

Freedom First

The Liberal Position

Strategic Policy Making and the Indian System ⁽⁴⁾

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From Our Readers

Why Not Go the Whole Way?

In 'For the Love of God' ('Cornucopia', *Freedom First*, No.508), Firoze Hirjikaka maintains, and rightly, that the gods (if, indeed, there are gods) are neither benevolent nor vengeful, and that it is not due to them that good or evil befall mankind. An application of logic and common sense, he says, shows that a temple, for instance, survived because it was solidly built on firm ground while the hutments were swept away because they were badly built. 'There was no miracle here,' he says, 'it was simple physics.'

In other words, what happens in the world is either due to empirical causes or to human faults. Absolutely correct. But, then, Hirjikaka's last sentence is puzzling and inconsistent with the rest of his thesis: 'God helps those who help themselves.' If everything happens according to the unrelenting Law of Causation, how and at what point can God break into the casual chain and alter it to help the self-helpers? Let us take logic to its bitter end.

- Sheryar Ookerjee, Mumbai

The Magnificent Maharani



During the heyday of the Swatantra Party, Maharani Gayatri Devi was the jewel in the crown of this grand old party. I was then the Secretary of the Colaba unit of the Party in Bombay.

I can never forget an incident which took place in November 1965 when my wife Havovi and I were honeymooning in Rajasthan. After a ten day sojourn in the fabulous Lake Palace Hotel in Udaipur we proceeded to Jaipur. After doing all the sightseeing and shopping, we still had half-a-day to spare and on a sudden impulse we decided to cycle round the city.

Having traversed quite a distance we came across a huge flag post with the tricolour fluttering atop, so we were a bit curious and made some enquiries and were told that it happened to be *Maharaj ki Kothi*. We went up to the officer-on-duty and told him that we wanted to see the Maharani. He looked us up from tip to toe and was wonderstruck that two of us on a bicycle in totally casual attire wanted to see the Maharani. He tried to dissuade

us from doing so but we persisted so he reluctantly took down our names and rang up the *Kothi* and in a jiffy Maharani Gayatri Devi called us in. As the palace was quite a few furlongs inside from the main gate, we nonchalantly cycled along and on reaching our destination were received by the Maharani herself who was having tea in the lawns of the vast estate. She was good enough to serve us with tea and snacks and we had an interesting discussion on various topics of current interest. This gesture of hers spoke volumes for her simplicity and humility.

Though she passed away recently at the ripe old age of 90 how can we ever forget this blue blooded queen. May her soul rest in peace.

Godrej N. Dotivala, Mumbai

"Power Corrupts ; Absolute Power Corrupts Absolutely"

During the 15th Lok Sabha election, in a particular constituency in India one candidate let loose his agents throughout the constituency with the voters' list and with bags full of Rs.500 currency notes. Every house was visited. Every voter was gifted with a Rs.500 note. The media, police, politicians and Election Commission looked on afraid to stop this foul game. played blatantly. The candidate won hands down. He would have incurred at least Rs.Three crores for his victory. Naturally, he will do whatever is necessary to recover this 'expense' by whatever means. Will the Income Tax department conduct an enquiry regarding the source of funds at the disposal of this candidate?

What is the solution to avert such cruel malpractices? The answer lies in 100% literacy. Look at Kerala. Because of high literacy the electorate cannot be taken for a ride. Film stars and dynasties cannot dupe the highly educated people there.

Prior to Independence in old Madras, Loyala College had a Social Service League. Social Service oriented students manned the league and served the neighbourhood slums. This writer was a group leader in the League in 1947-49. Our Patron was Lady Nye, the Governor's wife. She secured for the League slates, pencils, seeds, oil for bath, and chocolates for distribution to each hut in the slums. We worked on holidays. We saw to it that every child who went to school had a slate and pencil. The land around each hut was cultivated with the seeds supplied to the hut owner. The distribution was without any selfish motive. The slums began smiling and shining. Had all

the educational institutions throughout India followed such an example, within ten years of our freedom, during the regime of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru itself, India would have attained 100% literacy. Even now, in today's Chennai it is not too late to emulate the culture of Loyala College.

K. N. Narayana Pillai. Chennai

More on Madarasas - the Debate continues

This is with reference to the letter from Shri S.C. Panda (*Freedom First*, September 2009) responding to my article on Madarasas (*Freedom First*, June 2009)

Shri Panda has asked me to elucidate on the creation of Pakistan. I would like to suggest him that he may go through the recent book written by Shri Jaswant Singh. Shri Singh is neither a Muslim nor he has been following the ideology of appeasement of Muslims. It is another issue that he has been thrown out of his party. The only mistake he has made is that he has written the correct history of that period.

As far as casualty and loss of property during the partition is concerned, there is no such authentic report which can support the figures quoted by Shri Panda. It was almost at par on both the sides. If we look at Delhi alone, the entire Chandni Chowk, Karol Bagh for instance which were dominated by Muslims were completely devastated and today even one in a hundred business establishments does not belong to any Muslim in these or even in other areas. Most of the Muslims from Punjab (Indian side) and Haryana (except a small area in Mewat) had to migrate leaving everything behind. Also, casualty was very high in all these areas. Muslims also suffered a lot in Bihar and U.P. All these areas which consisted of large numbers of Muslims was converted into completely non-Muslim areas. Even today hundreds of mosques can be seen in these areas which are deserted and most of them have been encroached upon by members of the majority community.

As far as the Gujarat riots are concerned it was never an aftermath of the Godhra train fire. It was a pre-planned activity organised by a section of the Gujarat Hindus and supported by the Gujarat government. It has been proved by a host of reports and documents which emerged afterwards. All these have been written by persons who are not Muslims. Even about the Godhra train fire, there are conflicting reports about how it happened and whether it was done by the local Muslims.

As far as population growth is concerned, it is a

well documented fact that it is related to poverty and lack of education. If Mr. Panda knows ten or twenty families of educated and not so poor Muslims, I am confident that in most of the cases he will find that they have fully adopted small family norms. Growth in population is at par in poor and uneducated sections of the society irrespective of religion, caste or creed. So, there is no reason to blame any particular religion for the same. It is the misplaced policy which is leading to population explosion. There is one more reason for the disparity. Female foeticide is largely prevalent in the majority community. To get one son couples may go on killing any number of to-be-born daughters. Muslims are free from this practice and when we count the population, male and female are treated equally.

About sacrifice of animals on the eve of Bakri-id, cows are not sacrificed in states where cow sacrifice is not allowed. There are states where cow is slaughtered regularly as there is no ban. It is important to note that except in one or two of these all the other states where cow slaughter is permissible the Muslim population is negligible. Even in Kashmir which has a high ratio of Muslims, cow slaughter is banned.

The situation in Pakistan is totally different from India. There some Madarsas might have been the breeding ground for so-called 'Jihadis'. But in India there is no such instance. Here I would like to remind Mr. Panda that during the Punjab insurgency the Golden Temple was used as a fort by the extremists. Does it mean that the Golden Temple should have been demolished and the other Grudwaras locked?

As far as respect for other faiths in Islam is concerned, I will advise Mr. Panda to read the last few Suras of the Quraan. He will come to know that Islam does respect other faiths. In fact the word "Islam" has its origin in the word: "Salam". It means peace and Islam wants peace in all walks of life and in all affairs.

Dr. M. A. Haque, New Delhi.
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Heard This One?

Renaming of NREGS into Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGREGS) has put the UPA into a major political quandry - in Tamil Nadu.

The Union Government's communications to the states including Tamil Nadu is MGR EGS

Jayalalitha is happy with MGR But DMK's Karunanidhi is unhappy with the "MGR" name coming in!

Strategic Policy Making and the Indian System

Admiral Arun Prakash

Considering the fact that India has enjoyed reasonable political stability since independence, we have shown distinct ineptitude in handling most dilemmas and crises that have confronted us, and in safeguarding our national interests, during the past 62 years.

Wages of Indiscretion

While the rationale as well as timing of Mr. Santhanam's melodramatic pronouncement about India's thermo-nuclear prowess will remain a subject of speculation for a long time to come, there can be little doubt that it is an indiscretion of monumental proportions. In the midst of the current brouhaha, we need to retain clarity on one issue; given that deuterium-tritium boosted-fission weapons can generate yields of 200-500 kt, the credibility of India's nuclear deterrent is not in the slightest doubt. However, the same cannot be said about our scientific community, whose credibility has been the biggest casualty of the unseemly squabbling amongst the nation's seniormost scientists.

Whatever the other repercussions of this episode, it will certainly upset and confuse the Indian armed forces. This strong, silent bulwark of India's security has, so far, accepted the claims and statements of DRDO (and DAE) scientists at face value, and borne the operational consequences of many failed scientific projects with admirable stoicism. Will they continue to do so?

The Organizational Gap

The detachment of the Service Headquarters (SHQ) from most aspects of nuclear deterrence is well known. The army's missile brigade, the navy's Prithvi-armed vessels, and the dual-tasked IAF units seem to form the only interface between SHQ on the one side, and SFC as well as DRDO/DAE, on the other. There has, traditionally, been neither interest nor in-depth knowledge of the doctrine or philosophy of nuclear deterrence in the armed forces.

This is true all the way up to the top; and understandably so. The Service Chiefs must dedicate all their time to dealing with operational and administrative issues of their own Service, and since nuclear deterrence has been kept out of their purview by the Government of India, they see no need to spend their valuable time on it. It is only when a Service Chief becomes the Chairman COSC, and finds himself in the nuclear chain of command, that he

scurries around to learn the nuts and bolts of deterrence. Unfortunately, in many cases, the Chairman's tenure is a mere few months, and he finds himself passing on the baton to his successor before he has quite understood the nuances of this arcane subject.

While India has deliberately chosen to declare itself as a NFU nuclear weapon state, one of our adversaries, Pakistan – admittedly the weaker one – not just believes in first use, but has often indulged in nuclear blackmail. She has unofficially declared some conventional “red lines”, the crossing of which will supposedly trigger a nuclear response from her. Thus Pakistan has arrogated to herself the right to escalate a skirmish or encounter into a nuclear conflict when things are not going well for her on the battlefield. It is also noteworthy that Pakistan has taught the world a thing or two about leveraging nuclear capability to wage low intensity conflict with impunity.

Such a situation poses some uncomfortable questions about India's strategic policy making, such as: Does India have a system in place, by which our armed forces can transition seamlessly from conventional conflict to nuclear warfare? Can we absorb an enemy first strike, launch a retaliatory nuclear strike and simultaneously continue to wage a conventional war? Do the Chiefs have trained and knowledgeable staff to oversee such a transition? Are the SHQ continuously working on every possible scenario, including the unthinkable: Nuclear war fighting?

The Historical Backdrop

The root cause of most national security traumas that India has suffered in her turbulent past has been a historical leadership deficit. The fate of people and nations has always been deeply influenced by the quality of leaders that they threw up at crucial junctures in their history. The roles played by Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin and de Gaulle in WW II are clear examples. Considering the fact that India has enjoyed reasonable political stability since independence, we have shown distinct inepti-

tude in handling most dilemmas and crises that have confronted us, and in safeguarding our national interests, during the past 62 years. This is a clear reflection of our inherently diffident attitude as a nation, as well as the glaring lack of strategic vision that we demonstrate.

George Tanham, an American scholar, was possibly the first individual to cast a critical eye on the rationale for India's lack of strategic culture. In the mid-90s his study invoked much displeasure from the prickly Indian elite for postulating certain socio-cultural, historical and even geographic factors, which, he felt, had contributed to the introverted attitude of India's elite and the hubris, which prevented them from acknowledging it. According to him, this had created a strange conundrum whereby India had collected all the trappings of power, without having a clue about how to use it

If we go back far enough in our history we find that ancient Vedic literature was the medium for conveying politico-military strategies and the options available to a strategic leader for conducting affairs of State, including diplomacy and war. Around the 4th century BC, we find a masterly treatise focusing on not just economic policy but also statecraft and military strategy. This was the *Arthashastra*; written for the guidance of kings and rulers, by Kautilya the Prime Minister of the great Mauryan Empire. As a guide for strategic leaders, the *Arthashastra* is a remarkable document rooted in realistic or practical considerations, or realpolitik, as opposed to idealistic notions

The point that one seeks to make here, is that the ancient Indians were masters of strategy as well as the nuances of statecraft; a well developed and sophisticated politico-military philosophy was also available to the strategic leaders of those times. But something obviously changed subsequently.

