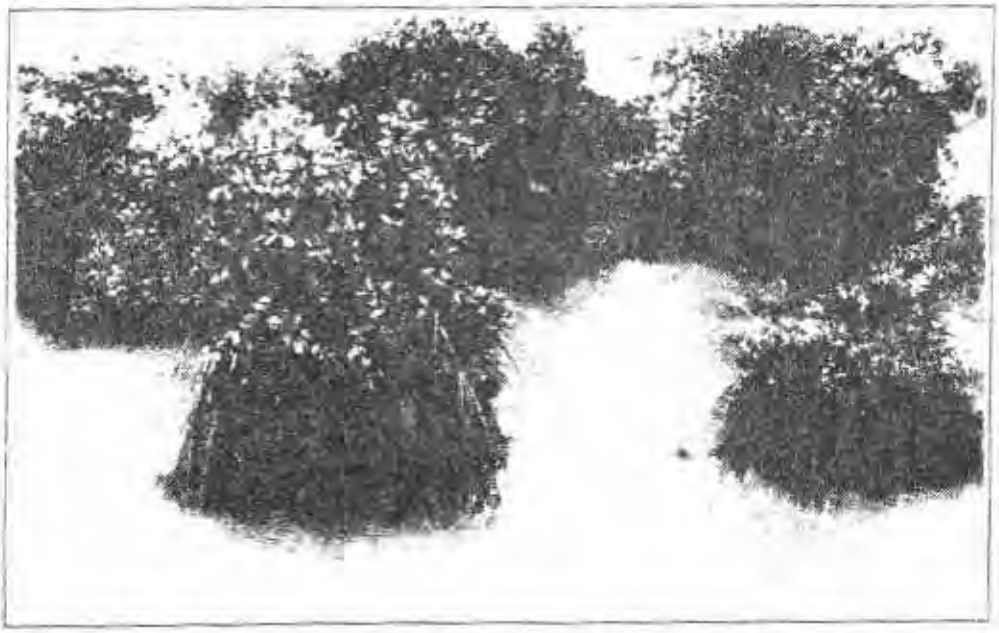
At that time already, and despite the pompous declaration of 'brotherhood', there was a total lack of trust between the two Asian giants. Tibet was at the heart of the mutual suspicions.

But let us go back two years earlier. In April 1954, India and China had signed the 'Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between the Tibet region of China and India,' known as the 'Panchsheel Agreement.' In June, less than three months later, a Chinese intrusion occurred on the Tibet-UP border (at a place called Barahoti). It was the first of hundreds of such intrusions.

Two years later, in September 1956, 20 Chinese crossed over the Shipki-la pass into India's territory. A 27-member Border Security Force party met the Chinese the same day. The BSF were told by a Chinese officer that he was instructed to patrol right up to Hupsang Khad (4 miles within Indian territory), though Shipki La was the recognised border pass under the Panchsheel Agreement. The BSF were however advised "*to avoid an armed clash but not yield to the Chinese troops.*"

In April 1954, India and China had signed the 'Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between the Tibet region of China and India,' known as the 'Panchsheel Agreement.' In June, less than three months later, a Chinese intrusion occurred on the Tibet-UP border (at a place called Barahoti). It was the first of hundreds of such intrusions.

CONCERN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT



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Delhi did not know how to react. A few days later, Nehru wrote to the foreign secretary: *"I agree with [your] suggestion …it would not be desirable for this question to be raised in the Lok Sabha at the present stage."* The policy of the Indian government was to keep the matter quiet and eventually mention it 'informally' to the Chinese officials.

Strangely Nehru stated: *"I think that if this question is raised in our Parliament at this stage, this might prove embarrassing from the point of view of the negotiations between Burma and China."* What was the connection between the Chinese intrusions and Beijing's negotiations with Burma, nobody knows!

Finally, the MEA informed Beijing *"The government of India are pained and surprised at this conduct of the Chinese commanding officer."*

This note was one of the first of hundreds of notes, memoranda and letters exchanged by the two governments. This copious correspondence did not stop the Chinese from maintaining their claims. They probably knew that Delhi would not go further than 'regret notes'.

The UP incursion had come a few months before Zhou's three visits to India. The Indian Prime Minister had then the occasion to have long talks with his Chinese counterpart on diverse topics such the policies of the Roosevelt administration or the happenings in Hungary. However, it was Zhou who took the initiative to bring up the situation in Tibet. He gave a long briefing to the Indian PM on the historical status of the Land of Snows.

Nehru kept quiet about the intrusions, but made a rather strange remark to the Chinese Premier: *"Historical knowledge is not important but is useful as background information. History is gone."* Unfortunately for India, history is not gone and fifty years later the border row is still not solved.

Later in the conversation, Zhou admitted: *"When I said that India knew more about Tibet, I meant about the past history. For example, I knew nothing about McMahon Line until recently when we came to study the border problem after [the] liberation of China."*

Fifty years before the Chinese Ambassador claimed Arunachal Pradesh as part of China, Zhou Enlai did not know about the McMahon line. Is it not strange?

The exchange with Nehru, also means that in the '50s, Zhou had no problem in granting real autonomy to the Tibetan people, while in 2006, Hu drags his feet to open serious negotiations with the Dalai Lama on the same subject.

Regarding the McMahon Line, the Chinese Premier explained: *"although this Line was never recognised by us, still apparently there was a secret pact between Britain and Tibet and it was announced at the time of the Simla Conference. And now that it is an accomplished fact, we should accept it. But we have not consulted Tibet so far."* Zhou had probably forgotten that in 1914 at the Simla Conference the Chinese Plenipotentiary participated for several months in the discussions on the so-called 'secret pact'. He even initialed the convention (though it was not ratified by the then Nationalist government).

Nobody can deny that 'engagement' is good, but one should not forget the issues 'not ripe for settlement', to use Zhou Enlai's words.

Regarding the recognition of the McMahon Line, Zhou Enlai conveniently put it on the Tibetans who: *"wanted us to reject this Line; but we told them that the question should be temporarily put aside. I believe immediately after India's Independence, the Tibetan government had also written to the government of India about this matter. But now we think that we should try to persuade and convince Tibetans to accept it..."*

Tragically Nehru did not take this golden opportunity to forcefully denounce the Chinese intrusions across the Indian border and get an agreement on India's Northern borders. Instead, he preferred to remain rather vague: *"The border is a high mountain border and sparsely populated. Apart from the major question, there are also small questions about two miles here and two miles there. But if we agree on some principle, namely, the principle of previous normal practice or the principle of watershed, we can also settle these other small points."*

Once again these most important issues were considered 'small' or 'petty'. The real tragedy is that the present Government in Delhi has a tendency to follow the same ostrich policy and pretend that there is no problem between friends.

Today, we are told that India and China are finally true friends. During the last G8 meeting in Germany, the Indian Prime Minister stated that China was India's greatest neighbour. Since Vajpayee's visit to China in 2003, South Block's new motto is 'let us engage Beijing, let us do business'.

Nobody can deny that 'engagement' is good, but one should not forget the issues 'not ripe for settlement', to use Zhou Enlai's words.

Let us look at Tibet first: for centuries the presence of this natural buffer helped to avoid the frictions between India and China. During his November 1956 visit, Zhou had advocated autonomy for the region. Where are we at today?

Five rounds of 'dialogue' between the Dalai Lama's representatives and Beijing's officials have led nowhere except perhaps to an acknowledgement of a larger than expected gap between the two sides. For Beijing today, there is no question of giving to the people of Tibet the autonomy promised 50 years ago by Zhou Enlai.

The Nehruvian policy of not hurting Chinese susceptibilities remains sacrosanct, regardless of Beijing's tactics.

Then India: despite the 'engagement' policy, the trust has not really increased in the recent years. The scar of 1962 still looms over the Sino-Indian relations. Take the stunningly beautiful district of Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh; it has been constantly in the news in recent times.

Is it because India and China are engaged in protracted discussions to solve the vexed boundary question? In January and April, the Special Representatives of India and China held their ninth and tenth rounds of talks "to arrive at a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution". Why are the Chinese today so aggressive?

The stir created by the Chinese Ambassador in Delhi on the eve of President Hu Jintao's visit to India had hardly settled down, when in March 2007, Prof Ma Jiali of the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, a leading Chinese Government think-tank, asked India to return Tawang. In a Press conference, Ma declared: "*Tawang is central to the resolution of the Sino-Indian border issue. If India returns Tawang, a sacred place for Tibetan Buddhists, the Chinese side could be magnanimous in settling the border in the western and middle sectors. If the border issue is not dealt (with) well, the Chinese Central Government could face problems from local Tibetan people, who consider Tawang to be part of Tibet.*"

This claim was obviously a move by Beijing to put pressure on Delhi to accept a border settlement favourable to China. Otherwise, why should Prof Ma have said, "*The Chinese Government cannot afford to ignore popular feelings. Some Tibetans could use this issue to foment trouble in Tibet if Tawang is not returned to China.*"

As the Dalai Lama has reiterated time and again that he recognizes the McMahon Line as the border between India and Tibet, the Chinese seem to have other hidden motives.

In May 2007 Tawang was again in the news when Independent MLA Lokam Tassar and BJP MP Kiren Rijiju from Arunachal Pradesh alleged that the Chinese have intruded up to 20 km in Tawang sector. This was denied by the Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister who described the claim as "false and misleading". He added that "*Kiren Rijiju has based his statement on the 1986 intrusion across the LAC by the Chinese in which they had taken a large chunk of our land in Tawang area*".

Home Minister Shivraj Patil also denied the Chinese incursion. The Army went a step further: Addressing mediapersons, Brigadier Sanjay Kulkarni said no such move by the Chinese had been reported since 1986 and that "perfect harmony exists between the two nations".

The statement about the last incursions having occurred in 1986 is rather strange. One still remembers the news of Chinese intrusions on Indian soil being flashed in the media even while the Prime Minister Vajpayee was returning from China in June 2003. It was a huge embarrassment for the Ministry of External Affairs's babus who had worked for months to draft a new declaration friendship.

At that time, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman had not denied the intrusions; he had only stated: "*China does not recognise the so-called Arunachal Pradesh mentioned by the Indian newspaper reports.*"

More recently, in January 2007 when similar intrusions were reported, then Home Secretary VK Duggal told CNN-IBN, *"There are some inadvertent incursions. Are we going to make them a national issue and make them come in the way of talks that are heading positively towards a resolution? No!"*

How can the present leadership in Beijing be trusted?

