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Patna Blasts - Implications Under Assessed

Iran Nuclear Deal

In Memoriam: JFK

Sardar Patel's Legacy & Congress

and many more

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Editor's Note

The recent interim nuclear deal between Iran and the P5+1 countries is indeed a major breakthrough in international diplomacy as 2013 draws to a close. The much anticipated agreement has the potential of resolving tensions which the volatile region has witnessed over the decades.

Both Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and US President Barack Obama deserve due credits for their pursuit of a peaceful solution. While the severe economic sanctions had deeply hurt the Iranian economy, the American leadership too was also under tremendous domestic pressure not to go in for military strikes a la Iraq or Afghanistan.

Though Teheran on its part has made substantial concessions, it has obtained comparatively less in return as of now. The road to a final deal is littered with obstacles what with a dejected Israel terming the interim agreement as a “historic mistake” and the equally concerned Saudis not likely to spare any effort to sabotage it.

As Sushant Sareen puts it aptly in his article in this issue, “If things work out, then there is a good chance of a paradigm shift being affected in the geopolitical and geostrategic equations in the region; if, however, the breakthrough fails to live up to its promise and breaks down, then chances are that conflict, the consequences of which will be horrendous for regional political stability and global economic security, will become unavoidable.”

India also stands to gain immensely in the event of a thaw in US-Iran ties, which would certainly prove to be a game changer in international relations.

Also in this issue is an analysis by our Director Mr Ajit Doval of the recent blasts at a political rally in Patna and its far reaching implications. Other highlights of this month's issue are a rare insight into relations between India and the US during the tumultuous days of President JFK by our Joint Director Prabhat Shukla as also a piece on the double speak of Western experts on Pakistan's nuclear weapons vis a vis India by noted diplomat Arundhati Ghose.

The much debated Sardar Patel's legacy has been dwelt at length by Prof Makkhan Lal.

Looking forward to your invaluable suggestions

K G Suresh

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Patna Blasts – Implications Under Assessed

- *Ajit Doval, KC*

The serial blasts that took place in Patna's Gandhi Maidan on October 27, 2013 during BJP's Hunkar rally was an event whose seriousness and implications have not been fully fathomed. In a setting consumed by ruthless electoral rivalries, the powers that be, have failed to assess the incident in its correct perspective and respond adequately. The event heralds a new genre of terrorist threat, where the objective was not so much to cause depredations as to prevent the people and the leaders from pursuing their lawful right of assembly and speech. The trend, if unchecked, could derail democratic process, undermine constitutional freedoms and seriously destabilise the country. If the terrorists even marginally improve upon their Patna performance, democracy in the country will get a body blow with no political party or political leader remaining safe enough to carry out their legitimate political activities.

Further, if the terrorists succeed in doing it to one – and their capacities are not degraded – they will do it to all; those in power becoming especially vulnerable. Long term implications would be still more dreadful and one would like to restrain oneself from alluding to them. This calls for a careful analysis of the event, re-assessing terrorist intentions and capabilities, evaluating efficacy of our response strategies and plugging the gaps in our level of security preparedness.

The first reality that the event brings forth is that the Indian Mujahideen (IM), though incubated by the Pakistan's ISI and a satellite of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), has amassed significant domestic content that we cannot wish away for political expediency. No responses can be strategised or meaningful policies executed by remaining in a denial mode. Since its inception in 2005, in last eight years, the IM has acquired menacing proportions both in its geographical spread

* *Ajit Doval, KC - Director, VIF*

and cadre strength. Its activities and existence of local cells have been reported from the states of Delhi, UP, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Bihar, Jhrakhand, Kerala, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh etc. Patna blasts when analysed along with the stunning disclosures made by Abdul Kareem Tunda, Riyaz Bhatkal and Abu Jundal, the indigenisation of Jihadi terror in India presents a disturbing spectre. If the menace continues to grow unabated at the pace of last eight years it may soon become

unmanageable. The tendency of its getting intertwined with domestic politics will make things worse.

Contrary to what their apologists would like us to believe, their Jihad does not spring due to the lack of economic or social upliftment but their plain and simple aim of degrading the Indian state and establishing Sharia rule. This aim mirrors that of global Jihadist groups like the Al Qaeda and LeT. It is true that their goal is neither achievable nor enjoys support of Indian Muslims, but that does not reduce their capacity to destabilise the country.

Patna blasts when analysed along with the stunning disclosures made by Abdul Kareem Tunda, Riyaz Bhatkal and Abu Jundal, the indigenisation of Jihadi terror in India presents a disturbing spectre.

Attack on the Patna rally is an early indication of that.

The second reality that the blasts demonstrate is that the Bihar policy of let sleeping dogs lie does not pay. The Bihar government has been pursuing the policy of conflict avoidance against all extremist groups, particularly the Jihadis, hoping that the soft policy will insulate them from the threat. Bihar has been an important hub of IM activities right from its inception and a good number of its

front ranking activists like Tehseen Akhtar and Haider Ali, who are presently driving IM's activities in India hail from the state. Proximity to Nepal

made it a favoured transit route for the IM members but no interceptions were attempted. Many IM activists considered Bihar as a safe haven and sought refuge there when under pressure from other police forces. In the last two years alone, nearly 15 IM suspects belonging to Bihar were either arrested outside Bihar or the police forces of other states nabbed them from Bihar. Bihar Police often resented their forays. The political argument of Muslim

sensitivity is completely unfounded as no Muslim leader of the country supports Jihadis though they want innocents to be spared.

Another reality that the blasts brings forth is the failure of the Bihar Police to anticipate and take counter measures to defeat any terrorist or extremist threat. For a rally of this magnitude and considering high security vulnerability of the leaders attending it, they did not follow even rudimentary principles of security. Had

proper area sanitization or access control measures taken, the terrorists would not have

Had proper area sanitization or access control measures taken, the terrorists would not have succeeded in placing 15 IEDs at the venue.

succeeded in placing 15 IEDs at the venue. An indifferent style of policing over the years had impaired the required verve and resoluteness of the force. Bihar Police refusing to cooperate with the IB in seeking remand of Yasin Bhatkal, despite his links with the infamous Darbhanga module, is illustrative of their indifference. The state police refusing to join the Advance Security Liaison (ASL) exercise with the IB and Gujarat Police before the rally and later even refusing to accept and

sign it for taking follow up action is unpardonable. In this environment, October 27 blasts were just waiting to happen.

When the Home Minister in March this year announced a judicial probe into suicide in jail by the prime accused in the gruesome Nirbhaya gang rape case, many who preferred to see him dead than alive, grudgingly accepted it. It is, however, intriguing that in a country where inquiry commissions are appointed at the drop of a hat, Patna blasts

which presented an imminent and real threat to some of the top political leaders of the country and led to the death of six

persons, with over 80 injured, was not considered fit enough even for a low grade magisterial inquiry. Both the central and state governments, more by design than default, preferred to ignore it. The assertion of the Bihar Chief Minister that there was no security lapse implies that little improvement can be expected in future. Although Narendra Modi's security has been beefed up following the blasts, it is ad hoc and not co-related to a proper threat assessment. The bigger

issue is with how much seriousness do we tackle the challenge thrown by the IM and the measures that we take to deny them both their means and the ends. A high level judicial probe focusing on these issues will help.

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Iran Nuclear Deal: A Game Changer in International Relations?

- *Sushant Sareen*

The interim deal struck between the P5+1 and Iran over the latter's nuclear programme is by all accounts a big breakthrough on an issue, which if it had spiraled out of control, held the very real potential of destabilizing not just the Middle-East and its surrounding regions but also the global economy. But whether this breakthrough, which apart from providing some relief to Iran from the crippling economic sanctions imposed on it by the UN and the US/EU combine, also wards off the immediate threat of hostilities breaking out and buys time for negotiations that lead to 'a mutually-agreed long-term comprehensive solution that would ensure Iran's nuclear programme will be exclusively peaceful', can be taken to the next level remains pretty iffy.

If things work out, then there is a good chance of a paradigm shift being affected in the geopolitical and geostrategic equations in the region; if, however, the

breakthrough fails to live up to its promise and breaks down, then chances are that conflict, the consequences of which will be horrendous for regional political stability and global economic security, will become unavoidable.

As things stand, the landmark deal signed in Geneva, has opened a window of opportunity for ending Iran's growing international isolation and preparing the ground for its re-engagement with rest of the world. By virtue of its geographical location, oil and gas resources, and its pivotal position in the restive Islamic world as the non-Arabic and non-Sunni counter to the Saudi-led Sunni bloc, Iran is well placed to play a significant role in the politics of the region. Of course, the all important caveat is that it becomes a player instead of just trying to pull the strings from the sidelines. It is entirely possible that the Ayatollah dominated Islamic Republic doesn't play ball once the nuclear programme issue

* *Sushant Sareen, Senior Fellow, VIF*

is sorted out. In other words, if Iran decides to keep its distance from the tantalizing realignments that are being speculated, then not much will change. But if Iran is able to break out of the Mullah-mandated straitjacketing in which it has been caught for the last few decades, then all the excitement in much of the world, and perhaps apprehensions in some countries, generated by the interim deal will prove to be entirely justified.

What the Geneva deal has done is that it has managed to address the international community's weaponisation concerns regarding Iran's nuclear programme and at the same time found a way to let Iran keep the bulk of its current capabilities intact. In other words, while Iran gets to keep its nuclear program, albeit with partial rollback and under enhanced monitoring, this will eventually be neutered to a level that Iran cannot weaponise. Although top Iranian officials, including the Supreme Leader and President, have repeatedly disavowed any intention of making nuclear weapons, a position that is consistent not just with Iran's obligations under the NPT and

Under the Geneva deal, Iran has once again 'reaffirmed that under no circumstances will it ever seek or develop any nuclear weapons'.

with religious edicts by the Iranian clergy expressing abhorrence for all weapons of mass destruction, the entire Iranian nuclear programme aroused a lot of apprehension and suspicion over its direction and secrecy. Under the Geneva deal, Iran has once again 'reaffirmed that under no circumstances will it ever seek or develop any nuclear weapons'. Iran has also agreed to a set of measures that effectively freeze, and to an extent rollback, the controversial aspects of its nuclear programme, in particular those related to uranium enrichment and reprocessing. What is more, Iran has accepted an 'enhanced monitoring' regime for verifying that it is living up to its commitments.

In return, Iran gets to keep its uranium enrichment capability, albeit with restrictions limiting this to under 5%. Iran has also received some relaxation on the sanctions regime that had been imposed on it. While the sanctions remain very much in place pending the final solution that is yet to be worked out, they have been relaxed to allow Iran to procure essential equipment for

civil aviation industry and engage in humanitarian trade. The deal also assures Iran against any new set of sanctions by either the UN or US and EU. This means that a further tightening of the sanctions that were being contemplated has been delayed to give diplomatic negotiations another chance. Iran is also allowed limited oil and petrochemical exports and can receive some of its blocked funds. It would however be rather premature to see this relief as a green flag for a return to business as usual, much less for going ahead with some of the mega projects, for instance the Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline.

There are a number of obstacles that will have to be crossed and torturous negotiations to go through before Iran is really able to re-emerge out of the isolation into which it has been thrust. Perhaps the single biggest problem is going to be the decades of antagonism that has existed between the US and Iran. Add to this the deep distrust of Iranian intentions, not only in the US but also in Israel and the Saudi-led Arab bloc. Although the Obama administration has displayed remarkable foresight and initiative in trying to open the door to Iran, there is bound to be

enormous opposition to this from the US Congress and the nuclear Ayatollahs in the West. Apart from the UN sanctions, lifting the sanctions imposed by the US will take a lot of doing, more so with a Republican controlled House of Representatives in place. Then there are the unreconstructed hardliners in Iran who will also be opposed to any compromise or re-engagement with the US. The Iranian President Hasan Rouhani will have to maneuver through the minefield of Iranian politics to ensure that the final deal goes through. As if these obstacles are not onerous enough, there will be the opposition to any such deal from countries like Israel, which sees Iran as an existential threat and a country that hasn't quite reconciled to its existence, and Saudi Arabia, which apart from sectarian differences with Shi'ite Iran, also sees Iran as a challenger to its dominance in the Islamic world as well as a threat to its security. Both Israel and Saudi Arabia have the potential for stalling, even sabotaging, any prospective deal that brings Iran out of its isolation.

The biggest gainers in the event of a deal will of course be Iran and the US. Besides of Iran managing to establish its independence and

credibility through first defiance and then compromise with the international order and the US proving the efficacy of the sanctions regime and then using this to effect a compromise formula, there are other significant advantages that both these countries will get if they manage to strike a comprehensive deal on the nuclear issue. Iran was clearly reeling under the impact of the sanctions and any further tightening would have led to not just the complete collapse of the economy but also led to the downfall of the regime as a consequence of the mounting economic hardships. Not only has Iran managed to avoid this calamity by creating the much needed space for its economy, it has also embarked on the path that leads out of its isolation which in turn opens opportunities for playing a big role on the regional stage. Standing as it does on the cross-roads of Central Asia, South Asia and the Middle-East, Iran can and has an important, even pivotal, role to play. With Iran on board, tackling the emerging strategic challenges in Afghanistan, Central Asia, Middle

Iran was clearly reeling under the impact of the sanctions and any further tightening would have led to not just the complete collapse of the economy but also led to the downfall of the regime as a consequence of the mounting economic hardships.

East (both Levant and the Arab countries of the region) and Pakistan become more manageable. There is also a reasonably good chance that with Iran's opening up to the rest of the world could lead to internal political reform that limits the overbearing influence of the clergy.

For the US, re-engagement with Iran gives it alternatives to some of the strategic logjams in which it is caught. For one, Iran is an effective counter to the rising Sunni Arab extremism and assertiveness. Much of the Islamist radicalism that is wreaking havoc both in the region – Syria being a prime example where Saudi backed Islamists linked to or adhering to the Al Qaeda philosophy have carried out unspeakable crimes – and around the world finds its roots in the export of Wahabi/Salafi ideology from countries like Saudi Arabia and its allies like Qatar. Engagement and partnership with Iran will help to bring stability and moderation in hotspots like Syria, Lebanon (where the Iran backed Hezbollah

has become a major player) and Iraq. Ties with the US can also help in moderating the Iranian stand on Israel, which will work to the latter's advantage. Iran can provide the US with an alternative access into Afghanistan which by ridding the US of its dependence on Pakistani GLOCs not only makes the post 2014 US presence in Afghanistan more viable but also takes away from Pakistan the leverage it has used to play both sides of the game in Afghanistan, which is the main reason for the resurgence of the Taliban. Moreover, Iran can serve as an excellent transit route to and from Central Asia. This will give a huge fillip to not just the Iranian economy but also the economies of the Central Asian States. And while on economics, Iran's re-admittance into the international system will have huge economic dividends for the Western economies because the pent up demand in Iran works to the advantage of both the West and Iran.

Apart from Saudi Arabia which has good reason to sulk at the prospect of a rapprochement between the US and Iran, Pakistan too stands to lose a lot of its significance. The IP pipeline will probably lose its

attractiveness for Iran once other markets open up. The desperation that forced Iran to practically fund the entire project will no longer be there. This means Pakistan will have to find the money if it wants this pipeline. What is more, the price at which the Iranian gas will be available – apart from US sanctions, the pricing of the Iranian gas coupled with the security issues surrounding the pipeline which would run through Pakistan as well as the transit fees Pakistan was demanding were all responsible for India backing out of the project – if the pipeline is built will be one that Pakistan can neither afford nor has the money to pay in hard currency. Pakistan's failure to build the pipeline on its end will impose a heavy penalty on it to the tune of around \$ 3 million per day. While Pakistan will lose its monopoly over the GLOCs, it will also see its dream of becoming the transit route for the Central Asian trade go up in smoke. Politically, Pakistan could see greater Shia assertiveness which in turn could have a serious impact on the internal security situation in Pakistan. But the unkindest cut of all for Pakistan will be that the myth of its geography being its biggest asset will be blown apart. Everything Pakistan offers in

terms of geography for rest of the world, Iran offers better, especially in terms of security and stability. Once Iran opens up, Pakistan's geography will be relevant only to the extent that it offers India a land route to Afghanistan and beyond. In other words, Pakistan's geography will become dependent on India. But as far as India is concerned, its dependence on Pakistan's geography will end because Iran will offer an equally good, if not better, connectivity to Afghanistan and Central Asian states, more so since India is already involved in the Chabahar port project and the road and rail links from there to Afghanistan and Central Asia.

A rapprochement between the US and Iran is clearly going to be a

game-changer in the realm of international relations. It promises to bring about tectonic changes in the current alignments, postures and policies of various countries in the region. But at the end of the day, the possibility of this happening will become real only if both the principal players keep their eye on the big picture. And that will involve not just some hard bargaining as well as big compromises but also getting over the decades of mistrust and malevolence that has defined the relationship of these two countries.

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Indian PM's China Visit: In Pursuit of Peace Along the Borders

- *Brig (Retd) Vinod Anand*

It is rare that a summit between two countries is held twice in the same year. Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's visit to Beijing came only about five months since their meeting in New Delhi in May this year. What were the compelling circumstances that might have driven Dr. Singh to proceed for another summit? It can be easily perceived that the visit was driven by domestic political factors and his desire to further engage the new political leadership of China. He wanted to have a last shot at improving relations with Pakistan and China before he retires from politics as the case seems to be when India goes for general elections in 2014. He also advanced his summit with Russia that was due in end November or early December. The only possible regional and international context could be that the Emperor of Japan would be visiting India in end November (a very significant visit since it is not common for the Emperor to undertake such visits)

and therefore the visit to Beijing, most likely the last one, could also be interpreted as a kind of balancing exercise. It also needs to be remembered that Dr Singh had also a meeting with US President Barack Obama in end September and some of the agreements concluded with Washington especially on defence cooperation may have caused consternation among the Chinese leadership.

The Joint Statements issued at the end of summits are also, in some ways, a good barometer of what transpired during the meeting. What is included in the joint statement could be as important or even more significant as what is left out. This time the joint statement was somewhat pithy compared to the previous one in May. While the May summit covered a broad expanse of the issues, this time it was largely restricted to bilateral issues with limited reference to the regional and international issues. But more than the joint statement, it was Manmohan

* *Brig (Retd) Vinod Anand, Senior Fellow, VIF*

Singh's address at the Central Party School in Beijing that underlined the philosophical underpinnings behind mutual Sino-Indian engagement. However, that does not mean that there were no practical considerations for his visit. With an eye on coming elections, Singh was more keen to address some of the contentious bilateral issues like maintaining peace and tranquillity along the LAC, stapled visas, sharing of river waters, and concerns about the ever increasing trade imbalance with China.