There is a theory that in the early part of the first millennium BCE, India's socio-cultural milieu underwent progressive transformation by movements which propagated spiritualism, asceticism and *ahimsa* or non-violence. Strategic awareness and pragmatism were thus superseded by excessive religiosity and spiritualism; overseas travel being declared taboo by Hindu orthodoxy was just one manifestation.

India, thus, stagnated intellectually, and consequently lost strategic focus; a situation, which prevails till today. Ironically, a direct result of this was a long era of domination by foreign invaders, which further eroded our self-respect and engendered a deep sense of diffidence and timidity.

Our Post-Independence Record

At independence three main factors influenced India's policies and stance. Firstly, as an economically poor and militarily weak nation state, we were not confident of safeguarding our security interests. Secondly Mahatma Gandhi's unique philosophy of *ahimsa* and passive resistance, was more successful in the freedom struggle than the endeavours of people like Subhas Bose who had raised armed forces, both in Europe and in Asia, to wage war against the British Empire. And lastly, there was a strong urge to keep the armed forces at a distance and out of the policy making loop, since they were, erroneously, perceived as instruments of colonial oppression.

The leadership of newly independent India decided to adopt a lofty moral posture and pursued policies like non-alignment, universal disarmament, and "*Panchsheel*". This was perhaps a pragmatic attempt by Nehru to insulate the country from intervention and buy some time for the developmental process to take root. However, in his idealism, he completely overlooked the important role of military strength as a component of comprehensive national power. Consequently, by adopting a cautious and timid approach India encouraged its neighbours to take unwarranted liberties.

Crisis situations are the crucible for testing leadership, and India has faced many in the past 60 years. In few of our predicaments or crisis situations (save the 1971 conflict), up to and including the 26/11 Mumbai terror strikes, have we demonstrated clarity of strategic vision, coherent thought processes and resolute action. These are the lacunae, which have justifiably earned India the tag of a "soft state". Such attributes send the wrong signals to neighbours, and can by themselves be a provocation for aggressive acts on their part.

The Genesis of India's Nuclear Programme

Apart from their intrinsic import, Mr. Santhanam's recent utterances also draw attention to a now familiar lack of institutional coherence, consistency and accountability in our system. In the context under discussion, the genesis and evolution of our nuclear programme are relevant and bear a brief examination.

India's nuclear programme was born from the vision of Dr. Homi Bhabha, and it was as far back as 1945, that this brilliant scientist acquired funds to establish the key Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in Mumbai. In 1946, the Indian Atomic Energy Commission was formed under Bhabha's chairmanship, to be sanctified two years later by an act of Parliament, which shrouded all its activities in a dense cloak of secrecy. In those early years,

no field of science appeared more promising and prestigious than atomic energy.

Fortuitously for India, Bhabha and Nehru had much in common as far as their Westernized background and outlook were concerned, and the two evolved a synergistic vision for India's future nuclear plans. Both felt that the British had retarded India's industrial development and the fastest way to catch up with the world and, at the same time, to ensure India's rapid progress, was to produce cheap electricity from nuclear reactors. However, there are many indicators, which clearly show that the possibility of India producing nuclear weaponry was never far from the minds of both Bhabha and Nehru.

While Nehru was statesman enough to recognize that nuclear weapons would give India the standing that she yearned for, in a Western-dominated world, his moralistic abhorrence of nuclear weaponry was a major constraining factor. He therefore deliberately chose an ambivalent stance, which has endured to this day.

Bhabha, as a dedicated scientist, was not bound by any such belief or posture, and clear-headedly drove independent India's nuclear policies. He set about implementing his vision of a three-stage breeder reactor project, which included plutonium; an ingredient vital for a weapon programme. In fact, by 1964, India's first plutonium separation facility had become operational in Trombay, and other elements of the programme were progressively put in place.

Having made a sound and early start in this field, where did we then go wrong?

Who Makes Policy?

India's moral and cultural aversion to nuclear weapons, coupled with domestic preoccupations and economic stringency can be blamed only in part for the indecision that has marked our halting progress in the nuclear arena. In the post-independence era, the high political stakes and sustained intensity of electoral politics of our evolving democracy have obviously not permitted the political leadership to devote adequate time and attention to issues and policy-making related to national security.

The question that arises, then is: If it is not the political leadership, then who has been taking strategic policy decisions and guiding the nuclear and missile programmes which have involved an expenditure running into of thousands of crores so far, and have had a crucial bearing on our survival as a national entity? This is the interesting issue, which has been dealt with comprehensively in an authoritative account by the American

analyst and author George Perkovich.

According to him, in early October 1964, Dr. Homi Bhabha, who happened to be on a visit to London, announced that India had the scientific know-how to explode an atom bomb within 18 months of a decision being taken to do so. A week later, when the Chinese undertook their nuclear test on 16 October 1964, Dr. Bhabha spoke on All India Radio. Spelling out the advantages of nuclear weapons, he is reported to have said that they: "gave a State possessing them a deterrent power against attack from a much stronger State." He went on to quantify the costs involved, stating that a 10 kiloton "explosion" would cost Rs.17.5 lakhs, while the cost of a 2 megaton "explosion" would be Rs.30 lakhs, and a stockpile of 50 atom bombs would cost Rs.10 crores.

That Dr Bhabha proved to be well off the mark, in both his time and cost estimation of a nuclear capability is not really relevant here. What must be noted is that for reasons which may have been largely technological, he strongly advocated exploration of the nuclear weapon option by India; influencing not just the nascent Indian scientific community, but also the country's political leadership. Our politicians, constrained as they were by the nation's post independence moral posture, may have expressed disagreement in public, but could not entirely ignore the advice, or resist consistent pressure of the scientific lobby.

This created the paradigm that India's political leadership has chosen to follow for the past 62 years. The task of charting the nation's path in the esoteric field of nuclear and missile technology has been entrusted to the country's scientific enclave (consisting of DAE and DRDO scientists), while Indian statesmen have maintained the high moral stance associated with universal nuclear disarmament. Significant decisions involving considerable expenditure, leading eventually to the evolution of a nuclear deterrent and a missile force have been taken on the exclusive advice of the scientific enclave. The armed forces have not been asked to participate in the process.

Here it must be stated that while nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) protection are part of many military curriculums, the armed forces, as an institution, have not been exposing their officer corps, to the nuances of either nuclear deterrence or nuclear war fighting, so far.

This isolation, whether intentional or inadvertent, has been so complete that the armed forces were never tasked to undertake an environmental assessment, a threat analysis or a strategic prognosis to assist crucial decision-making warranted by *inter alia*, the following semi-

nal events:

- China's nuclear explosion in 1964.
- The prelude or aftermath of India's PNE in 1974.
- During the period of over a decade that Pakistan was known to be racing towards attainment of a clandestine nuclear capability.
- When the full scope of China's clandestine support to the Pakistani nuclear weapon or missile programme became known.
- In the period leading up to, or after Pokhran II.

There is considerable speculation on this issue in published literature. Some justify this segregation on the ground that given the modest arsenal that our situation required, and the minimalist attitude of India's polity, they considered that association of the armed forces with the nuclear programme could result in demands for a large nuclear arsenal resulting in a sub-continental arms race.

Whatever the veracity of this theory, a related incongruity which emerges is that no Staff Qualitative Requirements have ever been asked for by the Government of India, nor written by the Service HQs for strategic missiles and nuclear warheads to be deployed by the armed forces. In the absence of such SQRs, or even a dialogue with the end users, the scientists and engineers have worked in what may be termed a "strategic vacuum", and delivered what was best in their judgment, with many adverse or skewed consequences.

Lack of Independent Advice

A situation wherein the nation's complete nuclear weapon programme is largely conceptualized controlled and operated by civilians, may have been understandable when we were in an evolutionary era of testing or technology demonstration, but 10 years after Pokhran II, such an arrangement loses its validity in the context of a nuclear weapon state with a growing arsenal. While the nation can fervently hope that it will never be faced with a nuclear conflict, it is courting disaster to keep the armed forces isolated during peacetime, from the systems and weapons which they may have to deploy at extremely short notice, during the fog and turbulence of war.

India's unique policy of continued separation of the military from nuclear policy and decision-making is an open secret internationally. This issue not only receives frequent media attention and is analyzed at great length in writings on India's nuclear programme, but invites incredulous comment and speculation; all of which serves to erode the credibility of the nuclear deterrent.

In the Indian system of governance, the Prime Minister holds all the levers of authority, and portfolios like atomic energy and space being the essence of national power, have traditionally remained in the PM's personal charge. Since the head of the AEC works very closely with the PM, the incumbent has traditionally tended to exert extraordinary influence on nuclear policies and decision-making. However, there is no institutional provision in the system to provide any checks and balances or for the PM to receive independent advice on any issue; nor does he probably have the time for such exploration.

This methodology has remained more or less unchanged since independence, and the Santhanam controversy should induce us to cast our mind back over events of the past decade.

Deterrence Credibility

Deterrence certainly lies in the mind of the opponent, and unless the potential adversary is thoroughly convinced of its credibility (in all its aspects) there is a very real danger of "deterrence breakdown", an issue, of which we have not yet taken full cognizance. The deafening silence that followed Pokhran I for the next 24 years exposed the total lack of a military, political or technological strategy to guide India's subsequent actions in the arena of nuclear weapon development.

Equally unfathomable was the logic and timing of Pokhran II, as well as some of the actions that followed this defining event. Having voluntarily and gratuitously declared (without consulting a single military person), a "moratorium on testing" and offered a "no first use" guarantee within days of the 1998 tests, the Indian Nuclear Doctrine then bravely threatens to inflict "unacceptable damage" on the originator of a first strike. Mr. Santhanam's skeptical views have a significant bearing on the existing and future India-China-Pakistan nuclear equation.

India's claims with regard to the performance of the nuclear devices tested both during the 1974 PNE, as well as during the multiple tests carried out on 11 May 1998 have been vigorously disputed by sections of the international scientific community, and these arguments have often received support from within India. Without entering into complex details, the crux of the arguments, which dispute Indian claims can be summarized as follows:

- That the yield of the 1974 PNE was significantly lower than the claimed "12-13 kilotons", due to a sub-optimal nuclear implosion.
- While Western scientists accept that the 15 kt fis-

sion device detonated successfully, many have divergent interpretations of the seismic data generated on 11 May 1998. This causes them to insist that the fusion-boostered fission trigger failed to ignite the fuel in the secondary, and thus the 43 kt thermonuclear test was unsuccessful.

In hindsight, the Western critique of the 1974 PNE has served to cast doubts, not only on the 1974 event, but also on the 1998 tests in whose analysis the seismic data from the PNE was used as a comparative baseline. Thus if the 1974 claims were erroneous, by inference, so were the 1998 ones. Indian scientists have decried this criticism as motivated foreign attempts to belittle their significant achievements through a disinformation campaign. They are possibly right, and Dr. R Chidambaram has himself published a scientific paper in “*Indian Nuclear Society News*” of December 2006, which logically sets forth various data of the 1998 tests to validate Indian claims.

Nevertheless it is, regrettably, true that this controversy did plant the seeds of doubt in the minds of Indians as well as our potential adversaries regarding the validity of the 1998 nuclear tests. Santhanam has, for reasons unknown, now revived all the old ghosts. The dogged assertion by our scientists that data generated by just three (simultaneous) hot tests is sufficient for all times to come, has added to the prevailing skepticism, especially when viewed against the history of 1050 tests carried out by the USA, 750 by the USSR and 45 by China.