That is not all, what about the Chinese plans to divert water from the Brahmaputra River to the Yellow river in northwest China? Of course it was denied by Beijing's foreign ministry spokesperson: 'China has no plans to build a dam and divert water from Yarlung Zangbo to the Yellow river.' He said he had no information. Will Delhi be satisfied with such a denial?

Another distressing fact is the completion of the 1,142 km Tibet Railway to Lhasa. This development will bring tremendous demographic and strategic changes in Tibet. But this does not seem to alarm Delhi; friends are friends! The Nehruvian policy of not hurting Chinese susceptibilities remains sacrosanct, regardless of Beijing's tactics.

Harmony during the border talks seems more important than the final outcome of the negotiations. Therefore there is no reason why Beijing should not continue to put pressure on Tawang: it will eventually help them to squeeze out a compromise on Aksai Chin, strategically far more important than Arunachal Pradesh.

However today, even if the Government of India wants to 'settle' the border issue, it will find itself in a fix. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has repeatedly declared: 'no redrawing of borders' with Pakistan. How could the government agree to change the border in Aksai Chin or in Arunachal? Further, to give away some portions of Indian territory to Beijing, would certainly require an amendment to the Constitution.

Engagement and talks are certainly part of a constructive process, but to call a spade a spade cannot hurt India's interests.

CLAUDE ARPI is the author of *The Fate of Tibet* (Har-Anand Publications, 1999), *Born in Sin: The Panchsheel Agreement* (Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2004), *India and Her Neighbourhood* (Har-Anand Publications, 2005). Email: claudearpi@gmail.com ● *Website: http://www.claudearpi.net*

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China's Burgeoning Military Spending – The Implications

K. S. Madhu Shankar

In March, China officially announced that it will increase its defence spending by 17.5% to about $45 billion this year. Many security analysts across the world estimate that actual spending is at least 2 to 3 times higher than what China officially announces, suggesting that real spending might be in the range of $100 billion. That makes China the third largest defence spender in the world this year after the United States and Russia (or Japan). While its budget is still about a fifth of America's, China intends to spend six times more on defence compared to India. So what are China's short-term and long-term goals accounting for this increase? The short-term plan is to increase the salaries of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) personnel by up to 20% and check the signs of discontent that are said to be brewing within the PLA ranks arising from wages not keeping pace with increase in the cost of living arising from China's rapidly expanding economy.

The long-term plan is to ensure that there is a firm foundation by 2010 for the planned second level of modernization to begin. By 2020 China plans to transform its forces from largely manpower based armies designed for the battlefields of the 20th century to smaller but highly technological forces capable of engaging hi-tech adversaries in short duration, high intensity conflicts.

To that end China is investing in major programs, building advanced nuclear attack and ballistic missile submarines, aircraft carriers and

improving the range and accuracy of its missile arsenal.It also recently unveiled a new indigenouslybuilt multi-role fighter aircraft and in January conducted an anti-satellite missile test.

There is a wide-spread impression, and one that works to China's advantage, that the rapid buildup of the Chinese forces is aimed at making sure that Taiwan does not declare independence. While this is largely true it will be a fallacy to assume that the dragon's fire is reserved for one direction.

A year and half ago, reports emerged of an unprecedented Chinese military buildup in the Tibetan plateau against India. The Qinghai-Tibet railway is complete upto Lhasa and is now being expanded to the Nepalese border coming very close to India's strategically vulnerable 'chicken's neck' area the Sikkim-Nepal-Bangladesh-Bhutan junction.

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On to the West, China has built a fully metallic highway capable of carrying battle tanks, armoured personnel carriers and other heavy equipment linking Lhasa to Urumqi and Kashgar at its frontier with Central Asia. It has also set up a listening post in Aksai Chin. According to some analysts, the Indian response of simply upgrading the Daulatbeg Oldi outpost in Ladakh with advanced communication equipment will not improve the military balance in this sector because the PLA is capable of deploying up to two divisions on the Ladakh front at short notice taking advantage of the Lhasa-Kashgar highway.

To bolster its air power projection capacity, China has built two new helipads that can support four helicopter squadrons and is building two new airstrips for its air force. It has deployed twenty MRBMs and 60 short-range missiles aimed at Indian cities like Srinagar, New Delhi, Chandigarh, Shimla in addition to military installations in the area. It's maritime 'string of pearls' strategyis already well known. According to Navy chief Admiral Sureesh Mehta "China we believe is shaping the maritime battle field in the region. It is making friends at the right places. If you don't have the capability to operate in those waters, for a length of time, then you need friends who will support your cause, when the time comes, so definitely China is doing that, as there are

Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and down below Africa. So it is a known fact that we are ringed by states, which may have a favourable disposition towards China. They are looking 20 years ahead."

To match China's determined effort to swing the regional military balance in its favour, India must accelerate the modernisation of its own armed forces. Unfortunately, this process is hampered on the one hand by tepid budgetary allocations and on the other by a pernicious culture of politicisation of defence procurement deals. The time has come for India to evolve a non-partisan, professional approach to defence planning and procurement.

MR. K. S. MADHU SHANKAR is a resident commentator on 'The Indian National Interest' and a regular contributor to *Pragati - The Indian National Review.*

By Arrangement with *Pragati: The Indian National Interest Review*

We should defend the fundamental rights and the Constitution as Winston Churchill defended Britain against Hitler and in the spirit of the true warrior which inspired him, not surrendering to fear or the prospect of defeat. The Constitution is worthy of this defence by the Swatantra Party, although it has no prospect of getting into office. It is a sacred duty which the Party cannot renounce. It is the Party's *Swadharma*. The Party should stand like Casablanca and his young son who refused to desert the burning ship, as immortalised in the poem by Felicia Hemans.

C. Rajagopalachari,
Swarajya, September 18, 1971

China : Not Hostile, but Unreliable

V. N. Torgal

Historical & cultural relations between India & China in ancient times (these relations were restricted to travelling ambassadors like Fahein, ItsingHuenstang etc) don't lead us to the above debate. The cultural ambassador mentioned above came to India on an almost cultural pilgrimage. They have left accounts of the social & cultural life of India in their days. Likewise Buddhist Indian scholars founded their schools of thought in Tibet, which was China's independent neighbour. Despite the great Himalayan barrier, attempts were not wanting to develop people to people contacts culturally, socially and to a very small extent economically also through the impassable Himalayan passes.

But China's political history in its monarchical and feudal periods shows its arrogance in that the Chinese rulers believed that they were of a superior stock and had contempt for outsiders. As Japan was opened up by Commodore Percy, China was opened up to western contacts in the latter half of the first decade of the 19th century by the British. But because of the open door policy of the U.S.A the Chinese melon was cut up into various spheres of influence of the occidental nations for economic exploitation, without exercising any direct political control over their respective spheres of influence. Then with the failure of Sunyat Sen to organise China into one nationalistic unit it was left to Mao tse tung to organise China into a Chinese Communist State.

Thence begins the story of China's imperialistic designs in Asia following the model of Russia in Europe. After the defeat of the mad plan of Japan's Co-prosperity sphere in Asia (during the Second World War) China took up the same idea in its zeal to export Mao's communism in Asia, but as nationalism proved stronger than "Workers of the World Unite" in Russia, Asian nations excepting northern Vietnam have declined to tow China's Communist line. Even Vietnam has not gone the Mao way but has gone the independent Ho chi minh way.

Thus thwarted in its attempts to spread the tentacles of Mao's Communism, China has turned on India as a soft target. Also when it found that Quemo and Matsu of Farmosa, now Taiwan, to be hard targets China turned to the Himalayan Indian border states as it found them to be soft targets due to the silly "Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai" policy of the Nehru Government, but fearing international adverse reaction and facing the gritty Indian nationalism it made a grand drama of retreat, though it has today nearly a lakh of square miles of Indian territory under its thumb.China after murdering the Tibetan baby (which was an independent nation and which once had ruled over China) has it's appetite whetted and is eyeing the Indian Himalayan States as is evident by its recent claims on Arunachal Pradesh.

After the liquidation of the Soviet Union, China has taken its place as a big power. Unlike the U.S.S.R which foolishly stuck to the idea of an expanding strong communist state and allowed its state to wither away, China knows how to keep steps with the changing times and has accepted Adam Smith's theory of free competition in the economic field without bringing the liberal democracy in its political aspects. Thus it has become a greater and more dangerous adversary to the world of liberal democracy and to the world of democratic Socialism.

In this sense China with its Tiananmen Square philosophy of mowing down the protestors under its tank force can't be a friend of India which with all its faults and in the face of the menace of fascist ideology is sticking to democratic ideology.

Despite the talks going on at various levels and despite the visits of the dignitaries of India & China to their Capitals, China's nibbling at the northern borders has been going on. In view of the futility of strained relations these talks need to be continued but the broad aim of these talks is the redrawing of the natural boundary line between India & China as the river Brahmaputra instead of the present artificial MacMohan, line which will then bring the ancient holy places like Manasarovar within the Indian boundary.

China need not be looked upon as a foe, as people to people relations between the two countries has been one of mutual respect and regard but India can never afford to be lax in the policy of strong northern Indian boundary not simply militarily but also culturally, democratically and nationally.

However, after the bitter betrayal by China in 1962 our policy towards China should be to it as politically an unreliable neighbour but not necessarily hostile.

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Safeguarding India's National Interests

Nitin Raut

In any discussion of India-China relations, the 1962 Chinese invasion stares us in the face. It was described appropriately as a "Himalayan Blunder" by the late Brigadier John Dalvi, the highest ranked officer in the Indian Army who was a POW of Communist China. President Radhakrishnan ascribed India's defeat by the Chinese in this war to "our credulity and negligence". The 1962 Chinese aggression, in the context of China's belligerent posturing on Arunachal Pradesh in recent months, is actually a continuation of a process that began in 1950 soon after the Communist takeover of China.

While Prime Minister Nehru – enchanted as he was by NAM and Panchsheel – had no foresight to assess Chinese strategy, the Chinese Communist regime always regarded India as a rival and has systematically tried to undermine India first by subjugating Tibet, supporting Pakistan's claim over Jammu and Kashmir and occupying Aksai Chin to

The pusillanimous reaction of the UPA government shows how the compulsions of a coalition dependent on the CPM-CPI crutches, has chosen to ignore the fact that a repeat of 1962 is very much a possibility.

the northeast of Jammu and Kashmir. And, if the claim to Arunachal Pradesh is alarming, let us not forget that the Maoist takeover of Nepal and the possible overthrow of the world's only Hindu monarchy fits perfectly in Beijing's expansionist and hegemonistic designs. The loss of Tibet and now the neutralization of Nepal as a buffer State brings Communist China's imperialistic regime right up to India's doorstep.