From the Indian perspective, the single most important achievement of the visit has been the signing of Border Development Cooperation Agreement (BDCA). There are some thinkers of the conservative school of thought who feel that there are many ambiguities in some of the clauses of BDCA agreement and how will this agreement be of any practical use when the previous agreements of 1993, 1996 and even 2005 have not been able to maintain peace and tranquillity along the LAC. On the other hand, largely the official perspective is that it is a

From the Indian perspective, the single most important achievement of the visit has been the signing of Border Development Cooperation Agreement (BDCA).

satisfactory agreement and it would be conducive to avoiding incidents between Indian and Chinese armed forces along the border/LAC. It is also being said that the BDCA was signed despite the opposition to it by some quarters of the PLA which is being perceived as becoming somewhat more assertive in the current power configuration in China.

Holding of the much stalled joint counter terrorism exercise between both the militaries in November is another positive step towards building mutual confidence. Regular defence exchanges would also promote military to military relationship.

Other than the BDCA, India could not get much satisfaction from China on remaining issues. Though the MOU on Strengthening Cooperation on Trans-Border Rivers was signed yet it does not really address Indian concerns regarding building of dams on the upper reaches of Brahmaputra/Yarlung Tsangpo River. Yes, the only saving grace was that period of flow of rivers on which hydrological data would be shared

has been expanded. Another point on which India can draw limited succour from the MOU is that both sides agreed to 'exchange views on other issues of mutual interest'. Further, there is recognition by China that 'trans-border rivers and related natural resources and the environment are assets of immense value to the socio-economic development of all riparian countries'. But so far China has not concluded any agreement with any down-stream nation whether in South East Asia mainland or Central Asian Republics on sharing of river waters. There is a general belief that China is unlikely enter into any river waters sharing agreement with India or for that matter any other country any time soon.

A sore point with India has been the issue of stapled visas to its citizens hailing from Arunachal Pradesh. Raking up of this controversy just before Dr. Singh's visit also prevented India from reaching an accord with China over liberalised visa regime for Chinese citizens visiting India. Given the past and current trajectory of connected events and issues, there is a general understanding that China is unlikely to change its stance. A

measure like disallowing liberal visas to Chinese is unlikely to affect China in any substantial way. However, as a riposte the much ritualised mention of Tibet as part of China or what is referred to as 'One China policy' has been absent from the joint statement this time like it was in the May Summit and earlier summits of 2011 and 2010. Though such an omission does not mean that India has fundamentally changed its policy yet the perception is that this could be used as an indirect pressure point.

Also, not much headway was made with China on India's concerns about rising trade imbalance with Beijing. India has been looking for some major investments by China in India's infrastructure sector and more access to Indian IT and pharmaceutical sectors exports to Beijing. However, the forthcoming India-China Strategic Economic Dialogue in November/December 2013 is expected to go into the connected issues and promote a balanced growth of trade through 'specific projects and initiatives'.

Further, the burgeoning trade deficit with China also moves India to look at China's proposal for a bilateral Regional Trade

Arrangement (RTA) very critically as under the current circumstances it is unlikely to benefit India. Similarly, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is also being viewed as another version of RTA by India though eventually it may join the grouping after some tough negotiations. Another emerging economic grouping in Asia-Pacific is the American-led Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) which is being offered as alternative or in addition to RCEP.

However, some of the clauses of TPP are very stringent and thus it may not be viewed by developing economies like India as growth friendly.

The question of establishing a BCIM (Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar) Economic Corridor was for the first time discussed in the May 2013. In the earlier years, it was a Track II initiative that did not gain much traction. India has concerns about both security and economic issues as the proposed corridor would pass through some of the sensitive North Eastern states of India. Such a corridor is not expected to be realised in a

hurry though the economic benefits especially to Manipur and south Assam may outweigh any perceived security concerns.

The regional issues, especially the evolving situation in Afghanistan was absent from the joint statement this time while in the last summit two paras of the joint statement were devoted to the same. The joint dialogue between China and India on Afghanistan was for the first time started this year with meetings of high level

The joint dialogue between China and India on Afghanistan was for the first time started this year with meetings of high level officials and further discussed during the May 2013 summit.

officials and further discussed during the May 2013 summit. Though India and China share many concerns about post-2014 Afghan

scenario yet that does not mean that China has stopped looking at Afghanistan through Pakistan's prism. As mentioned earlier, India hopes to moderate Pakistan's approach to Afghanistan through its engagement with China. And China is also taking a broader perspective on the evolving scenario in Afghanistan and is engaging many regional powers and Afghanistan's neighbours for ushering in peace and stability in the war-torn country.

Overall, Singh's visit could be said to be moderately successful. The visit was perhaps designed to convey a larger political message that without peace along the borders there would be no end to turbulent relationship between the two nations and the prospects of an Asian Century would remain

elusive. Therefore, the Prime Minister's remarks at the Central Party School need to be studied with the above aspects in mind.

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Indian Foreign Policy Being Undermined from Within

- *Kanwal Sibal*

The political controversy generated over Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's participation in the Commonwealth Summit (CHOGM) in Sri Lanka on November 15 deepens mounting concerns about our foreign policy being increasingly determined not by our overall national interest but being driven off course under pressure from some constituent state wracked by narrow regional politics.

Weakness

We tasted this unpleasant phenomenon when Mamata Banerjee's government obstructed the Teesta accord with Bangladesh, much to the political discomfiture of Sheikh Hasina's government that had boldly acted to suppress anti-Indian insurgent activity in her country but saw India unable to ink a settlement negotiated with New Delhi. That episode raised questions about the central government exercising its constitutional prerogative to

formulate Indian foreign policy without buckling to emotionally charged and ethnically driven regional politics and sentiments.

The Prime Minister's procrastination about attending CHOGM, the conflicting views of cabinet ministers and the ruling party's dithering have further exposed the political and institutional weaknesses that have crept into governance. Such decisions, however difficult, should not be postponed to the last minute under visible pressure, as that degrades the government nationally and internationally. The government, already seen as indecisive and lacking in leadership, has inflicted more damage to its image by the confusion over CHOGM. Given the compulsions of coalition politics, it is relatively easier to understand government's timidity in dealing with domestic political issues unconnected to foreign policy. In such cases, the internal pulls and pressures, and their practical

* *Kanwal Sibal, Dean, Centre for International Relations and Diplomacy, VIF*

consequences, remain confined within our borders. It is more difficult to understand, however, such governmental vacillation when our external interests are involved.

Generally speaking, functioning, stable countries do not control their external environment to the same degree as the internal one. India has therefore to deal with its external challenges as a nation, not as a political party. For political, economic and security reasons we need to control the play of external powers in our neighbourhood, as we can cause irretrievable damage to our longer-term interest by ill-considered decisions.

Our states have become very sensitive about their constitutional rights and resent any encroachment on them, to the extent of obstructing positive central initiatives such as the creation of a powerful centralized body to combat terrorism which has become a national problem and can worsen, or delaying the implementation of a much-needed tax reform like the GST. By the

same token, they should be respectful of constitutional provisions and not interfere in the conduct of the country's foreign policy by the Centre. It is a well-established constitutional principle that in any federal or even confederate structure, foreign policy, defence and finance are reserved for the central authority.

Regionalism

This does not mean that the Centre, especially in a democracy, should ignore public sentiment, even if it is confined to one part of the country. It must take into consideration the reason, source and strength of such sentiment. In case the Centre is convinced that the country's larger interest requires a course of action other than that being advocated by a particular section of the public opinion, it has to resort to internal "diplomacy" to explain the rationale of its intended decision to those opposed to it, but not succumb to pressure against its better judgment.

If the power of the Centre to conduct foreign policy gets frayed,

For political, economic and security reasons we need to control the play of external powers in our neighbourhood, as we can cause irretrievable damage to our longer-term interest by ill-considered decisions.

India will face enormous difficulties ahead. Our unity will come under strain if states seek to impose their will on the Centre, believing that regional interests are above national interest. With the serious geopolitical challenges India faces, India needs a coherent foreign policy, not one prey to uncertainty created by regional pressures. We will be opening ourselves to greater internal interference by outsiders that will seek to manipulate regional figures and interests to push their objectives. In conformity with international practice, foreign countries are required to conduct their relations with India through the Ministry of External affairs as the political hub. The compulsions of coalition politics in India cannot be allowed to dilute this principle.

The principal political parties in Tamil Nadu must recognize that our relations with Sri Lanka cannot be reduced only to politicking over the Tamil issue there, sensitive and important though it is.

Totality

The Centre has to look at the issue in the wider perspective of the totality of our relations with our geo-politically sensitive neighbour.

This has several dimensions, including the need to counter the strategic inroads China is making there at our expense, the coherence of our approach to our neighbours, the functioning of SAARC and the adherence to certain principles of conduct in dealing with sovereign countries that we want to be internationally observed, vis a vis us as well. Other aspects are the expansion of our own economic ties with Sri Lanka as part of a larger policy of developing stronger economic linkages with our neighbours, the prevention of the erosion of our influence over Sri Lanka's decision making by avoiding any coercive steps and eschewing signals that we might be indirectly supporting the revival of internal dissidence and even terrorism in Sri Lanka by an excessive ethnicity based approach.

This is not to ignore the human rights issue, relief and rehabilitation measures in the war affected zones, the genuine grievances of the Tamil population that remain essentially unaddressed, the signals coming from the latest election results from the provincial elections in the north, the obligation of the Sri Lankan government to implement

the 13th Amendment and President Rajapakse's guile.

If the decision against the Prime Minister attending CHOGM were a well-considered move by the Centre to exert pressure on the Sri Lankan government to address the

Tamil issue, it would not be as indefensible as the one now taken to placate Tamil Nadu politicians with electoral calculations in mind.

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China's Geo-Strategic Jaw : Another Step to Global Power

- *Lt Gen (Retd) Gautam Banerjee*

Preamble

Development of the Gwadar Port on Pakistan's Makran Coast on the Arabian Sea has been in the news off and on since the project took a concrete shape in the late 1990s. Meanwhile, thousands of kilometres to the North, across the entire length of Pakistan, then across the Pakistan occupied Northern Areas of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, and finally beyond there to the Western Province of Xinjiang in China, another development of monumental proportions had already taken place – that was the opening of the Karakoram Highway for commerce, in 1986. Since then, both these Sino-Pak joint venture among the two formally declared 'all weather friends' have continued to generate considerable interest among the strategic community who focus on the South and West Asian region. However, it was only recently, following the turmoil

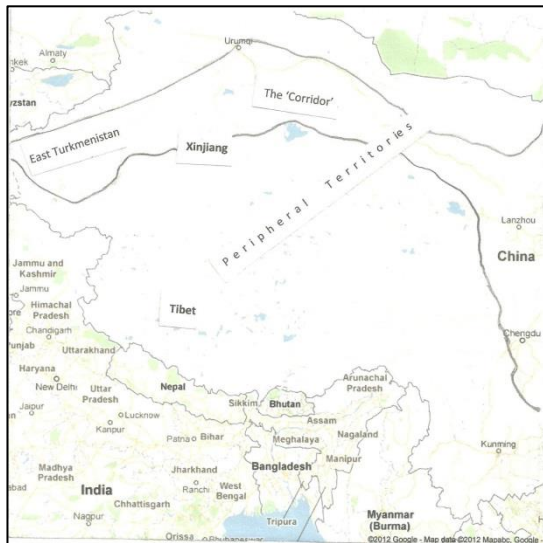
that engulfs the region of Pakistan, Afghanistan and beyond, that the two apparently distinct events crystallised as parts of a grand design of immense geo-political implications, both encouraging and worrisome, depending on which side the observer pitches for and as to how one is inclined to come to terms with it.

This paper argues that development of the Karakoram Highway and the Gwadar Port had ever been but two ends of one strategic initiative to pave the way for China's emergence as a world power. Further, it is argued that the overland 'axis', connecting China's core areas, through her peripheral provinces, to the strategic outlet at the Gulf of Oman, is but a complimentary version of the sea connectivity between China, through the Indian Ocean and its littoral states, to West Asia and beyond to Africa – two arms of a strategic 'jaw', so to say.

*Lt Gen (Retd) Gautam Banerjee, Executive Council, VIF

China's Peripheral Territories

Down the ages, successive Chinese empires had exercised varying degree of control over the East Asian landmass that is bounded by the great Mongolian Steppe to the North, the China Sea to the East, the Indo-Tibetan high-altitude Plateau to the South and the East Turkmenistan region of Central Asia to the West. Historians therefore are inclined to view the extent of the Chinese empires under three distinct categories, viz, the 'core' area of predominantly Han ethnicity, the 'cradle' area of Chinese civilisation and the 'peripheral' or the outlying areas.



The last named is the general area West of the *Hwang Ho* River. This is a desolate region, bounded by

rugged mountains going up to an average altitude of 4000 metres and cold high altitude deserts. The region is inhospitable to human settlements except in small patches along a narrow '*Corridor*' that runs East-West connecting the Hwang Ho River Valley to where territories of Tajikistan, Afghanistan (the *Wakhan Corridor*) and Pakistan lie within 250 kilometres of each other. With the highlands and climate prohibitive to human settlements, the 'peripheral' areas were traditionally treated as the nature's barren land, an 'open-to-all' ground for international transit for trade and religion, and controlled by local overlords, who many a times accepted Chinese suzerainty for expediency till they could gather enough muscle to repudiate the superficial allegiance. Thus, during the course of three millennia past, five of the six of the most powerful Chinese dynasties had enjoyed varying forms of jurisdiction from time to time – sometimes formally, otherwise notionally or none at all – over this vast and desolate landmass. Then there were long intervening periods when the empire's rule shrunk just to the Hwang Ho and the *Yangtze* River Valleys, smaller independent kingdoms reigning over the rest.

Indeed, the extent of territories over which China's ruling dynasties imposed their control in various forms, went through cyclic expansions and contractions throughout the history, as dictated by the political and military power at their disposal.

Point to note is that even at the best of times, the Chinese jurisdiction over what today are the provinces of Gansu, Quinghai and Xinjiang was geographically confined to a narrow, relatively habitable and fertile 'Corridor' that run East from *Lanzhou*, through *Urumqi*, to its Western terminus, *Kashgar*. Yet, it is the control over this 'Corridor' that sanctifies China's present day territorial sovereignty over the desolate mountains of the *Kun Lun Shan* and *Tien Shan* and the *Takla Makan* Desert – most of the 'peripheral' area, to be concise.

As China became a republic in 1911, first under the Guomintang and then finally under the Communist rule in 1949, she continued to consider the largest territory, more or less, that

constitutes the aforesaid 'peripheral' area - inclusive of Manchuria, Outer Mongolia and Tibet - that was ever under any form of imperial China's control, even influence, as her sovereign territorial jurisdiction. As a corollary, the above mentioned 'Corridor' – *Lanzhou to Kashgar* – became the power-arm of her claim over the 'peripheral' areas. Concerned over the historical fact that control or its loss over the peripheral territories had ever

Yet, it is the control over this 'Corridor' that sanctifies China's present day territorial sovereignty over the desolate mountains of the *Kun Lun Shan* and *Tien Shan* and the *Takla Makan* Desert – most of the 'peripheral' area, to be concise.

been synchronous with the rise and fall of Beijing's state power, the modern era Chinese strategists are very sensitive towards the sanctity of this territorial

jurisdiction. In fact, these territories are seen as a plank of China's statehood, and explains her extreme sensitivity to the rebellious ethnic inhabitants, particularly the independent minded Uyghurs and the Tibetans. Indeed, the traverse of this 'Corridor' sustains China's control over the remote, ethnically and religiously different territories at her peripheral out-back. Later, as we shall see, contemporary geopolitics has made this 'Corridor'

even more significant to China's access to world power status.

The Karakoram Highway

The route along the East-West 'Corridor', connecting China's 'core' area to Central Asia, had been trod over since times immemorial. This was also the main 'silk route' during the middle ages. During the later part of Nineteenth Century and the early Twentieth Century, parts of this route was gradually developed for motorable and rail traffic. After the Communist takeover at Beijing (Peking as it was called then), one of the first matters that drew their attention, besides the 'integration' of Tibet, was to further develop the road and rail communications over this 'Corridor', extend the roads branching off to the areas to the North and South of the 'Corridor', and so enforce their rule over these 'peripheral' areas. Thus by the mid-1950's, the ruling-arm of China was well in control up to the Western limits of her East Turkmenistan – now Xinjiang – territory.

China's decision to patronise Pakistan and start construction of the Karakoram Highway in 1959, to connect Kashgar to Islamabad,

was a strategic master-stroke. It is not known whether it was a foresighted grand design devised by the Chinese geo-strategists - given her traditional wisdom, it could well be the case – or was it an event favoured by providence. The case for grand design becomes more apparent when viewed alongside her assumption of control over Pakistan's 'gift' of India's *Shaksgam* Valley (gift of a stolen item!) and surreptitious occupation of the Indian territory of *Aksai Chin* to provide depth to her yet intended 'axis' to the Arabian Sea – her geo-strategic '*Corridor of Power Projection*' so to say. Whatever be the case, the fact remains that these decisions stand vindicated as a welcome stepping stone towards realisation of China's dream of regaining her 'Middle Kingdom' status in the world.

Completed in 1979, the 1300 kilometre Highway takes off from *Kashgar*, crosses over the Karakoram Ranges through the *Khunjerab* Pass (15,400 feet), and skirts past the Nanga Parbat to run down along the Indus River Valley via the Pakistan occupied settlements of Hunza, Gilgit and Chilas. Emerging at the foothills of Abbotabad, the Highway finally meets the Islamabad – Peshawar –

Kabul Road at Wah, strategically one of the two most significant communication hubs in central Pakistan. Added with alternate crossing over the *Mintaka* Pass and widened to 10 metres, the Highway was opened for commercial transportation in 1986. There is survey going on to lay a rail link astride this alignment which, demonstrative of the Chinese culture, is certain to be executed in good time. Since 2006, China has started work to further upgrade the Highway to six-lane

specifications. It is on the strength of this Highway that China is a power for Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan,

Pakistan, Iran and India to contend with. It is this Highway that has actually found China her military foothold in the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir – a very significant event indeed. Obviously, it is only a matter of time before this ‘*Corridor of Power Projection*’ plays a major, if not dictatorial, role in the Indian Sub-continent and its neighbourhood.

The Gwadar Port

If the construction of Karakoram Highway was a contemporary version of the ‘Great Game’ of the mid-Nineteenth Century, its connectivity with the Gwadar Port on the Makran Coast of Pakistan’s Balochistan Province is a game even greater.