The set of nuclear tests undertaken by China as late as 1997 were understood to be an indicator of their modernization programme seeking more accurate missiles, and smaller warheads with better yield to weight ratios. If nuclear weapons are indeed “an integral part of India’s national security” as asserted by our permanent representative in the UN as recently as 23 September 2009, it appears inevitable that at some point in the not too distant future, the need will arise for Indian scientists to validate new warhead designs; especially those to be used for underwater launch by our newly launched nuclear

submarine Arihant.

Conclusion

By their ingenuity and intellectual skills, India’s scientists have scaled tremendous technological heights in the past 62 years, and given the nation a great deal to be proud of. However, with the best possible intentions and the most patriotic motives, it is possible for the scientific community to go off track in their enthusiasm, and divert considerable resources to scientific pursuits with uncertain benefits to national security. The only way to guard against this is to ensure that decision-making regarding major scientific initiatives takes place under close political guidance with military advice.

In the paradigm that India has chosen to follow, the scientific lobby enjoys unique and unfettered access to political authority. Unlike any other matter of national importance where the Cabinet Committee on Security exercises ultimate authority, issues and proposals emanating from this enclave are dealt with directly by the PM, perhaps in consultation with one or two trusted bureaucrats or diplomats. This kind of structure makes it virtually impossible for any questioning of overstated scientific claims, or review and oversight of strategic policies and their implementation.

We have managed in this fashion since independence, and history will sum up the enormous price that we may have paid for this personalized style of functioning. Now that we aspire to be a major power, it is essential that we create institutions for oversight of technological endeavours, and introduce institutional checks and balances, which will help us, take major decisions in a rational and logical manner.

ADMIRAL ARUN PRAKASH retired in November 2006 and is currently Chairman of the National Maritime Foundation and a member of the National Security Advisory Board.

This article first appeared on the website of the National Maritime Foundation - www.maritimeindia.org and published with their permission.

Irving Kristol

To the present generation, Irving Kristol who passed away on September 19, will be a hazy name for most of them have grown up in a different milieu with communism more or less totally discredited with the alternative Capitalist order not being able to fill the political void for it has been generating problems not easily workable.

The journal *Encounter* under his editorship had a unique intellectual vibrance that made it the leading journal of the period and most of us went to college by reading its pages and imbibing the abiding values of western liberation. He belonged to the generation of activist intellectuals of New York, many of them Jewish who remained critical public intellectuals continually debating issues, founding and editing journals and writing books. Many of them kept issues on the cauldron and their public role was indeed irreplaceable; they were political gurus to more than a generation.

R.S

Point Counter Point

Ashok Karnik

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

The Chinese Dragon

1. The uneasy relations with China keep disturbing this country from time to time despite reassuring noises from the foreign office mandarins, Ministers, the NSA etc There are frequent reports of violations by the Chinese in NEFA, Sikkim, Utarakhand and Ladakh. The army plays these down without actually explaining why such incidents are being reported so frequently. The NSA talked of the satisfactory talks going on with the Chinese. How many rounds have gone by and what progress has been made is unclear; there is more hope than conviction since we have gone down this road for the last 50 years. The Chinese also assure us that the border dispute can be resolved once for all. We do not understand the Chinese doubletalk. It is clear that the Chinese are not prepared to accept Arunachal Pradesh as part of India and constantly assert their claims to various other areas through pinpricks of minor incursions. It is as if they test our sensitivity to the pinpricks. The Chinese have now found a new way to spite India by issuing visas to Kashmiris on a stapled sheet of paper instead of stamping it on the Indian passport; that is to drive home the point that it regards J&K as a 'disputed' area.

1. China has never accepted the McMahon Line between India and Tibet. Hence the dispute. Unfortunately, India accepted China's suzerainty over Tibet unconditionally or else we would have had no border to discuss with the Chinese. Now we are sticking to the agreement between the British and the Tibetans through which the McMahon Line was recognised. This is indeed a legalistic argument since the Line was never drawn on the ground. A group of scholars/historians on our side suggest that India should give up the legalistic, jingoistic stance and adopt a more flexible policy. In fact, their sage advice is that since nationalism is *passé* and borders are a vanishing concept, India should adopt a more mature approach to the whole dispute. Why China is sticking to its narrow outlook and how India's philosophical approach could negate the Chinese claims over vast territories of India is not spelt out. Good intentions do not make good diplomacy is a lesson India learnt the hard way in 1962. Jawaharlal Nehru's world vision and faith in 'friends' led us nowhere except to disaster. What can we do now except to stand firm and not give in to impatience or to the Chinese tactics of attrition?

Tharoor's Humour

2. Shashi Tharoor is a political outsider and that shows in his freshness and political naiveté; his virtue has become a handicap in the humourless world of politics. For a politician, every word of the High Command is holy grail; nobody can treat it with levity, and not at all a Minister who is a spokesman of the Government at all times, whether he intends to be or not. How dare he make fun of the pronouncement from the Mount, which 10 Janpath is for all Congressmen? Perhaps the High Command itself may take it lightly but not the Praetorian guards. There were immediate cries for Tharoor's resignation. To a lesser degree but equally pertinent was Tharoor's suggestion that Gandhi Jayanti could be better celebrated by working rather than holidaying. This applies to all '*jayantis*' but would be unacceptable to most of our countrymen!

2. What was so offensive in Tharoor's 'twitter' about 'cattle class' travel and 'holy cows' like the austerity drive? Austerity has very little impact on a country's economy; it is a symbolic gesture rather than an answer to economic woes. Symbolic actions have importance in public life but we should allow people to disagree on such trivial matters. It would be a mark of maturity. Austerity should be one's way of life – not an occasional show of empathy with the poor. Our politicians have obviously not heard of 'twitter' and it is doubtful if many have ever reached out to the internet. How can we expect them to react to light hearted banter? For them, every word uttered by a leader is loaded with meaning. His pronouncements are serious business. It will take years for them to understand that an official Ministerial statement and his private banter are two different things. We require more Tharoors in politics before we appreciate humour.

Wise men talk because they have something to say; fools talk because they have to say something.

Pakistan's Credibility

3. Pakistan and credibility are antonyms! What have we heard from Pakistan so far that has turned out to be true? Pakistan claimed to have never heard of Dawood Ibrahim when he was cozily ensconced in the bungalow provided by the ISI; Pakistani army was avowedly not involved in Kargil till Pak soldiers' bodies were identified and later the double-talk specialist Musharraf claimed that his 'adventure' in Kargil had helped bring the Kashmir issue before the world. His own Prime Minister also wanted him prosecuted for bringing disgrace to Pakistan in Kargil! Pakistan refused to trace the background of the perpetrators of 26/11 attack in Mumbai even after all the terrorists were identified as Pakistanis; The brains behind the attack were also identified but Pakistan wants the victim (India) to provide more evidence to prove the case in its court; It is helpless to do anything on its own! How a foreign country (India) can collect evidence of what happened in Pakistan is beyond logic. To add laurels to its achievements in duplicity, its own nuclear hero (Dr. Khan) has revealed the Pak-China-North Korea-Iran-Libya axis in nuclear proliferation. Musharraf had the further audacity to claim that he had done great service to Pakistan by diverting US aid to prepare for a fight against India. If this is not perfidy, what is?

3. With so much to go on to judge Pakistan, the world still wants to help Pakistan survive! Is it reverse psychology or what? The greater the trouble you create, more the cookies you get. An international pariah like Pakistan, which lies about almost everything important, gets more and more US aid because the US and the world is afraid that Pakistan will go over the brink if not handled tenderly. It has to be mollicoddled so that it remains in the fold of civilization. The US senate has passed a bill releasing US \$ 7.5 bn non-military aid to Pakistan, with some conditionalities. It is for 5 years, and every 6 months the US Administration has to report to the Congress that the aid has not been misused. Is it possible for a foreign country to keep tabs of this kind? How Pakistan hoodwinked the US in the past has been revealed proudly by Musharraf. What use are conditionalities then? The fear of Pakistan going berserk drives US policy. Does this kind of policy ever succeed? Do you have to bribe a child constantly for it to behave well? International diplomacy is taking strange turns, trying to save a country in spite of itself!

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

Warren Buffet

There was a one hour interview on CNBC with Warren Buffet, the second richest man, who has donated 31 billion to charity. Following are some very interesting aspects of his life.

1. He bought his first share at age 11 and he now regrets that he started too late.
Things were very cheap at that time. Encourage your children to invest.
2. He bought a small farm at age 14 with savings from delivering newspapers.
One could have bought many thing with little savings. Encourage your children to start some kind of business
3. He still lives in the same small three-bedroom house in mid-town Omaha, that he bought after he married 50 years ago. He says he has everything he needs in that house .His house does not have a wall or a fence.
Don't buy more than what you "really need" and encourage your children to do and think the same.
4. He drives his own car everywhere and does not have a driver or security people around him.
5. He never travels by private jet although he owns the world's largest private jet company.
Always think how you can accomplish things economically.
6. His company, Berkshire Hathaway, owns 63 companies. He writes only one letter each year to the CEOs of these companies, giving them goals for the year. He never holds meetings or call them on a regular basis.
Assign the right people to the right jobs.
7. He has given his CEOs only two rules: *Rule No.1:* Do not lose any of your shareholder's money. *Rule No.2:* Do not forget rule no.1
Set goals and make sure people focus on them
8. He does not socialize with high society crowd. His pastime after he gets home is to make himself some pop corn and watch Television.
Don't try to show off, just be yourself, and do what you enjoy doing.
9. Warren Buffet does not carry a cell phone not has a computer on his desk.
10. His advice to young people: "Stay away from credit cards (bank loans) invest in yourself and Remember:
 - A. Money doesn't create man but it is man who created money
 - B. Live life as simple as you are.
 - C. Don't do what others say just listen to them, but do what you feel good.
 - D. Don't go on brand name; just wear those things in which you feel comfortable.
 - E. Don't waste your money on unnecessary things; just spend them on what you really need rather.
 - F. After all it is your life then why give a chance to others to rule our life."

Courtesy: From the Net

The Return of One Party Dominance?

– A Rejoinder

Sharad Bailur

**Even if the UPA is in better shape now than in its first term it still is a coalition.
It must still listen to the Mamatas and the Karunanidhis.**

I liked H. R. Babu Satyanarayana's article on this matter in the issue of October 2009. But I have a bone or two to pick with not just the title but also the conclusions.

First let me make it clear that I am no great admirer of the Congress that has had the likes of Deva Kanta Baruah and Sanjay Gandhi among its commissars. Nor did I hold the Emergency in much admiration in spite of the fact that more than just Mrs Gandhi were to blame for what transpired then, and many among them were on the other side of the political divide.

What bothers me about this article and the title is the impression sought to be created that we have taken the first step towards a dictatorship by the Congress. A bit of history will put this to rest.

Beginning with the first election the Congress held undisputed sway over the political fortunes of this country right up to the time of the unfortunate Emergency and its subsequent withdrawal that saw the defeat of the Congress and the ascent of the so-called Janata Party. It could have turned the country into a one party dictatorship in Nehru's time itself. The fact that it did not must go to the credit of the Congress irrespective of our personal likes or dislikes. Turn this around and speculate what the BJP (or then the Jan Sangh) would have done in its place. Would it have allowed liberal democracy to flourish?

In that first defeat the Congress did not collapse into mutual recriminations and fear that it would vanish as a political force. It stayed the course and brought the Janata government to its knees in less than half the time that the Janata had to serve out a full term. The methods employed may or may not have been ethical but they were politically within the laid down law.

It then went on to win the elections with varying success until the NDA finally came to power and the Congress lost out. Once again it bided its time and waited for things to turn its way. With the NDA in the saddle, the BJP's ill-concealed triumphalism started to manifest

itself. When it unexpectedly lost the election of 2004 the top brass of the BJP were stunned into disbelief, so much so that they went in a body to meet the new Prime Minister Mr. Manmohan Singh to tell him a thing or two about how to run the office of PM. He sent them away with a flea in their ear.