The pusillanimous reaction of the UPA government shows how the compulsions of a coalition dependent on the CPM-CPI crutches, has chosen to ignore the fact that a repeat of 1962 is very much a possibility.

China occupied Aksai Chin in 1958 to link Xinkiang Province with Tibet. By conceding the Chinese occupation of Tibet, India has sown the wind and is now reaping a political tsunami with Arunachal Pradesh as the eye of the storm. China respects strength and the supplicative policies of India in 1950s -60s like pleading Beijing's admission to the UN and the Security Council has been treated with contempt by the Communist Chinese region let alone the courtesy of an acknowledgment.

It is significant to note that in Aksai Chin, China first put up forward posts and then claimed it as its own territory. The claim that India's Arunachal Pradesh was part of China's Xingkiang Province is part of their strategy of encircling India from the West and the North and mollycoddling Myanmar to India's East.. The Maoists and Naxalites along with the Naga and Mizo insurgents are China's fifth columnists. In this context India's failure to stall a CPM-CPI inspired SPA take over of Nepal is a tactical blunder., The CPM-CPI silence over China's claim to Arunachal Pradesh is significant in this context. Such a scenario will give Chjna a tactical advantage on the so-called Arunachal Pradesh "issue".

China's interest in Pakistan's Gwadar Port provides refueling and anchorage facilities to the Chinese Navy, linking Gwadar with Xinjiang Province in the north by road and oil pipelines for suppplies to its navy. It suits Pakistan also because Gwadar will be an alternative naval base to Karachi which in 1971 the Indian Navy had successfully

blockaded from Gwadar which will be completed in 2010. China can monitor India's maritime movement in the Gulf region and also pose a threat to Western India.

It is therefore necessary for India to pre-empt similar facilities which China seeks to develop in Myanmar and Sri Lanka. The Communists will never allow the UPA government to forge strong strategic ties with Myanmar and Srilanka if it adversely affects Chinese interests. This is where the UPA is seriously compromising on India's security interests as is evident from the Chinese claim to Arunachal Pradesh where there was not even an official protest. One wonders who is dictating India's China policy or does India have one.

India ought to forge closer ties with Myanmar, Southest Asia and Sri Lanka to stall Chinese encirclement. In this context China more than India realizes the advantage of the Indo-US nuclear deal. It is India's growing relations with the USA and West that is making China up its ante on Arunachal Pradesh as India is the only nation that has the capacity to stall Chinese expansionism. Even the West realises that stragtegically India is more dependable with its democratic system and free society. In its expansionist policy China has border problems with almost all its neighbiourrs. It has border problem with Mongolia, with Vietnam over the oil rich Sprately islands in South China Sea and even with Russia which resulted in a fierce military clash between the Socvit Union and China over the Ussuri River. India can therefore ignore Chinese claims only at its own peril.

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Delhi Conference Demands *Poorna Swaraj* for Tibet

The first ever conference on Tibetan Independence organized by Friends of Tibet, India was held at the Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi on June 23 and 24, 2007. Over 300 participants, among them Indians, Tibetans , Americans, Englishmen, Frenchmen and Poles participated. Noted Tibetan writer and activist Jamyang Norbu who explained that the Olympics could provide the one chance for Tibetans to come out and protest "like one mighty force." For many Tibetan youngsters who were sitting on the floor, as there were not enough chairs, it was their first opportunity to hear him. Niru Vora, prominent Gandhian and a former professor in the school of Chinese and Japanese Studies of Delhi University addressed the gathering. Tenzin Tsundue, the Tibetan activist clarified that "though our political stand is different from that of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, our commitment to Non-violence is the same. But non-violence without mass support will not succeed," he said. Other notable speakers included prominent journalist Vijay Kranti, French researcher and Tibet commentator, Claude Arpi, Raghav Mittal of the Braj Foundation and Radha Bhatt a Gandhian, and participant in the Chipko Movement. Radha Bhatt affirmed that as long as Tibet is not free, India can never be free. India will have to forever live under Chinese pressure.

The Conference adopted a resolution demanding full independence (*poorna swaraj*) for Tibet. Citing a UN Resolution on 7th February 1995 regarding the granting of "Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples" the Conference recalled that this resolution had been ratified even by China, makes it the "moral responsibility of the UN and the member nations of this body to call a special meeting of the General Assembly and impress upon China that in view of this Resolution, China must restore full independence to whole of Tibet i.e. all the three provinces and its people".

The Conference called upon the Government of India to recognize the Tibetan Government-in-Exile as the sole legitimate Government of Tibet and theTibetan people and His Holiness the Dalai Lama as its sole political and spiritual leader.

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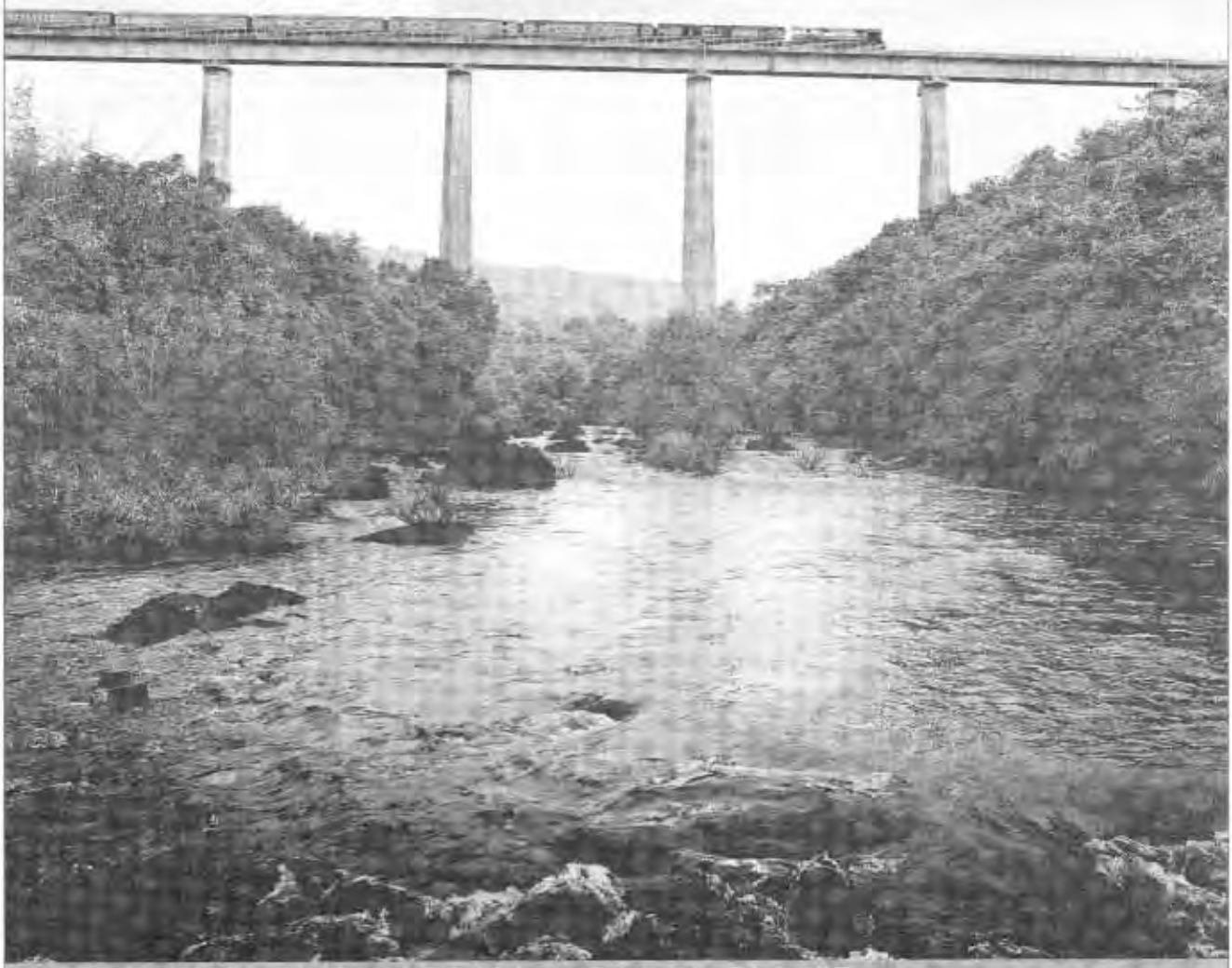

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Clarity

Point Counter Point

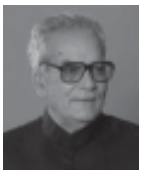
Ashok Karnik

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

Presidential Election

1) By the time this is published, the Presidential election should be over but our hopes and aspirations about our first citizen would be worth analyzing. We expect our President to be an icon, a philosopher, guide and a protector against capriciousness of politicians; ergo, he/she should be capable of rising above political shenanigans. A tall order but many of our past Presidents did meet these standards. We were lucky with eminent personalities like Rajendra Prasad, Radhakrishnan, Zakir Hussain and Dr. Abdul Kalam; some others were not that eminent but we have a blue print of a good President in our mind. This time we hoped to have some non-political personality as a candidate and hoped that Dr. Kalam would be re-selected by the politicians; that was not to be. Ultimately our hope rested on the wishful thinking that whosoever was elected would not be a rubber stamp in the hands of politicians. In any case, since the President can do very little formally, we can only hope that he/she would act as a sobering influence, waver of a red flag in case politicians go woefully wrong.

1) Is it realistic to expect the Presidential election to be a non-political event? In a democracy, since the President is to be "elected ", voting is inevitable; consequently, electoral politics cannot be wished away. One can only hope that all political parties would arrive at a consensus to avoid an unseemly fight for the post that underpins the dignity of the nation. It is a romantic notion, mostly unfulfilled. The most one can expect is that the contestants would not be dragged into dirt and that all candidates leave with their dignity intact. We could then look up with respect to anybody who gets elected. This time that did not happen and there was unseemly mud slinging, which is a shame. We hope lessons will be learnt for the future and political expediency will give way to better sense.



BMC and Floods

2) The season of howls and protests is on. The first rains exposed the deficiencies of the BMC, its failure to protect citizens from floods, traffic disruptions, reappearance of pot holes and hundred other failures of all and sundry agencies. TV Channels and newspapers were full of headlines like "Mumbai inundated", " life disrupted " with shots of potholes and waterlogged areas creating an impression as if 26/7 had struck again; what was pushed away in memory as once in a life time bad dream was threatening to recur so soon. There was no respite from the news hammering. On the spot anchors interviewed people to register their horror and one channel chief wondered how people could tolerate such breach of promises and inefficiency; something had to be done, he implored people and asked them to contact the channel directly for redressal. It went on for half a day but when the water receded and trains and traffic were normal, the channels fell quiet.