A small port-township of geographical significance, Gwadar was transferred to Pakistan by Muscat in 1958. Situated close to the *Strait of Hormuz* – the energy life-line of South and East Asia –

Situated close to the *Strait of Hormuz* – the energy life-line of South and East Asia – and one hour’s drive from Pakistan-Iran Border, it had earlier served as a port of call for sea traffic steaming from Britain to her South and East Asian Colonies.

and one hour’s drive from Pakistan-Iran Border, it had earlier served as a port of call for sea traffic steaming from Britain to her South and East

Asian Colonies. During the 1971 Indo-Pakistan War, the Karachi based Pakistan Navy took shelter here to avoid the marauding Indian Navy and Indian Air Force, and thus struck the idea of developing Gwadar as a major port and a commercial hub, and of course, a naval base. Construction work was however slow to take off; it picked up pace in 2001 with China’s technical and financial assistance and started operation in 2008. A network of high

classification roads connect Gwadar with Karachi, and through the *Indus Valley* Road to Western China and beyond. Presently, with one set of global issues coming upfront with Afghanistan and Iran, and another set of issues to contend with in the Central Asian States, the geo-strategic importance of Gwadar – and its Iranian counterpart, Chabahar - is mind boggling.

China has officially repudiated any suggestion of her eyeing Gwadar as a naval base for the 'People's Liberation Army Navy' (PLAN). But the Chinese logic has a way to find synonymy in opposite meanings – a 'naval facility' could just do as much as a 'naval base'.

The Lanzhou-Gwadar 'Axis'

We have so far discussed the significance of the East-West '*Corridor*' as an artery of China's state-power over her 'peripheral' territories. We have also appreciated the role that the Karakoram Highway would play in regional affairs related to the Central and West Asia, thus upgrading the 'Corridor of Power' to a '*Corridor of Power Projection*'. Now, with its seamless

connectivity to the Gwadar Port, this great 'Axis', traversing from East China Sea Coast to the mouth of the Gulf of Oman, would pave the way for China's bid for world power status. Let us briefly see as to why it should be so.

The great overland '*Axis*' connecting the 'core' areas of China to the Persian Gulf elevates China's reckoning in geo-politics to a very significant level and offers great possibilities – good or bad as one chooses to view it – in regional matters. On a positive note, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and India could be its direct beneficiaries through trade, tourism and harnessing of natural resources including energy, water and strategic minerals. No doubt, this 'Axis' could transform the poverty-ridden societies into happy ones, thus bringing about a state of regional inter-dependency for common good. Besides, it could only be a matter of time before the circle of beneficiaries could expand to include the West Asia-Middle East and the South-East Asia neighbourhood, and finally, attract the Western Powers in their quest to retain the economical lead that their societies have become so used to. The lead player in all this would, of course, be China on her

way to her elevation to world power status that she is so keen to assume.



Currently, China continues to conform to showcase her rise to be a 'peaceful' one which may not cause any apprehension amongst her regional neighbours. It is averred that in the coming decades, the overland connectivity from Gwadar to Lanzhou and beyond would satiate China's ever increasing demand for energy and raw materials. In other words, flow of resources from Africa, West Asia and Central Asia into China would dominate the role of this 'Axis'. However, it is becoming apparent that the period of marking time till her economic and technological rise is firmly in place - in conformity to Deng

Xiaoping's '24 Character Strategy' to "keep cool ..., be composed ..., hide capabilities and bide time ..." - is nearing its end. This is evidenced by a growing school of hard-line strategist who cannot restrain themselves from adopting rather assertive, even threatening stance towards her neighbours on China Sea, Tibet and Indian Ocean. Given the Communist China's affiliation to her imperial culture that is dictated by a sense of supreme superiority and predatory tendencies, there is every possibility that the *Lanzhou-Gwadar Axis* may turn out to be China's hegemonic tool, an axis of political machinations, economic cartels and military arm-twisting. Therefore, rather than just being a conduit for inflow of resources into China, there is every possibility, nay certainty, that the 'Axis' would also transport China's military belligerence the other way. Attraction of the Western Powers towards this region, as mentioned above, could also lead to emergence of 'client states' - as Pakistan is to the United States and China - that would add to the sinister competition. Inevitability of such a situation is a lesson of history.

A Geo-Strategic 'Jaw'

This discussion would remain incomplete unless we look at another development of landmark dimensions – that is China’s quest for a position in the Indian Ocean. Indeed, the initiatives taken by her in finding footholds for her ‘peaceful’ shipping lanes, that is, her energy life-line, has generated much discussion – and subtle consternation - among the littoral states. No doubt, a situation wherein a blue water PLAN would majestically impose over the Indian Ocean while enjoying logistic facilities from the string of friendly ports – commonly referred to as the ‘string of pearls’ around the peninsular India – is yet far away. But it is inevitable.

Seen in wider perspective, the aforementioned *Lanzhou-Karakoram Highway-Gwadar Port Axis* appears to be an upper jaw while the ‘String of Pearls’ is the lower one, with mainland China as its pivot and the Gulf of Oman in its mouth. Between these two lie a host of nations trying to lift themselves up from a state of under-development. As to how this gigantic ‘*Jaw*’ would come handy in promoting harmony,

development and friendship, or would it be used as a geo-strategic lever to torment smaller neighbours, is to be seen.

Whatever be the case, the Karakoram-Gwadar connection is a significant geo-strategic development. The soul of the Tang Dynasty General *Gao Xianzhi*, defeated by the Abbasid army in the Battle of Talas in AD 751, that put paid to China’s territorial expansion to the West Asia, may now be pleased!

But alas, in the cauldron of international politics, noble considerations are invariably subsumed by a greed for more power, more consumption – and that at the cost of others. That is probably in human nature.

Conclusion

Geo-Strategic developments are always twin purpose tools. If harnessed sagaciously, the

Lounzhou-Gwadar Axis could make the region a better place to live. But alas, in the cauldron of international politics, noble considerations are invariably subsumed by a greed for more power, more consumption – and that at the cost of others. That is probably in human nature. But whatever be the case, as history teaches us, it is always advantageous to protect one’s peace and development by diplomatic arguments that is

backed up with a stern military countenance. 'surrounded' or 'embraced', depends on her strategic wisdom.

Whether India is getting

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Balochistan- The New Regional Tinderbox?

- *Monish Gulati*

On 25 October 2013, the Iranian State News Agency reported that fourteen Iranian border guards were killed and five wounded in clashes with “armed bandits” near Saravan on Iran’s southeastern border with Pakistan. There were also reports of three (to six) soldiers of having been taken hostage and moved across the border into Pakistan. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has since called for an investigation into the incident.¹ The Balochistan region (with areas falling in Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan) has for long been associated with instability and armed conflict. On the other hand, events of regional and global significance involving Iran have been unfolding in the Middle East and on the global stage. It is argued that disturbances in Balochistan which are being influenced by events outside Iran can have a significant impact on the strategic environment in South Asia.

Sistan-Baluchestan

Balochistan strategically straddles the borders of three volatile countries. In Pakistan, Balochistan is its largest province (43 percent of the country’s land mass) and home to at least five million Pakistani Baloch. While the Iranian province of Sistan-Baluchestan, comprises of 11.5 percent of Iranian land mass and has around 2.5 million inhabitants. In Iran, the Baloch are mainly Sunni Muslims, who share the province of Sistan-Baluchestan with Persians and Sistanis, who are mainly Shia .

Sistan-Baluchestan's proximity to Pakistan and Afghanistan makes it one of the world's most dangerous narcotics, arms, and human trafficking conduits. The involvement of Baloch operated smuggling networks in regional trafficking activity and their extension into Pakistan and Afghanistan, has influenced Iran's perspective of the Baloch. Iran is

* *Monish Gulati, Defence Analyst based in Delhi*

also worried about the threat Baloch nationalism poses to its territorial integrity and regional stability. This has resulted in a rather severe Iranian approach to governance, development and security in Sistan-Baluchestan. The Iranian attitude in turn has only served to distance the Baloch and accentuate the sectarian divide.

Saravan Attack

Iranian Deputy Interior Minister Ali Abdollahi said that the Saravan attack had been carried out by Iranians who were "members of hostile groups". The Iranian Sunni insurgent group Jaish ul-Adl ("Army of Justice"), formed last year, has claimed responsibility for the hour long encounter.² Some analysts believe Jaish ul-Adl to be an offshoot of another Sunni terrorist group, but presently passive; the Jundallah, which has been responsible for terrorist attacks on civilians, assassinations and kidnappings in Iran. In retaliation for the Saravan attack, the Iranian authorities on 26 October executed 16 "rebels" held at a prison in

This has resulted in a rather severe Iranian approach to governance, development and security in Sistan-Baluchestan. The Iranian attitude in turn has only served to distance the Baloch and accentuate the sectarian divide.

Zahedan.³ According to available information, eight of these rebels belonged to Jundallah, while the remaining were hanged on drug offences.

After the attack, Iran lodged a protest with the Pakistani government over the apparent lack of control on illegal movements along the common border.⁴ Pakistan government has been requested to abide by the mutual security cooperation pact and the accord on extradition of

criminals in force between the two countries since 18 February this year.

Over the past year, Iran has seen an upsurge in Sunni separatism in

Sistan-Baluchestan, including from another Sunni terrorist group, Harakat Ansar Iran.⁵ Recently, Commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari said that the IRGC have successfully foiled 11 terrorist attacks in south-eastern Iran in the first half of the Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22, 2013)⁶. Jafari blamed "agents of Iran's enemies and counter-revolutionary groups".

Although the grievances of these groups are local, they are however increasingly linked via media networks to a conceptual framework of “global jihad” and a wider sectarian fight of Sunni versus Shia Islam. Jaish ul-Adl makes extensive use of the social media to network and propagate its cause including posting videos of its actions on its Facebook account.

Jaish ul-Adl

Jaish al-Adl (Army of Justice), which describes itself as a “political-military” movement, is motivated by Baloch nationalism and what they claim, Iran’s oppression of the Sunni Baloch people.⁷ The group operates primarily in the Sistan-Baluchestan province and according to a statement on the group’s website, is “composed of young Iranian Sunnis who have come together to defend the oppressed to the divine command”. Jaish al-Adl describes Iranian crimes against the Sunni minority in Iran as destruction of mosques, murder and arrest of clergymen.

The external causes driving the group has been the Iranian involvement in Arab countries, primarily Syria, and its attempt to

impose the Twelver Shiism (Ithna Ashariya) in Arab states through the “Hezbollah” branches in Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.⁸ The group recently called on all Sunnis to provide financial assistance. In addition to the better known Jundallah, the other Sunni Baloch terrorist group in operating in the region is the Harakat Ansar Iran (HAI).

Harakat Ansar Iran (HAI)

Harakat Ansar Iran (HAI) differs from its predecessor, Jundullah, in being more than regional in its perspective and joining their cause with wider Sunni issues.⁹ Recently HAI made an appeal, on a Saudi-based pan-Arab satellite channel (Wesal TV), calling on Sunnis to support the group by sending arms. HAI is cooperating with Sepah-e Sahaba Iran (SSI), another Sunni extremist group with ties to Pakistani terror group Sipah-e-Sahaba¹⁰ Pakistan.¹¹ Operationally HAI also employs suicide bombing and has claimed to have targeted IRGC including members of its elite Qods Force, in Chabahar.¹²

Assessment

The Islamic Republic of Iran has been the target of the US, Israel, and the Gulf Arab monarchies led

by Saudi Arabia. In addition to the crippling effect of the economic sanctions due to its nuclear programme, the prospect of the revival of a nationalist Baloch insurgency can severely impact stability in Iran and subsequently the entire region.

Further even though, the grievances of the Baloch Sunni extremist groups in Iran are local, they are getting increasingly linked by ideology and via media networks to a conceptual framework of “global jihad” and the larger sectarian strife between the Sunni versus Shia Islam; or in way a proxy Iran versus Saudi Arabia tussle in the region. Iran recently blamed explicitly its Sunni rivals Qatar and Saudi Arabia for funding and inciting Sunni separatist movements in the country.¹³

The finger pointing on Sistan-Baluchestan has led Iran to foment trouble in the Saudi backyard- Yemen. Iran has been lending support to the Houthis, a Zaidi Shia insurgent group operating in Yemen. The Houthi insurgency besides destabilizing

parts of North Yemen has managed to bring trouble to the Saudi province of Jizan

Iran is a key stakeholder in the ongoing discussion over peace talks on Syria and has covertly been influencing ground action in the country. A statement published in Persian on the website of Jaish al-Adl, after the Saravan attack, read as: “This successful operation is an answer to the violent crimes of Sepah (IRGC) in the Islamic land of Syria and is also an answer for oppression and crimes the regime has committed against the oppressed Sunnis of Iran.”¹⁴ On the other hand, Basij, Iran’s volunteer paramilitary organization operating under the IRGC¹⁵ has blamed the US and Israel for the attack.

The border incident at Saravan assumes significance not only by virtue of its geopolitical location or the sectarian tensions being fanned allegedly by Saudi Arabia and Qatar, but also due to the critical nature of developments concerning Iran on the global stage. Negotiations between Iran

and the P-5+1 on the Iran's nuclear programme have picked up pace after the election of Rouhani as Iran's president, his recent address to the UN General Assembly and his telephonic discussions with the US President. The subsequent fallout of these events and the US position on Syria has adversely impacted the US-Saudi-Israeli equilibrium in the Middle East, which makes a case for creating 'distractions' on Iran's eastern borders. Israeli Mossad agents have in the past posed as US spies to recruit members of Jundallah to fight their covert war against Iran.¹⁶

Given the swift Iranian reaction to the Saravan attack, further disturbances in the area have the potential to raise Sunni-Shia tensions in Afghanistan and Pakistan as well. As Afghanistan prepares for its crucial presidential and provincial elections early next year, sectarian tensions will be an added source of instability.

Besides the spilling over of the Syrian conflict to the region and rise of sectarian tensions, India's concerns would include the Chabahar port, its planned sea-link to Afghanistan and Central Asia, which is located in Sistan-

Baluchestan province. In October 2012, a suicide bomber killed two guards at a mosque in Chabahar. Earlier in 2010, an attack by two suicide bombers at the same mosque had killed 39 people.

India would be alert to the fact that as the Syrian conflict drags on and the US stand on Iran and its nuclear programme softens, the frequency and intensity of insurgent and proxy activity in Balochistan is likely to increase to the detriment of peace and stability in the region.

(The author is a Defence Analyst based in Delhi)

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Western Discourse on Pak Nukes Exposes 'Double Standards' Vis-a-Vis India

- *Arundhati Ghose*

It certainly cannot be the cooler days in Delhi that has attracted, in recent weeks, so many concerned western 'experts' to the capital, to discuss the abstruse-to the Indian public-subject of "strategic stability" in Asia/ in the sub-continent. Ahmed Rashid, the celebrity commentator on the Af-Pak region, has recently written in the Financial Times that they-the West-should "Beware Pakistan's small nuclear weapons" and this kind of reporting perhaps is causing some of the excitement. Add to this the fact that apart from an unflurried response from a semi-official source, there has been no other official reaction from India, which should have been the most worried, and the concern of these 'experts' is not surprising.

It is public knowledge that since April 2011, Pakistan has conducted three tests of its Hatf-

IX (NASR) missile, the latest in February of this year. The Pakistani Army has, after each launch, stated in press statements, that the "missile has been developed to add deterrence value to Pakistan's Strategic Weapons Development Programme at shorter ranges" and that the 60km NASR "carries a nuclear warhead of appropriate yield with high accuracy, shoot and scoot attributes." The introduction of battlefield nuclear weapons for use as a deterrent to conventional land based troops has been seen and reported as a reaction to the Indian Army's doctrine of Cold Start which in turn was drawn up as a possible response to another Mumbai-like terrorist attack. Apart from this widely reported conclusion, it appears clear that the effort behind this development is to signal to both India and to the international community, Pakistan's willingness to escalate any move by the Indian Army

* *Arundhati Ghose, Former Indian Diplomat*

against it to a nuclear level.

Indeed, the Indian strategic community has been discussing the implications of Pakistan's move for some time—a comprehensive analysis available in the public domain is the one by the International Strategic and Security Studies Programme (ISSSP) of the National Institute of Advanced Studies. At the semi-official level, Ambassador Shyam Saran, Chairman of the National Security Advisory Board pointed out that India's nuclear doctrine made no difference in the categorisation of nuclear weapons. Any nuclear attack on India or on her troops anywhere would be responded to by the inflicting of 'unacceptable damage'.

Lest the signal be lost on the international community, Rashid's article refers, almost with relish, to Pakistan's growing nuclear arsenal and that "Pakistan has one of the fastest growing battlefield or tactical weapons programmes in the world "and claims that Pakistan has developed the capacity to

miniaturise nuclear weapons "very successfully". Pointing to the dangers of another terrorist attack like the one on Mumbai in 2008, he appeals to the West (the US?) to translate its concern about Pakistan's tactical nuclear weapons "into a larger deal that pushes both Islamabad and New Delhi to contain what is now a runaway bomb." The logic is truly bizarre: Pakistan makes these terrorists and these weapons and India should be restrained?

At the semi-official level, Ambassador Shyam Saran, Chairman of the National Security Advisory Board pointed out that India's nuclear doctrine made no difference in the categorisation of nuclear weapons.

This logic, however, seems to be finding some support among the 'western experts'. At a recent meeting in Delhi, George Perkovich presented what he

felt were five options before India in the event of a Mumbai-like attack by terrorists from Pakistan. Perkovich works on the basis of assumptions and presumptions which reveal that in spite of having written reams about India and her nuclear programme, his understanding of Indian decision making seems to be based on current media reports. He remains deeply doubtful of Indian capabilities—not just military but intelligence in both senses, and

resources. (He apparently presumes that Pakistan would have the capability and resources even though they have never won a war and are making a very good try at ruining their economy.) He assumes, for example that the Cold Start doctrine would include occupying some Pakistani territory by the Indian Army-and on that ground alone, he finds this option flawed, quite apart from provoking Pakistan to use its tactical nuclear weapons. Air strikes are ruled out as Indian capabilities coupled with possible collateral damage and adverse media coverage should dissuade India (presuming, of course, that 'Mumbai-II' would not have had either collateral damage or negative press coverage) not to mention the likelihood of Pakistani reaction with its tactical nuclear weapons, and pulling China into the equation. Fomenting insurgency is immoral and illegal and should be eschewed; developing tactical nuclear weapons by India would require further testing and would cost- he is silent on whether this would apply to Pakistan or not. The ISSSP study referred to above makes the point that Pakistan would need to test the miniaturization of its weapons to be usable by NASR-on technical grounds. The most egregious

argument is Perkovich's quotation of Shyam Saran's speech, so partially, that the sense of that sentence has been changed to meet his needs rather than Saran's clear intention. There has been discussion at home about the issue of 'credibility' of a 'massive response'; while more precision might have been helpful, 'massive' surely includes 'punitive', and the effects could be 'massive' not just the attack. What is clear is that the response would inflict 'unacceptable damage'.