Their disbelief at their loss continued to haunt them right through the first five years of UPA governance and they kept insisting that the Congress had not mastered the art of coalition politics; that the UPA government was a nine day wonder. When it lasted the full term, in spite of the Left-BJP combine's attempt to turn it out over the nuclear deal debate, it found itself facing an election that it *had* to win.

When the 2009 elections gave victory to the UPA in even greater measure the BJP's disbelief turned to despair. Here was a party of natural super-patriots who were born to rule the country, who had been rejected by the electorate not once but twice over. The angst and inability to digest this extraordinary turn of events has resulted in the major upheaval that the party has been facing these last few months.

Now contrast this with what happened to the Congress in defeat – first when Indira Gandhi lost and the Janata Party coalition won and later when Vajpayee led the NDA. In both cases the Congress handed over power without much fuss, if not with much grace, and went on to plan its way to victory with or without partners in future elections. It did not suffer from the kind of fear of being wiped out of existence that the BJP seems to manifest.

What is being brought out here is the clear difference between one party that understands the ebb and flow of democratic politics and the changing fortunes of political parties and another that does not, and believes that it alone is born to rule, preferably for all time to come. Which would a liberal rather have – the incipient absolutism of the BJP or the liberal ethos that the Congress exhibits even as it shows signs of the same triumphalism that

infected the BJP?

Now to the issue of the return of one party dominance. In a liberal democracy like ours it is expected that one party should have an absolute majority (though not a two thirds majority) while the opposition should occupy the rest of the seats amounting to about 49% of the Parliament. If that is one party dominance by the Congress or the BJP so be it. The other minnows both big and small merely serve to muddy the waters.

in its first term it still is a coalition. It must still listen to the Mamatas and the Karunanidhis. The Congress may be better off. But any attempt to portray it as a single party “dominating” the polity of India, to the exclusion of all others, is manufactured bunkum made more malicious by the fact that no such attempt was made to describe any victory by the BJP during its days in power.

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Second even if the UPA is in better shape now than

Germany's New Coalition Government

The Christian Democratic Union (CDU) remains the largest party in the German parliament despite losses in the recent elections, winning 33.8% of the vote. She secured a mandate to form a new coalition with the pro-business Liberal Democrats (FDP, 14.6 %).

The “grand coalition” of Germany's two biggest parties, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the left-leaning Social Democratic Party (SPD), has been voted out of office. Angela Merkel remains as chancellor but her new governing partner will be the liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP), which scored its best result ever on Sunday September 27. The change of partners portends a sharp shift in the priorities and tone of Germany's government.

The new “black-yellow” government is a reincarnation of a coalition that governed Germany from 1983 to 1998 but with the FDP now in a considerably stronger position. The FDP is a pro-business party that champions reforms of social security, civil liberties, and above all lower and simpler taxes. It strongly opposes many of the policies that Ms Merkel adopted during the grand coalition to placate her SPD partners, such as minimum wages and give-aways to pensioners. The course of government over the next four years will largely depend on how tensions relating to such policies are resolved.

The FDP and the CDU may clash over civil liberties. The FDP objected to many of the anti-terror policies backed by the conservative interior minister, Wolfgang Schäuble, most recently a proposal to expand the powers of the domestic intelligence agency. The two parties are closer on the vexed issue of nuclear power. They may well agree to allow nuclear plants to continue operating beyond 2022, the deadline set by an earlier SPD-Green government. Mr. Westerwelle is expected to become foreign minister and vice-chancellor. He is better known for his views on taxes than on how to handle the relationship with Russia, what to do about Iran or how deeply Germany should be involved in Afghanistan, but he is unlikely to break sharply with current cautious policies. In any case Ms Merkel will still call the shots.

The election brought about what may prove to be a lasting realignment in German politics. It is a blow for both the *Volksparteien*. The SPD with 23% of the vote scored its worst result in modern history and moves into opposition for the first time in 11 years. But the CDU's performance was no triumph either. Despite Ms Merkel's popularity, it won just 33.8% of the vote, its smallest share in 60 years.... After four years of horse trading and compromise in the grand coalition, the identities of both the main parties had been blurred and many of their voters were disenchanted. The gainers were the three smaller opposition parties: the FDP, the Greens and the ex-communist Left Party. Voter turnout was a record low of 70.8%.

The results mark a return to more traditional politics with the two big parties in opposition to each other and a clear distinction between right and left.

Courtesy: *Open Democracy*, September 28, 2009

Jaswant Singh : The Book, Expulsion and Thereafter

Keshav Rau

No one can deny Mr. Jaswant Singh his right to hold such views. But what about the views of the BJP of which he was a member for three decades?

Jaswant Singh may have been with the Bharatiya Janata Party ever since its transformation from the Jana Sangh, but never during the 30-odd years of his association with the Party was he ever considered to be a front-rank leader of the Party. No doubt, the Party conferred on him the honour of heading two very important Ministries at the Centre. It's also very well-known that he was a close confidant of Atal Behari Vajpayee. The latter obviously found something in common in him on an intellectual and literary plane. Yet all these privileges which Jaswant Singh enjoyed did not at any stage make him fit enough to be taken note of as somebody with a weighty voice – let alone be in the line of succession within the Party. He may have won a few elections, but the absence of a sizeable following behind him was always conspicuous. Ample confirmation of this is provided by the manner in which he had to shift base to Darjeeling to get back to Parliament in the 2009 elections.

However, the publication of his latest book on Jinnah and Partition of the country has catapulted him into a type of limelight which he had never experienced in his entire political career. The BJP also lent him an aura of a martyr by expelling him. Resultantly: Jaswant Singh has emerged as the one who has been wronged and meted out a raw deal.

Generally, comments of the BJP leaders, media and others have centred round the dominant theme of the book: Jinnah's approach to attainment of freedom vis a vis the approach of the Congress leaders, mainly Gandhi, Nehru and Patel, the differences of opinion leading up to Jinnah's demand for partition on the basis of "Muslims are a separate nation" theory, the manner in which the Congress tackled Jinnah and his demands and the areas in which the Congress – particularly Nehru and Patel – erred in their approach resulting in the vivisection of the country and the terrible holocaust that followed.

However, there is one more aspect of the book on which not many comments have been made: Jaswant Singh's views on the effect partition has had on the Muslims left behind in the country. His elaboration on these views in interviews and statements given to mark the release of the book has also not been talked about much. These views of Jaswant Singh are as much important as his views on the principal actors of the saga of

partition. This is because it raises a fundamental question as to how even after holding such views, his conscience could have permitted him to join a party – and remain in it for 30 years – which made no bones about consistently taking a stand to the contrary – and continues to do so even today.

Bemoaning that partition has not left the country in peace, Jaswant Singh says it's because the "central problem of relations between Hindus and Muslims still remains, as partition had come escorting a permanent divide between our people". It resulted in not only partitioning the land, but also "cutting up of human societies". His most profound statement: "Those Muslims who remained or were left behind in India now find themselves as almost abandoned, bereft of a sense of real kinship of not being 'one', in their entirety with the rest. This robs them of the essence of psychological security...." He also writes of Muslims also "inevitably demanding a share" in the special rights selectively granted in the Constitution to certain sections of people and the taunting response it evokes in those opposed to such an idea: "Special rights? Still? Even after Pakistan?" Later in an interview to *The Times of India*, he elaborated his views on the post-partition scenario thus:

"A large percentage of my country's population has been rendered non-citizens simply because of faith. Isn't that an absurdity? It is social injustice of the grossest kind. We have psychologically alienated a large segment of people. We cannot fracture people like this. Partition has had huge psychological consequences."

At the time of the release of his book, in Karan Thapar's "Devil's Advocate" TV interview also, he spoke of how alienated and insecure Muslims feel today in the country. He repeated these views in interviews and statements at other media platforms as well. also. The undercurrent in the book as well as his utterances after its release was one of total sympathy for the Muslims of the country and concern for their place as Indian citizens.

Fair enough. No one can deny Mr. Jaswant Singh his right to hold such views. But what about the views of the BJP of which he was a member for three decades? The Party has always held that: (a) the country practices pseudo secularism (b) Muslims are pampered and appeased

(c) Muslims need to be brought within the national mainstream – “Indianisation” of Muslims, as Balraj Madhok would have put it (d) the historical clock should be put back by restoration of Temples desecrated and converted into Mosques centuries ago. In the Party’s scheme of things, Muslims don’t deserve any sympathy. Despite this, Jaswant Singh chose to remain in the Party and be a mute spectator to, for instance, the manner in which Advani whipped up sentiments during the *rath yatra*, which finally led to the destruction of the Babri Masjid or the Gujarat carnage. He may have taken a bold step in writing the book – knowing fully well the fate which Advani met for his utterances after a visit to the Jinnah Mausoleum – but he doesn’t really come out as a man with courage of conviction looking to the views now being expressed by him about Muslims.

Jaswant Singh has also not covered himself with glory by sticking on to the Chairmanship of the Public Accounts Committee [PAC] even after his expulsion from the Party. The arguments advanced by him for not quitting rest purely on technicalities and what is provided for in the Rule Book. But parliamentary democracy is much more than that. Conventions and traditions play an important part. Jaswant Singh would also be aware of it. A

few months back the country witnessed a similar such blow to parliamentary conventions, when Somnath Chatterjee refused to step down as Speaker of the Lok Sabha even after not sailing along with his Party for moving the motion of No-Confidence. That the action came from an eminent lawyer with years of experience as a Parliamentarian made it all the more galling.

The Congress and all the other parties which are not part of the NDA alliance would be reveling in the discomfiture of the BJP in Jaswant Singh continuing as the Chairman of the PAC. Not a single party has come out to criticize Jaswant Singh on this issue – again sticking to what is provided for in the rules. Removing him from the chairmanship by any party or the Speaker may not be possible under the rules, but bringing moral pressure on him could certainly be attempted. For instance, why can’t all the parties direct its members on the Committee to boycott meetings of the Committee till Jaswant Singh resigns – just as the BJP members have done? Will it be asking for too much from our political parties? Not really so, if they have any concern for parliamentary democracy.

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TEACHER and GURU – The Essential Difference

A teacher takes responsibility for your growth; a Guru makes you responsible for your growth
 A teacher gives you things you do not have and require; a Guru takes away things you have and do not require
 A teacher answers your questions; a Guru questions your answers
 A teacher helps you get out of the maze; a Guru destroys the maze
 A teacher requires obedience and discipline from the pupil; a Guru requires trust and humility from the pupil
 A teacher clothes you and prepares you for the outer journey; a Guru strips you naked and prepares you for the inner journey
 A teacher is a guide on the path; a Guru is a pointer to the way
 A teacher sends you on the road to success; a Guru sends you on the road to freedom
 A teacher explains the world and its nature to you; a Guru explains yourself and your nature to you
 A teacher makes you understand how to move about in the world; a Guru shows you where you stand in relation to the world
 A teacher gives you knowledge and boosts your ego; a Guru takes away your knowledge and punctures your ego
 A teacher sharpens your mind; a Guru opens your mind
 A teacher shows you the way to prosperity; a Guru shows the way to serenity
 A teacher reaches your mind; a Guru touches your soul
 A teacher gives you knowledge; a Guru makes you wise
 A teacher gives you maturity; a Guru returns you to innocence
 A teacher instructs you on how to solve problems; a Guru shows you how to resolve issues
 A teacher is a systematic thinker; a Guru is a lateral thinker
 A teacher will punish you with a stick; a Guru will punish you with compassion
 A teacher is to a pupil what a father is to a son; A Guru is to pupil what a mother is to her child
 One can always find a teacher, but a Guru has to find and accept you
 A teacher leads you by the hand; a Guru leads you by example
 A teacher instructs you; a Guru constructs you
 When the course is over you are thankful to the teacher, When the discourse is over you are grateful to the Guru
 When a teacher finishes with you, you graduate; when a Guru finishes with you, you liberate

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Cornucopia

Firoze Hirjika

Whose Money Is It Anyway?