2) Can anybody expect a multilevel city not to become waterlogged after a heavy rainfall? No city in the world can take such heavy rainfall and not get inundated. It all depends on how much water can flow into the sea; if the sea is already in high tide, it will not allow any inflow from the city. Nobody has the means to flatten the city to an even level and ensure outflow of rainwater into the sea when it is in high tide. Water logging is a natural phenomenon; Municipal services can only ensure quick relief by keeping the drains free of obstructions and consequent drainage of accumulated water as soon the tide turns. Why do the TV Channels insist on showing the old visuals again and again and pick subways and low-lying areas to present a picture of inefficiency and sloth all around. We are not a very efficient country and need to improve a lot but why do we have condemn our administration all the time just to sell more newspapers and attract more eyeballs to the channel?

Is there no social responsibility for these sensation mongers to provide solace to the people in trying times? Even the Courts are joining the chorus to order that next year there should be no flooding! Our civic authorities are guilty of cowardice in not telling the people that certain things are beyond their capacity

Justice for the Rich

3) Mumbai – Pune are agog with the news that Avinash Bhosale (AB) was arrested by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) for bringing in diamond-studded watches illegally through the customs. Not that anybody knew who Bhosale was till that date. What mattered was Bhosale was released on bail the same night by the night duty magistrate, without the DRI's knowledge. Bhosale is known to be close to politicians of all hues and is rich beyond a common man's understanding. He owns a palatial house, a fleet of imported cars and a helicopter to boot. This translates into big political clout. Stories of Bhosale's meteoric rise to riches and his *modus operandi* of manipulating government construction contracts appeared in the press immediately. The conclusion was that all his wealth needed to be looked into; the fact that he got immediate bail also needed scrutiny. He got away because he is rich; any other man would have languished in the police lock-up.

3) AB's conduct is indeed reprehensible but does the case deserve the high voltage publicity it attracted particularly in the Marathi press? It is loftily claimed that a man should not escape punishment just because he is rich. Wonderful sentiment but a little introspection will show that we are really glad to see a rich man being brought to ground level. Are envy and moral hypocrisy involved in our desire to see him punished? We are not stirred when hundreds of people bring imported things without paying duty; many arrested people get bail. After all, night duty magistrates are appointed just for this job. AB's wealth and his construction contracts are irrelevant to his present offence of watch smuggling. We do not care; all we want is to see a filthy rich man in jail. We would not have got so worked up if an ordinary smuggler had got bail and vanished!

Sino-Indian Dialogue

4) Not surprisingly, the recent publication of declassified CIA documents of the 60s revealing CIA's analysis of Sino-Indian relationship of that era matches that of Pandit Nehru's critics in India. The CIA held that Pandit Nehru was naïve and was taken in by Chou en Lai's declaration that there was no border problem except for some "petty issues" and that Communist China had not had time to revise maps from the old Kumintang regime; Chou played on Nehru's anti-imperialist mind set and his sincere desire for an amicable Sino-Indian relationship.

4) CIA's analysis need not be accepted as the gospel truth; its extended analysis that China feared that there would be an army coup in India at the behest of USA, who supposedly intended to surround China with US supported military regimes in South East Asia is as misplaced and points to the shallowness of CIA's analytical ability. Nevertheless, CIA seems to be right in understanding Nehru's overwhelming desire to usher an era of peace and mutual trust in international relations. That Nehru failed is a tragedy not only for him but also for the world at large.

(Note: This issue of *Freedom First* covers Sino-Indian relationship in greater detail, The above note merely summarises the problem.)

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

In the conflict between modernism on the one side and obscurantism, whether that of the nation, caste or religion on the other, the Liberal is on the side of modernism and change. The Liberal is not against tradition. On the contrary, the Liberal respects what is good in the tradition of people and seeks to build and change on the basis of the tradition. In that sense, the Liberal is not an incendiary or disrupter but a constructive element of change.

Minoo Masani, Essay on Liberalism, *Freedom First* 1985

India Shining

Musings of an Indian

Dattatraya R. Pendse

"As Victor Hugo said, 'No power on earth can stop an idea whose time has come.' I suggest to this august House that the emergence of India as a major economic power in the world happens to be one such idea. Let the whole world hear it loud and clear: India is now wide awake. We shall prevail. We shall overcome."

- Dr. Manmohan Singh, then Finance Minister, in India's Parliament presenting his first Budget. July 24, 1991.

For businessmen world wide, India, with our 9% + GDP growth, exchange reserves of $ 200+ billion, and all that, has justifiably become the flavor of the season. What impresses even more is the equally justified aspiration to lead the world in some areas. Thus, for example, we in India want to be the world's gold trading capital, instead of being tied much longer to the apron strings of the LBMA (London Bullion Market Association); we want to be the health-care destination or the manufacturing hub for the world; not to mention our achievements in BPO, IT and the like. The leadership bug has bitten us.

There are quite a few structural shifts taking place in India's population. Each one even singly, should be mouth-watering for business:

(a) The population is urbanizing.

(b) The bulk of it is passing through a period of 'unprecedented prosperity.'

(c) It is becoming more educated.

(d) It is young now but with an ever-improving expectation of life span.

(e) The shift away from agriculture, (and also from industry) to the tertiary sector continues.

(f) People are saving more.

(g) A larger and larger share of their savings is being canalized into financial instruments.

Considering the massive base of 1.2 billion, these shifts cannot fail to attract.

Why India Shines

India shines today not because some new generation of Indians endowed with never-before entrepreneurial and leadership skills is born today and, with the help of ever-obliging foreigners, has taken over the reins of Indian industry from their mediocre, lazy and selfish predecessors of yesteryears. We shine primarily because of the sea change in the direction of our economic, industrial and fiscal policies. (Much remains to be done; a little may have to be undone. But all that is another matter.) The inherent capacities and the skills of our entrepreneurs and other citizens of yesteryears were not even a wee bit less than those of today. Alas, our own past policies kept these skills and talents suppressed and sure enough brought the economy, in 1991, just a few days away from doom.

There were at best a handful of visionary patriots and industry leaders, like the late Mr. J. R. D. Tata and his A-team, who foresaw the impending damage and undertook a crusade to create public opinion in favour of a radical reversal of those policies. This was mighty tough because even in the older policy mix, quite a few other 'leaders' had found ways to achieve fast personal prosperity.

These 'policy reforms' (admittedly an imperfect phrase) were adopted from about 1991. It is difficult to say, and perhaps idle to debate now, as to whether even by that time there was among the policymakers any intellectual conviction and an emotional commitment about the need for radical reforms for the good of our people, or whether the policymakers' minds merely concentrated wonderfully on the IMF-favored reforms medicine in view of the looming humiliation of an emptied treasury.

India shines because of the sea change in the direction of our economic, industrial and fiscal policies.

The medicine turned out to be precise; was overdue and had immense therapeutic value. The dose was administered brilliantly by none else than Dr. Manmohan Singh, who was then Finance Minister. He was brimming with confidence in July 1991 that the medicine would work. India's shine today has proved Victor Hugo right once again.

The shine is yet not all perfect. We should therefore always welcome comments, more so from serious foreign friends and businessmen, rather than always brushing them aside as excuses for extracting more concessions.

Infrastructure Weaknesses

For example, when we are repeatedly told about the weaknesses in our infrastructure, we must accept their concern. We need not be oblivious to the fact, however, that there are a few bright areas too. The Railways have turned around from a loss of over Rs. 60,000 crores ($ 14.6 billion) to a profit of Rs. 20,000 crores ($ 4.86 billion) within a few years and have brought awe-struck MBAs and faculty of the world's best B-schools to a rustic Indian leader a-studying! The turnaround in public sector banks and the near completion of the massive 5846 km. long golden quadrilateral highway are some other examples. They give us confidence to assure our foreign friends that all is not lost; yet 'their comment is under active consideration.'

The Poverty Line

Our friends remind us also that there are still nearly 220 million impoverished Indians, (people below India's own stark poverty line). True again; and I mourn this sad plight of so many of my countrymen. But then there were no fewer than about 320 million impoverished Indians in 1991. On the other hand, we have now as many as 980 million Indians above the poverty line, as against only 525 million in 1991. Millions and millions thus continue to cross the poverty line year after year and to improve their lot yet further. Government's reformed policies must have been instrumental; but those that achieved the crossover, must have themselves been endowed with enormous talent which is now blossoming and no more suppressed. They are the pride of India. They are my countrymen too; I cannot ignore celebrating their success and wishing them yet better days. In the shining India they deserve to be spread out a red carpet of government policies and social recognition. I will feel disturbed to see fishing nets thrown to catch and cook them.

We have now as many as 980 million Indians above the poverty line, as against only 525 million in 1991. Millions and millions thus continue to cross the poverty line year after year and to improve their lot yet further.

Identify Imperfections

The list need not be extended. The fact is that we have to live and prosper within a world that is not all that open, nor opening. It is full of sovereign countries not without their own prides, prejudices, jealousies and fears. We must therefore not only value any perceptions expressed in friendly countries about the imperfections of our shine, but must also identify any imperfections on our own , even if not readily perceived or highlighted by outsiders.

To give just one illustration, I find, (a) our obsession with monetary targets and outlays as well as (b) our complete neglect of physical targets and achievements, both to be very irritating indeed. We, the people, are rarely told, for example, that the Government planned, in a given period, to set up electricity generation capacity of X mw; or to build highways of Y km. or to construct W new schools or add Z new hospital beds. Strictly speaking, some such physical targets are no doubt obscurely printed somewhere in the plethora of boring Plan documents. For general public consumption, however, everything is reduced to the sexy denominator of outlays in terms of crores of rupees. This is an open invitation to serious malpractices and inefficiencies. For the shine to be more transparent should intentions not be expressed in terms of time-bound physical targets; and should achievements not be published after an independent audit?

The Not so Nostalgic Years

Our shine today is well deserved. India's younger generation of today has not experienced, and probably is not even fully aware of the absurdities (-some of them silly, others crooked-) and the humiliation to which the common man's day-to-day life was exposed during the quarter century of our nightmare with the licensee-permit raj and with all that went under the pretence of the so-called socialistic pattern of economy.

Our citizens wasted hours every year queuing up (separately) for renewal permits to use the radio and TV at home.