The option preferred by Perkovich- and no doubt others of the so-called 'non proliferation brotherhood', is that India should use "competitive restraint or non-violent leverage" "hold fire and mobilize Pakistani society and international organizations"! In fact, he admits that a 'normal' country would meet violence with violence; in his view India should not behave normally.

There are several other organizations which are due to hold meetings in Delhi and elsewhere on the need for 'stability' in the region. While this is a perfectly legitimate activity, their concerns, and they are perhaps valid ones, should surely be addressed to Pakistan, which

has nurtured terrorists and is signalling the use of nuclear weapons on the battlefield. Efforts should concentrate on finding ways to persuade Pakistan to desist from what are obviously suicidal attempts.

On the other hand, there is a need for our own Government to let the country-and the world-know how it reacts to recent developments affecting our nuclear posture. I am not referring only to the issue of

the introduction of tactical nuclear weapons in Pakistan's arsenal. Few of these could have been foreseen in 2003 when the doctrine was adopted by the Cabinet. This does not or need not entail any change in the doctrine: what is needed is an indication of policy changes to meet the current challenges.

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Populism and Emotional Blackmail in Indian Elections: Time to Grow Up

- *Dr M N Buch*

India is a representative democracy, a republic which is socialist and secular and in which the Preamble of the Constitution and Article 19 guarantee the fundamental right of freedom of speech and the freedom to form associations or unions. These can be political, which means they would be political parties, social, welfare oriented, religious or even groups of friends with common interests. In a representative democracy, elections are fought on the basis of political parties and this finds legal recognition in the Representation of Peoples Act 1951. After the election, the President in the case of the Union and the Governor in the case of a State appoints a person as Prime Minister or Chief Minister, as the case may be, under Articles 75 and 164 respectively because under Articles 74 and 163, the President or the Governor performs his

executive functions in accordance with the aid and advice of his Council of Ministers, whose existence, therefore, is mandated by the Constitution itself.

This article refers only to the situation in the Union because constitutionally the position in the States vis-à-vis the Governor and the Council of Ministers is the same as that for the Union. Because the Council of Ministers is collectively responsible to the House of the People under Article 75 (3) and the Prime Minister and his Ministers can hold office only so long as they enjoy the confidence of the House, it is obvious that unless they belong to the majority party or group in the House, they cannot enjoy the confidence of the House. It is for this reason that politicians form parties which then try and get a majority in the House at the time of the election. A heterogeneous collection of 543 Members of Lok Sabha can never develop the cohesion necessary to form a

* *Dr M N Buch, Dean, Centre for Governance and Political Studies, VIF*

majority group and, therefore, let us take it as axiomatic that in a representative democracy there will be political parties.

To differentiate itself from other parties every political party adheres to an ideology, a political philosophy and a programme which can promote that particular ideology. There is complete freedom to develop, evolve and present one's own ideology, ranging from the extreme left to the extreme right, but subject to the restriction that no political party will question the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India or advocate a system of government which rejects the socialist, secular and democratic nature of our republic. Nor can a party advocate that there will be no justice, liberty, equality and fraternity in India. The Representation of People's Act states categorically that for a political party to be recognised by the Election Commission, it must swear allegiance to the Constitution. Every office bearer who holds a constitutional position

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is required to swear an oath or make a solemn affirmation that he or she will function according to the Constitution. For example, the oath for the President is: "I, A.B. do swear in the name of God/solemnly affirm that I will faithfully execute the office of President of India and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect and defend the Constitution and the law and that I will devote myself to the service and well being of the people of India". As per the Third Schedule, a minister is required to take the following oath, "I, A.B, do swear in the name of God/solemnly affirm that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India as per law established, that I will uphold the sovereignty and integrity of India, that I will faithfully and conscientiously discharge my duties as a minister for the Union and that I will do right to all manner of people in accordance with the Constitution and the law without fear or favour, affection or ill-will". Similar oaths have to be sworn by a minister in a State, by

judges, by Members of Parliament and the State Legislatures, amongst others. Every M.P. or MLA, every Minister belongs to some political party or is an independent and if he has to swear an oath to uphold the Constitution it means that the ideology of every party and individual has to accept the common denominator of the Constitution. This point is pertinent here because whereas every party is free to adhere to its ideology, it cannot forswear the Constitution or advocate its overthrow. That would constitute an offence of sedition under section 124 A of the Indian Penal Code and invite drastic penalties, apart from making the party ineligible to hold public office.

If India is a representative democracy and elections are largely fought on the basis of parties, then obviously every party has to present to the people its own ideology, its vision of India in the long term and its specific programme of work in the next five years after an election by which it will promote such action as will facilitate the party in achieving its political goals. For example, Margaret Thatcher as leader of the Conservative Party in Britain stated categorically that if the party was voted to power she

would dismantle the socialist state. The people of Britain accepted this and for the next eleven years Margaret Thatcher worked diligently to achieve what had been stated in the election manifesto of the party. Even when a particular policy was unpopular, Margaret Thatcher relentlessly worked towards implementation of the policy and by the time she ceased to be Prime Minister, the entire political picture of Britain had changed. Even successor Labour Governments were unable to restore the old socialist state and in one form or the other they continued to implement what Margaret Thatcher had wrought.

In a true representative democracy ideology and programmes for implementation of ideological goals have to form the base of a party's electoral platform. There is no room for cheap populism, nor is there any need, because every political party prepares a programme on the basis of an ideology which has strong philosophical moorings and which has been adopted after considerable thought. Of course, in a true democracy governments can change according to whether the people accept or reject the performance of the government and, therefore, the ideological

differences between the parties have to be within defined parameters which ensure that no extremist philosophy can take over the State. In India, the Constitution itself provides for such parameters because if a party steps outside these limits, the courts and the people would intervene and the party would cease to hold office.

The extreme example of this in India was the proclamation of Emergency in June 1975 and the attempt by Mrs. Indira Gandhi and the Congress Party to establish authoritarian rule by using the emergency provisions of Article 352, 357, 358 and 359 of the Constitution. However, even this failed because though Parliament extended its own life by one year, ultimately in 1977 elections had to be held, in which the people firmly rejected Indira Gandhi and the Congress Party and the new government, through the Forty-fourth Amendment of the Constitution, rescinded all the amendments under the Forty-second Amendment which had

This populism takes many forms, including handing out largesse to undeserving people in the hope of getting their votes, introducing a communal appeal to voters so that specific sections of the electorate which might be religion based, caste based, region based, even gender based may vote for a particular party.

promoted authoritarian rule. In other words, our Constitution is strong enough to ensure that however extreme in its political ideology a party may be, such ideology has to restrict itself to the bounds set by the Constitution.

Unfortunately India is witnessing the phenomenon of sheer populism substituting for ideology in the functioning of political parties. This populism takes many forms, including handing out largesse to undeserving people in the hope of getting their votes, introducing a communal appeal to voters so that specific sections of the electorate which might be religion based, caste based, region based, even gender based may vote for a particular party. Such largesse can take the form of job reservations, pandering to a particular community without necessarily benefitting it in any meaningful way, using state agencies such as CBI to force political groups to support a particular party under the threat that if that party does not fall in line its leaders may have to face

criminal charges. The way in which CBI registered cases against Mulayam Singh Yadav and Mayawati, then delayed them, then once again became active and then officially decided to close the cases, has been coterminous with the fortunes of the Congress Party and the need to coerce or appease the target group or party from time to time. This is blatant misuse of the coercive power of the State and has no place in a democracy.

India has a multitude of problems. Setting aside decimal point economic demography, the fact remains that larger numbers of Indians are poor, huge numbers are unemployed or under employed, they cannot feed their families adequately, there is considerable child malnutrition and the living conditions of vast numbers of people are horrendously bad. How does a sensible country deal with such issues? What should be the approach of every political party to address the question of poverty? Poverty can be ameliorated or eradicated only if there is healthy economic growth in which equality is a focal point. Unless the economy expands in terms of infrastructure development, higher productivity in agriculture,

industrial growth and higher level of business which generates wealth, we cannot tackle poverty and malnutrition. Every political party in its manifesto must state categorically how it intends to promote economic growth in which there is social justice, increase gainful employment and ensure adequate income to the last man, thus ensuring that hunger, malnutrition and bad living conditions disappear. Every manifesto must state how the party views the social sector, in particular education and health and what it intends to do to strengthen it. Every manifesto must state what can be expected both long term and immediately if the party comes to power. In the field of agriculture, industry, business, infrastructure development, the social infrastructure, social welfare and security the party must state how it intends to go about its task in the next five years. The manifesto must specifically give the position of the party in the matter of law and order, dispensation of justice speedily and economically, foreign policy globally, in relation to the developed world and in the context of its immediate neighbours. All these are issues which the party must place before the people and discuss with them so that the

voter can form an intelligent opinion and exercise an intelligent option while casting his vote. What is more, every party must state how it intends to bring about a casteless and classless society in India, what it intends to do to promote the welfare of the backward and socially disadvantaged people, not by giving them sops but by organising them, educating them and leading them towards genuine empowerment so that they acquire an equal status with the more advanced social groups.

Unfortunately, reservation is the only means that parties seem to visualise for bringing about social equality in India and this falls firmly within the definition of populism.

Populism takes many perfidious forms, of which the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) under the MNREG Act is a leading example. Instead of using funds to create rural infrastructure which would bring about a permanent change in the village economy by increasing water availability, giving road connectivity, providing additional fuel and fodder, the programme

has become a muster based one whose principal objective is to provide a hundred days employment per year to those who come forward for it in the rural areas. A muster based programme cannot be run honestly and MNREGS has led to massive corruption and leakage of funds, with very little to show for it by way of village improvement. Now we have the Food Security Act, much touted by the National Advisory Council of Sonia Gandhi and the UPA Government, which is really the use of Keynesian

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deficit financing to fund a food dole. Deficit financing to kick-start a flagging economy which makes the economy function more efficiently is justified because it creates gainful jobs, increases production and removes stagnation without creating excessive inflationary pressure. Deficit financing to pay for a dole is a recipe for economic disaster.

However, populism in the name of the political game in India, so if one Chief Minister says that he will make rice available for Rs. 2 per kg., some other Chief Minister is bound to give it at Re. 1 per kg. Populism makes free electricity

available to agriculture, thus beggaring the Electricity Board, leaving distribution lines in a state of disrepair for want of funds, but with no commensurate advantage to the farmer because power supply becomes more erratic as the Electricity Board becomes dysfunctional. Populism leads to surrender to anti social elements such as the Naxalites when they kidnap an official and populism prevents the use of those stern police measures which are necessary in order to restore peace to the Naxal infested districts. Populism is what makes politicians surrender to every pressure group. Populism is what takes a highly prosperous state like Andhra, promising to carve out a separate state of Telangana, thus causing an upsurge of resistance in the main State of Andhra Pradesh, wrecking the economy of the State and causing disorder to prevail in every nook and corner. Populism substitutes an emotional appeal to the voters instead of telling them in practical terms what the party will achieve if it is given a chance to come to power.

The extreme form of populism is emotional blackmail, whose chief practitioner now seems to be Rahul Gandhi, on whom Congress

has pinned all its hopes for the five State elections in 2013 and the general election of 2014. Some of the gems of this scion of the house of Feroz-Indira Gandhi are worth recounting. Addressing a conclave of Dalits, Rahul Gandhi wanted to give a message that Dalits have to strive hard to escape from their present lowly status. The way he explained things was to refer to the velocity of acceleration needed to escape the gravitational pull of the earth if one is to go to the moon and of Jupiter if one is to leave that planet. Even here he made a factual error because it is not a particular speed which breaks one away from a given gravitational pull but it is rather acceleration per second per second till one achieves the critical speed. Anyway, the speech made no sense to the audience, but it did attract considerable media reaction, a great deal of it sarcastic. During the U.P. elections, Rahul Gandhi was clean shaven in Delhi and sported a two-day stubble when visiting a scheduled caste household, with a fortnight's facial growth when visiting Muslim constituencies in Azamgarh. Was he signalling that his incipient beard made him a Muslim and thus one among the crowd in Azamgarh?

In Madhya Pradesh, Rahul Gandhi has excelled himself. In Gwalior he said that the Congress was all for the poor and the Food Security Act will take care of their hunger. His family was emotionally attached to the Bill that when Sonia Gandhi found that she could not attend the House on the day of the vote because of her physical indisposition, she wept uncontrollably. Naturally the people would be expected to vote for such a compassionate leader. At Indore he said that his grandmother and his father were assassinated and perhaps he, too, would be assassinated. The appeal obviously was that he comes from three generations of victims and, therefore, the people should vote for him and his party because after all the victim of assassination needs some compensation from the people at large. He has also stated that the Muzaffarnagar riots were engineered by BJP and that an Intelligence Bureau officer had told him that ISI had contacted a group of about fifteen Muslim boys

thereafter in order to create more trouble. Was he indicating that ISI and BJP have a pact to create trouble in India? Who was the IB officer who gave information to a person not authorised to have access to it? Why were the Muslim youth not questioned and their assistance sought to trace the ISI agents?

At some stage an election campaign may have a degree of emotional appeal creeping in. But to go before the electorate with nothing but cheap melodrama does not behove a great national party, the party of Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, Maulana Azad, B.C. Roy, G.B. Pant, K. Kamaraj, B.G. Kher, Morarji Desai, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Swaran Singh and all the other great men who fought for our independence and then gave us a Constitution and a polity which aimed at leading a secular India into the modern world. Is this the best that the Congress can offer us?

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China and the United States – Big risks to the Global Economy and Markets

- *Dr. V. Anantha Nageswaran*

US stocks reach all-time high as government shuts down

George Orwell is reported to have remarked famously that telling the truth would be a revolutionary at a time of universal deceit. It cannot be more apt than now when financial markets are dancing to the commentary that is peddled by central banks and other cheerleaders that the world is embarking on a self-sustaining recovery even as the IMF and the World Bank are reducing their growth forecasts. The United States emerged from a fortnight long government shutdown in October. The US Congress voted to lift the debt ceiling but for three months. GDP growth in the fourth quarter in the United States will be lower than previously estimated. The Bloomberg Consumer Comfort Index at minus 37.9 is at its worst level since October 2012. It has fallen for six weeks in a row.

Some indicators in Europe are turning up but it is not yet clear if

Europe has what it takes to achieve a self-sustaining recovery. Export growth in Asia – China, Taiwan and Korea – slipped in September. Although October foreign trade data improved in China, it is hard to see a sound economic rationale for the rebound to sustain. No one is prepared to tell financial markets and investors that rising asset prices without fundamental improvement simply means that they are blowing bubbles. US banks have, almost uniformly, reported disappointing results. The few that did report better results have resorted to the use of clawing back loan-loss reserves to shore up profits. IBM has reported its sixth straight quarter of declining revenues. Corporate profits were flat in the US in 2012. Yet, Earnings per Share (EPS) of S&P 500 companies went up slightly in 2012 only because companies bought back shares. The rise in the S&P 500 index stock value is entirely due to an expansion of P/E multiple. To put

* *Dr. V. Anantha Nageswaran, Visiting Fellow, VIF*

it bluntly, that is bubble blowing, especially when fundamental economic and corporate backdrop are both turning unfavourable.

The final denouement of this bubble-blowing behaviour is the price of the stock, Twitter (TWTR is the stock code). It opened for trading at USD26.0 on 7 November and jumped to an intraday high of USD50.09 before closing at USD44.90. That is a one day jump of 72.7%. According to John Mauldin's research note ('Bubbles, bubbles everywhere', Nov. 2, 2013), "since 1990, the P/E multiple of the S&P 500 has appreciated by about 2% a year; in 2013, the S&P's P/E has increased by 18%!" He was citing another market commentator Doug Kass. Some of the worst debt practices of the 2007-08 period are back.

It is hard to believe but true that barely after five years of the last crisis of such a huge magnitude, policymakers and investors are blowing big bubbles again. Investors are obsessed with the liquidity provision by central

banks. Mohamed El-Erian of PIMCO has brought out this point rather well in a recent commentary:

In normal (healthier) times, markets look to central banks to provide the appropriate regulatory and monetary policy environment; and central banks look to markets to deliver efficient pricing and resource allocation. Today, this co-dependence has become a lot less healthy.

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Markets are now conditioned to expect a solid and continuous "central bank put"; and the revealed-preference of central banks for repeated interventions to support asset prices undermines efficient market functioning and discipline. For their part, and as illustrated as recently as last month's non-decision on tapering by the Federal Reserve, central banks find it hard to reduce their direct market interventions lest they cause severe disruptions to market pricing, liquidity and financial conditions – as indeed occurred after the May 22 mention of "taper" by Fed officials.

Source: <http://blogs.ft.com/the-a-list/2013/10/15/the-artificial-fuel-for-growth...>

On October 30, the US House of Representatives passed, with bipartisan support, legislation “that would roll back a major element of the 2010 law intended to strengthen the nation’s financial regulations by allowing big banks like Citigroup and JPMorgan Chase to continue to handle most types of derivatives trades in house”. (<http://dealbook.nytimes.com/2013/10/30/house-passes-bill-on-derivatives/>). The interesting part is that Citigroup lobbyists wrote about 70 of the 85 lines of the House Bill. With this, the House has passed eight bills this year that would roll back provisions of Dodd-Frank.

Now, in any other country, it would be a major scandal if the regulated wrote the law that would regulate them. It is one thing for lawmakers to seek their views before a law is amended or passed. It is another thing to let them write the provisions that they would like to see. It has ‘Conflict of interest’ written all over it. Unfortunately, America remains the intellectual leader for global financial capitalism.

Practices such as these, in combination with reckless monetary policy and investors’ carefree attitude, makes America a big risk to international financial stability.

China Credit Taps running again

Turning to China, even as analysts wrote copiously on the Fitch downgrade threat to US sovereign debt, they completely ignored the press release that Fitchratings put out on the same day. Fitch had tied China’s ratings to economic rebalancing. Of course, Fitch appears to want to wait until the National People’s Congress meeting in 2014 is over, before taking any rating (downgrade) decision. However, based on the government’s record thus far on re-balancing, the case for a downgrade of China debt already exists.