It is now a given that almost all our politicians possess disproportionate wealth

With assembly elections around the corner, the candidates are hurriedly declaring their assets to avoid disqualification.

For the past few years, NGOs and other groups who purport to be fighting for the democratic rights have been patting themselves on the back for compelling politicians and election candidates to declare their assets. Obtaining and disseminating this information may induce a temporary feel good state of mind, but what is it really worth? What concerned citizens should be asking is how these gargantuan assets were acquired.

It is now a given that almost all our politicians possess disproportionate wealth; and the higher up they are in the hierarchy of their party, the greater are the assets accumulated by them. Indeed, stories of fruit sellers and vegetable vendors becoming multimillionaires after joining

politics are legendary. Take the case of Poonam Mahajan as a typical example. She has declared assets of Rs.12 crores, which include expensive cars and a flat worth Rs. 4 crores. On the face of it, the lady, who is an SSC pass, would have difficulty getting a job as a clerk in a nationalized bank. It is obvious that much of her wealth has been inherited from her late father, Pramod Mahajan. Which raises the question, how did Pramod Mahajan acquire his huge wealth? It is a question that can be asked of almost any political leader.

The fact that our politicians, as a rule, are wealthy way beyond what their qualifications and abilities merit is taken for granted. Why has the general public become so complacent about this? It is we, the people, who have elected them to the exalted positions they now occupy. Don't we have a right to know how they have acquired their assets? This is the real question our civic activists should be asking.

Arresting Hafez Saeed Won't Make A Difference

It is time we got over our penchant for symbolism and recognized the real dangers facing our country.

The Indian government and the Indian public need to get over their obsession with Hafez Saeed, founder of the Pakistan-based terrorist group *Lashkar-e-Toiba*. The man is a mere symbol, a puppet nurtured and controlled by the Pakistan army. Arresting him may satisfy a craving for retribution in many of us, but in material terms, it won't change anything. It will not make the country safer. It is the same situation with Afzal Guru. The man ceased to be a threat the moment he was put behind bars. Yes, he has become a handy and opportunistic football being kicked around by our political parties to score brownie points against each other, but the reality is that he has become irrelevant. What if he is hanged tomorrow? Will it make the slightest change in our lives? Will it make us more secure?

It is time we got over our penchant for symbolism and recognized the real dangers facing our country. Symbolism has long been a powerful weapon in the armoury of politicians, but we, the so-called educated intelligenzia, have fallen prey to it as well. Hafez Saeed is a classic example of this. Our politicians and our media have elevated him to the status of a villain of mythic proportions. We are lead to believe that his arrest and detention will, in one fell swoop, nullify the horror of 26/11 and ensure that it is never repeated.

The fact is that the Pakistani establishment is playing

a very clever cat and mouse game with us. They send out tantalizing signals that Saeed's incarceration and punishment is imminent; and then withdrawing them on a technicality. By showing their reluctance to take action against Saeed, they are furthering the illusion that Saeed is India's enemy number one. Implicit in that is the hope that neutralizing him will get India off their backs. It is very probable that once Saeed has served his purpose, the Pakistan government will lock him up and throw away the key. This will have the added advantage of putting them in the good books of their principal sponsors, the United States.

For the present, however, Saeed is very useful to the Pakistanis. They are hoping – and succeeding – that by focusing attention on this one individual, the Indian government will lose sight of the main threat to their nation: the army and the ISI. Gauging our preoccupation with Saeed, they are again trying to sneak the Kashmir issue into bilateral talks that are supposed to concentrate on 26/11 and terrorism. Do not be surprised if, at a later stage, Pakistan agrees to lock up Saeed as a *quid pro quo* for reintroducing Kashmir in the dialogue.

Few of us appreciate how deep rooted the fear of India is implanted in the psyche of the average Pakistani. Yes, I have heard all the theories about people to people

contacts; and how the nationals of one country when they visit the other, are greeted with extraordinary warmth and hospitality. That may be true but, at the same time, the image of India as a powerful neighbour who is intent on annexing their country has been indoctrinated into Pakistani minds for half a century. This is particularly true of the Pakistani army. No matter what so-called CBMs (confidence building measures) India undertakes, it will never convince the Pakistan army that their neighbour remains the principal enemy. One might say that hatred and distrust of India is the *raison d'être* of the Pakistan army. That attitude is not likely to change at least for the next half century.

That is why Hafez Saeed and others like him are irrelevant. They are mere puppets being controlled and used by their military masters. If he is eliminated, another one will quickly take his place. Indeed, the *Lashkar-e-Toiba*, itself is expendable. If the international pressure to “do something” about them becomes intolerable, the army and ISI will facilitate them in going quietly underground, only to resurface at a later date, perhaps under a different name.

India will always have a hostile neighbour on its Western border. It is time we accept it and learn to live with it.

Should Donald Trump Have Allowed Gaddafi to Pitch his Tent?

Gaddafi is in the United States legally, with a valid visa. He has to stay somewhere.

There is a huge flap currently going on in the United States over the fact that Donald Trump has leased one of his properties in Westchester County to Libyan leader Muammar al Gaddafi as a temporary residence while he is in New York to attend the General Assembly session of the United Nations.

Not surprisingly, passions among ordinary Americans are running high. They regard Gaddafi as a “killer” and are furious at Donald Trump for his insensitivity to popular feelings. Some say he is selling his soul for hard cash. An American friend of mine was agitated enough to make this outburst, “When is enough money enough? Donald, YOU ARE FIRED!!”

One can understand - and even sympathize - with American angst, but in the world of realpolitik, one has to be practical. As long as the United Nations headquarters are located in NYC, you cannot stop heads of state of member nations from attending the General Assembly session. Even as an American embassy in a foreign country is considered American soil, the United Nations could justifiably claim

that it belongs to all its member states. You may justifiably call Gaddafi (and Iran’s Ahmadinejad) known killers, but you cannot dispute their right to attend the General Assembly of an institution they are legitimate members of. If one does not like it, the best solution is to relocate the United Nations in another country.

Also, let us not forget that during the cold war, the United States was quite happy to do business with “killers” like Chile’s Pinochet, so long as he kept the communists in check. One may argue that it served the national interest of the United States at the time. Fair enough. In the same vein, Gaddafi could claim that his speech at the United Nations serves the national interest of Libya.

Perhaps Donald Trump is guilty of a lapse in judgement - although he claims that he cannot be personally aware of who his numerous affiliates rent his properties to - but does he really deserve to be reviled? Gaddafi is in the United States legally, with a valid visa. He has to stay somewhere. Righteous indignation may be therapeutic, but it has to be tempered with reality.

The Allure Of Newsprint

The simple truth is that newspapers are as important to our lives as our daily bread.

I woke up on Monday morning with an inexplicable air of foreboding. I couldn’t make sense of it till I went to the dining room for my morning cuppa and realized there were no newspapers on the table: no *Times of India*, no *Indian Express*, and no *Hindustan Times*. I hollered for the wife, who explained – without the slightest expression of horror on her face – that there would be no newspapers today on account of the Ganapati festival the day before. No *Mid-day* or *Afternoon* either? I asked in a faltering voice. My heart sank when she nodded sedately. I have always had the utmost admiration for the elephant god, but after enduring this purgatory, I may need to re-evaluate my

relations with him.

So what is this mysterious allure newsprint has on many of us? After all, with 24 hour television news channels, news can be obtained with astonishing facility. You can even read the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* online. If anything there is a surfeit of information out there. So why does one day without newspapers represent such a calamity?

Part of it is familiarity, I suppose. Those of us in their forties and above grew up in an age without the internet or

television. The newspaper was our only lifeline to what was going on in the country and the rest of the world. And for some of us, solving the daily crossword was a major, if often frustrating, pastime. But that was then. Television news and the internet have been around long enough to become as second nature as newsprint. But somehow, they cannot compare with the satisfied feeling of holding a broadsheet in your hands, even though turning a page involves a fair bit of calisthenics.

Part of the reason may be the sense of intimacy a newspaper provides. Physical contact can be very comforting. Then again, most newspapers publish letters to the editor, although some are more generous than others in providing space. Although many of the letters are highly opinionated – and some grammatically atrocious – they provide us readers with a faint sense of entitlement. Our

voice may often be ignored by the powers that be, but at least it is being heard. Lately, even television channels have cottoned on to the effectiveness of viewer participation. Thus CNN has its I-Reports and CNN-IBN its Citizen Journalists.

I could analyze this subject to death, but the simple truth is that newspapers are as important to our lives as our daily bread. We may groan and vituperate at the boorishness and antics of our politicians, but not being able to rant about them would be interminably worse. We need them as much as they need us. The elation and relief I experienced on Tuesday morning at the sight of *The Times of India* beside my cup of tea provides ample proof of this.

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Asian Development Bank, and Arunachal Pradesh The Australian Ambivalence

Peter Varghese, the new Australian High Commissioner to India, has said there is need to constructively engage China, let it have a voice in regional and international fora and encourage it to play by the rules as part of a strategy to ensure that its rise does not destabilise.

Speaking to *The Indian Express* Editor-in-Chief Shekhar Gupta on NDTV 24x7's Walk the Talk programme, Varghese said: "The issue here for all of us is how do we constructively engage with China and how do we ensure that China's rise will not be destabilising. And I think the strategy that we all have... that we engage China, we bring them into regional and international institutions, we encourage China to play by the rules, and we give China the room to have a voice in regional and international forums. I think what we are doing is precisely what India is doing with China, it is precisely what the United States is doing with China, it is what Japan is doing with China."

On the issue of Australia voting alongside the Chinese to help the latter win a vote on a disclosure agreement which prevented the Asian Development Bank from formally acknowledging Arunachal Pradesh as part of India, Varghese said: "Australia fully supported the inclusion of Arunachal Pradesh in the India country strategy for the ADB. So there can be no question of what Australia's position is on whether or not Arunachal Pradesh projects should be included in the ADB's programme."

"And that's the key point. This is only an issue about how the ADB should publicly characterize the India country strategy. And the position we took there was to support what the ADB management wanted, which was to issue a press statement on the India country strategy which was silent on Arunachal Pradesh. And the reason the ADB management wanted to take that position was that they didn't want the ADB as an institution getting involved in a political border issue between India and China. So Australia wasn't casting a vote in favour of China and against India. It was casting a vote to support ADB's leadership position."

Asked if Australia had a position on the status of Arunachal Pradesh as a part of India, he said: "With most territorial disputes, Australia's position is to urge peaceful resolution between the two contesting parties and that is the position of most countries to disputes relating to the borders of other countries. So we neither support nor oppose the Indian position on the status of Arunachal Pradesh."

On India's Look East policy, Varghese said "the gravitational pull of your economic interests will take you even further east." He said this would create "a common agenda for India and Australia in terms of East Asian regionalism, architecture, confidence building measures."

Courtesy: Express News Service Online, September 28, 2009

Religious Symbolism or Secularism in State-funded Educational Institutions

Narendra Nayak

We are well known for our moral policing, pub attacks, church ransacking, communal riots and “religious” sentiments getting hurt at the drop of the proverbial hat.

In Kannada there is a popular saying “As connected as Imam Sabi is to *Gokulashtami*” -meaning what does a Muslim have to do with *Gokulashtami*, a Hindu festival? This could be said of Ayesha Yasmin who joined the Bachelor of Commerce course at the S.V.S.College in Bantwal. S.V.S. are the initials for Sri Venkaramana Swami, the popular deity of the Gowd Saraswat Brahmin community who have a lot to do with the founding and managing of this college, though as of now, it is a government-aided institution.