- They waited for ten years to get a telephone installed and another one to get it connected.
- They waited fifteen years to buy a car, which, outside the Indian streets, was considered fit to be seen only in museums.
- We spent more time and often a night, queuing up for a railway ticket; a time-span often longer than the time of the railway journey itself.
- Foreign travel was riddled with unthinkably cumbersome rules and absurd restrictions.
- Earning foreign exchange for our country seemed almost a crime. Lakhs of Indians were working

in the Middle East and earning valuable foreign exchange for the country. But when they returned on a holiday and brought sarees or blankets or two-in-ones for their dear families, instead of being garlanded at the airports, they were treated like thieves and criminals.

- The gold policy [Ha!], took the cake. Gold imports were banned, thus promoting massive smuggling. It also compelled Indian ladies to use no more than 14-carat gold jewellry!
- At the industry and business level the absurdities were even more corrupting:
  - The industrial licensing system;
  - The whole idea of 'Larger Industrial Houses';
  - The disastrous portion on the 'Concentration of Economic Power,' - Part III in the MRTP Act [The Monopolies & Restrictive Trade Practices Act];
  - The convertibility clause;
  - The Credit Authorization Scheme;
  - The laughable restrictions on managerial remuneration;
- The 98% personal income tax;
- The reservation bug – for the public sector, or for the small scale sector.

Examples abound. Most of the restrictive provisions had escape routes that opened up floodgates for black money and political corruption.

I think, one day, for the sake of posterity and as an alert, I must write a little booklet on the absurdities that my countrymen and my country were made to live with. We have paid dearly, by setting India's national clock backwards in a fast-forward moving world. Collectively, it was a recipe for collapse. The inherent strengths of the country and its people must have been gigantic to have survived such continued severe onslaughts for over a quarter of a century.

Should we then not continue to follow this path pursued since long by many other countries in this fast moving world? No doubt it will help us keep the shine. But what if it also threatens to permanently eclipse our own culture and lifestyle? Again, let me refer to only one of such clouds that I see on the horizon:

Some Disturbing Developments

Nowadays we notice the highly disturbing emergence of a new set of 'industries' like, for example, health-care and medicine; education; sports, performing arts and entertainment. These and such like are no more professions with sanctity and values of their own. Perhaps this is a parting gift of the 20th century. In the name of providing adequate financial security to the practitioners of these professions, these activities are commonly run like 'with-profit' businesses, with 'dirty money' taking centre stage. Is this a desirable trend? How much further will it go? May it not, one day soon, engulf our cultural and family values too?

Luckily for us, we have the two sets of experiences of some other countries, mostly in the West, to learn from. Some of these countries seem to see no imminent danger and are willing to go the whole hog. Others dub this as the ugly side of capitalism and advocate legislative, social and other protective measures, even at the possible cost of some economic prosperity. As an economist, I would be reluctant to support anything that curtails prosperity; but as a citizen, when I watch beyond the shine of prosperity, I am singularly uncomfortable.

There is interesting and incidental fallout that should not be ignored: Most of us *criticize* the commercialization of the professions and the arts; hardly ever we admire it. When we say nowadays that something had become a business, we imply that it had become dirty and self-centered. We have come a long way away from the time of Alfred Marshall who was sure that " A score of Tatas might do more for India than any Government can achieve"; or from the time of Jawaharlal Nehruwho said that factories were the temples of modern India. Once again I feel singularly uncomfortable.

Fewer Laws make for Better Governance

It will be tempting for an enthusiastic government to offer to make new laws and regulations to meet any perceived imperfections in India's shine. The temptation must be resisted. Reality checks five years after laws are made have invariably shown that, honourable exceptions apart, most laws hinder and not help progress. Government should be able to manage with as few laws and regulations as possible. In fact, there are innumerable and irritable laws, regulations and procedures currently in force that have far outlived their utility. Government should firmly and expeditiously start repealing as many of these as possible. That will be the test to decide how enduring and beneficial the shine will be. Business worldwide and millions of Indian citizens will be happy and thankful; and so will be Confucius.

(Figures quoted are indicative)
(One crore = ten million. $1= INR 41)

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The Cold War Isn't Over

Firoze Hirjikaka

Back in the 1990's – after the disintegration of the Soviet Union - if you were one of those optimistic Americans who thought the Cold War was over and the US had won; it's time for a reality check.

The Cold War actually never ended – it just seemed to go into hibernation for a spell, while Russia experimented with this new-fangled concept of democracy. Needless to say, that experiment is now officially buried; and the Russian bear is growling as loud as before.

Russia's Concerns

To most Americans who grew up during the era of Khrushchev and Brezhnev, the Cold War was best symbolized by hulking big, nuclear-tipped Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles pointed at the USA. Well, guess what? They still are. Just a few days ago, Russia test fired an ICBM, with multiple warheads, in response – according to Russian President Putin – to provocative actions by the US. He was referring to the proposed anti-missile shield the US is proposing to set up in Eastern Europe.

"(The US) is stuffing Eastern Europe with a new base in Bulgaria, another in Romania, a site in Poland; radar in the Czech Republic…what are we supposed to do? We cannot just observe all this" Putin said. Russia says the US missile defense shield is a threat to its security; and will change the strategic balance in Europe. I hate to admit it, but he does have a point. Washington, on its part, says the shield is intended to counter 'rogue states' – which presumably includes Iran – but Putin is not buying it. George Bush and Putin are scheduled to meet on July 1 and 2 in Kennebunkport, Maine – but I doubt whether Bush's down-home charm offensive is going to cut much ice with the Russian President.

What most Americans perhaps do not grasp is that to expect the US and Russia to be friends and allies, in the conventional sense, would be really stretching the envelope. The Slavs of Russia (I'm not talking about the Russians who emigrated to America in the last century; and became American citizens) are a fundamentally different race from the melting-pot that is the USA. They really have nothing in common – least of all, their concept of 'democracy'.

The Russian Temper

The truth is that Russians have – historically and traditionally – been more comfortable under an authoritarian system of government. Prior to 1991, they have been ruled by figures demanding total, unquestioning obedience, for over a thousand years. Even the Communist Revolution merely replaced the Czars with even more tyrannical dictators. And the common people didn't seem too resentful of the yoke really. So long as they had a roof over their heads, food on the table and a steady – even low paying – job, they did not bother their heads with alien concepts like freedom of expression or artistic license. Sure, occasionally, a Solzhenitsyn burst forth like a beacon, but free thinkers like him were few and far between.

The Agony After the Collapse

The Soviet Union collapsed so rapidly that the Russian population did not get a decent period of transition to adjust to the new order. Suddenly they had 'freedoms': freedom to speak their minds; freedom to vote in elections whose results were not rigged and a foregone conclusion; and freedom to travel outside their borders – although very few could actually afford to. But these freedoms came with a price. As the rouble, whose value was kept artificially by the Communist bosses (it was a matter of pride, after all), found its true value in the international currency market, Russian citizens discovered that it was almost worthless; and inflation went through the roof. As government subsidies on food – that most Russians had been used to all their lives - were withdrawn, just having two square meals a day; of anything, became a struggle. Suddenly, your job could not be taken for granted; you had to compete for it. The Russian

What most Americans perhaps do not grasp is that to expect the US and Russia to be friends and allies, in the conventional sense, would be really stretching the envelope.

mafia – which had been kept under control by even more ruthless Communist masters – was suddenly let loose and was free to commit acts of mayhem.

A lot of Russians took a long hard look at this 'democracy'; and decided that they did not much care for it. The once-hated Communists began to look like the 'good guys'. So, when Putin took over the reins; and inexorably dragged Russia back to the old ways, not many protested. Some even welcomed it. An authority figure was what they were comfortable with. And make no mistake, in everything but name, Vladimir Putin is the new Czar of Russia.

When Putin took over the reins and inexorably dragged Russia back to the old ways, not many protested. Some even welcomed it. An authority figure was what they were comfortable with.

The KGB is Back

And America needs to be very wary. This new Russia is infinitely more dangerous than the Communist one. The Soviet Union called itself a superpower but, in fact, the only thing 'super' about it was its military might. Its economy was a mess and – as all great leaders know – wars are eventually won by economic clout. Putin's Russia, flush with petrodollars, can be a much more formidable opponent. It's still a military power. Yes, I know the Russian army is filled with conscripts and, man for man, a Russian soldier is no match for an American GI. Thing is, it doesn't need to be man for man. The Russian military has a five to one superiority over its US counterpart. The Russian KGB – under new initials – is back in business and as powerful as ever.

And meanwhile, the richest country in the world is spending over a hundred billion dollars on a war it cannot win. Unlike self-sufficient Russia, the US depends for its oil on a part of the world: one of whose nations is part of George Bush's axis-of-evil; and the other is threatening to descend into a full scale civil war. I'm not saying there is any immediate threat but, if I was an American, I wouldn't let my guard down.

MR. FIROZE HIRJIKAKA is a member of the editorial board of *Freedom First*. He can be contacted at leonardo8_99@yahoo.com

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Small is Beautiful

M. S. Nagarajan

(1906-2001)

Freedom First joins the many admirers of R.K.Narayan in remembering him on his birth centenary year. His novels have been a source of delight to all of us for he made reading such a pleasure. If his brother R. K. Laxman gave us the typical Indian 'Common Man', R. K. Narayan gave us 'Malgudi' typifying the quintessential Indian town and its denizens. It is therefore with much pleasure that we carry this paper by Dr. Nagarajan on R. K. Narayan's contribution to the writing of the Indian novel in English.

Seeming artlessness is Narayan's narrative strength. The rough and tumble of our daily activity provides nourishment for his fictional world. Based on A Story-Teller's World, A collection of sketches, essays and travel pieces, this paper examines the essential Indianness of Narayan, his 'achieved simplicity.' When some of the contemporary writers revel in rejecting or disowning Indian culture, here is Narayan, the patriarch of Indian fiction in English, who, all the time, seeks a recovery of our forgotten past. Indianness involves a belief in the essential unity of things, a commitment to a sense of the metaphysical continuity of life, a faith in age-old and well-tried ways of life. The short pieces of Narayan centre on a problem or crisis that gets resolved in course of time and this resolution implies an ethical sense, a sense that organizes our life giving it some meaning. How does Narayan reach out to the core of this ethical sense without recourse to any self-conscious narrative mode? The paper raises questions such as these and concludes that it is because of his stark simplicity that Narayan is basic to the canon of Indian English. He expanded and established the tradition of the Indian novel in English.