It was some time in 2007 when the former Prime Minister Wen Jiabao called the Chinese economy increasingly unstable, unbalanced, uncoordinated and ultimately unsustainable. Not much has improved since then. If anything, China’s economy has become more unstable and unbalanced. This is what Fitch ratings had to say on the China macro situation:

Capital formation rose to account for 48.1% of GDP in 2012 - unprecedented for any large emerging market. If investment continues to grow faster than GDP, it would soon exceed domestic savings (50.8% of GDP in 2012) - and China would sink into a trade deficit, dependent on capital inflows to fund growth. Fitch believes the authorities are determined to avoid such an outcome.

consumption, year to date. Investment contributed 4.1 percentage points (pp) of China's 7.6% growth in H113, against 3.4pp from consumption. Credit continues to grow faster than GDP: the flow of new "total social financing" was up 30.6% year-on-year in H1 2013 while nominal GDP rose by 8.8%. Fitch believes China faces a process of structural economic adjustment - which could be bumpy. Moreover, some of the

Investment and debt are closely connected and Fitch believes China has a debt problem to match its extraordinarily high investment rate. The stock of debt in China's economy has

The stock of debt in China's economy has surged to around 200% of GDP at end-2012 from 129% at end-2008 when the authorities unleashed a credit-fuelled stimulus. The agency believes no economy can operate indefinitely with a rising leverage ratio - another reason why growth is on an unsustainable path.

costs of fixing China's debt problem are likely to fall on the sovereign.

Source:

http://www.fitchratings.com/creditdesk/press_releases/detail.cfm?pr_id=8...

surged to around 200% of GDP at end-2012 from 129% at end-2008 when the authorities unleashed a credit-fuelled stimulus. The agency believes no economy can operate indefinitely with a rising leverage ratio - another reason why growth is on an unsustainable path.

In August, Total Social Financing (TSF) was up by Yuan (CNY) 1.6trn. Consensus forecast was for an increase of just CNY 950bn. In September, TSF rose again by another huge amount – CNY1.4trn. China's macro-economic turnaround in the third quarter has been entirely due to another round of credit flood.

There has been no progress in rebalancing the economy away from investment towards

Such huge numbers on new credit creation (these are ‘flow’ of new credit created every month and not stock of credit) have persuaded some analysts that these numbers might be overstating the actual credit creation and that some double counting might be involved (see <http://bloom.bg/193v6g5>). However, Fitch has a response to this:

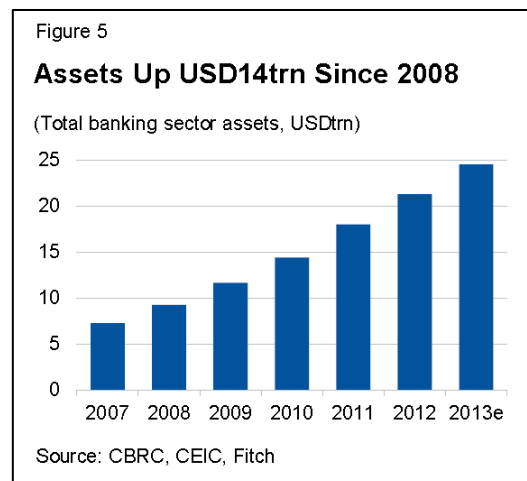
Some double-counting is inevitable, but limited and offset by the numerous channels of credit not captured by either metric, e.g. corporate credit transformed into interbank claims, inter-company credit and payables, private equity (PE) funds (particularly local government PE funds), and person-to-person lending. This is further supported by the fact that growth of total banking sector assets remains so strong (Figure 5), which would not be the case if TSF data contained substantial double counting or diverged visibly from broader financial sector trends.

In Fitch’s view, the principal reasons why credit continues to outstrip GDP are: 1) the majority of non-household principal obligations falling due are being

rolled over/refinanced, resulting in a fall in net repayments of credit and propping up credit flows; 2) as the stock of credit rises, an increasing share of new financing is going toward servicing interest payments, which has little or no impact on the real economy; and 3) a substantial portion of credit is going toward long-term projects that have yet to come on line.

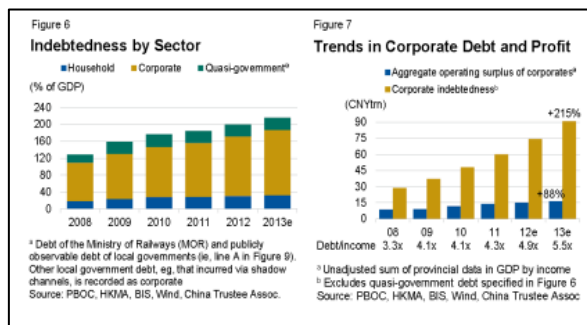
Source: ‘Chinese banks - Indebtedness Continues to Rise, With No Deleveraging in Sight’, FitchRatings, 18 September 2013

We present below some charts that tell their own story.



“Credit/GDP will have risen an estimated 87pp in the five years ending in 2013, nearly twice that observed in other countries prior to financial sector stress”.

Source: ‘Chinese banks - Indebtedness Continues to Rise, With No Deleveraging in Sight’, FitchRatings, 18 September 2013



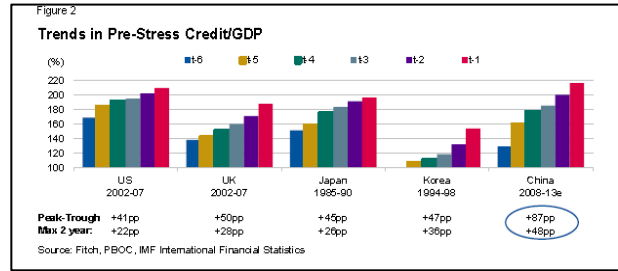
Source: ‘Chinese banks - Indebtedness Continues to Rise, With No Deleveraging in Sight’, FitchRatings, 18 September 2013

Figure 9: Chinese Local Government Indebtedness, (CNYtrn)

Item	2008	2010	2012e	H113e
A. Debt of provinces, prefectures/cities, counties				
Bank loans	n.a.	8.5	9.3	9.7
Fiscal bonds	0	0.4	0.7	0.7
Other tradable local government-related bonds ^a	0.2	0.8	1.8	2.3
Other debt	n.a.	1.0	1.0 ^b	1.0 ^c
Subtotal	5.6	10.7	12.8	13.7
Percent of GDP (%)	18	27	25	25
B. Other debt				
Debt owed by towns and villages ^d	n.a.	0.8	0.8 ^e	0.8 ^e
Estimated additional shadow credit ^f	n.a.	Included in 'other' above	3.0 ^g	4.0 ^g
Total	5.6	11.5	16.6	18.5
Percent of GDP (%)	18	29	31	32

^a Issuance of publicly tradable bonds by local government financing vehicles and city construction companies
^b More recent data is unavailable, so the 2010 figure has been left unchanged
^c State Council Economic Research Center, 2012: A Study on China's Fiscal & Financial Risks/ 中国财政金融风险研究报告
^d Estimated by Fitch, includes borrowing from trust companies, entrusted loans, private placement debt issuance, and other non-bank/non-trust company credit
^e Source: National Audit Office, Wind Information, China Banking Regulatory Commission, CEIC, Fitch

Source: ‘Chinese banks - Indebtedness Continues to Rise, With No Deleveraging in Sight’, FitchRatings, 18 September 2013



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China calling on the United States to behave responsibly was clearly a case of the pot calling the kettle black. China’s suggestion that it was time the world abandoned the U.S. Dollar as the global reserve currency might be a reasonable one but certainly, the alternative is not the Chinese yuan. In fact, presently, the Euro looks a safer bet than either the US dollar or the yuan. However, there is a big question mark hovering over sustainable economic growth in the Eurozone.

Finally, when central banks are the only game in town – they are the plaintiffs, the jury, the judge and the executioner – it is foolish to try to view asset prices through the prism of economic fundamentals.

During a brief interview on FOX Business, David Stockman, the author of *The Age of Deformation* exclaimed "There's no one in the stock market today except drugged-up day-traders and robots... This is utterly irrational." The blame (and benefactors) are clear, he blasts, "how could someone in their right mind believe that you can have interest rates... at zero for nine years? ... That is the greatest gift to the

speculators, to the 1%, to the leveraged traders, to the carry trade ever imagined!" He concludes, "we're almost on the edge of another explosion at the present time." (<http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2013-11-07/david-stockman-blasts-brace-exp...>). Enough said.

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In Memoriam: John F Kennedy

- *Prabhat P Shukla*

T*he historical record sheds positive light on JFK*

It is fifty years since the assassination of President Kennedy, and time to explore his Presidency for what it might have done for Indo-US relations, had he lived longer. What follows is an Indian perspective dealing with JFK's role in South Asia. He was President at a critical time, particularly because of the India-China War, and what follows is an examination of his policies in a crucial period in the subcontinent's recent history.

Life is full of ironies, and one was on display in an unlikely venue, very early in JFK's Presidency – in March 1961 in Soviet Russia, in the city of Novosibirsk. The US Ambassador, Llewellyn Thompson, was calling on Khrushchev, to deliver a letter from JFK. Having read the letter, Khrushchev asked the Ambassador to convey his thanks and good wishes to the President. He added that he was not conveying the usual wishes for a long life for JFK, which was the

Russian custom, since he was so young. Such a wish was not needed for a young man like Kennedy.

One leader who did not particularly like Kennedy was Ayub Khan in Pakistan. Even before Kennedy was elected President, indeed before he was a declared candidate, Ayub had complained against him. This happened during a meeting in Karachi with President Eisenhower in December 1959. Ayub complained about the opposition to military aid to Pakistan from then-Senator Kennedy, and then-Congressman Bowles – the latter was to be appointed Ambassador to India by Kennedy to succeed Galbraith in the job. This was an unusual diplomatic step on the part of Ayub, but the Pakistani leaders have usually been both outspoken and petulant in their dealings with the Americans.

Once Kennedy was elected, however, Ayub was off the blocks early, and met Kennedy at the

* *Prabhat P Shukla, Joint Director, VIF*

White House a few months after he assumed office on a July afternoon for a long, leisurely talk. Earlier, the State Department had discussed the drift in US-Pakistan relations, and an internal note had pointed out that relations between India and China were facing renewed tensions, and there was scope for Indo-US military cooperation. The problem, according to the State Department officials, was that any improvement with India was bound to alienate Pakistan. It could shut down intelligence cooperation, or even leave SEATO and CENTO, and this the US could not afford. Not for the first time, and not for the last, the Department concluded that the best way forward was for the US to reassure Pakistan by taking on a more active role over Kashmir.

This background is important to appreciate how the US-Pakistan summit talks proceeded. Kennedy led off with a detailed survey of global affairs, including his recent meeting in Vienna with Khrushchev, the situation concerning Germany, which remained a priority for him

The problem, according to the State Department officials, was that any improvement with India was bound to alienate Pakistan.

throughout his Presidency, and other problem areas of the world.

Ayub came straight to the point – India.

With the help of maps of Kashmir and Punjab, he explained to Kennedy that India was militarily threatening Pakistan, which needed all the help that America could give. On the other hand, India did not deserve any help from America, because of its aggressive intent towards Pakistan. Kennedy replied that he

did not believe India was going to attack Pakistan – it already had what it wanted in Kashmir. When Ayub persisted,

Kennedy observed that he could understand India's, particularly Nehru's, desire to hold on to what they had. He could also understand the Indian military deployment, to keep out Pakistan, which had "irredentist feeling". Any other leader would have got the message, but Ayub was not for stopping. He persisted, and advised Kennedy that India would disintegrate within fifteen or twenty years. As for Kashmir, Pakistan would have to have all of the state up to River Chenab, and

a little beyond. Failing this, Pakistan public opinion was beginning to turn in favour of China. Finally, Kennedy agreed to raise the issue with Nehru when the latter visited the US later in the year. Some further vituperation against Afghanistan, Russia and “those bloody Hindus” and Ayub was done.

True to his assurance, Kennedy did raise the subject with Nehru when the latter visited the US in November the same year. From all accounts, the meeting did not go as well as Kennedy would have liked: Nehru was tired and uncommunicative, except on the subject of Kashmir. On this, Nehru told him that there was a fundamental error in thinking that, because the majority of the population in Kashmir was Muslim, it should go to Pakistan; this ignored the reality of the presence of 45 million Muslims in other parts of India. He was willing to legalise the current status quo, with minor changes, said Nehru, and added that the former Prime Minister of Pakistan had agreed with this formula. Unfortunately, the military had stepped in, and matters had grown worse since Gen Ayub took over. Nehru concluded by saying that it

would be difficult enough to get approval for the partition of Kashmir along the current ceasefire line, any territorial change to the detriment of India would not be saleable in the country. Kennedy did not press any further, though some of his aides present at the meeting did try and probe a little more.

Thus, Kennedy’s understanding attitude was already in evidence in the early months of his Presidency. So was his personal admiration for Nehru, whom he had hosted at Hammersmith Farm, Mrs Kennedy’s parental home, the previous day for a family affair. It was further displayed in his readiness not only to press on with economic assistance for India, but even to discussing the possibility of providing military assistance – something that had not been seriously considered earlier. As already mentioned, the State Department had already been discussing internally the possibility of military cooperation with India in the context of tensions with China, but had essentially concluded that antagonizing Pakistan was not worth the benefits that might be gained with India.

The test came soon enough. Kennedy really came into his own on the India relationship during the China war in October-November 1962. But first, a little bit on what preceded this in the summer of the year would be in order. Two issues were noteworthy. The first was a brief discussion on Kashmir at the UN Security Council [UNSC]. Kennedy had assured Ayub that if other approaches did not work with India, he would support Ayub in raising the matter in UNSC.

The US had suggested the name of Eugene Black – who, as head of the World Bank had worked with India and Pakistan on the Indus Waters – as an intermediary for Kashmir. India had rejected the proposal, and the Pakistanis were therefore moving the UNSC.

America did not want to sponsor any such resolution, and so had asked some of the non-permanent members to sponsor it. One by one, after initially agreeing, UAR, Chile, Venezuela, and Ireland had backed out under pressure from India. Finally, Kennedy himself approached the Irish again and

they agreed to sponsor the resolution alone. In the vote that followed, the US and the UK voted in favour of, and the USSR vetoed, the Resolution. This had led to some frictions at the top leadership level, and Kennedy had himself expressed irritation at the strong speech Nehru made in Parliament against the US and the British following their UNSC votes. Naturally, the Soviet Union came in for considerable praise, including in the media.

The second issue was the Indian plan to acquire supersonic fighter aircraft. This was essentially in response to the sale by America of F-104 aircraft to Pakistan, a decision that was made by the previous Eisenhower Administration.

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Pakistan, a decision that was made by the previous Eisenhower Administration. President Eisenhower, who was to warn his country three days before demitting office, of the possible danger from a too-powerful military-industrial complex, had done a great deal to push the arms race in South Asia by arming Pakistan under military assistance programmes once Pakistan joined SEATO and CENTO. And so it was that India

was searching for viable response to the Pakistani and Chinese military strength. One option was the indigenous HF 24, for which an engine needed to be outsourced with the British in competition with their Orpheus engine. In the end it was the USSR that won the contract, but it was never implemented.

But India was also in need of a short-term response to the military build-up, and was negotiating with the USSR for the MiG-21; also in the fray were the British Lightnings, the French Mirages and the American F-104 itself. However, the latter was ruled out by the Americans, principally because they were concerned that the Pakistanis would react negatively – and shut down the intelligence facilities that America had on its soil. Since India was also keen to obtain the rights to license production, and wished to buy against Rupees, there really was only one serious option and that was the USSR. Although Kennedy tried hard to get an attractive package behind the British, it was clear that the latter did not seriously hope or try to clinch the deal. Even after forcing the US to undertake to meet 75 percent of the cost of the deal, the British did not pursue

the project in earnest – and were happy enough to let Krishna Menon kill the offer.

This, then, was the backdrop to the fighting that began as small skirmishes in September-October, and then flared up into large-scale fighting along the entire frontier. Very early after the war began [on 20 October 1962], two diplomatic moves made by the US Administration revealed their stance. The first was to authorise Ambassador Galbraith to issue a declaration that the US recognised the McMahon Line as the border between India and China, and that it fully supported India's position in this regard. The second was to approach Ayub and advise him not to make any military moves against India, and instead, to call off his own talks with China on the border. He reluctantly – and conditionally – agreed to the former, but ignored the latter request.

Inevitably, the question of arms for India had to be faced. The US had begun emergency arms supplies to India on 3 November, within a few hours of the formal request for such assistance. On 14 November – Nehru's birthday – the two countries also signed a formal agreement, in the form of

an exchange of diplomatic notes, for such an arms supply arrangement, the first such in the history of independent India with the US. However, the bureaucratic system was arrayed against a long-term arms supply agreement for India. In a Note prepared by the State Department, with the Defence Department and the CIA concurring, it was argued that military assistance to India would need to be weighed against its negative impact in Pakistan. The implication was that such a decision should not be taken.

In putting up this Note to the President, the NSC, presumably more in tune with the President's thinking, recorded a comment that deserves to be quoted at length, as much for its contemporary resonance as for the appraisal of the Kennedy Administration:

I would add one comment on section 3 of the memorandum. Section 3-b (page 5) is devoted to difficulties that the new situation in India will raise for our relations with Pakistan. It seems to me that the problem could be stated a little more sharply in a somewhat

different way. We are now faced with the necessity of making the Pakistani [sic] realize that their alliance with us had been of immense value to them. This comprises not only the substantial economic and military assistance we have given, but also the general support that the alliance provides in their relations with India. They are obviously the weaker power, and they have been able to maintain as strong a line on Kashmir as they have in part because of the existence of our

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support in the background. We are now beginning to confront them with the fact that we are really not able to support their demand for a settlement via plebiscite, and that their best opportunity for settlement on terms something like ratification of the status quo may be passing from their grasp. This will be a difficult and painful process, but it is one we must push through. [Foreign Relations of the United States, Volume XIX, South Asia, Doc 190 of 3 November 1962.]

Kennedy was later to take the same position vis-à-vis Pakistan in cabinet discussions, but that was

to come later. During the war itself, the first of the senior-level meetings took place on 19 November, when the US cabinet met to discuss the course of action to be followed after the initial airlift of emergency requirements. Defence Secretary McNamara wanted to send out a military mission urgently to assess the situation and India's military needs; Secretary of State Rusk was opposed, suggesting that the British should take the lead, as a fellow Commonwealth country. JFK ruled in favour of a stand-alone US mission, while suggesting that the British be kept in the loop to see what they were planning to do. Meanwhile, the airlift of equipment that began as early as mid-October continued, despite Pakistani protests.