This college got into the headlines for all the wrong reasons as things in this area are now wont to. We are well known for our moral policing, pub attacks, church ransacking, communal riots and “religious” sentiments getting hurt at the drop of the proverbial hat. The latest in this is the curious case of this girl who wants to wear a burkha to college. For those who may not be familiar this term it is a garment which supposedly guards the morals of Muslim women and according to some is the prescribed dress code for every Muslim woman above the age of puberty.

Let me tell you frankly that I may have a bias in this case because the correspondent of the college, Dr. Bhamy V. Shenoy is a close friend of mine and we have fought many an issue together in the consumer and rationalist movements. He has taken a stand against unscientific attitudes and beliefs and has been at the receiving end of uncomplimentary remarks from communalists of various hues. Two years ago, he had conducted a series of lectures on true education and had invited me to speak about superstition. After that he had to face the wrath of the community, the Gowd Saraswat Brahmins into which both of us happen to be born. He had been under attack for inviting a person like me who had encouraged students to ask questions about their beliefs, customs and rituals.

Ayesha came to the class wearing a half burkha. Since the college authorities had banned all kinds of dress connoting the religious identities of its students she was

asked to remove that which led to a confrontation between her, the management and disciplinary action. It was the policy of the management that the students would not be allowed to wear any sort of dress which would be identified with a particular religion. They claimed that on previous occasions when students came to the college dressed in a manner denoting some religious practices, they were not allowed to do so. These students who were Hindus pointed out to this girl who was wearing a burkha which was a Muslim religious symbol and asked the management that if that could be allowed why not their religious costume. In fact they threatened that they would come to college wearing saffron shawls. In a way the management’s hands were forced by students of a particular community and the student organization affiliated to the saffronites. So, action was taken to suspend her from the college.

That was when the issue got blown into an international crisis. Some TV channels, including BBC went on air telecasting how the religious freedom of a community was being threatened by insensitive managements. There were complaints lodged with the district authorities by this girl, her relatives and supporters. Some student organizations took to the streets to protest what they described as interference with the religious rights of the minorities. However, some secular student organizations which had initially said that they would support the cause withdrew citing that while wearing a burkha was the choice of an individual they would not support any organization which was making it compulsory for girls belonging to their community to wear them. This controversy erupted in other colleges too but was settled with the girls being permitted to wear scarves of permitted colours.

The state human rights commission warned the college not to interfere with the religious rights of the students. A number of organizations for and against tried to foment trouble with their statements. Some newspapers too added fuel to the fire. The Mangalore University to which all these colleges are affiliated has now called a meeting of the heads of the institutions to discuss the

issue of a common dress code and ways to enforce it. The controversy had an undesirable effect too. Some of the girls of the Muslim community who were up to then not wearing the burkhas started doing so as a protest against the dress code and what they perceived as interference in their religious matters. Some of the colleges where nuns were attending dressed in the robes prescribed by their orders were in a quandary. If they could be allowed to dress in clothes which were identified with a particular religion why not others? The affair Ayesh Yasmin had opened a can of worms which is now adding fuel to the already surcharged communal atmosphere and the boiling cauldron of communal strife.

Do we of the rationalistic humanistic bent of mind support the freedom of dress of some one however regressive that may appear to us? Do we say secularism at all costs including prescribing a dress code for college students? This is the dilemma that we are facing as of now. If one is going to enforce a dress code what about the Sikhs who wear turbans and beards? If they be allowed to dress according to the dictates of their religion, why not the others? If priests and nuns, under religious training, and also studying in secular educational institutions are allowed to dress according to the rules of their order why not the others? Most of the institutions prescribe trousers and shirts for their male students which were identified at one time with the Christian missionaries and one could argue that it has connections with that religion! That could also apply to white shirts tucked into khakhi shorts worn by you know who!

In the whole cacophony of voices, the academic issues have gone for a toss and instead of improving the education system which is now in a mess, energy and time are being spent on dress codes and religious freedom. The basic questions are still not answered that if some one is allowed to cover the face under the pretext of freedom of religion, what prevents impersonation and malpractice? Why do people want to wear their religion on their sleeve or rather on their face? What is the meaning of true secularism? If the very same principles of secularism were to be applied to all activities in educational institutions, all pujas and such religious rituals should not be allowed. In fact, the very name of the college connotes a deity belonging to a particular religion. If that was to be complied with, what about the innumerable institutions named after Christian saints and Christ himself all enjoying government aid? Why should prayers be held in educational institutions to a god in whom the atheist has no belief? How can religious symbols of the managements of the institutions be allowed to be conspicuously displayed in them? The controversy seems to be never ending. Perhaps, the French type of secularism

in which no religious symbolism of any kind is allowed in any public-funded institutions could solve this problem or would it cause more of them; which government in India would have the courage to do that?

Dr. Narendra Nayak is a well-known rationalist from Mangalore. A post-graduate in Medical Biochemistry, he quit his job as Assistant Professor to continue full time as an activist in the rationalist movement.

Right to Die with Dignity

Where voluntary euthanasia (VE) and/or physician-assisted suicide (PAS) is now legally permitted under guidelines:

1. Switzerland. Physician and non-physician assisted suicide since 1940. VE banned.
2. Colombia. VE since 1997.
3. Oregon. PAS since 1998. VE banned.*
4. The Netherlands. VE and PAS. Since 2002.
5. Belgium. VE. Since 2002.
6. Luxembourg. VE and PAS. Since 2008.
7. Washington. PAS since 2009. VE banned.*
8. Montana. PAS. Since 2008. (Under court review.)

* Oregon and Washington are the only places where the citizens voted for this law in an election.

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Where PAS law reform is currently under active legislative or court consideration:

1. Canada. (Parliament Bill C-384).
2. England and Wales. (Winnick proposal)
3. Scotland. (Margo McDonald Bill)
4. Connecticut. (Drs. Blick & Levine v. CT)
5. New Hampshire. (House Bill 304)
6. Tasmania. (Death With Dignity Bill)

Source: ERGO. www.finalexit.org
 ergo@finalexit.org
 Updated 11 October 2009.

Come On, Liberals: Let's Change India!

A Liberal Perspective on Taxes - Part I

Sanjeev Sabhlok

The idea of a liberal social contract to defend our life and liberty harks back to Thomas Hobbes.

This month and the next I will outline a liberal theory of taxation: something that, surprisingly, does not yet exist (indeed, there are many arbitrary assertions about taxes in the liberal literature but nothing that is fully integrated with the liberal social contract). Before I propose such a theory, let me thank Mr. S.V. Raju for his generous review of my book, *Breaking Free of Nehru*, in *Freedom First* last month. I'd also like to remind you that the book, as published, is now available as a free e-book at <http://bfnsabhlokcivcity.com/>.

Paying for the Social Contract

The idea of a liberal social contract to defend our life and liberty harks back to Thomas Hobbes. The contract authorises governments to provide us with public goods like defence, police, justice, and infrastructure.¹ Taxes are then the fees paid for these goods. The liberal thus considers the proper funding of government activity as an integral part of the free society. This perspective is dramatically different from the 'Neo Classical' or anarchic approaches which consider government activity to be a waste.

The liberal notes that it is *citizens* who, implicitly or explicitly, authorise the social contract (and not companies or other legal entities). Therefore citizens, individually, must pay taxes: not companies or other such entities. Second, it must be mandatory on all citizens to pay taxes except when someone is simply too poor to pay.

How much should these citizens pay? Should there be one flat fee per citizen (poll tax) or should different citizens pay a different amount? There are basically two different price models in the marketplace. (1) In a perfectly competitive market everyone pays the same unit price (such as for a kilo of onions) irrespective of his or her willingness or ability to pay. (2) Monopolistic control, however, allows circuses to fix different prices for different seats for the same performance. Price discrimination (PD) of this sort is based on consumers' differential willingness to pay (note that willingness to pay is the same as the ability to pay under most circumstances). PD is

commonly used in markets, and includes student discounts and different fees charged from Indians and foreigners to enter the Taj Mahal.

Price Discriminating Taxation by the Monopoly State

Economic analysis (made from the demand side) of public goods provision leads us to "Lindahl prices" as the proper solution. According to this each person must pay a different price equal to the worth of the public good to him.² From the supply side the opposite problem becomes: what should the monopoly state (*Leviathan*) charge for its services to ensure that everyone gets what they really want?

The theory of monopoly tells us that where PD is feasible, the monopoly will increase its output to accommodate all preferences and thus produce "the same level of output as would a competitive industry"³. It does so by skimming off all consumer surplus.⁴ Both these analyses lead us to reject outright the poll tax solution: thus, a "tax structure that levies the same tax on all citizens cannot in general be Pareto efficient".⁵ But which of the two: flat tax or progressive tax is a better way to deliver the optimal level of public goods?

Consumer surplus generally increases disproportionately with income for (as illustrated by auctions) the rich are willing to pay disproportionately more than the poor for a given product, since each incremental unit of money has a relatively lower value for them. A flat marginal tax will therefore lead to sub-optimal provision of public goods by not capturing the entire consumer surplus of the rich. A level of progression is therefore more appropriate. In general, tax levels should be set at the point where the rich and poor get *equal disutility* from taxes.

A few other arguments reinforce this conclusion. First, the liberal requirement of a social minimum (basically a universal insurance scheme funded through the tax system) adds an apparent measure of progression to the liberal tax system. More commonly, progressive taxation is needed to offset the many indirect taxes usually

imposed, such as consumption and excise taxes which are highly regressive, hitting the poorest the hardest in relative terms. Even F. A. Hayek, the great advocate of flat taxation, accepted that a modicum of progression would be needed for these two reasons.

But there is one more very important reason that is often neglected. PD is optimal only when the *same* good is provided by a government. If an extra product is delivered to the rich, then a further increment must be charged. It is self-evident that the rich do receive a greater *share* of government services than the poor do. For instance, they use the court system disproportionately more. They also receive a higher *quality* of services. Thus, if a rich person's daughter is kidnapped, the head of Police gets involved, but a similar complaint from a poor slum-dweller may not even get registered. Governments treat the rich as being of value, and the poor of no value. That is totally contrary to the social contract, and even the slightest such discrimination means the rich must be charged progressively.

The Practical Implementation of PD: Hurdle Pricing

A monopoly can only price discriminate if it has complete information about consumer preferences and is able to keep transaction costs (of calculating different prices for each consumer) low. Without these preconditions, it will prefer to impose hurdle pricing by placing hurdles between 'seats' and pricing them differently. "[T]he more finely the monopolist can partition her market under the hurdle model, the smaller the efficiency loss will be."⁶ Governments generally follow a hurdle model with tax brackets based on citizens' ability to pay.

The Rich Never Pay a Flat Tax

The reality all over the world is that only the salaried upper middle classes end up paying the highest marginal tax rates. The rich pay much less than an overall flat tax rate would require, by influencing politicians to create tax shelters, exceptions, exemptions, and loopholes. Thus, Warren Buffet noted in June 2007 that in 2006 he paid only 17.7% of his \$46 million income as tax, while his employees paid 32.9%. And the rich never pay the worst tax of them all: inflation; because they own real estate and shares which are inflation-proof.

Modest Progressive Taxation Recommended

Since the rich don't even pay a flat tax, introducing a genuine overall flat tax will always be an improvement. But other factors prevent the practical implementation of progressive taxation, as well. First, a government can never determine the precise level of progression that captures

everyone's consumer surplus perfectly. Second, progressive taxation can lead to injustice when those with variable income flows (e.g. sports celebrities) are taxed at the highest marginal rate during the few years when they receive high incomes, while others who receive the same total income that is distributed more evenly are possibly (not necessarily) taxed less (in theory, this should not happen as the annualised lifetime worth of individuals must be used as the base of taxation; but this requirement can't be implemented precisely). The third problem is that if a country sets its highest marginal rate too high, its rich will promptly abandon it or smuggle out their capital.