In a two part article published in 1997 by *The New Yorker* and reprinted as an introduction to the *Vintage Book of Indian Writing* (1947-1997), Salman Rushdie makes what appears a rueful but authentic observation that quite predictably aroused the ire of most Indian academics and not a few practicing writers. Rushdie's observation was that apart from fiction, Indian Writing in English has not made any visible dent on the outside world. Thus Rushdie:

"The prose writing – both fiction and non-fiction – created in this period by Indian writers working in English, is proving to be a stronger and more important body of work than most of what had been produced in the 16 'official languages' of India, the so-called 'vernacular languages.' During the same time, and, indeed, this new, and still burgeoning, 'Indo-Anglian' literature represents perhaps the most valuable contribution India has yet made to the world of books."

The truth of this remark cannot be easily brushed aside or rejected summarily. We possess an uninterrupted tradition of fiction in English - referred to with great pride as twice-born. For more than a hundred years there has been a vogue in the genre practiced by writers of the different regions of our country. Of these, three stand out prominent and all the three belong to the era Rushdie talks about – Narayan, Raja Rao and Anand – each of whom erected, in his own way, what we call the Indian tradition in English fiction.

Narayan's way is the old granny's way who weaves winter's tales that holds children from play and old men from the chimney corner, to use Sidney's famous dictum. This is clearly to be seen in the short piece "The World of the Story-Teller" which, in a sense is a metaphor for Narayan's art.

"He is part and parcel of the village community…his narration is backed with authority…The characters are prototypes and moulds in which humanity is cast and remain valid for all time. Each story has implicit in it a philosophical or moral significance and an underlining of the distinction between good and evil…there is no tragedy in the Greek sense; the curtain never comes down finally on the corpses strewn about the stage…

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Everything is bound to come out right in the end…evil has in it, buried subtly, the infallible seeds of its own destruction… While the evil minded pursue power and the acquisition of riches, there are idealists who renounce everything, including the ego, in their search for an abiding reality. Renunciation is ever a desirable means of attaining a higher life, and at some stage every character of goodness adopts it…every story has implicit in it a moral value, likened to the fragrance of a flower."

Poetics of fiction raises several questions on how reality is shaped and presented in a work of art. Narayan demystifies the whole process. It has a general practice in Narayan's household to sit around and talk about the day's events before the members retired to bed. During one such session, his brother who was a government official described a person working in the taluk office, who helped people solve their daily monetary problems. The same night Narayan wrote the first line of his novel which grew into *The Financial Expert* in a year and three months. Here is Narayan:

"As I went on writing day after day I found the character growing. *It must be understood that at the right point fiction must depart on its own course* (italics mine), and soon I forgot the original. Then when I was half way through the book, a financial phenomenon occurred in our office…About this time the Margayya of my novel was maturing as a financial expert, and I found the new material just what I wanted to blend into my story. So Margayya is actually a combination of two personalities."

For Narayan, "writing a novel is both a conscious and an unconscious occupation; it is something both of the intellect and superior to the intellect. That means that the mind should be left completely free to continue to exercise itself at all levels. The intellect portion of it pertains mostly to technique and expression, and not to the ultimate shape of the thing, though there is always a possibility that the novelist has some idea of the shape of things to come, and to that extent the mind is burdened."

"The Crowd" for Narayan binds people together in a common experience: the source of strength for us lies in each other's presence. "The Cat", another short piece is an epiphany for the Lawrentian 'living otherness.' The cat he sees seated on the platform in front of the dais where D.K.Jayaraman sings in the December season at the Music Academy, Madras, belongs to each place. Though it belongs to Woodlands Hotel, it enjoys an unlimited jurisdiction happy, in any environment, in cosy harmony with the rest of the world. "The Family Doctor," of pre-war years, the all-round healer is a vanishing tribe in these days.

"The Image" is an archetypal Narayan story. The Belur temple is building. Janakachari the old and experienced sculptor is at work giving finishing touches to the idol of the chief deity, Kesava, since the date for the consecration is fixed. A young man, an intruder, enters the place of work and to Janakachari's chagrin tells him that the choice of the stone for the image is wrong, unlucky, not fit for carving. Being challenged with punishment, he with a deft stroke breaks open the part near the navel. There is a cavity with water and a toad inside it. Janakachari admires the young man's feeling for the stone. Remorse stricken he comes forward to fulfil his vow of chopping off his arm when he leans, much to his astonishment that the young man is none other than his own son whom he had abandoned when he decided to dedicate his life in the service of God and art. "The choice was between family and attachments and utter dedication. There was no middle way, and he made his choice abruptly and uncompromisingly, the only way in which any choice in life can be made." He gets back home with his son with a resolve never again to touch stone. He is commanded in his dream to build a temple, which he does with great satisfaction as he was an artist first and last. Life, art, service to God are all integrated actions. Growth in one to the exclusion of the other is a lopsided growth. Janakachari realises this home truth from his own son.

The story is told in, what Henry James might dismiss as, the 'accursed third person' narrative. Modern critics who may favour dramatized narration and multiple points of view may fault the story for its ramshackled construction and woeful lack of technique. For them the story tells; it does not reveal. But the essential Indianness of the story is what makes the story come through. Rooted in the Indian ethos, it speaks to us straight and this seeming artlessness is the real strength of Narayan's narrative art.

DR. M. S. NAGARAJAN retired professor of English, University of Madras, Chennai. Email: ms_nagarajan@hotmail.com

In India, we have democracy. In America, they also have democracy. But the difference is that in America, you can kiss in public but cannot shit in public, In India, you can shit in public but cannot kiss in public.

(From the internet)

My Bombay Reminiscences

Saratchandra Panda

Reading the two articles in which Firoze Hirjikaka and Sharad Bailur indulged in nostalgia about their younger years in Bombay in the middle of the last century, long time reader of Freedom First *recalls his student days in Bombay (now Mumbai) in the sixties. Looking back, life in Bombay was far less complicated those days as you will gather from this nostalgic account.* – Editor.

In May 1960, the results of the inter science examination of Utkal University were announced. I was placed in the list of the first 35 students in the order of merit. At that time it was the only university and no Higher Secondary Board had been constituted. I applied for higher studies to many colleges/institutes, viz., Ravenshaw College in Cuttack, the Jadavpur University in ,Kolkata, the Regional Institute of Technology, Jamshedpur, the Department of Chemical Technology popularly known as UDCT of the Bombay University

The first to allot me a seat for a four-year course in Chemical Engineering along with a seat in the adjoining University hostel came from the UDCT. Despite the fact that it would stretch his resources my father, Nityananda Panda, an advocate in Jeypore in the Koraput district of Orissa encouraged me to join the UDCT.

It was a big thing those days to be able to study in Bombay. My friends at Jeypore congratulated me and I recall someone telling me how fortunate I was because I would be able to see many cine actors and actresses! As it happened I do not recall seeing any in the flesh!

On 16th June, I left Jeypore for Mumbai and arrived on the 18th at Dadar station I carried a letter of introduction from Mr. A. V. Swamy, a former student of UDCT to Mr. T. Appa Rao,a textile engineer and an Oriya speaking Telugu staying at the nearby VJTI hostel. A venerable old institution in Matunga (VJTI stands for the Victoria Jubilee Technical Institute. I am told that the name has not been changed.

On 20th, the first day, I attended classes. I was surprised that the teachers began taking classes in right earnest from day one. In Orissa serious teaching in colleges did not start at least for the first month of the academic year. Secondly, the classes were arranged in a consecutive manner unlike in a haphazard manner as in Orissa. I took some time to grasp and assimilate the contents of lectures since I came from an Oriya medium school with only two years of English medium at the college level.

This was the first time I stayed in a hostel which had students from practically all parts of India and a few from abroad – from East Africa (now Kenya), Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Malaya (now Malaysia) and Indonesia.

Dr. G. A. Nariboli the Reader who taught mathematics had a phenomenal memory. He spoke and wrote very fast on the black board without having to consult any notes. This made it very difficult for me to catch his lecture so much so, I became weak in mathematics. My scholastic career suffered a nose dive. In Engineering Drawing as well, I was unable to conceptualise an object from its plan, front and end elevations. Because of these weaknesses, I gave a goodbye to my analytical faculties and started mugging. My memory served me well enough to pass the examinations. This loss of scholastic status weighed heavily on me and I regretted having decided to join Bombay University. Perhaps I would have done well elsewhere. I nearly failed in the first year i.e. failing in one subject (Engineering Drawing) but allowed to keep terms (ATKT) in the second year.

In the hostel, there was a debating society called, Friends' Literary Forum (FLF). A few of my seniors treated me with respect and affection and from them I also learned to respect my juniors. There was no ragging in the hostel, something I recall with pleasure to this day. There were many seniors who rose to great positions later in life. The most outstanding among them was Mr K. Anji Reddy, founder Chairman and Managing Director of Dr. Reddy's Laboratories in Hyderabad.

The hostel had a small library with an excellent collection of books including those of Fyodor Dostoyevsky. During my four-year stay, I read at least eight of his books including "Crime and Punishment". I remember giving a talk critically reviewing this book at an FLF function and even started imitating Dostoyevsky's style of writing! *(To be continued)*

MR. SARAT CHANDRA PANDA, now retired, lives in Bhubaneswar.

From Our Readers

An Invitation from Freedom First Subscriber A. Pankajakshan to his Fellow Subscribers!

Dear Friends

Trust and hope this 'goodbye' letter reaches you and members of your family in all happiness.

After spending over forty three years in Pune (or Punyanagari as Nanasaheb Goray described it when he was Mayor), I have now settled in my wife's village in Kerala. I have, equally my wife, very pleasant memories about the days, months and years spent in Dehu Road and Pune. In between I had the fortune of working in Kol;hapur and Mumbai. I have had immense love and affection from all, which, I shall cherish forever.

My wife's village called Arattupuzha (named after a river flowing through the village – the river Karuvannur) is a very small village. But it is resplendent with natural beauty without any pollution. This village is situated about 13 kms away from Trichur (Thrissur, in Malayalam) Railway Station. If you take an auto rickshaw, it will cost you Rs.100/- or so. There is a private bus stand about a kilometer away called the Sakthan Thampuran Bus Stand from where you get direct buses to Arattupuzha. The fare is only Rs.8/-. Of course the frequency of direct buses is limited. Another easy way to reach this village is to board a Kodungallur or Irinjalakuda bus and get down at the Raja Tile Factory stop (Karuvannur) and engage an auto rickshaw which will cost only Rs.10/-.

Arattupuzha is well known for its temple – Sastha temple, managed by the Cochin Devaswam Board. The deity in the temple is Vasishta Maharshi – Guru of Sri Ram. This temple is considered on par with Kasi (Benaras). A grand festival takes place in this temple sometime during March/April when a large number of caparisoned elephants from temples in and around participate. There is a Sri Ram temple about ten kilometers away from Arattupuzha in a place called Triprayar. The legend is that Sri Ram visits Arattupuzha once a year to meet his guru Vasishta. This meeting of *Guru-Chela* makes this village hum with activity for a day and then it relapses into silence for the rest of the year. The villagers settled outside have generally made it a mandatory custom to attend this festival.