Anyway, on 20 November, exactly a month after the war began, the Chinese declared a cease-fire and began to withdraw from most of the areas they had occupied. However, Kennedy continued to give thought to what needed to be done in order to establish a new relationship with India. His thinking was crystallizing over the next few weeks, and became clear in a series of messages he sent to his subordinates and peers, such

as the British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan.

The first and most significant of these conclusions was that India had finally woken up to the reality of the Communist threat, and this had opened prospects of a new relationship between America and India. In these early weeks even after the ceasefire, the Soviet Union had not taken a clear-cut stand as between India and China, and had not responded favourably to the Indian requirement for MiG's. Therefore, Kennedy was looking to a long-term defence relationship with India, and seeing it in the context of the Cold War – that is, to confront China, and keep the Soviets out of India.

The second was that the US could no longer turn a blind eye to the difference in objectives between America and Pakistan over the purpose of their alliance. America was in it for containing Communism, Pakistan was in it for support against India. Pakistan would have to be carried along, but it could no longer hold a veto over what the US did with India. This was recognised as being difficult, but, in his mind, Kennedy was clear that Pakistan would be told clearly that it needed to settle its disputes with

India, Kashmir principally, but that the US could not compel India to follow a certain course for such settlement. At the same time, Pakistan would also need to back away from its growing ties with China, as well as control the anti-US sentiment that was finding ever wider expression in the media.

Third, to give expression to the new defence cooperation, Kennedy intended to step up air defence assistance. In his opinion, India had failed to use its Air Force in the war with China because it feared a counter attack from the Chinese Air Force. He therefore suggested to the British Prime Minister that America could supply the hardware – radar and other ground equipment – while the British and other Commonwealth countries could offer to deploy active fighters with crew in case of need. The implication was that the latter would not be permanently deployed in India, but be available in case of need. This insistence on involving the Commonwealth and the British, even in the lead role, called forth from Ambassador Galbraith the tart comment that there were only two-and-a-half

In his opinion, India had failed to use its Air Force in the war with China because it feared a counter attack from the Chinese Air Force.

capitals in the world that took the Commonwealth seriously – London, Washington, and Canberra.

What broke this scheme was that the accompanying demand for a settlement on Kashmir proved a bridge too far. In the first place, although the idea had been clearly formulated that Pakistan would not be allowed to hold the military cooperation with India hostage to its own demands on Kashmir, in practice, that is exactly what did happen. And, further, in the negotiations on Kashmir that started in December 1962, the Pakistani territorial demands were so high that no Indian Government could possibly agree to them. And, for all his personal reservations, Kennedy could not carry his team with him, and disregard Pakistani objections to closer military cooperation with India. This is abundantly clear from a message from the Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, to the Embassies in New Delhi and Karachi instructing Ambassador Galbraith that it should be stated without ambiguity to the Indian leaders that it was “untenable for us to continue for long [to] give

extensive military assistance to India while it [was] expending efforts on quarrel with Pakistan.” No such condition was imposed on Pakistan.

What further angered the Indian establishment was a direct intervention by the Americans, and the British, in the India-Pakistan talks. This took the shape of a document covering the “elements” of a settlement, jointly authored by the US and the UK. This was injected into the discussions on the eve of the fifth – and penultimate – round of the talks, as a result of the growing concern among the US and British policy makers that the talks were not making adequate progress, and needed more hands-on involvement. The two “elements” that caused Nehru to reject the proposals were the demand that both countries had to have a substantial position in the Vale; and that Pakistan had to have its interests in the Chenab recognised. Neither was acceptable to India, even its demoralized state after the war with China.

An equally important factor for the failure of the India-Pakistan talks was that the Soviet Union moved swiftly, once the Cuban

crisis was out of the way, to restore ties and trust with India, even though its principal ally in the Government of India – Krishna Menon – was gone as a result of the military debacle. The Soviets offered the MiG’s, and also agreed to provide for licensed production in India, all to be paid for in Rupees. All these steps enabled India to call off the talks with Pakistan on Kashmir by the middle of 1963.

It is also noteworthy that Pakistan played a predictably dubious role throughout the course of the talks. On the eve of the first round, in late December 1962, they announced that they had reached agreement with China to settle their boundary in the Xinjiang-POK area. And on the eve of the fourth round – on 2 March 1963 – Bhutto travelled to Peking to sign the border agreement. This was done in the teeth of opposition not only from India but the US as well. India had registered a formal protest, which was ignored by both China and Pakistan by pointing out that the agreement was of an interim nature, and could be reviewed when the J&K issue was finally resolved. The US had registered its own doubts at the growing closeness between Pakistan and China, but this was

also brushed aside by Bhutto and Ayub.

Once the India-Pakistan talks on Kashmir had finally collapsed by mid-1963, the Americans, now willing to cut loose from the British connection, were confronted with determining the way forward with India and with Pakistan. Kennedy was clearer in his mind by this time that the Pakistan connection was not all that it was cracked up to be. The first inkling of his new assessment of the worth of the Pakistan

connection was in evidence already in December 1962, at the Nassau Summit with the British Prime

Minister, Harold Macmillan. At a plenary session devoted to India-China issues, he asked what the Americans got out of Pakistan. He was told, as per the official line, that Pakistan was an ally under SEATO and CENTO, and if America leaned too far towards India, Pakistan could leave these two bodies. Not satisfied, he persisted: what would happen if Pakistan did leave? Iran would also quit, and that would be the end of CENTO, he was informed.

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Clearly, this kind of thinking had been developing further in Kennedy's mind, and his conviction and confidence in his own thinking became clearer after the failure of the talks between India and Pakistan. A note recorded by McGeorge Bundy, the National Security Adviser, on Kennedy's views on India, spells out the following:

1. Given the declining prospects for a Kashmir settlement, we should not hold off so long on aid, in order to get leverage on Kashmir, that we jeopardize the developing relationship between the US and India.

2. As to the magnitude of further military aid, we should try to get the Indians down to a realistic program, but should regard \$300 million (including defense production aid) over three years from the US and UK as a floor rather than a ceiling.

3. ...our policy should be not to let the UK restrain us from moving to the extent we think desirable.

....

6. We must make clear to Ayub that we can't hold off indefinitely on aid to India because of Kashmir.

[FRUS Vol XIX, Document 285 of 26 April 1963 - excerpts]

This line of thinking only got sharpened as the summer of 1963 wore on, and Kennedy grew in confidence and took on the entrenched views not only of the British, but also his own establishment, in State, the CIA and Defence – though this last was less negative on India. In the final event, the Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, bowed to the inevitable and recommended to Kennedy that the US, apart from other measures of defence cooperation, should enter into an executive agreement with India to consult in the event of an attack by China. In a full meeting of the National Security Council to discuss these recommendations, Kennedy asked whether a commitment to “consult” meant a commitment to defend India; on being assured by Rusk that it did, he gave his approval. For good measure, he also said that he would also favour a “flat guarantee of the territorial integrity of India”.

Kennedy's assessment of Pakistan was also evolving rapidly by the summer of 1963. In August, the US Under Secretary of State was to visit Pakistan, and was seeking instructions from his principals. When there was talk among the officials of the need to reassure Pakistan, Kennedy observed that he “didn't think that Ayub was really scared of India. What would the Indians get out of attacking Pakistan? They'd lose a billion dollars in Western aid. What Ayub was really worried about was that he was losing the capability to attack India successfully or at least to get his way vis-a-vis India.” And once again he asked his team what exactly the US got from Pakistan – his question seemed to imply that the answer was, at best, very little.

Thus, Kennedy had brought Indo-US relations to an entirely new qualitative level from where they had been under the Truman and, especially, the Eisenhower Administrations. And yet, it is ironic that many of the issues that Kennedy grappled with, in particular Pakistan and China, do not seem to have changed all that much since those days fifty years ago.

And so it is that India has reason to regret the untimely killing of a President who might have made a difference to relations between the two countries. As it was, Johnson succeeded Kennedy on 22 November 1963, and with a week of taking over, he had made his position clear: Pakistan had been neglected, and this needed to change. According to a memo recorded in the NSC:

“The President expressed the greatest of confidence in Ayub and a feeling that we had not been forceful enough with him, had not given him a feeling of confidence in our motives and that he had drifted into the thought that we would abandon him in favor of India. He stated that he wished this corrected in a most positive manner.”

To wrap up the narrative, the record shows that Kennedy came to office with an understanding of the importance of India, and a sense that the military ties with Pakistan were of limited value. However, in the early period, he was still feeling his way forward, and was not ready to take the

hard decisions that were needed to translate his vision into reality. It should also be remembered that South Asia was not a priority those days, and that he had his hands full dealing with the USSR, the Europeans, and Cuba. The Bay of Pigs had been a disaster, as had the summit in Vienna with Khrushchev. It took the success of the Cuban Missile Crisis, which played out even as the India-China war was taking place, for Kennedy to acquire the dominance over the system that would allow him to drive the changes that he wanted in South Asia. It is hard not to be impressed by the fact that he was able to get the system to recommend an executive agreement for the defence of India, and for him to offer a commitment – a “flat guarantee” - for the territorial integrity of India. Sadly, by the time he was beginning to assert himself, he was assassinated – and that ended what was a very promising start in Indo-US relations.

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Mangalyaan, Vibrant Symbol of India's Growing Prowess in Space Exploration

- *Radhakrishna Rao*

For a country that was badly in need of a good news, the spectacularly successful launch of India's Mars Orbiter Mission Mangalyaan on Nov.5 came as a heart warming development that overwhelmed Indians with a sense of "joy and pride".

The hoisting of the 1340-kg Indian Mars orbiter into a precise near earth orbit by means of an augmented version of the reliable, four stage Indian space workhorse, Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle(PSLV) not only marked a big leap ahead for the Indian space programme but also catapulted India into the ranks of the select galaxy of advanced space faring nations. Indeed, this first ever Indian interplanetary mission is being envisaged as a stepping stone for India's deeper forays into outer space in the years ahead, in keeping with India's ambition of emerging as a technological power house of global standing.

Rightly, as pointed out by K.Kasturirangan, a former Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation(ISRO), Mangalyaan will be a key milestone for the Indian space programme that would also boost India's credentials to join the future international deep space missions not only to Mars but also to other planets of the solar system. By all means, Mangalyaan is the most complex and challenging space mission ever tried out by the Indian space agency.

Indeed, the accomplishment of Mangalyaan mission in a record period of around thirty months and that too within a limited budget is one more striking instance of the "Indian space success story on a shoe string budget." As stated by ISRO Chairman, K.Radhakrishnan, "The worth of a nation is defined by the dreams it dares to dream. ISRO dreamt a dream and made it real". On their part, Western

**Radhakrishna Rao, Visiting Fellow, VIF*

aerospace analysts have not minced words in describing Mangalyaan as a vibrant symbol of India's growing prowess in space exploration. Across the world, there is a growing realization of the long strides made by India in high technology areas and the successful launch of Mangalyaan has only gone to strengthen this impression.

Considered a natural follow on to India's highly successful maiden lunar mission Chandrayaan-1 launched in Oct 2008, Mangalyaan has helped ISRO develop a number of new and novel technologies involved in the design, planning, management and operation of interplanetary missions. These technologies will stand ISRO in good stead while launching probes to Venus and inner asteroid belt in the years ahead. Moreover, the spin offs of the strategic technologies developed for interplanetary missions have many potential civilian applications which the Indian industry can exploit for the benefit of the country. On another front, the Indian Mars mission has all the potentials to fire the scientific imagination of the young Indian

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minds keen on pursuing frontier research that could also result in the development of cutting edge technologies that no country is willing to sell or share. Indeed, for a country that commenced its space journey in a very humble way with the launching of a nine kg. sounding rocket from a facility in the fishing hamlet of Thumba near to Thiruvananthapuram, the slingshot to Mars that would involve an epic trek of Mangalyaan spacecraft covering a distance of about 400-million kms in 300 days is as exciting as it is spectacular.

There is no denying the point that Mangalyaan with a price tag of

Rs.4500-million is the cheapest ever ticket to Mars. The cost of Mangalyaan is said to be one tenth of what USA has spent on its latest mission to Mars, MAVEN (Mars Atmosphere and Violet Evolution) which is all poised for its celestial journey. Innovation, indigenisation and frugal engineering are considered the secret of India's low cost space missions. For instance, Jeffrey Plescia, a researcher at Johns Hopkins University in USA says that the cost of Indian Mars mission is less than 0.1% of India's

annual budget. ISRO has spent just about 5% of its annual budget on the Mars mission. Significantly, the widely respected British aerospace magazine, Flight International comments, "Remarkably, ISRO has spent a mere \$ 75-million on the Mangalyaan mission, an astoundingly small budget for a project so complex. By comparison, Alfonso Cuarón's acclaimed 2013 space epic, Gravity, starring Sandra Bullock and George Clooney was made at an estimated budget of \$100-million".

As expected, there has been trenchant criticism of the Indian Mars mission based on the argument that a country of India's standing with the problem of widespread poverty and backwardness on hand, should not have a costly and high profile planetary mission as its priority area. However, such an argument has not found many buyers in the country. For space technology too can contribute to the advancement of the community in tandem with socio economic measures at the ground level. Stating that the Indian space programme is overwhelmingly people centric, Radhakrishnan drove home the point that "there is no question of wrong priority .In fact, this is the

right priority. We have benefited the grass root level people in the country."Indeed, the thrust of India's INSAT communications and IRS earth observation spacecraft constellations being operated by ISRO is on diffusing the fruit of space technology into the mainstream of national development.

From aiding agriculture to disaster warning as well as supporting education and health to mapping natural resources and providing instant communications links in disaster hit areas, these two satellite constellations continue to play a stellar role in the all round development of the country. In fact, the massive evacuation of people along the coastline of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh in October this year that saved human lives in thousands is a tribute to the early warning on the movement of devastating cyclone Phailin that the weather watch satellites in INSAT constellation made available to the India Meteorological Department(IMD). This is but just an example of how space technology is benefiting the nation. "Our three satellites have helped evacuate people in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh during the recent cyclones. You can see our

satellites have been put to use in many such instances”, noted Radhakrishnan.

Indeed, right since inception, the focus of the Indian space programme has been on exploiting the potentials of space technology for speeding up the socio economic development of the country. Radhakrishnan has been quick to observe that while looking at the stars, ISRO has firmly been rooted in the ground.

A section of western analysts have also projected the view that Indian Mars mission is a symbol of India’s overriding ambition to attain a super power status. India, like other space faring countries has every right to project its prowess in outer space in a peaceful manner. To work towards attaining the status of a super power is a prerogative of a sovereign, independent country. Moreover, India which lost the “Industrial revolution “ but as a nation under foreign rule, cannot afford to remain stagnant in so far as the exploration of the final frontiers is concerned. Indeed an interplanetary probe like Mangalyaan is vital to affirm India’s leadership position in outer

We may have something to say about the presence of methane in the Red Planet and where it comes from.

space. USA was able to attain an unprecedented level of industrial and technological growth because of the massive investment it made on the basic science research.

As noted by Prof U R Rao, a former ISRO Chairman, just as India’s Chandrayaan-1 made research history with the discovery of water on the moon, Mangalyaan too can come out with something new about the Red Planet, many aspects of which continue to remain shrouded in mystery.” We may have something to say about the presence of methane in the Red Planet and where it comes from. That may give us indications of any form of life at all on the planet”, noted Prof.Rao, Going ahead, he expressed the view that Mangalyaan has also the potential for the advancement of science and technology in the country. The successful accomplishment of the mission to the Red Planet will make ISRO the fourth space agency in the world to pull off this distinction. So far, only National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) of USA, Roscosmos of Russia and European Space Agency (ESA) have logged successful missions to

the Red Planet. Interestingly, around half of more than 50 missions launched so far to Mars have ended up in failure. And in Asia, success has eluded Martian probes sent by both China and Japan, the space front runners in the continent. As such, there is a perception that in the area of exploring Mars through a robotic probe, India is keen on assuming a leadership position in Asia. However, ISRO has repeatedly denied the suggestion that it is in race with other space faring countries. It was during his Independence Day speech on August 15,2012 that the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh made an announcement of the Indian mission to Mars, saying that it will mark a huge step forward in the area of science and technology. "If it succeeds, Indian Mars mission would represent technological leap for this South Asian nation, pushing it ahead of its space rivals, in the field of planetary exploration," said Wall Street Journal.

Of course, as pointed out by ISRO, the primary driving technological objective of the mission is to design and realize a spacecraft which can reach Martian transfer trajectory, orbit around Mars to study its atmosphere and map

minerals while looking for signs of methane. ISRO feels that MOM is a logical extension Chandrayaan-1 mission . But then in contrast to Chandrayaan-1, mission to the Red Planet involves a longer flight and an altogether different trajectory involving a lot of hurdles on the way. According to M.Annadurai who is currently programme Director for Indian Remote Sensing, Small, Science and Student Satellites at ISRO Satellite Centre in Bangalore, "it provides us with opportunity to test technologies like spacecraft autonomy, long distance space communications, interplanetary navigation and miniaturized space payloads and systems."Annadurai provided leadership to the team that realized India's Chandrayaan-1 mission. Evidently, ISRO chose a Martian mission since there are several similarities between the earth and Mars. They include soil surface, seasons, the duration of their days and the polar ice caps.

The Indian Mars probe carries five scientific instruments with a total weight of 15-kg to study the various aspects and features of the Red Planet. All these instruments were designed and developed within the country. According to Radhakrishnan "It has a colour

camera for optical imaging of the planet's surface, a methane sensor to monitor the presence of methane in Martian atmosphere, a thermal infrared camera to study the geological features, a Lyman Alpha Photometer to study the Martian atmosphere and a payload to study the neutral composition of the planet's upper atmosphere." As envisaged now, Mangalyaan is expected to help ISRO generate a first ever comprehensive map of the Red Planet. Rightly, ISRO considers the Mars mission as a symbol of India's assured access to space.

The importance of Mars to earthlings stems from the fact that many researchers believe that Mars could be the next outpost for the human civilization to flourish in our solar system. According to Prof Rao, the Red Planet holds a great potential and relevance to earthlings. For in "about 500 years or so we might be able to use Mars as a resources base for earth". Observes Rao, "We are running out of resources in the world. There are many people who believe Mars can be made hospitable and of course it

As envisaged now, Mangalyaan is expected to help ISRO generate a first ever comprehensive map of the Red Planet. Rightly, ISRO considers the Mars mission as a symbol of India's assured access to space.

requires a lot of efforts." Former Indian President and internationally recognised space scientist Dr.A.P.J.Abdul Kalam has made an impassioned plea for a well organised international collaboration to give a practical shape to the human dream of colonizing Mars in the future.