Practical difficulties with progression and the reality that the rich never pay even a flat tax mean that only a modest level of progression can be recommended. Hayek's prescription on taxation⁷ can now be extrapolated to yield a broad rule of thumb, namely: that where income taxes are the primary source of taxation (as should be the case), then the highest marginal tax rates should be just *above* the proportion of taxes to GDP, with two tax brackets equal to, and below, this proportion. In India, this could mean the highest marginal tax of (say) around 21 per cent with two brackets at 18 and 15 per cent each. Of course, such low rates will demolish our tax collections because of our narrow income tax base. But in this article I'm only discussing the theory; the practicalities will be dealt with the next month.

Freedom Team of India

You are hopefully aware of the work of the Freedom Team of India (<http://freedomteam.in/>) to find leaders to contest elections on a liberal platform. A new concept called Adharshila has also been proposed (<http://adharshila.freedomteam.in/>) to promote liberal discussion and advocacy across India. I hope you will participate in these important efforts to reform India's governance.

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¹ Details in chapter 4 of my draft manuscript, *The Discovery of Freedom*, <http://discovery.sabhlokcity.com/>.

² Joe Stevens, *The Economics of Collective Choice*, Westview, 1993, p. 106.

³ Hal Varian, *Microeconomic Analysis*, W. W. Norton and Company, 3rd edition, 1992, p. 243.

⁴ The amount over and above the market price for a product that different consumers would be willing to pay if its supply were significantly reduced.

⁵ Robert Frank, *Microeconomics and Behaviour*, Irwin McGraw Hill, 3rd edition, 1997, pp.622-23.

⁶ *Ibid*, p.418.

⁷ In his book, *Constitution of Liberty*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960, p.323.

If 'Boys will be Boys', Why Not the Girls?

Kusum Chopra

Gang rapes seem to be the flavour of the season, along with elderly men raping their own young daughters. One wonders, has this perversion always existed and only now coming into the open or is this phenomenon a product of our times? for which we have to find a solution in our times?

A little more than a year ago, Gujarat was agog with a set of perverted college teachers who dangled internal marks to their students, over years until the repeated molestation took dramatic toll of one girl and the scandal broke open; only to be hushed up in the academic world as scores of young and otherwise, teachers refused to agitate, asking what could they say in their own circumstances.

It is another matter altogether that the young woman has subsequently gathered enough courage to not only do outstandingly well in her exams but also opt to remain in her profession. But will she be able to shake off that trauma?

What of those rapists and the dozens of others exposed since, out on bail, awaiting trial or whatever?

Let us reflect:

Why do we tell our daughters to dress and behave decorously, within the prescriptions of our so-called 'society'? To avoid any public shame to ourselves, nuclear and extended families, to give them a chance to make a suitable marriage and settle down, etc.

Why not then a level playing field for our boys and girls? Why are boys not taught to behave within similar prescriptions for accepted social behaviour? And when they cross the limits, why are they being shielded, by the police who would not release the details of their families and addresses, splash their faces and names and those of their families in the media? While we get bits and pieces about the victims' rapes every day, the silence about the culprits is deafening?

Is it not time that the same social prescription be made applicable to male and female? Splash the pictures of the culprits in the papers and TV, hunt through the records to trace and interview their families wherever they are hiding themselves, portraying them as the "Families That Reared Rapists", talk to their teachers and school/college mates for early signs of evil, their girl friends/wives,

their *paan galla walla* who supplied them with cigarettes and *masala*...in short the whole media circus that usually accompanies female victims and culprits?

In the bargain, the mothers, sisters and wives of the rapists will be affected. Undoubtedly so. But is it possible to make omelettes without breaking some eggs?

As women, we sympathize with them. But when they raise and protect such evil minds, and then seek to excuse themselves saying 'boys will be boys' or threaten 'I will commit suicide...' when approached, should they not be reprimanded and shamed? So that people can point fingers at them in public and refuse to marry their sisters, as happens in the case of the female victims.

If girls cringe from male company for fear of bearing the ignominy of being a 'loose girl', such punishment of rapists, with the public shaming of their families will definitely go a long way in putting the fear, not of God, but perhaps of Public Shame of themselves and their families into the minds of many would-be rapists. For those who have no sisters to worry about, the combined pressure of *Tayajis*, *Chachajis* and *Mamajis* worried about their own daughters and their family social standing may serve as an effective deterrent in many cases. Perhaps enough to stem this deluge of rapes until a more effective and rational solution can be found to what is becoming a national epidemic.

Kusum Chopra is a writer and freelance journalist.

Heard This One?

According to Pranab Mukherjee austerity measures might save Rs.25,000 crores for the Centre. He also plans to cut the grants-in-aid to NGOs by fifty percent. That would further add to the saving brought on by austerity

Most of the NGOs are run by politicians. They will be most upset with this kind of austerity!

When Indians Asserted their Self-Respect: Two Happenings in Colonial Bengal

R. Srinivasan

The students of Henri Derozio (1809-1831) made the name of Young Bengal reverberate in the provinces.

Bengal has been uniquely blessed by the presence and activities of a galaxy of intellectuals and public men of affairs from the time of Ram Mohan Roy. Each generation saw groups of committed intellectuals who took their public responsibility with a passion. Many of them were superbly bilingual and not a few traversed many intellectual areas far from their professional fields. The tradition of enquiry and social involvement started by Ram Mohan continued and each generation added its bit to the on-going intellectual and social inquiries. This lasted till the nineteenth century and even later.



The students of Henri Derozio (1809-1831) made the name of Young Bengal reverberate in the provinces. It is not unusual for an aspiring teacher who died at the age of 23 to have inspired such a brilliant group of intellectuals.

Many of them were busy in founding and running journals of opinion, in being active in learned societies, editing and translating classic texts, avidly discussing public affairs and writing upon them. One such was Tarachand Chakraborty (1806-1855) who could not continue his education beyond his sixteenth year because of his poverty. In spite of this he ran several journals including the famous and influential *Bengal Spectator* of which he was the *de facto* editor. Considered the leader of the Derozians, he was also the first Secretary of the Brahmo Samaj and is regarded as the link between Ram Mohan Roy and the Derozians. His independence and character shines down the ages. He was not liked by the Europeans for his sturdy independence.

The Derozians used to organize and conduct discussions on social and other issues. And in this many of the elite participated. One such occasion is justly celebrated in the annals of Bengal testifying to the independence of the youth of those days and being prepared to stand up for their freedom.

The Hindu College, Calcutta established in 1817

used to hold meetings organized conducted by the Society for acquisition of general knowledge. Tarachand presided over one such meeting held on February 8, 1843 and the paper reader was Dakshinaranjan Mukhopadhyay. Among the audience was Captain Richardson, Principal of the Hindu College and another Englishman. The subject of the paper was Criminal Justice and the Police. When the reader had read through half of his critique, Captain Richardson stood up angrily and said that he could not permit the College Hall to be converted into a den of treason and must close the doors against all such things. Tarachand immediately responded on behalf of the reader of the paper – “Captain Richardson! With due respect I beg to say that I cannot allow you to proceed any longer in this course of conduct towards our Society and as the President of the Society, and on behalf of my friend Babu Dukhin, I must say, that your remarks are anything but becoming. I am bound also to add that I consider your conduct as an insult to the Society, and that if you do not retract what you have said and make due apology, we shall represent the matter to the Committee of the Hindu College, and if necessary to the Government itself. We have obtained the use of this public hall by leave, applied for and received, from the Committee, and not through your personal favour. You are only a visitor on this occasion, and possess no right to interrupt a member of this Society in the utterance of his opinions. I hope that Captain Richardson will see the propriety of offering an apology to my friend, the writer of the essay and to the meeting”. Other speakers, including Dakshinaranjan, also strongly supported Tarachand, and Capt. Richardson was in the end obliged to tender an apology.

This provoked British newspapers to go on a campaign against Tarachand and his group. One of them reminded that had such an event taken place in Batavia, he would have been transported for life. However a few months later George Thompson esteemed in Calcutta’s elite circles was to characterize Tarachand as “a man whose earnest and quiet zeal, whose retiring modesty, whose benevolent feelings, and whose incorruptible integrity entitled him the esteem and admiration of all those who knew him”.

A similar incident that took place in Dehra Dun also involved one of the ex-students of Derozio - Radhanath Sikdar (1813-1870) who has a unique place in Indian Science as one of the discoverers of Mount Everest and for calculating the highest peak of the Himalayas and who later became the Chief Computer of the Survey of India. He also held an important position in the great Trigonometrical Survey of India.

In 1843 he opposed the District Magistrate Vansittart for employing a coolie for carrying the magistrate's heavy personal luggage and stopped him. It was usual for high officials to compel corvee labour. Vansittart accompanied by a military officer came to Radhanath's office. When one of these gentlemen called out 'Who has detained my property?' I answered: 'It has been detained by my orders'. He continued, 'What business had you to detain my property?' I replied: 'Just as much as you had in pressing and maltreating my people to convey your baggage; and I intend to take legal measures'. He rejoined, 'I certainly gave orders to my people to procure coolies, but not to press private servants; and I shall discharge the

whole set of my burkundazes' (armed retainers). He now beckoned to Mr. Keelan (an officer of the Survey Department) and asked him to persuade me to give up the property. Mr. Keelan replied, 'But what security shall we have against the recurrence of the proceeding complained of?' I then observed, 'There is no regulation authorizing the forcible seizure and employment of anybody'. Upon which the gentleman in question in a loud and authoritative tone said: 'Do you know who I am?' At this moment the other gentleman who had remained silent, sprang forward and questioned me, 'Who the devil are you?' I answered, 'A man, and so are you'."

This was published in local newspapers which became a matter of social concern and created unrest.

Similar happenings took place in different parts of the country and they need to be recorded for the benefit of the younger generation.

DR. R. SRINIVASAN, retired professor of political science, University of Mumbai

Remembering Minoo Masani on his 104th Birth Anniversary

November 20 this year will mark the 104th birth anniversary of Freedom First founder Minoo Masani. We mark the occasion by reminding readers of the last essay wrote for Freedom First in January 1994. Entitled "An Open letter to my Young Friends" he wrote inter alia:



1905-1998

"If the economic reforms fail then the one opportunity the people of India have had in forty years to look forward to a better life and a fighting chance to reduce poverty and unemployment, will have been lost and will be a long time before another such opportunity presents itself.

"Why do I put so much stress on liberalisation? I do so because I believe that the business of government is to govern and not be in business. How true the Gujarati proverb: 'Where the king becomes a trader, there his subjects become beggars'. The policy of involving itself in industry, trade and commerce has led to the state neglecting its primary responsibilities: The maintenance of law and order, the provision of drinking water facilities, primary health care, primary education, and a network of good roads and rail lines.

"These ought to be the objectives of the new economic policy. And this is the essence of liberalisation. It will enable the government to live within its means as it will make it unnecessary for governments to maintain huge administrative overheads. It will eliminate the need for deficit financing which in turn will keep prices at reasonable levels. A government committed to liberalisation will not even while proclaiming its policy of freeing the economy, engage in the dubious and anti-market act of administering prices as it did recently in the case of petrol. Such acts make a mockery of economic reforms and can only hamper the process of liberalisation.

"I am personally unhappy with the fact that the Indian voter today has to make his choice between unwilling liberalisers on the one hand and those who seek the people's support through appeals to religion or caste be it Ayodhya or Mandal. Had I been even ten years younger I would have taken an active role in educating people on the real meaning of liberalisation, why it is so important that the economic reforms succeed. I might even have taken the initiative to once again organise a movement to put pressure on the government to ensure that it honestly implemented the reforms."

Sino-Indian Relations

– Should be guided by Macro and Global Perspectives Not by Micro Events

Subramanian Swamy

Border incursions have been made by units of Chinese internal security armed police and not by Chinese army as reported in the Indian media.

I returned yesterday (18 October) from a four day visit to Beijing, China, where I had gone to address the Asian African Development Research Institute [AADRI] of the State Council of the Chinese Government on “South Asia and Sino-Indian Relations”. The State Council is the equivalent of India’s Cabinet, and AADRI is its think tank that prepares policy documents for the Chinese government.