The ideal period to visit Kerala is from November to February when the climate is neither hot nor cold. If one intends to go in for Ayurvedic indoor treatment, the ideal time is June-July when it will rain continuously. In and around Arattupuzha within a radius of 10 to 15 kms. there are three Ayurvedic Nursing Homes. The most reputed and modern Nursing Home is run by Ashta Vaidyan Thaikkathussery Moos (where, incidentally my second son had taken treatment).

Trichur is a small town unlike Pune. It is known as 'the culture town of Kerala, comprising the Kerala Sahitya Akademi, the Fine Arts Akademi and other literary organizations. About 15 kms. away is situated the institution for teaching Kathakali and other dances, named Kalamandalam established by the well-known Malayalam poet Vallathol Narayana Menon.

The place is now known after him as Vallathol Nagar. Trichur town has a number of magnificent churches of various denominations. In a lighter vein, I may add here that Trichur has the dubious record of being the home of 'Chit Funds' ('*Kuries*' in Malayalam). It is a different story that the said 'Chit Funds' later became notorious as 'Cheat Funds'!

Trichur is also known for the annual Temple festival, which takes place a month ter the Arattupuzha Temple festival. This festival called the 'Thrissur Pooram' is famous for its fireworks and orchestra of traditional musical instruments. Here again a large number of elephants participate.

About 30 kms. away from Trichur is Guruvayoor where the famous Krishna temple is situated. This temple is known in Malayalam as the Guruvayoorappan temple. This is the richest temple in Kerala and is managed by the Cochin Devaswam Board.

About 50 kms. from Trichur is the historic town of Kodungallur (earlier known as Cranganore). This was a port town in the good old days where St.Thomas landed. It is also famous for the oldest mosque known as Cheraman Perumal Mosque. Equally, this place is important to the Hindus for its Kali temple known as the Kodungallur Bhagavathi temple. There was a custom in the past for pilgrims to propitiate the Goddess by reciting the choicest vulgar hymns. This is now banned. My wife still has the bitter taste of such songs when she used to travel in the bus to attend college in Irinjalakuda. Now, of course, things have changed a lot but the stigma about the place remains. This port town got submerged and then Cochin became the important port town of Kerala. I don't have to narrate the beauty of Cochin (now Kochi), which is known as the Venice of the East. The oldest Jewish Synagogue is situated in Fort Cochin.

Before I conclude this letter, I invite you to be my family guest in Arattupuzha village and get a first hand taste of village life (over a glass of coconut toddy with fresh fish curry)!

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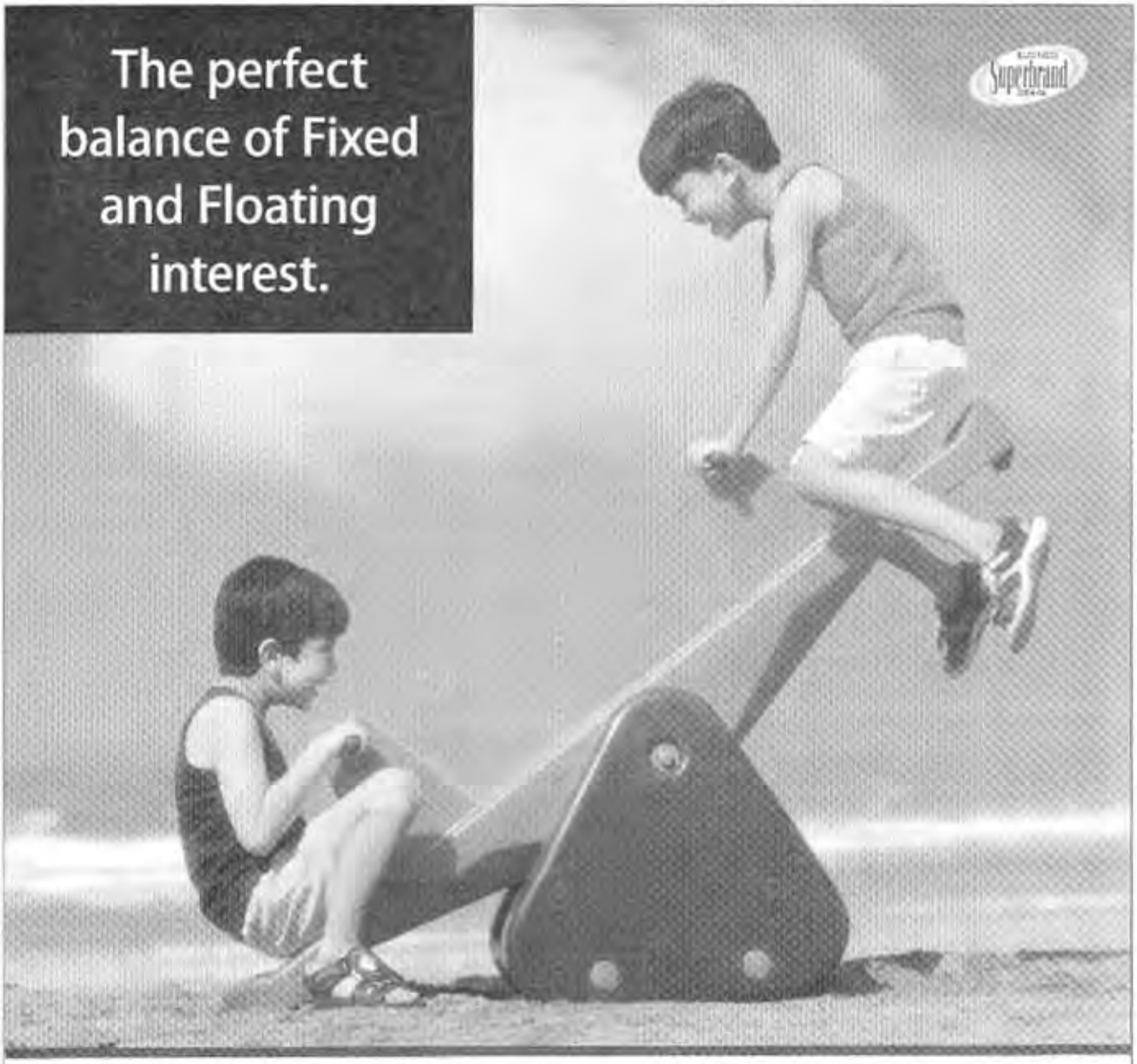

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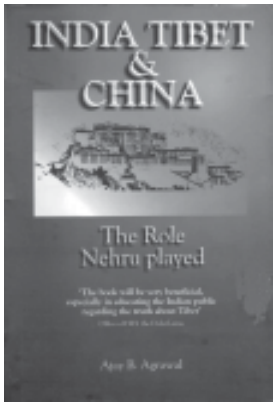
BOOK REVIEWS



INDIA TIBET & CHINA -THE ROLE NEHRU PLAYED by Ajay B. Agrawal • Published by N A Books International, 702A Shree Yamuna Building, Borsa Pada Road, Kandivli, Mumbai 400067 • Year of Publication : 2003 • Pages 211• Price: 295

Reviewed by R. V. Chari, retired professor of Commerce and Management and a freelance writer.

Though published in 2003 the issues it deals with are not only of historical value but have contemporary relevance. Mr. Ajay Agrawal, the author, is a businessman who was born in Kalimpong, a hotbed of political activity in the fifties. His family had a business establishment in Yatung in Tibet. Yatung was a trading centre agreed upon between the British and the Tibetans in 1905. The author's interest in Tibetan matters goes back over thirty five years.

The book as the title suggests has the spotlight on the role Nehru played in India betraying Tibet when she needed our help most.

Right upto 1949 Tibet was a sovereign nation with its own language, culture, religion and rituals. In 1950 Communist China invaded and subjugated Tibet. Being a landlocked, peace-loving nation, with not much of an army to speak about, the Dalai Lama who is the political and spiritual head of Tibet appealed to India with which it had cordial relations for centuries, for help. Despite frantic, fervent appeals from Tibet, India, with Nehru as the Prime Minister did little to allay the fears and misgivings of the Tibetans. On the contrary, he went out of his way to praise and flatter China, saying that the Chinese dragon is quite friendly, with no intention of harming anybody.

There was a furore in India's parliament when members, cutting cross part lines demanded to know what positive action was being contemplated by the Congress government. Nehru, even while trying to mollify the pent-up feelings of the members made some sarcastic remarks about their approach. The author quotes extensively from parliamentary reports and other sources about the manner in which Nehru was handling the situation. He quotes the Dalai Lama's sad remarks: "Our friends would not even help us to present our plea for justice. We feel abandoned to the hordes of the Chinese Army."

When Prime Minister Nehru was cajoling the Tibetan leaders to accommodate the Chinese claims to suzerainty, the New China China News Agency reported: "Anglo-American imperialists and their running dog, Pandit Nehru, were plotting a coup in Lhasa, for the annexation of Tibet.." Recently the daily *DNA* of February 23, 2007 reported Prof.Ge Jianxlong, Director, Instiute of Chinese Historical Geography as saying: "It would be a defiance of history to claim that Tibet has always been a part of China, since the Tang dynasty.; the fact, that the Qinghai/Tibetan plateau subsequently became a part of Chinese dynasties does not substantiate such a claim." He goes on to affirm: "The Qing State refers to the 18 interior provinces, excluding Manchuria, Inner Mongolia, Tibet and Xinjiang."

The Dalai Lama fled to India disguised as a Tibetan soldier and sought refuge. A revolt by the Khampas, a fierce tribe who waged a guerilla war against the Chinese Army was crushed ruthlessly. Tibetan leaders were murdered and their children sent to China. Parents who did not concur were tortured. Adamant and obdurate Tibetan women were regularly raped or forced to marry the Chinese; beggars were conscripted into the Army, lamas in their hundreds were killed or jailed.

The reasons for the Chinese occupation of Tibet are not too far to seek. Firstly the population of China was burgeoning beyond its boundaries. What better place, then to take over the neighbouring country forsaken by India and the world. Secondly, Tibet is rich in natural resources of minerals and metals. China aggressively went about constructing a 1572 mile rail route connecting Qinghai to Tibet which made the task of exploiting and looting their new colony that much easier.