Significantly, ISRO researchers behind the Mars Orbiter Project did carefully study the failures and successes of the various missions to Mars before arriving at the spacecraft configuration and mission profile. It may be recalled that Russia's Phobos Grunt mission to Mars that also carried a Chinese probe named Yinghuo-1 launched in Nov.2011 came cropper after the spacecraft failed to leave earth's orbit and crashed back earth in early 2012. This mission was meant to collect the soil samples from the Martian moon Phobos and send them back to earth in a return capsule .Similarly the Japanese mission to Mars, Nozomi launched in July 1998 had, on account of a mechanical hitch, gone into a wrong trajectory and failed to reach Mars.

One of the key areas of research that many Mars probes have focussed on so far is the possibility of the existence of methane whose presence could point out to the planet having supported primitive life forms .As it is, the American Curiosity rover to Mars could hardly find credible evidence for the presence of methane on Mars. “We will be looking at Mars differently from what Curiosity has done. There can be new findings or confirmation of findings,” says S.K.Shivakumar, Director of ISRO Satellite Centre in Bangalore. Significantly, the American MAVEN probe which will study the atmosphere of Mars is expected to share synergy with India’s Mars mission. The sensors of both these missions will probe and analyse the dynamics of the process that resulted in the thinning of the Martian atmosphere. ”There are some overlapping objectives and at the point we are both in-orbit collecting data, we plan to work together with the data, “says Radhakrishnan.

Both India’s Mangalyaan and MAVEN spacecraft will join earth’s armada of five operational obiter and surface rovers currently exploring the Red Planet. “If all goes well, NASA’s MAVEN orbiter

and Indian MOM will work together to help solve the mysteries of Mars atmosphere. We plan to collaborate on same overlapping objectives,” says Bruce Jakosky, MAVEN’s principal investigator from the University of Colorado.

Perhaps the most challenging scientific objectives of the Indian Mars probe would be finding clues for the existence of methane on the Mars. Further, the Indian Mars mission will help answer questions such as whether Mars ever had an environment in which life evolved in addition to studying the surface topography, mineral resources and microbiology and atmosphere of the Red Planet Everything going as planned, Mangalyaan will reach its final orbit around the Mars in September next .The five scientific payloads on-board the spacecraft would actively explore Mars from this position in a variety of angles for about six months.

Meanwhile, ISRO is aware that it cannot rest on its laurels. For the Mangalyaan happens to be just the beginning of a long, challenging journey into the mind boggling expanse of outer space, a large part of which remains unexplored. The philosophy that

“not even the sky is the limit” ISRO happens to be the brightest
continues to propel ISRO for part of its history.
“deeper and wider’ forays into the
final frontiers. And for India, the
continuing space conquest by

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Sardar Patel's Legacy and the Congress: A Reality Check

- *Prof. Makkhan Lal*

The recent spat between the ruling Congress and the main Opposition BJP over the legacy of India's 'Iron Man' Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel has reignited the debate over the differences among the stalwarts on key issues pertaining to the nation's unity and identity.

It has also brought to the fore certain bitter truths about the then political leadership, which has hitherto been brushed under the carpet as even their discussion was considered not only politically incorrect but also blasphemous to a great extent.

The pre-independence Congress was not a party but a movement of freedom fighters among whom included people from all shades and ideologies. It was due to this fact that Mahatma Gandhi, despite not being a member of the Congress party, was accepted as the Supreme leader.

For a greater understanding of the freedom struggle and the politics

of those turbulent times, it becomes important to understand the historical facts and context pertaining to the election of India's first Prime Minister and Sardar Patel's stand on contentious issues such as Article 370 and religion based reservation, which continues to be widely debated to this day in the country.

The First Prime Minister

By the time World War-II was coming to an end, it was becoming clear that India's freedom is not very far. It was also very clear that it will be the Congress President, due to the number of seats the party had won in the 1946 elections, who shall be invited to form the Interim Government at the Centre. Thus, suddenly the position of the President of the Congress Party became a matter of great interest.

Once the election to the post of Congress President was announced, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad expressed his desire for re-

* *Prof. Makkhan Lal, Senior Fellow, VIF*

election. This move of the Maulana “agonized Azad’s close friend and colleague Jawaharlal who had his own expectations.”¹ However, Gandhi had made his choice known in favour of Nehru on 20th April, 1946. This was not the first occasion that Gandhi spoke about his choice of Nehru. He had been speaking about it for the last several years. However, despite Gandhi’s open support for Jawaharlal Nehru, the Congress Party overwhelmingly wanted Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel as the President and consequently the first Prime Minister of India, because it considered Patel as ‘a great executive, organizer and leader’² with his feet firmly on the ground.

April 29, 1946 was the last date for the nominations for the post of the President of Congress, and thereby the first Prime Minister of India. It is pertinent to note here that by this time Gandhi had already made his choice known. Still 12 out of 15 Pradesh Congress Committees nominated Sardar Patel. The remaining three may not have nominated Patel but

then they did not nominate anyone else also including Pt. Nehru. Thus, no Pradesh Congress Committee proposed the name of Jawaharlal Nehru even on the last day of filing the nominations i.e. April 29, 1946.

However, Nehru was formally proposed by a few Working Committee members who did not form any electoral college. Once this happened, efforts began to persuade Sardar Patel to

However, despite Gandhi’s open support for Jawaharlal Nehru, the Congress Party overwhelmingly wanted Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel as the President and consequently the first Prime Minister of India, because it considered Patel as ‘a great executive, organizer and leader’²

withdraw his nomination in favour of Jawaharlal. Patel sought the advice of Gandhi, who in turn asked him to do so and “Vallabhbhai did so at once.”³ But it must be mentioned

that before advising Patel to withdraw, Gandhi had given enough hint to Nehru to step down in favour of Sardar Patel. Gandhi told Nehru:

“No PCC has put forward your name...only [a few members of] the working committee has.”⁴

This remark of Gandhi was met by Jawaharlal with “complete silence”. Once Gandhi was

informed that “Jawaharlal will not take the second place”, he asked Patel to withdraw. Dr Rajendra Prasad lamented that Gandhi “had once again sacrificed his trusted lieutenant for the sake of the ‘glamorous Nehru’ and further feared that “Nehru would follow the British ways.”⁵

When Rajendra Prasad was using the phrase “once again”, he indeed was referring to the denial of Presidentship of the Congress to Patel, always at the last moment in 1929, 1937 and 1946 in preference to Nehru. Prasad was not the only person to complain about Gandhi “sacrificing his trusted lieutenant for the sake of the glamorous Nehru.” There were many others. But Gandhi took the decision because he was convinced that “Jawaharlal will not take a second place but by giving Jawaharlal the first place, India would not be deprived of Patel’s services and the both will be like two oxen yoked to the Governmental cart. One will need other and both will pull together”.⁶

Sardar Patel agreed to take a secondary position because of two reasons: firstly, for Patel, post or position was immaterial. Service to the motherland was more important; and secondly, Nehru

was keen that “either he would take the number one spot in the Government or stay out. Vallabhbhai also reckoned that whereas office was likely to moderate Nehru, rejection would drive him into opposition. Patel shrank from precipitating such an outcome, which would bitterly divide India.”⁷

The very same Maulana Azad, who had always been considered a great friend and confidant of Jawaharlal and who had issued a statement on 26th April 1946 calling for Nehru’s election as Congress President, wrote in his autobiography, published posthumously in 1959:

“After weighing the pros and cons, I came to the conclusion that the election of Sardar Patel would not be desirable in the existing circumstances. Taking all facts into consideration it seemed to me that Jawaharlal should be the new President....

“I acted according to my best judgment but the way things have shaped since then has made to realize that this was perhaps the greatest blunder of my political life. I have regretted no action of mine so much as the decision to withdraw from the Presidentship of the Congress at this junction. It

was a mistake which I can describe in Gandhi's words as the one of Himalayan dimension.

"My second mistake was that when I decided not to stand myself, I did not support Sardar Patel. We differed on many issues but I am convinced that if he had succeeded me as Congress President, he would have seen that the Cabinet Mission Plan was successfully implemented. He would have never committed the mistake of Jawaharlal which gave Mr. Jinnah an opportunity of sabotaging the Plan. I can never forgive myself when I think that if I had not committed these mistakes, perhaps the history of the last ten years would have been different."⁸

Looking back at those tumultuous years, Rajagopalachari, who had all the reasons to be angry, unhappy and uncharitable to Sardar Patel because it was the latter who deprived Rajaji the first Presidentship of India, wrote almost 22 years after Patel's death:

"When the independence of India was coming close upon us and

Gandhi was the silent master of our affairs, he had come to the decision that Jawaharlal, who among the Congress leaders was the most familiar with foreign affairs, should be the Prime Minister of India, although he knew Vallabhbhai would be the best administrator among them all...

"Undoubtedly it would have been better if Nehru had been asked to be the Foreign Minister and Patel made the Prime Minister. I too fell into the error of believing that

I too fell into the error of believing that Jawaharlal was the more enlightened person of the two... A myth had grown about Patel that he would be harsh towards Muslims.

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This was a wrong notion but it was the prevailing prejudice."⁹

Thus, not only the people of this country, but even those great Congressmen who supported Nehru to become Prime Minister regretted their action later on.

Article 370

The framing of the Constitution of India was virtually in the final stages. Gopaldaswamy was made in-charge of framing the part dealing with Kashmir. A draft was

finally agreed upon among Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Gopaldaswamy, Dr. Ambedkar, the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah and three of his colleagues. It was also approved by the Constituent Assembly and the Congress Party. The Article dealing with Kashmir in this draft was known as Article 306A. But after Abdullah and party went back to Srinagar, they started raising objections to this draft. Abdullah argued that the provisions of Indian Constitution applicable on all other states should not be applicable on Jammu and Kashmir. He just would not listen to any reasoned argument. It transpires that this move of his had the blessings of Jawaharlal Nehru. It was perhaps Nehru who advised Abdullah to seek the help of Ambedkar for securing the Special Provisions for Jammu and Kashmir. After giving a patient hearing, Ambedkar told Abdullah:

“India should provide all the money for the governance and development of your state. India should undertake to defend your state against Pakistan and other aggressors. Indians should die to defend your state. You will have a separate constitution, separate head of state, separate sets of laws

and separate flag. Your people can buy and own land anywhere in rest of India but none who was not born in Jammu and Kashmir could reciprocally buy and own property in Jammu and Kashmir. Indians should be taxed to develop your land, to defend it from all aggressions and you have no obligation at all to the Indian Union. I can never agree to such treatment to any state.”¹⁰

It is very difficult to guess whether Gopaldaswamy was honest in writing in what he wrote to Patel after Abdullah’s interview with Davidson in which he demanded an independent Kashmir, or was he really playing a game. Nevertheless, he lamented that it was unimaginable and hurtful that:

“after having agreed to the substance of our draft both at your [Sardar Patel’s] house and at the party meeting, they [Abdullah and company] would let me and Panditji down in the manner they were attempting to do.”¹¹

But the story gets murkier as we proceed. Though Gopaldaswamy and Nehru were blaming Abdullah for the impasse and trying to impress on Patel that they were unhappy with Abdullah’s

behaviour, somewhere behind Patel's back, the game was still on. Gopaldaswamy, on 15 October, 1949, sent another draft of the Article to be incorporated in the Constitution, replacing Article 306A dealing with Kashmir, to Patel for his consideration. Gopaldaswamy did not forget to mention in his covering letter that he has prepared this new draft, in place of the one agreed upon by all:

“Without giving up the essential stands we have taken in our original draft, read just it in minor particulars in a way which I am hoping Sheikh Abdullah would agree to.”¹²

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Patel was aghast at the draft. What Gopaldaswamy was calling as ‘minor’ adjustments, and in all essential it was the original draft, was seen by Sardar Patel as follows (communicated to Gopaldaswamy):

“I find there are some substantial changes over the original draft, particularly in regard to the applicability of fundamental rights and directive principles of state

policy. You can yourself realise the anomaly of the state becoming part of India and at the same time not recognising any of these provisions.

“I do not at all like any change after our party has approved of the whole arrangement in the presence of Sheikh Sahib himself. Whenever Sheikh Sahib wishes to back out, he always confronts us with his duty to the people. Of course, he owes no duty to India or to the Indian Government, or even

on a personal basis to you and the Prime Minister who have gone all out to accommodate him.

“In these circumstances, any question of my approval does not arise. If you feel it is right thing to do, you can go ahead with it.”¹³

Things became more and more complicated due to the reopening of the Constitution Draft, already unanimously approved by the Constituent Assembly, and that too without anybody raising any note of dissent. Abdullah and three of his colleagues were present when this draft (Article 306-A) dealing with Kashmir was

approved by the Constituent Assembly. They also did not raise any objection or moved any amendment to it. Still, Gopaldaswamy and Nehru thought it prudent to open the chapter and start drafting the whole thing afresh (which came to be known as Article 370) as per the whims and fancies of Sheikh Abdullah and his cronies. The state got a Constitution of its own which was an unfortunate by-product of Article 370. No other State of the Indian Union has a separate Constitution. All other States have a uniform structure as per the Part IV of the Constitution.

The question that now arises is as the inheritor of Sardar Patel's legacy, does the Congress feel, like Sardar Patel, that Article 370 is not the right thing and it need to be dealt with? As a part of Sardar Patel's legacy, does it have any plan abolish Article 370 and make Jammu and Kashmir at par with all other states? If not that can it restore proposed Article 306A that was agreed upon and approved by the Constituent Assembly?

Religion Based Reservation and Separate Electorate

Right from the Congress party to all other political parties who claim to be the protector of minority (read Muslim) interest are now clamouring for separate electorates and job reservations for the Muslims in the name of religion. Some states have gone ahead with such reservations defying the High Court and Supreme Court directives. The Central Government headed by the Congress party appointed Sachar Committee to look into the problems faced by Muslims and Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh declared from the ramparts of Red Fort that "Minorities, particularly Muslims, have the first claim on the (nation's) resources".

Not that this issue was not discussed in the Constituent Assembly. It was discussed and the entire debate is available in Volume V of the *Constituent Assembly Debate*. Sardar Patel also spoke on the issue.

Replying to the debate on 27 August 1947 and addressing the issue of Separate Electorates, and also the question of religion based reservations in Government jobs, he said:

“I am sorry to learn that this question [question of the separate electorate] was taken seriously.... There are many eminent Muslims who have recorded their views that the greatest evil in this country which has been brought to pass is the communal electorate. The introduction of the system of communal electorates is a poison which has entered into the body politic of our country. Many Englishmen who were responsible for this also admitted that. But today, after agreeing to the separation of the country as a result of this communal electorate, I never thought that this proposition was going to be moved seriously, and even if it was moved seriously, that it would not be taken seriously. Well, when Pakistan was conceded, at least it was assumed that there would be one nation in the rest of India – the 80 per cent India – and there would be no attempt to talk of two nations here also. It is no use saying that we ask for separate electorates, because it is good for us. We have heard it long enough. We have heard it for years, and as a result of this agitation we are now a separate nation. The

I am against separate electorates.... Therefore, my dear friends, I ask you “Do you want now peace in this land? If so do away with it.... I appeal to you ‘let us at least on this side show that everything is forgotten’.”¹⁴

agitation was that ‘we are a separate nation; we cannot have either separate electorates or the weightage or any other concessions or consideration sufficient for our protection. Therefore, give us a separate State.’ We said, ‘All right, take your separate State’. But in the rest of India, in 80 per cent of India do you agree that there shall be one nation? Or do you still want the two nations talk to be brought here also? I am against separate electorates.... Therefore, my dear friends, I ask you “Do you want now peace in this land? If so do away with it.... I appeal to you ‘let us at least on this side show that everything is forgotten’.”¹⁴

Replying to the amendment motions moved in the Constituent Assembly in favour of separate electorates, he further stated:

“You cannot have it both ways. Therefore, my friends, you must change your attitude, adopt yourself to the changed conditions. And don’t pretend to say “Oh, our affection is very great for you”. We have seen your affection. Why talk about it? Let us forget the

affection. Let us face the realities. Ask yourself whether you really want to stand here and cooperate with us or you want again to play disruptive tactics. Therefore when I appeal to you, I appeal to you to have a change in your heart, not a change of tongue, because that won't pay here. Therefore, I still appeal to you: 'Friends, reconsider your attitude and withdraw your amendment'. Why go on saying "Oh, Muslims were not heard; Muslim amendment was not carried". If that is going to pay you, you are mistaken, and I know how it cost me to protect the Muslim minorities here under the present condition and in the present atmosphere. Therefore, I suggest that you don't forget the days in which the agitations of the type you carried on are closed and we begin a new chapter. Therefore, I once more appeal to you to forget the past. Forget what has happened. You have got what you wanted. You have got a separate State and remember, you are the people who were responsible for it, and not those who remain in Pakistan. You led the agitation. You got it. What is it that you want now? In don't understand. In the majority Hindu provinces you, the minorities, you led the agitation. You got the partition and now again you tell

me and ask me to say for the purpose of securing the affection of the younger brother that I must agree to the same thing again, to divide the country again in the divided part. For God's sake, understand that we have also got some sense. Let us understand the thing clearly. Therefore, when I say we must forget the past, I say it sincerely.... There must be reciprocity. If it is absent, then you take it from me that no soft words can conceal what is behind your words. Therefore, I plainly once more appeal to you strongly that let us forget and let us be one nation."¹⁵

Can the Congress, as the 'true' inheritors of Patel's legacy stand by these statements and uphold the interest of the nation rather than indulge in vote bank politics?

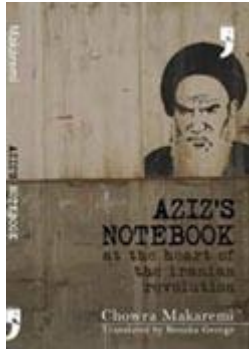
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AZIZ'S NOTEBOOK: at the heart of the Iranian revolution



Iranian Revolution and How it Devoured its Children

- ***Sushant Sareen***

Can there be anything in common between the Islamic Revolution led by the Ayatollahs of Iran, the formation of a medieval Islamic Emirate by the Taliban of Afghanistan, the Cultural Revolution unleashed by the Red Guards of Maoist China and the pathological Khmer Rouge regime of Cambodia? Apparently, apart from the blood lust that characterised all these revolutions and the regimes they fostered on the hapless people of these countries, they were also tied together by their antipathy for anything remotely modern. In sheer brutality, the Ayatollahs who presided over the Iranian

Revolution appear to be mirror images of the Taliban, who ironically they denounced as savage barbarians after the fall of Kabul in the late 1990s. Worse, they were just as antediluvian in their attitudes as not only the Taliban but also the Red Guards and the Khmer Rouge. A passage in the book “Aziz’s Notebook” quotes a cleric as saying: As long as there is one person left in this country who can say ‘I am an engineer, or a doctor, or I have a masters degree’, this revolution will not stabilise. This revolutionary society must be purged of the filth of their existence, because all these people

* *Sushant Sareen, Senior Fellow, VIF*

are westernised and incurable.