I also met Mr. Ai Ping, Director General of the International Department of the Chinese Communist Party and had a detailed discussion with him on the current state of Sino-Indian relations and how it could be improved.

At present there is possibility that India and China may be sucked into a serious border conflict by miscalculation and self-fulfilling hype. Such a war will end in a stalemate, and damage the economies of both nations.

Much of the hostility to India in the Chinese media is seen in Communist Party organs such *Peoples Daily* and *Global Times* newspapers. This is claimed to be in reaction to Indian media’s “false anti-China” reporting that the Chinese allege is motivated by Indian government sources. In India much of the hostile anti-China reporting is based on events such as border incursions by China, which events used to sporadically happen earlier but did not come to media’s knowledge and was not reported. These local events, Indian media hold are directed by Chinese government.

Both these presumptions are wrong. Hence, the Prime Ministers of the two countries should use the “hotline” set up recently, before the Bangalore BRIC meeting, and clear the air. The two PMs should see to it that media reports do not generate a hysteria in the public, which could spiral into an armed conflict on the border by miscalculation on both sides.

Border incursions have been made by units of Chinese internal security armed police and not by Chinese army as reported in the Indian media. Moreover, India has now moved a squadron of Sukhoi jets to Tezpur and strengthened Ladakh cantonment. Hence, a rational Chinese strategist would recognize that an armed border attack today will not be of the same result as in 1962.

The situation has spiralled because Indian opin-

ion today unfortunately is dominated by the trauma of 1962 and the public perception of a repeat “Chinese betrayal” when in fact 1962 border war was the outcome of the foolishness of Prime Minister Nehru in failing to first develop defence capability before asking the army to “throw the Chinese out”. Our jawans had to fight on the icy hills with tennis shoes. To hide such truths is why the government is still refusing to provide the Henderson-Brooks Inquiry Report under the RTI.

In China too, the people and Chinese media exhibit the same kind of trauma with regard to Japan’s alleged militarism, despite Japan being one of the most peace loving countries today. This is because of the savage invasion and occupation of China by Japan in the 1937-45 period.

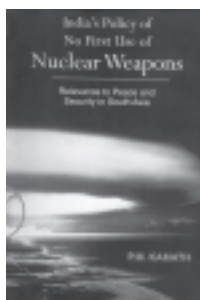
India has accepted [vide agreements signed by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1988, and by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee in 2003, thus making this acceptance bipartisan] that the border has to be negotiated and settled on the ground. At the moment there exists no legal border. Till such a border is negotiated, border crossings by China’s Tibet police and by our ITBP are inevitable. The media should report it, but the people should not get into a hysteria.

However, our defence preparedness for a possible Chinese attack should always be up to date, even as our foreign policy should strive for friendly relations with China. India and China will have to create a new global order as two very large and fast progressing countries. We should not allow ourselves to be derailed by micro events but be guided by macro and global perspectives in Sino-Indian relations.

I urge Prime Minister Manmohan Singh not to be intimidated by jingoism in the media but to boldly and frankly talk on the hotline, and discuss with visiting Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiao bao in Bangalore next week on how the two nations can moderate the current negative hype, and get back to developing a productive strategic partnership with each other, especially against the common terrorist threat arising from the Taliban ascendancy in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and as well as the fragility of the global financial architecture.

(Statement of Janata Party President Dr. Subramanian Swamy after his four-day visit to Beijing in October 2009)

BOOK REVIEW



INDIA'S POLICY OF NO FIRST USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS – RELEVANCE OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN SOUTH ASIA by P. M. Kamath ● Anamika Publishers and Distributors (P) Ltd., 4697, 21A, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110002 ● Year of Publication: 2009

● Pages: 229 ● Price Rs.500

Reviewed by S. V. Raju, editor, *Freedom First*

Highly focussed as the title suggests the author skilfully navigates the reader through a jungle of acronyms; though each time an acronym is repeated the reviewer still had to go back to pages 14, 15 and 16 to refresh his memory.

The Introduction and the Conclusion are very comprehensive and the pages in-between so well researched that the author Dr. Kamath needs to be complimented for packing in so much in a book of less than 230 pages.

My first acquaintance with a nuclear weapon was the atomic bomb over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 when I was in my teens. It left an impression in my mind yet a sense of relief that it was far away. Then came the Apsara Reactor in 1956 and the renaming of the Atomic Energy Establishment as the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre in 1967 closer home at Trombay in Bombay. Thereafter there was Pokhran 1 in 1974 and Pokhran 2 in 1998 when we reached the point of no-return.

Rajaji led a delegation of the Gandhi Peace Foundation and met President John F.Kennedy in 1962 to plead for universal disarmament. This was perhaps the first big move in foreign policy terms for India to project its desire for world peace and abjuring nuclear weapons. Towards the end of that year the communist Chinese invaded India and this led us to re-examine our basic stand on nuclear weapons.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons was accelerated by the Cold War between the US and the USSR. The US test-explodes a Bomb in 1952, so does Britain and the USSR in 1953. The US explodes another in 1954, France does it in 1960 and China in 1964. With all permanent members of the Security Council having bombs, they formed the 'Nuclear Club' and decided to close the membership. They came up with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (the NPT) in 1968. The signatories who agreed to give up testing bombs were assured access to civilian nuclear technology.

What about India? Dr. Kamath notes: "India was in the forefront of talks to initiate NPT in the initial stage. But as the negotiations proceeded India realised how divergent her goals were from those of the superpowers." Among these goals were:

A guarantee of security for NPT members; conducting nuclear tests, when necessary for peaceful purposes. get the "nuclear haves to commit themselves to a binding provision on nuclear disarmament." This latter was not acceptable to the two super powers and India decided to stay out of NPT.

There were other countries too who rejected to the NPT: Among them Argentina, Israel and South Africa and of course Pakistan which said it would sign if India signed.

Indian diplomacy failed to convince nations particularly those in the sub-continent of the nature of its dissent. Why only foreign nations. Within the country too there were many sections of opinion that felt that India should sign the non-proliferation treaty.

For instance, after China had exploded its atom bomb, Mr. Frank Moraes then editor of *The Times of India* sent Rajaji two questions. The first one was: Should India make the atom bomb? In the context of China emerging as an atomic power is it an absolute essential that India should make use of her own resources to produce bombs and stockpile them? Can the Indian economy sustain the manufacture and stockpiling of atom bombs without effecting development?

Rajaji replied: "We should not seek to become a nuclear Power and produce atomic bombs. Neither does our economy permit such an undertaking, even if it were sensible.

His second question was: What is the best deterrent that India should think of in defence strategy against China:

Rajaji's response: "...What India should think of in its defensive strategy is a clear Treaty Alliance against China with those Powers of the world who are firmly ranged against communist aggression. This means that we should reverse our fatuous policy of 'non-alignment' which only amounts to standing alone in our defence contented with hire-and-purchase of arms from the West...If we do not take immediate steps for entering into a Treaty Alliance with the West, we may escape Chinese aggression by reason of China's own unilateral decision to abstain from it now; but we will surely have to accept Chinese hegemony in Asia." This was in November 1964.

This was of course ignored and non-alignment continued to be the anchor of India's foreign policy not only during the cold war years but even after 1991 when the cold war ended with the break up of the USSR.

After Pokhran 2 in 1998, India reiterated its assurance of no first use of nuclear weapons. Dr. Kamath points out that both the US and Pakistan have not accepted the concept and retain the right to first use. After the 1998 tests the then Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, unilaterally announced a moratorium on further tests and "initiated a dialogue on nuclear weapons with the US". Dr. Kamath's book details on how the then NDA government led by Jaswant Singh took the dialogue further which marked the first major shift in Indian foreign policy after

1947 away from non-alignment to come to a deal with the US. Dr. Manmohan Singh built on this which led to the famous Nuclear Deal which freed India from embargoes on acquiring nuclear related material from countries who signatories to the NPT.

Meanwhile Dr. Kamath in his book continues championing the cause of nuclear disarmament.

"Is the world a safe place with more nations armed with nuclear weapons or more dangerous place where one lives. Answer depends on where one lives. Every individual normally adopts government stance as his own", writes Dr. Kamath and continues "So an American may feel Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons makes the world more dangerous than ever before while an Iranian may feel ensured of his security. Hence a phased nuclear disarmament is needed. There is a need to move to achieve a two-phase partial nuclear disarmament. First is a need for vertical reduction of nuclear weapons amongst the five permanent members of the Security Council. Second is to move an international treaty on no first use of nuclear weapons."

And this is what the book's USP is all about. The need for a "global treaty amongst the known nuclear powers and threshold states on no first use of nuclear weapons".

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Between Ourselves ...

While we are debating the culpability of Jinnah, Nehru, Sardar *et al* over the partition of India, the irony is not lost that a country founded by a so called-secular Jinnah as a homeland for those belonging to the Islamic faith (Jinnah described Muslims in pre-independent India as constituting a 'nation'), is now being riven asunder by Muslim fanatics (who currently go under the description 'Taliban' (from the word 'Taleb' or student) and who are clear that the Islamic Republic of Pakistan is not 'Islamic' enough. According to a recent PTI report Pakistani Taliban chief Hakimullah Mehsud said in a footage aired by Britain's Sky News channel: "We want an Islamic state. If we get that, then we will go to the borders and help fight the Indians". The implication is obvious.

Let them fight among themselves on the *kind* of Islamic State they want but we Indians irrespective of our religious faiths (and those who do not believe in one) have to unite to preserve our country's integrity and freedom. We have in the northwest a nation in turmoil a victim of its own religious identity. In the northeast we have a totalitarian regime currently in capitalist garb (as they had to jettison their Marxist/communist economics which only bankrupted them) seeking to nibble away at our land after having swallowed the whole nation of Tibet and trying to frighten us with the ghost of 1962). The Chinese Communists have discarded their ideology but retain their imperialistic ambitions. Successive Indian governments

have, with regrettable pusillanimity, given the world the impression that our nation is a soft state made up of timid people.

How far are we prepared to go to defend our liberty and free way of life. Two articles in this edition have, independently touched on this subject. In his very perceptive article "Strategic Policy Making and the Indian System" Admiral Arun Prakash reminds us that in the early part of the first millennium "Strategic awareness and pragmatism was ... superseded by excessive religiosity and spiritualism; ... India, thus, stagnated intellectually, and consequently lost strategic focus; a situation, which prevails till today. Ironically, a direct result of this was a long era of domination by foreign invaders, which further eroded our self-respect and engendered a deep sense of diffidence and timidity." Dr. Srinivasan in his essay "When Indians asserted their self respect", draws attention to a period during the days of British colonialism, when Indians asserted their self-respect and "the youth of those days" were "prepared to stand up for their freedom."

We need to rediscover our self-respect and confidence in ourselves as a people of a great nation. We are rapidly moving into a period when our will to be free will be tested by religious fanatics on the one side and by atheist totalitarians on the other!

Editor

"Values that Still Hold Good"

A Veteran Journalist Applauds *Freedom First*

"Every once in a while one comes across a weekly/monthly/journal that turns out to be a joy to read. Such a one is *Freedom First* which at one time represented the view of the Swatantra Party. On August 1 this year a programme was held by the monthly to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Swatantra Party which, alas, is no more. Its aim was to emphasise the primacy of the individual *vis a vis* the State and to promote an economic policy which was bitterly opposed by the then ruling Congress -I.

"The Swatantra Party was opposed to Jawaharlal Nehru's concept of socialism and *Freedom First* articulated the Party's views in full measure. The latest (September) edition of the monthly says that "*Freedom First* was not in the past, not will it in the future, be the mouthpiece or organ of any political party" only to add that "this does not mean that we will not associate with any entity or organisation that has policies that promote liberal values and ideas." So, in its own way, *Freedom First*, is a totally independent journal that has the courage of its conviction and the daring to air them.

Mr. M. V. Kamath in his column Mediawatch in the *Afternoon Despatch & Courier*, October 3, 2009.

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