The lukewarm and pro-Chinese attitude of Nehru on Tibet provoked Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel then India's Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister to write a letter to Nehru warning him about the lurking dangers of befriending the Chinese dragon rather than confronting them. He wrote in his letter of 7 November 1950: "The Chinese Government have tried to delude us by professions of peaceful intentions…There is no doubt that during the period covered by this correspondence the Chinese must have been concentrating for an onslaught on Tibet. The final action of the Chinese, in my judgement, is little short of perfidy. The tragedy of it is that the Tibetans put their faith in us and we have been unable to get them out of the meshes of Chinese diplomacy or Chinese influence." Unfortunately this letter as that of the then President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad did not evoke any response from Nehru.

Minoo Masani then a member of the Lok Sabha said in parliament "military experts assure us that not only can aircraft fly over the Himalayas and come and bomb our cities in North India but also that even mechanised armies can go through the Himalayan passes and come into our country…Let us guard our frontiers ideologically and militarily to the best of our ability. All these warnings fell on deaf ears. And Nehru went his way without consulting his cabinet colleagues or his army officers nor was any action taken by him to construct motorable roads for the military to pass through.

After strengthening and consolidating its presence in Tibet, the Chinese now turned towards the Indian border. On January 1, 1960, Nehru informed the chief ministers of the states: "We have to face quite a new kind of trouble on our own frontiers. This frontier trouble with China is a major event for us and for India it might well be considered to be a historical development which will pursue us for a long time." The letter betrayed Nehru's incapacity and indecisiveness in handling the Chinese incursions. The peaceful relations with China, which he dreamt of, lay shattered and it was to become a veritable nightmare for him. But even at this stage he was unwilling to confess that he had committed a 'Himalayan Blunder' in acquiescing to the take over of Tibet by the Chinese communists. For almost a year Nehru had been only speaking about Chinese encroachments, while they had been stealthily connecting the areas illegally grabbed by them with a network of communications and motorable roads for their military.

Amazingly, even in 1961, he did not deem fit to give due importance to the logistic requirements of the Indian Army. Nehru took little notice of the warnings of Lt. Gen. Daulat Singh GOC-in-C Western Command and Gen. S. P. P. Thorat. Nehru went about implementing his forward policy, without any backing from the military or logistic support. This led to utter disaster and collapse.

In a letter to Sri Prakasa, Dr. Rajendra Prasad then President of India said: "I agree with you that in the matter of Tibet we acted not only unchivalrously, but even against our own interest in not maintaining the position of Tibet as a buffer state and thus exposing a frontier of about 2500 miles to the Chinese except for a small strip belonging to Nepal. I feel that the blood of Tibet is on our head and we must do *prayaschit* (penance) which is already being forced on us."

Nehru felt very piqued when he received a second letter from the President of India and suggested that he should communicate with Nehru only verbally and not through letters. This did not appeal to the President who wrote back: "I have been worried by your suggestion that I should send for you and speak to you if I have anything to communicate rather than write. I am afraid this will stultify me in performing my constitutional duty to bring to the notice of the government any matter which I desire to communicate to it in the way I consider best."

Mr. Agrawal the author of this book has done a service to the country by recording unpleasant facts that every Indian needs to know particularly of the role played by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in the betrayal of Tibet a peace loving nation and people who did no harm to anyone.

The struggle of the Tibetan people is not about the struggle for the status of a few Tibetan individuals; it is the struggle of a people. We have already transformed the exile Tibetan administration and community into a genuine democratic system, with a succession of leaders elected for the people by the people themselves. We have thus set up a deeply-rooted, vibrant social and political institution that will carry forward our struggle from generation to generation. In the end, the ultimate decisions will be made democratically by the people themselves.

From a statement by the Dalai Lama on March 10, 2007, the 48th Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day

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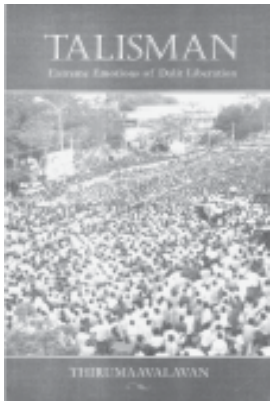

TALISMAN – Extreme Emotions of Dalit Liberation by Thirumaavalavan • Published by Samya, 16, Southern Avenue, Kolkata 700026 • Year of Publication 2003 • Pages 185 • Price Rs.200

Reviewed by Brigadier Suresh C. Sharma (retd.)

The essays by a fiery Dalit intellectual give an account of the caste atrocities and anti-democratic behaviour of the elected governments. These were first published in the Tamil edition, *India Today*, between 2001 and 2003. Atrocities continue to be committed against the Dalits in spite of laws against such discrimination. Democracy and humanism have become objects of ridicule and casteism has permeated all fields like politics, society and economy. The two Dravidian parties – the DMK and the AIDMK – both proclaim the Periyar doctrine of women's liberation, social justice and struggle against Brahiminical oppression. The two are engaged in fierce competition and no benefits have accrued to the Dalits. The consequent political upsurge amongst the Dalits has resulted in increased oppression by the castes that dominate both the political parties. The DMK Government took no action against the people who did not allow the Dalits to contest the Panchayat elections. During the five year rule of the DMK , no nominations were filed in the three reserved constituencies even after six announcements by the Election Commission. There is more violence against the Dalits in Tamilnadu than in other parts of India. This is happening in a land, once known for a strong movement against the caste system.

The same apathy continued during the AIDMK rule. The compensation given to the four Dalits hacked by the caste fanatic Naidus was twenty five thousand rupees, while the victims of the temple stampede were given one lac each. It stands out that the OBCs are responsible for this wave of oppression, yet there is a constant tirade against the Brahminical party of Jaylalitha. The author is a strong votary of the Tamil culture and language and advocates support to the LTTE. He regrets the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi on humanitarian grounds, condemns terrorism by the Sri Lankan State but has no sympathy for the innocent citizens killed by the bomb blasts of the LTTE in the name of Tamil liberation. His passion for Tamil culture and history leads him to question the indigenous origin of the Aryans. He calls it fabrication of history even though the evidence for Aryan migration is questionable. A better course would be to mention both the points of view. This approach will encourage a spirit of enquiry amongst the children without hurting the feelings of any particular community.

He is critical of the privatization of the Public Sector due to reservation being available in these units. Losses due to inefficiency and corruption are no concern. The cake which is to be shared by all, Dalits and others, will keep on shrinking leading to bankruptcy. He overlooks that.

Dr. Ambedkar had made a proposal for proportional representation of the various communities in the 40s. He had suggested 40% seats for the Hindus and 32% for the Muslims. This would ensure that the minority community is not at the mercy of the majority community. Thirumavaalavam recommends this approach little realizing that all Hindus do not make one political party. There are dissentions amongst them as amongst others. True secularism can only function by creating a wall between religion and the State.

The book gives the viewpoint of a fiery Dalit intellectual on a wide variety of subjects. In the concluding essay, he reverts to his pet theme of Tamil culture, history and language. During the glorious rule of the Cholas, " oxen did not suffice but elephants were needed to thresh" in the fertile land of Tanjore. Today, the people there suffer starvation. The cause of this decline is the blocking of the River Cauvery by Karnataka. Kerala has also entered the field by constructing a dam across the River Bhavani. He sees hostile conspiracy all around and condemns the apathy of the Tamil politicians and the Central Government. He wants the "retrieval of the identity, individuality and the authority that the Tamilians have lost regrettably. The only potent medicine for that retrieval is the Tamil nationalism that says " Tamil Nadu is for the Tamilians alone."

Some of the essays continue to be of topical interest, particularly due to the recent debate on reservation and affirmative action.

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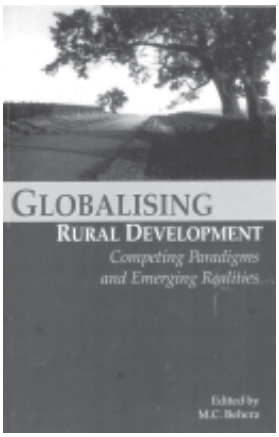

GLOBALISING RURAL DEVELOPMENT - COMPETING PARADIGMS AND EMERGING REALITIES edited by M. C. Behera • Published by Sage Publications, B/11,Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area, Mathura Road, Post Bag 7, New Delhi 110 044 • Year of Publication: 2006 • Pages: 452 • Price: 550

Reviewed By S. Arunajatesan, formerly Deputy General Manager, State Bank of India.

The concept of rural development is neither concise nor precise. It becomes complex and capacious in the background of competing paradigms and emerging realities of globalization. The details on the status of rural development in several countries across the world, make interesting reading. It appears things are not much different whether the countries are in the west or east and whether they are rich or poor.

The critical issues elaborated by the authors who contributed to the compendium are (i) development perspectives change from time to time and from country to country (ii) development is more than economic growth and material gain (iii) for valid reasons countries like India, Bangladesh, Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, have more often focused on employment and poverty alleviation, besides asset creation (iv) Indigenous knowledge and skill have to be valued and preserved (v) gender sensitivity is valued in countries like Ireland, Germany, Italy and EEC countries (vi) the role of NGO's vis a vis state participation and intervention (vii) relevance of the Gandhian concept of rural development and (viii) natural capital and sustainable development. The book contains scholarly presentations by twenty one experts on the subject. The incisive analysis of the issues by each one of them is thought provoking. People involved in developmental activities, more particularly rural development, must read the book.

The major weakness of the rural development programme is the "core" that the World Bank and governments decide and direct the periphery, viz, rural people to implement programmes decided in the office instead of the field. It is not a bottom up approach where the people become the initiator of the process it is top down approach. Therefore the programmes on poverty alleviation, food security, illiteracy and human development became matters for compliance rather than commitment to social objectives.

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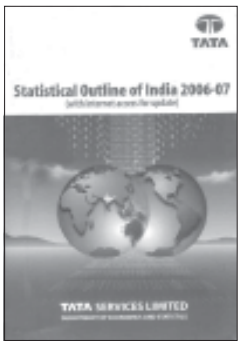

STATISTICAL OUTLINE OF INDIA (2006-07) edited by Siddhartha Roy and R. G. Katoti • Published by Tata Services Limited, Department of Economics & Statistics, Bombay House, 24, Homi Mody Street, Mumbai 400 001 • Email: jjmore@tata.com • Year of Publication 2007 • Pages: 302 • Price: Rs.500

The 33rd edition of the much sought after Statistical Outline of India 2006-07 (popularly known as S.O.) covers a wide spectrum of relevant and useful data. The statistical tables track crucial economic and social parameters at domestic and international levels. The user friendly Pocket Size S.O. would be of immense use to CEOs, CFOs, Chambers of Commerce & Industry, economists & researchers.

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