It isn't often that one comes across a book that is both unputdownable and at the same time difficult to read in one go because it is so disturbing that it is impossible to read it in one go. Chowra Makaremi, who has put together the notes that her grandfather wrote of the tyranny, tumult and torture that her family went through in the wake of the Iranian Islamic revolution, has brought to life exactly such book. What makes this book even more remarkable is that the author accidentally discovered the notes that her grandfather penned down not just to "bring the beloved beings back to life" but also to explain to his grandchildren "who their mother was and why she was executed".

Unlike other non-fictional accounts of terrible crimes that visit peoples, this is a first person account of the horror, brutality and cruelty that was unleashed by the Islamic Revolution. While being deeply disturbing and heart rending, it is a chronicle of the times, written not from the perspective of the winners or losers but from the perspective of the sufferers. So often tectonic events in history get reduced to

just an anodyne recounting of the main developments. Something similar has happened with the Islamic revolution. With the passage of time, the turmoil in Iran, starting in the late 1970s and going on for nearly a decade, is explained away either in a couple of sentences or by just highlighting the main political and strategic developments. What the people went through, their trials, travails and tribulations, the daily grind and struggle to survive, is generally glossed over. Worse, the thousands killed during those times are reduced to just a statistic, completely ignoring the pain and suffering of those who lost their loved ones. Makaremi fills this gap by compiling her grandfather's notes into a book which is a must read for anyone who wants a factual account of how a revolution eats its own children and the death, destruction and dislocation that revolutions, which are so often romanticised, cause.

At one level, Aziz's Notebook is the outpouring of a helpless old man who watches his two daughters being tortured to death. It is the primal scream of a parent who is unable to do anything to stop the brute injustice of an evil regime. But at another level, it is a

devastating critique of the Islamic Revolution. Aziz calls the revolution "one of the greatest scourges of history" and says "since its inception....it has progressed like leprosy, devouring the skin, the flesh and the bones of those who founded it and participated in it". His utter contempt for the 'revolutionaries' aside, Aziz gives a graphic description of the horrible injustices and inequities that were heaped on the people by the Mullahs.

Aziz's Notebook is a terrifying testament of the inquisitions carried out by the mullahs in Iran. Quoting his daughter who was subjected to the worst sort of torture, he describes how forced (but also false) confessions were demanded so that they could be aired on TV, how these were justified by the judges on grounds of taqiya (telling a lie for reasons of self-preservation) and how on refusal the person was battered in torture cells. The bravery of his daughters who refused to indulge in these blatant falsehoods to implicate others (despite knowing that they would be made to suffer enormous mental and physical torture, including being taken before fake firing squads) is truly awe inspiring. The resolve and call

of conscience that his daughters displayed in not repudiating their comrades is extra-ordinary because it takes a lot character to refuse to harm someone else just to save your own skin. When the mother in law of one of his daughters advises her to confess, she refuses by saying that the confessor has to then kill several 'mujahideen' and since she was not willing to kill even a bird, there was no way she could kill an innocent person. Compare this to the long list of Indian civil servants who even today are willing to say the most blatant lies and untruths about their colleagues only for the sake of a post-retirement job.

The bravery of Aziz's daughters – for instance, one of them despite being arrested spins a yarn to keep the parents from worrying and later nonchalantly informs the father that she has been sentenced to death – and the terrible torment that the family went through is shakes the very soul of the reader. But more than the tragedy that visits Aziz's family, the true value of this book lies in exposing the evil that was and continues to be inflicted in the name of religion. It is a must read for anyone who wishes to understand the truth of the Iranian Islamic Revolution.

More importantly, it serves as a wakeup call for all those who try and make a case for the Taliban being allowed a second chance in Afghanistan under the pretext

that they have reformed. Aziz's Notebook nails this lie.

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Interaction with Taiwanese Delegation

An interaction was held with a Taiwanese delegation from Prospects Foundation at the VIF on 6 November 2013. The five member Taiwanese delegation was led by Dr. Tzong-Ho Bau, Vice Chairman of the Foundation. Dr Frances Chung, Deputy Representative, Taiwan Economic and Cultural Centre, New Delhi was also present. Other members from Taiwan were Mr. Yang Ming Sun, Vice President Prospects Foundation, Dr. Edward I-Hsin Chen, Dr. Vincent Wen-Hsien Chen and Darren YH Chang.

Mr Ajit Doval, KC, Director VIF began the discussion by emphasizing that relations between India and Taiwan has tremendous potential and the two sides need to further enhance co-operation in various fields particularly technology and trade. At present, the volume of India's trade and investments with Taiwan is not at an optimal level. Mr Doval focused on Taiwan's unique model of diplomacy where the thrust is on conflict avoidance, especially with reference to its relations with mainland China. Dr Tzong-Ho Bau deliberated upon Taiwan's economic integration

with the ASEAN countries and on trade dependencies between the Republic of China and People's Republic of China.

The VIF faculty and the Taiwan delegation interacted closely on issues such as internal stability in China, position of China's economy, progress of inner party democracy within the Chinese Communist Party and prospects of democracy in China. Other pressing issues such as US-China relations, Taiwan's stance on the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) and Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) were also discussed. Taiwan is more inclined towards joining RCEP as bulk of its economic exports is with South East Asian countries. The Indian side also shared their perspectives on broad contours of India-China relations including the unresolved boundary issue and co-operation between India and China at global forums like WTO and UN.

The two sides were unanimous in their view that India and Taiwan need to bolster the level of their partnership with special emphasis on signing a free trade agreement and exchanging reciprocal visits

between senior ministers of both countries. In the field of economy, the two countries have a great potential for developing mutual benefits in the IT, manufacturing, food processing and agricultural sectors. The Taiwanese side was especially keen on increasing people to people contact between India and Taiwan. They pointed out that India has the potential of becoming a major tourist destination for Taiwanese tourists

but at present only about 10,000 of nearly 10 million Taiwanese foreign tourists visit India. They were of the opinion that a Visa waiver programme with India would accelerate the flow of Taiwanese tourists to India. Taiwan desires that India includes it among the 40 countries to whose citizens it is considering granting tourist visas on arrival.

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Vimarsha on Indigenising Technology and Production in Defence – India’s Survival Need

On 11th November 2013, Vivekananda International Foundation invited Dr. V. K. Saraswat, former Director General of DRDO and former Scientific Advisor to the Ministry of Defence, to deliver a talk on **Indigenising Technology and Production in Defence – India’s Survival Need**, under its monthly series of talks given by eminent personalities, *Vimarsha*.

Welcoming Dr Saraswat, VIF Director Shri Ajit Doval KC, raised some critical issues related to India’s future defence requirements.

Dr Saraswat in his highly informative presentation highlighted the geo-political scenario that engulfs India at present and expressed his concerns for the future. Arguing that self-reliance in Defence technology and production was vital for our survival, Dr Saraswat suggested numerous measures including setting up of a

Commission on the lines of ISRO focused specifically on the development of technology and production for both defence and civilian purposes. He also called for an increase in investment in the R&D sector and suggested rational taxation or exemption to encourage greater investment in the sector. Dr Saraswat said it was beyond comprehension as to why the Indian Government could not get Indian private sector involved in defence technology and production, while it is ready to import defence equipments from foreign private manufacturers.

The talk was followed by a very enthusiastic interaction between the guests in the audience and the speaker. It was unanimously agreed that India needs to press-in the paddle, while we still can, as far as indigenisation of our defence sector is concerned.

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Interaction with Mr. Tom Dodd, Senior Policy Advisor, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, UK

Mr. Tom Dodd, Head, ASEAN Department of Foreign and Commonwealth Office accompanied by Helen Fazey, Counsellor, ASEAN and Regional security Affairs at the British Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia had an interaction with the VIF Faculty on 12 November 2013. The discussions focussed on emerging environment in the Asia Pacific and responses of India and UK to the developments.

Mr. Tom Dodd explained the reasons for enhanced engagement of UK with ASEAN countries and East Asian nations. Shifting of focus of trade, commerce and economics to Asia was the primary motivation for UK's increasing interaction with the Asian nations. As a consequence, the UK has not only increased the number of its diplomats in Asia but is also strengthening its relationships through economic and strategic partnerships. The UK has had presence in many of the Asian nations in earlier times and is now keen to build up relations on many

of the positive aspects of such a relationship. The UK was independently engaging with ASEAN and other Asian countries and not necessarily as a part of America's Asia Pacific strategy. The Five Power Defence Arrangement between UK, Malaysia, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand of 1971 has survived the onslaught of ever changing strategic environment yet motivations for its continued existence may have undergone a change.

So far as India's approach to ASEAN and East Asia is concerned, the VIF faculty explained, it is encapsulated in its 'Look East Policy' unveiled in early 1990s. The dominant impulse of this policy was to integrate the region economically with India. After two decades or so, the policy has acquired some strategic orientation. India has concluded an FTA with the ASEAN in goods and services and has bilateral defence and security cooperation agreements with most of the nations in the region. While

US is 'pivoting' or rebalancing to Asia in recent times, India's 'Look East Policy' predates the new U.S. strategy. While China's assertive policies in the region may be cause

of America's rebalance to Asia, India is inclined to follow independent policies that best suit its national interest.

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Launch of the book *Tibet: Perspective and Prospects*

T*ibet: Perspectives and Prospects, a publication of Vivekananda International Foundation*, was launched on 6th November 2013, by His Holiness the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje. Shri Ajit Doval KC, Director VIF, Ambassador P P Shukla, Joint Director VIF and Editor of the book, Shri Vijay Kranti, noted Tibet expert, and Vikas Arya, the publisher of the book.

In his opening remarks, Shri Doval highlighted the strong bonds of fraternity India has always shared with Tibet. He pointed out that despite events of modern history, for India, Tibet has always remained an individual and single entity. Maintaining that nothing stays constant, he expressed hope that the sad state of affairs that engulfs Tibet today will certainly improve and the people of Tibet will see a bright and peaceful future.

Ambassador Shukla, the editor of the book, highlighted two major aspects which the book deals with. Firstly, it reflects the sense among

the authors of having let down the Tibetans in their hour of greatest difficulty. It is a *mea culpa* on the part of the contributors to the book. Second, he referred to the dimension of India's security concerns. For India, Tibet is not just a civilisational peer, but also a safeguard against unfriendly foreign forces. It was bewildering, he said, to note that India in the late 1940s and early 1950s, keeping the thousand year old friendship with Tibet at stake, allowed the Chinese invasion in Tibet to consolidate itself without challenge – to the point where we actually blocked UN discussion of the issue. Disturbingly, India also became the first nation to recognize Chinese sovereignty over Tibet. However, it was not too late even now to take up the Tibetan cause and to join in the struggle of Tibetans. The issues which the international community could take up today are those of the deteriorating human right situation, water-related issues in Tibet which affect many of the lower riparians in Asia, and the right to self-determination for the people of

Tibet, enshrined in a UN General Assembly Resolution of 1961.

His Holiness expressed his gratitude towards the Vivekananda International Foundation for publishing a book that holistically takes up the cause of Tibet and its people. He strongly emphasized on the relationship that people of India and Tibet share. This relation, His Holiness maintained, is deeper than mere political or economic. The relation is spiritual and cultural and it goes so deep that it becomes the basis of Tibetan identity. He argued that despite all the mistakes that Tibet and India did half a century ago,

Tibetans realize the fact that India is the mother from where the Tibetan culture originated and like a mother, India has helped and nurtured the people of Tibet in recent times of struggle and difficulties.

The session then opened up for the participation from the audience who expressed their views and shared their views, which included the call for a national debate on the cause of Tibet and also the need to introduce India's Tibet policy as separate from its China policy.

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Round-Table Discussion on Credibility of India's Nuclear Deterrence

A Round-Table Discussion to deliberate upon the credibility of India's Nuclear Deterrence especially in the light of Pakistan's development of Tactical Nuclear Weapons (TNWs) was held at the VIF on 18 November 2013. The discussion was chaired by Gen NC Vij, former Chief of Army Staff. The participants included members of the strategic community comprising former diplomats, military personnel and representatives from think tanks.

Mr AK Doval, KC, Director VIF opened the discussion by stating that the building up of India's nuclear capabilities was largely due to its scientists and a few enlightened civil servants who had the vision to allow the former to go ahead with their work in an unfettered manner. The final decision to go nuclear was due to a number of factors and the credibility of India's nuclear deterrence would be further enhanced with operationalisation of India's submarine borne nuclear missiles. He underlined the importance of close integration of all the stakeholders viz the

developers – scientists, decision makers – Nuclear Command Authority, and the users – Armed Forces, coupled with the constant upgradation of our nuclear arsenal for ensuring the efficacy of India's nuclear command and control apparatus. He concluded that while nuclear weapons may have prevented full scale wars they had not reduced the scope of limited conflict and covert actions by countries inimical to us.

In his initial remarks, Gen Vij dwelt upon some features of India's Nuclear Doctrine notably credible minimum deterrence, no first use and massive retaliation if deterrence fails. He indicated that Pakistan had gone nuclear and now developed tactical nuclear weapons (TNWs) because of the widening conventional asymmetry with India. It also believed that under the cover of nuclear weapons it could calibrate the use of non-state actors without inviting a punitive military response from India. Therefore, the aim of Indian policymakers should be to find effective means to signal the credibility of its nuclear doctrine without falling

for the bogey of nuclear blackmail. The adoption of TNWs is not a new strategy by Pakistan. Even during the Cold War, the Soviet Union and US had graduated to a flexible approach entailing the use of TNWs. Manpreet Sethi of Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS) stated that the size of India's nuclear arsenal, its delivery vectors, command and control system, decision making process etc lends immense credibility to India's nuclear doctrine. The size of the arsenal and a declaratory no first use policy enhances credibility of India's nuclear deterrence and limits the possibility of nuclear strike against it as the costs on the adversary would be too prohibitive.

Air Marshal K K Nohwar recalled the successful conduct of Exercise Poorna Vijay by the Indian Armed Forces in May 2001 which validated the theory that there was space for conventional war even under a nuclear overhang. In his presentation, Air Marshal Nohwar provided figures for the number of nuclear weapons and delivery systems held by the US, Russia, China, India and Pakistan. The development of Arihant SSBN would further enhance India's strategic depth

and dissuade Pakistan from launching a first strike, he said.

Ambassador Satish Chandra detailed the main features of India's nuclear doctrine and the circumstances under which it was formulated. India had no choice but to conduct nuclear tests as Asia was awash with nuclear weapons and as there was blatant Sino- Pak nuclear collusion.

India's nuclear doctrine was formulated in restrained terms in keeping with its traditional behaviour as a mature and responsible state. The term "credible minimum deterrent" signalled that India's nuclear weapons program was modest and defensive in nature. The concepts of "No first use" and "Non use" of nuclear weapons against non nuclear weapon states lent credence to India's non threatening posture. The commitment to civilian control, to eschewing exports which could contribute to proliferation and to a continuity of its traditional approach to nuclear disarmament was reflective of its being a responsible state.

Clearly, India envisaged its nuclear weapons as only a deterrent merely for defensive

purposes and not as a means to threaten others, that it was not interested in building up a huge arsenal and that it would not engage in an arms race. However, should it be attacked with nuclear weapons, nuclear retaliation would be “massive” and designed to inflict “unacceptable damage.”

He mentioned that the prerequisites for the credibility of our deterrent in the context of our nuclear doctrine may be listed as follows:

- Sufficient and Survivable nuclear forces both in terms of warheads and means of delivery able to inflict unacceptable damage;
- Nuclear Forces must be operationally prepared at all times;
- Effective Intelligence and Early Warning Capabilities;
- A Robust Command and Control System;
- The Will to Employ Nuclear Forces;
- Communication of Deterrence Capability.

He pointed out that any effort to develop tactical weapons as a response to Pakistan’s development of tactical weapons

would be counterproductive for the following reasons:

1. It would embolden Pakistan to use such weapons as it would remove the certainty of a “massive” attack;
2. It would enormously complicate our command and control responsibilities and enhance the costs thereof;
3. It would defeat the purpose of our conventional force thrusts by their neutralization through Pakistan’s tactical nuclear attacks;
4. It would encourage foreign interference.

Brig Gurmeet Kanwal expressed doubts whether Pakistan has actually been successful in miniaturizing the Nasr based TNWs or are they simply a showcase weapon. Even if Pakistan is successful in fielding TNWs, given their low yield, such weapons will have a very limited damage potential. Brig Kanwal advocated that future wars would be limited but the Armed Forces must remain prepared for the full spectrum of conflict. Various scenarios of conflict under a nuclear shadow were discussed. There was unanimous view among the participants that the

capability or credibility of India's nuclear doctrine is not in doubt but we must enhance our means to effectively signal the same to our adversaries.

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Interaction with Mr Adam Thomson, the British High Commissioner to Pakistan

Vivekananda International Foundation welcomed Mr Adam Thomson, the British High Commissioner to Pakistan on 26th November 2013 for an interaction with leading security and foreign policy strategists of India. The team for interaction was headed by Ambassador Prabhat P Shukla, former Indian Ambassador to Russia and the Joint Director of VIF, and included Vice Adm. (Retd) K K Nayyar, Lt. Gen. (Retd) Ravi Sawhney, Mr C D Sahay (former Secretary R, Cabinet Secretariat), Amb. Rajiv Sikri, Vice Adm. (Retd) Raman Puri, Lt. Gen. (Retd) Gautam Banerjee, Brig. (Retd) Vinod Anand, Mr. Sushant Sareen, Mr. K G Suresh, Dr. Anirban Ganguly and Mr Arka Biswas.

The roundtable focused on the evolving political situation in Pakistan. Emphasis was laid on

the development of equations between the civilian government and the security establishment in Pakistan, and its likely impact on India, Afghanistan and the entire region. Also discussed was the role of the US, and China in the policy making calculus of Pakistan. Pakistan is going through a process of change, and its current priorities are reviving the economy and containing the threat of religious extremism. There is no certainty regarding how long the process might take, and there are many challenges that could change the dynamics of the process inside Pakistan. The VIF team was of the view that India would and should formulate its judgments and policies on the basis of actions on the ground rather than words.

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